

**2023-2024**

**ST. MARY'S ACADEMY  
PARENT/STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**



**St. Mary's  
Academy**

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**MAGNIFY THE LORD**

## Introduction

In order to ensure that students and their families are familiar with the philosophy, rules, regulations and policies of St. Mary's Academy (SMA), we ask that students and parents or guardians please read and review the St. Mary's Academy Student/Parent Handbook.

We ask that you sign and return the acknowledgement form on the last page of this handbook that states that you agree as a condition of admission, to abide by the guidelines of this and all governing administrative policies or regulations of St. Mary's Academy in effect at the time of admission, or as amended, for the duration of enrollment of the student. Signing of this handbook is an acknowledgement of the acceptance to be governed by the rules, regulations, conditions, and requirements of the school as stated in this Handbook as well as those policies of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. This form also states that PowerSchool is the database in which official academic and discipline records are stored at St. Mary's Academy.

Additionally, all students will participate in the Archdiocesan required safe environment training for students – VIRTUS. Families who do not want to have their students participate in this training must send an email to [jgagnier@smaschool.org](mailto:jgagnier@smaschool.org) by Friday, **August 12, 2023** to opt out of the training.

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## **WELCOME**

### **Welcome**

On behalf of the faculty, staff and administration, welcome to the new school year. When enrolled, you became part of the St. Mary's Academy community. We hope you enjoy your time here and take advantage of every opportunity for growth that SMA has to offer. The school administration reserves the right to make additions and/or corrections in this handbook at any time when deemed necessary with proper notification of these changes being communicated in writing to parents and/or students. Final authority rests with the school administration on all matters. Enrollment in the school constitutes agreement with the policies contained herein.

### **Mission Statement of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta**

We, the faithful of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, are a people of prayer, love and joy who are dedicated to the salvation of all. As disciples and believers in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we proclaim the good news and grow in faith, hope, love and service to others. We are unified in our commitment to sacramental life, pastoral care and life-long formation in our Roman Catholic faith. We express our love through evangelization, fellowship, Catholic education, social services and charity in the full pursuit of effective discipleship.

### **Mission Statement for the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Atlanta**

Our schools are committed to providing an excellent education in an environment of spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical formation in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Atlanta serve a vital role in the evangelizing and educational mission of the Church.

### **Statement of Public Assurance**

Schools in the Archdiocese of Atlanta admit students of any race, sex, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to all students at the school. St. Mary's Academy is in full compliance with all archdiocesan policies set forth in the archdiocesan schools' policy manual. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, loan programs and athletics or other school administered programs.

### **Archdiocesan Compliance**

SMA is operated by the Archdiocese of Atlanta under the authority of the Office of Catholic Schools and is in full compliance with all Archdiocesan policies as highlighted in the Policy Manual for Catholic Schools. This manual is available for family review upon request. Parents and students agree to comply with not only the school's stated policies in the handbook but also those of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

### **AHERA Compliance**

Our school does not contain asbestos in any form. All reporting procedures, as required by AHERA, are executed annually. The school's management plan is available for review upon request.



**CIPA Compliance**

St. Mary's Academy is in compliance with the federal Children's Internet Protection Act.

**Compulsory School Attendance**

St. Mary's Academy is in compliance with the Compulsory School Attendance Law of the State of Georgia. The Archdiocese of Atlanta requires 180 student instructional days. Repeated absence or tardiness may be considered grounds for suspension or expulsion.

**Bright from the Start Exemption**

St. Mary's Academy has been granted a Notice of Exemption from Licensure as a Child Care Center. St. Mary's Academy's after care program is granted this exemption by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. This exemption is granted because SMA Catholic School operates as an integral part of an established religious school and the school agrees

- to maintain accreditation and meet accreditation standards;
- to comply with requirements for background checks for its director and employees;
- to comply with local, regional, and state health departments, state fire marshal, and local fire prevention guidelines.

*Your signature on the handbook form is your acknowledgement that you have been advised and understand that SMA is exempted from licensure.*

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **History**

In March 1997, Archbishop John Francis Donoghue launched the “Building the Church for Tomorrow” capital campaign to raise funds to build new churches and much-needed Catholic schools in the northern and southern suburbs of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Two of the sites chosen were Tyrone and Fayetteville. In 1999, Tyrone became the home to Our Lady of Victory K-8 school and in 2000, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School opened its doors to students of grades 9-12.

In the spring of 2021, Archdiocese of Atlanta Superintendent of Schools, with the blessing of Archbishop Gregory Hartmayer, OFM Conv., oversaw the development of a plan to merge Our Lady of Victory and Our Lady of Mercy to form St. Mary’s Academy, the first archdiocesan-sponsored PK-12 Catholic school in the archdiocese. Allowing families to have their children under one roof for the school day and allowing teachers and coaches to coordinate efforts across the entire educational journey was part of this vision. St. Mary’s Academy opened its doors to the community at the Fayetteville site in August of 2022.

### **Mission**

Through integrating academic and formative efforts, St. Mary’s Academy provides a unique Catholic learning experience and college-prep education that equips our students to be Christ-centered, life-long learners and global-minded productive members of their communities. Inspired by our Catholic pedagogical traditions, we place the individual learner at the center of the learning process – body, mind, and soul.

St. Mary’s Academy is a Roman Catholic educational institution, fully committed to the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. All educational activity offered at the school is grounded in the Catholic faith; without it, the school is unable to achieve its mission. While St. Mary’s Academy is committed to ensuring that all teachings of the Catholic faith are shared and discussed with respect, sensitivity, and charity, especially with those who may struggle with them, the school expects all parents/guardians and students to demonstrate support for the mission of the school and all the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith by not contradicting or criticizing them publicly, in words or actions, including through online social media venues. Parents/guardians and students who fail to act in a manner consistent with this expectation may be asked to withdraw their child/children from the school.

### **Vision**

To partner with parents to prepare our students to lead successful, rewarding lives - firm in faith, strong in knowledge, joyful in hope, and active in charity.

### **Motto**

“Magnify the Lord”

### **Core Virtues**

Magnifying Virtuous Living, Magnifying Diversity & Inclusion, Magnifying Servant Leadership, Magnifying Academic Excellence, Magnifying Intentional Discipleship

## **Mascot**

Bobcats

## **School Website**

[www.smaschool.org](http://www.smaschool.org)

## **School Logos**

No one may use the school name, mascot, logo or motto on any type of social media or in any other way, e.g., putting the name on t-shirts, without the express written permission of the Principal.

## **Accreditation**

Accreditations and Affiliations: SMA is fully accredited through district-wide accreditation of the Office of Catholic Schools. Each school maintains full accreditation through Cognia. St. Mary's Academy is also a member of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) and the College Board.

## **Leadership**

### **JoAnn McPherson, Principal**

B.A., History, Clemson University

M.A., English, Clemson University

M.T.S., Theology, Spring Hill College

### **Cynthia Launay-Fallasse, Assistant Principal**

B.A., English, Spring Hill College

B.A., Theology, Spring Hill College

M.Ed., Educational Leadership, University of West Georgia

Ed.S., Educational Leadership, University of West Georgia

### **Marlene Martin, Assistant Principal**

B.A., English, University of Miami

M.Ed., Educational Leadership, Kennesaw State University

## **Faculty and Staff (Alphabetical Order)**

### **Daniel Arenas, High School Theology**

B.A., Theology, Franciscan University of Steubenville

### **Dr. Wendy Ashmore, Elementary School 5th grade**

B.S., Elementary Ed, Indiana University

M.S., Middle Grades, University of West Georgia

Ed.S., Middle Grades Leadership, University of West Georgia

Ph.D., Education Leadership, University of Georgia

**Sarah Athearn, College Guidance Counselor**

B.A., Liberal Studies/English, Clayton State University

**Dennis Bogumill, Physical Education**

B.S., Math Education, Georgia Southern University

M.Ed., Administration/Supervision, University of West Georgia

Ed.S., Administration/Supervision, Jacksonville State University

**Alexander Brown, Technology, High School Spanish**

B.S., Mathematics and Nutrition, University of Georgia

M.A.T., Secondary Math, Georgia State University

**Mary Canning, Elementary School 4th Grade**

B.S., Mathematics, Samford University

M.S., Mathematics, Vanderbilt University

M.Ed., Mathematics Concentration, University of Notre Dame

**Ana De Mello, High School Math**

B.S., Mathematics, Garcilazo de la Vega University

M.Ed., Spec. Ed, University of West Georgia

Ed.S., Special Education, University of West Georgia

**John Del Pilar,**

A.S., Business Science, St. John's University

**Phyllis Del Pilar, Accounts Payable**

A.A., Marketing Management, Queens College

**Daniel Deveault, High School French**

B.A., Education, Universite Quebec a Trois-Rivieres

**Marisa Dobson, School Counselor**

B.S., Secondary Education, Louisiana State University

M.Ed., School Counseling, Louisiana State University

**Santiago Duran, High School Spanish**

B.S., Psychology, University of Georgia

B.A., Latin, University of Georgia

**Dr. Ashley Duxbury, Middle/High School Science**

B.S., Biological Science, North Carolina State University

Ph.D., Entomology, University of Georgia

**Dr. Tilford Ellerbee, High School Health and Weight Training**

B.S., Health & Physical Education, Georgia State University  
M.Ed., Integrated Study, Cambridge College  
Ed.S., Leadership Administration, Lincoln Memorial University  
Ph.D., Kinesiology, Sheffield State University

**Julie Gagnier, Professional Assistant to the Principal and Athletic Director**

B.A., History and Political Science, University of St. Thomas

**Mary Garger, Elementary School 2nd Grade**

B.S., Early Childhood Education, University of West Georgia

**Amy Gilchrist, High School Dance**

B.F.A., Communication, Valdosta State University  
M.P.A., Administration, Valdosta State University

**Robert Grgetic, High School Science**

B.S., Physics, University of West Georgia

**Kevin Grinstead, High School Social Studies**

B.A., History, Creighton University

**Colleen Hagert, Elementary School K**

A.A., Early Childhood Education, Niagara College, Ontario, Canada  
B.A., Child Studies, Brock University, Ontario, Canada  
B.Ed., Brock University, Ontario, Canada

**Dr. Brent Hollers, Director of Informational Technology**

B.A., Business Administration, North Georgia College and State University  
M.A., Teaching, University of West Georgia  
M.S., Data Science, Eastern University  
Ph.D., Philosophy in Workforce Education, University of Georgia

**Kelli Kalen, RN BSN School Nurse**

B.S.N. Central Missouri State University

**Dr. Adam Kellam, High School Mathematics**

B.S., Mathematics, Wingate University  
M.S., Mathematics, Georgia State University  
Ph.D., Mathematics, Georgia State University

**Molly Kellam, High School Art**

B.A., Studio Art and Computer Science, Converse College

**Mark Komdat, Director of Finance**

A.A.S. Millard Fillmore College

B.S. SUNY Buffalo

M.B.A. SUNY Buffalo

**Christine Krabel, Middle School Religion**

B.Ed., English & Secondary Education, University of Florida

M.Ed., Secondary Education, University of Florida

**Franck Launay-Falasse, High School Theology**

B.A., Philosophy, University of Paris-IV-Sorbonne

M.A., Philosophy, University of Paris

**Jorge Londono, Plant Manager**

A.A.A., Academia Antioquena de Aviacion

**Paola Londono, Registrar**

A.A.A., Academia Antioquena de Aviacion

**Adeline Martin, High School Science**

B.A., Molecular and Cellular Biology, Harvard University

**Brooke Mavretich, Middle School Social Studies and Language Arts**

B.A., English, Hunter College

M.A., Literacy Specialist, Queens College

Ed.S., Curriculum and Instruction, Lincoln Memorial University

**Katy McCall, High School English**

B.A., English, Vanderbilt University

M.A., English, University of Kentucky

**Andrew McGovern, High School Theology**

B.A., Theology, Ave Maria University

M.T.S., Theology, Holy Spirit College

**Rebecca Miller, High School English, Drama**

B.S., Criminal Justice, Andrew Jackson University

**Jaklyn Murphy, Middle School Math, STEM Coordinator**

B.S., Mechanical Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology

**Cori Nardoza, Administrative Assistant, Lower School**

**Jae Parker, High School Mathematics**

B.B.A., Finance, Austin Peay State University

M.A., Mathematics, Clayton State University

**Tam C. Pham, Athletic Trainer**

B.S., Exercise Science, Georgia State University

M.A.T., Athletic Training, Life University

**Sarah Philips, Elementary School Third Grade**

B.A., English, CSU Sacramento

M.A., Education, National University Sacramento

**Sandra Pinal-Zapata, Elementary School Aide**

**Kiesha Porter, Director of Admissions**

B.A., English / Specialization in Business Admin., University of California – Los Angeles

M.S., Broadcast Journalism, Syracuse University

**Shauntelle Samples, ESP**

B.A., Political/Pre-Law; Alcorn State University

M.Ed., General Education, American Intercontinental University

**Kathleen Schenck, Media Specialist**

B.A., Elementary Education, Special Education, University of New Orleans

M.S., School Library Media, University of West Georgia

**Ryan Schilling, High School Science**

B.S., Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, Georgia Institute of Technology

**William Schmitz, Athletic Director**

B.A., Sports Management, Belmont Abbey College

**Katie Sharpe, Middle School Literature & Resource Teacher**

B.S., Elementary Education, University of Southern Mississippi

**Elizabeth Slattery, High School Receptionist/Attendance**

B.S., Marketing, Miami University

**Susie Stucko, Elementary & Middle School Specials**

M.Ed., Early Childhood Education, American College of Education

B.A., English, California State University, Fullerton

**Ray Suescun, Director of School Safety and Security**  
Georgia Certified Law Enforcement Officer  
Crisis Intervention Training Certification

**Bill Tenore, High School Social Studies**  
M.Ed., Educational Leadership, Cambridge College  
B.A. History, Earlham College  
A.A. Theology, Thomas More College

**Ignae Thomas, High School Receptionist**  
B.A., Sociology, Clark Atlanta University

**Brian Williams, High School English**  
B.A., English Literature, Oberlin College  
M.A., English Literature, Georgia State University

**Diane Williams, Elementary School Pre-K**  
B.S., Elementary Education, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces  
M.A., Education Administration, Azusa Pacific University, CA

**Bianca Yates, Elementary School First Grade**  
B.A., Early Childhood Education, University of West Georgia

### **School Advisory Council**

The mission of the St. Mary's Academy Advisory Council is to further the advancement of a quality Catholic education for the students attending SMA by providing leadership, advice, assistance and support to the Principal/**President**. Its authority is derived from the Archbishop of Atlanta, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Archdiocesan School Advisory Council.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

The primary responsibility for the education of the children belongs to parents. The greatest single factor in building a child's intellectual, cultural, moral, and spiritual attitude is the example you provide in your home. Parents are responsible for:

- Supporting the mission of the school.
- Supporting and complying with the policies of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.
- Modeling and supporting the practice of the Catholic faith.
- Supporting school policy and the authority of the administration and teachers.
- Requiring your child to complete all assignments.
- Insisting that your child obey the regulations and principles of the student code for responsible behavior.
- Discussing problems with the persons concerned and avoiding any criticisms of teachers and school policy.
- Following the policies and procedures stated in the handbook.



- Ensuring regular and consistent attendance for all school activities, programs and events.
- Meeting all financial obligations on time.
- Reimbursing any property destroyed (accidentally or intentionally).
- Attending conferences with the administration, teachers and school personnel when requested.
- Checking the website and emails for school communications.

As our students' primary educators, parents are to support the school's discipline policies and procedures; failure to do so may result in the parents being asked to withdraw their children from the school.

### **Student Participation**

By enrolling at St. Mary's Academy, students agree to participate in the entire program offered. All students are required to participate in ALL school activities that are a part of the academic/religious/civic program. All students are required to attend and participate in Masses and/or prayer services.

### **Annual Fund Participation**

St. Mary's Academy Annual Fund is an annual giving program that is integral to advancing the mission of our school. It helps bridge the gap between tuition and operating expenses.

The Annual Fund allows families and friends to connect to our cause and sustains and propels the life of the school through the enrichment of our academic, spiritual, and extracurricular programs. It provides revenues that have an immediate impact on the diverse student programs that is the hallmark of a St. Mary's Academy experience.

No matter how much you may be able to give, your support of the Annual Fund makes a tremendous difference. Participating at an amount meaningful to you is at the heart of our annual appeal and we ask that you prayerfully discern a meaningful amount to donate. Your gift is tax deductible.

### **Volunteers**

Parents are the primary educators of children. We encourage parents to assist in the educational process by volunteering as room parents, lunchroom monitors, chaperones, committee members and spiritual life assistants. Their presence and enthusiasm create an excellent means of reinforcing the value of Catholic education in the community. The school appreciates and encourages these volunteer efforts because they enrich the life and health of our school. Children may not accompany parents while they are volunteering. All volunteers must report to the office, sign in, and wear required identification. All volunteers must be screened and receive Virtus training according to the Archdiocesan policy. Per legislation activated in July, 2012 all volunteers are considered to be "mandatory reporters" and must report suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the person in charge of the organization or to the local Department of Child Welfare.

## ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT

### Admissions Policy

In order to be considered for priority admission, a completed application must be returned by the first Friday in February. Applications are accepted after this date on a rolling basis; however, limited spots may be available. Catholic families “receive priority of acceptance” (policy 5120) and will confirm they are Catholic by providing the required Catholic verification form.

St. Mary’s Academy uses several criteria in the admissions process, including, but not limited to:

- Timely submission of a completed application
- Teacher and Principal recommendations
- Academic records
- Proficiency/standardized test results
- Placement exam results
- Disciplinary records

The school in its discretion reserves the right to refuse admittance, suspend, or expel any student. Expulsions are reported to the Superintendent of Schools, according to Archdiocesan School policy.

For a detailed list of admissions criteria per grade, please visit our website at [smaschool.org](http://smaschool.org)

**New students are accepted on a sixty (60) day probationary status which begins on the first day of attendance. A student may be dismissed by the administration during this probationary period for any reason.**

### Accommodation of Students with Special Needs

St. Mary’s Academy strives to accommodate students with physical, emotional, social, or learning challenges. However, families must fully disclose the nature and known extent of such challenges **during the application process**. St. Mary’s Academy has limited resources to meet certain challenges and may recommend educational alternatives that may better serve the needs of some students.

### Statement Regarding Non-Catholic Students

St. Mary’s Academy respects the personal conscience of individual students and their families. This freedom is recognized by the Catholic Church. However, as a Catholic school it cannot relinquish its own freedom to proclaim the Gospel and to offer a formation based on the teachings of the Catholic faith and the values to be found in Christian education. All students will therefore be expected to participate in religious instruction and Catholic formation offered at the school except those intended only for Catholics; namely, the reception of the Sacraments.

### Re-Enrollment Policy

Enrollment of the student is subject to the student observing all school rules as set out in the school handbook including, but not limited to, general behavior, academic performance, and

attendance. Continued enrollment during any given school year, and re-enrollment in any subsequent years, is subject to the parents/guardians continued support of the mission of the school as documented in the school handbook and the maintenance of a demonstrably effective and supportive relationship between the school and the parents/guardians. Re-enrollment in any subsequent year is subject to mutual agreement. The student, the parents or the school administration may withhold the agreement with or without cause. Enrollment during a school year is subject to termination at the discretion of the Principal.

St. Mary's Academy will establish a deadline to re-enroll each year. After this date, SMA cannot guarantee financial aid and a \$50 late fee will apply to those families who re-enroll after the deadline.

### **Withdrawals**

Families must notify the school in writing if a student is withdrawing from the school.

In the event of a student's withdrawal during the school year, a two (2) calendar-month written notice is required. Families are responsible for fulfilling their tuition obligation during the time of the two month notice. Tuition will not be prorated for any portion of the month.

In the event of a student's withdrawal in the summer, the school must be notified prior to June 1st in order to have no tuition obligation for the upcoming school year. Families who withdraw after June 1st are responsible for 1 month's tuition. Families who withdraw after July 1st are responsible for 2 month's tuition. Tuition will not be prorated for any portion of the month.

Student fees will not be refunded.

### **Transfer Policy**

Local transfer of students from any public, private, or Archdiocesan School into grade twelve (12) or into grade eight (8) is generally not considered. However, families may appeal to the Principal who may seek a waiver from the Office of Catholic Schools. Students whose families have relocated to the Atlanta area and who have been attending a Catholic school may apply for admission into grade eight (8) or twelve (12) in an Archdiocesan School.

### **Tuition**

Tuition is established annually as part of the budget process. St. Mary's Academy uses FACTS Tuition Management to collect tuition. All families, except families of international students, must make all payments in FACTS. All families who seek the Catholic tuition rate must complete a Parish Verification Form annually to receive the discounted tuition rate.

### **Late Tuition Policy**

Tuition is considered late if not paid on the due date. Should circumstances arise that may cause a delay in payment, the Business Office must be notified immediately so consideration for an alternate plan can be discussed. The Director of Operations will try to work with the family to develop a mutually agreeable arrangement.

Grades and transcripts will not be released for any student whose account is not current. This policy is inclusive of students who are applying to colleges and universities and it may affect their application(s). Students whose accounts are one payment behind may lose access to PowerSchool and may be held out of class until the account is made current. Students may be withheld from taking final exams for balances due to the school. Students who have an outstanding balance at the end of the school year will not be able to enroll for a new school year until the balance due is paid.

### **Financial Aid**

Financial aid is provided by the Archdiocese of Atlanta and is available to Catholic families. Limited school funded financial aid is available for non-Catholic families. All aid is determined on the basis of need. Applications are available on the website.

### **GRACE Scholarship Program**

GRACE provides scholarships to students for families with financial need. **You can help deserving students at St. Mary's Academy to receive an excellent Catholic education at no cost to you. In exchange for your contributions to GRACE Scholars, you will receive a 100% state income tax credit.** For more information visit [www.gracescholars.org](http://www.gracescholars.org).

### **Family Custodial Situations**

St. Mary's Academy is finding an increasing number of families experiencing transitions in parental custodial relationships. In addition, laws governing divorce settlements and custody have been recently changed. For this reason we find it necessary to clarify the procedures the administration and faculty will follow in communicating with parents in such situations.

- In two parent families it is assumed that both parents are living at the same address unless we have been notified otherwise. St. Mary's Academy personnel will, therefore, send home notices, communication, etc. to the address given on the application/registration form. It is assumed that both parents are communicating regarding their child and that all information is shared by and between the parents. This information includes but is not limited to conference appointments, report cards, discussions with school personnel, and financial obligations.
- In families experiencing separation of parents or pending divorce, the above information will be sent to the home of whichever parent currently has primary physical custody of the child. Again, it is assumed that this information is shared by the parents and between the parents. Since these situations may impact a student's achievement and interactions at school, parents are asked to inform both the Principal and teacher of this fact so that appropriate support can be given to the child. St. Mary's Academy can only proceed with the appropriate documentation detailed below.
- In cases of an actual divorce decree involving clear custody by one parent, the Principal is to be informed by the custodial parent of this fact. A copy of the first page of the

decree bearing the case number, the pages referring to custody and the relationship with the school, and the final page bearing the judge's signature are to be submitted to the Principal. Unless the decree indicates otherwise, school communications will be sent home to the parent that has primary physical designation or primary physical custody. Custodial parents should understand, however, that unless the divorce decree specifically limits the non-custodial or non-primary physical custodial parent's right to access the records, the non-custodial parent has a right to the same access as the custodial parent. St. Mary's Academy will, unless otherwise restricted by a Court Order, release school-related records upon request to the noncustodial parent. "Records" include official transcripts, report cards, health records, referrals for special services, and communications regarding major disciplinary actions. This does not include daily class work and papers, or routine communications sent to the home of residence. In these cases the custodial parent is asked to cooperate with the school and share this information directly with the non-custodial parent. This avoids time-consuming duplication of services.

Further, unless restricted by an order of the court, any non-custodial parent has the right to attend any school activity of his or her child, which includes sports activities and class programs. Parents should keep each other informed as to these activities to avoid duplication of communications and to allow the school to better attend to the duty of teaching your children.

- In cases of "joint custody" (shared parenting agreements) entitling other parents access to school personnel and activities, it is assumed that one copy of communication and information sent to the home will be shared by and between the parents.

When arranging parent conferences, it is preferred and will be the general procedure that one conference appointment be scheduled "jointly" if both parents wish to be present. It is assumed that parents are able to set aside differences and to come together on behalf of their child. A joint conference further ensures that both parents are given the same information at the same time, thereby avoiding misunderstanding or misinterpretations.

In cases where joint conferences are clearly neither possible nor desirable by all parties involved, alternate arrangements may be discussed with the Principal, subject to the approval of both parents, and further reviewed by St. Mary's Academy. Every effort will be made to keep communications open with both parents while at the same time avoiding duplication of services and excessive demands on the teacher's time.

Court-ordered visitation should generally begin at the home of one of the parents and not at school. It is hoped that visitation arrangements would reflect the sensitivity of both parents to the consistency and routines that foster security in a child and allow for school responsibilities and homework to be taken care of during the school week.

If there are questions concerning this statement of procedures, or circumstances you feel necessitate other arrangements, please contact the Principal personally.

## GENERAL SCHOOL DAY OPERATIONS

### School Hours

7:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. (High School)

7:45 a.m. to 2:55 p.m. (Elementary and Middle School)

### Visitor Policy

Visitors are required to sign-in and wear a nametag at all times. School-age visitors are not allowed on campus unless authorized by the Principal.

### Arrival and Departure Guidelines

The building opens at 7:10 a.m. High School students report to the cafeteria. Elementary and Middle school students report to the gym. All High School children must leave the building by 3:00 p.m. unless attending a school-sponsored, co-curricular, or extra-curricular event. In ensuring the proper supervision of students after regular dismissal, any ES/MS student who has not been picked up by 3:10 p.m. will be sent to the Extended Care Program and the family will be billed according to the daily rate. High School students may wait for a ride in the atrium; however, there is no supervision and students may not reenter the building. High school students do not attend Extended Care Program.

Once students are dropped off at school, they may not leave campus until they are picked up by a parent or guardian. (EXCEPTION: with written parent/guardian consent and the administration's approval).

### Carline

Carpool drop-off and pick-up are ONLY in the designated areas. Follow the directions of staff members at all times to ensure the safety of all. All high school students should be dropped off and picked up in the front circle. All other students should be dropped off and picked up from the Elementary/Middle School entrance. *Please be mindful of students in the crossing zones.*

### Morning Carpool Procedures

1. As you enter the parking lot, please proceed slowly and stay in line as you pull up to the school. Do not pass other cars!
2. Follow directions of teachers when asked to move up in line.
3. Please stay in your cars. Staff members will assist the ES/MS children with car doors and in gathering their belongings from cars and trunks. Please do not allow your child(ren) to exit your car until it has pulled up to a space at the curb. Children should exit cars from curbside doors only.

### Afternoon Dismissal Procedures (Elementary & Middle School)

1. Please do not arrive prior to a half hour before carpool begins. Fire lanes must be kept open to ensure that safety vehicles can move with easy access to the school.
2. Parents may not park elsewhere on the property and walk students from the carpool waiting area to their car.
3. Each driver is required to display the school provided placard bearing the names of all students in the carpool that day. Parents should make multiple signs, as needed, to designate changing carpools. Names on display must be printed in LARGE, LEGIBLE letters so that staff can easily read the placards. Placards must remain visible while on campus until all children in the carpool are in the vehicle.
4. ALL CARS MUST REMAIN IN PLACE until the directing staff member indicates your car may move.
5. Siblings/carpools must be picked up on time even if others are required to stay for after school activities.
6. Children will only be dismissed into the care of their parents or arranged carpool. Students must have a note from their parents to be allowed to go home with any other person. This note must be turned in to your child's homeroom teacher in the morning.
7. Please be prompt in picking up your children. Children remaining after **3:10** p.m. will be sent to the Extended Care Program and FACTS accounts will be billed according to the **ECP payment schedule**.

Note: Middle Schools students who have school-sponsored activities or meetings after school must return to Extended Care immediately following the meeting/activity. Students who do not report to Extended Care after their activity will be issued a citation. Elementary school students will be escorted back to Extended Care after their activity.

### Afternoon Dismissal Procedures (High School)

1. High School students will be dismissed at 2:45 p.m.
2. If you have multiple students in different grade levels, please pick up your students in the appropriate areas.

### **Carline Safety Regulations**

Our goal is for the safe and timely dismissal of all children; therefore we ask that you adhere to the following regulations:

- Turn off cell phones so that your full attention is directed to the supervising staff member.
- Put the car into park while stopped.
- Stay in a single line.
- Leave all pets in the car (or better yet, at home).
- Do not pull around the car in front of yours.
- The school is not responsible for damage incurred to cars during carpool. Please take care as you enter or exit the cars.
- Please be mindful that we have student drivers. Please be patient and drive attentively!



## **Attendance**

It is the shared responsibility of the school and the home to assist students to develop desirable habits of punctuality and attendance. Students are expected to attend school regularly in compliance with the Law for Compulsory Attendance.

Elementary, middle and high schools in the Archdiocese of Atlanta comply with the Compulsory School Attendance Law of the State of Georgia. If a student surpasses twenty (20) days of absence and/or tardy per school year or ten (10) days per semester, excused or unexcused, the student may be required to appeal to the Principal to receive credit for the course and/or be promoted to the next grade level.

In order to participate in school or after-school activities, a student must be in attendance at least half day. This policy relates to practice and competition. Athletes and performers must be on time the day following a competition or performance. Attendance at school the day prior is required for all students who plan to attend school dances and after-school events.

As a reminder, **late arrivals and/or early departures are noted as part of the attendance record.**

## **Absences**

### ***Excused***

If an absence is anticipated, families should complete an Informed Absence Form. This form may be obtained from the attendance office. This should be completed three (3) days prior to the anticipated absence. It is the student's and parent's responsibility to contact teachers or to obtain the assignments for the excused period.

If the student's absence is unanticipated, the parents/guardians are asked to call or email the school at [frontdesk@smahschool.org](mailto:frontdesk@smahschool.org) by 8:00 a.m. the day of the absence. If notification is not received by the school office or clinic, the absence will be considered unexcused. No calls or verbal reporting are accepted from minors. Parents who do not call in an absence will be called **or emailed** at home or at work by the school. **An excused absence will be recorded for documented illness, death in the family, medical appointment, or court summons provided that written documentation is presented. The written excuse must be brought to the office the day the student returns to class.** The following procedure will follow an absence:

- The student/parent reports to the school front office and is admitted back after receiving documentation for the absence.
- The attendance office then records the absence as either excused or unexcused in the attendance database to which all teachers have access.

Students who are absent for five (5) or more consecutive days must return to school with a note from a doctor. This excuse will be duly honored and the student will be given one day per absence, up to five days, to make up work without penalty. After five days, the student may be permitted to make up work within a period of time designated by the administration. The student

is responsible for making up all the missed work. It should be emphasized that although staff and faculty will do all they can to assist a student that may be behind due to excused absences, it remains the student's responsibility to seek this assistance.

Juniors and seniors are granted two (2) days to visit colleges per school year. **In order for these to be excused, a form from the Guidance Office must be signed and approved by each of the student's teachers at least two (2) school days in advance.** College visits will not be approved for the day before the PSAT's are administered.

### ***Unexcused***

- Parents of students who have 5 or more *unexcused* absences per semester will receive a letter from the attendance office notifying them of any possible academic ramifications, including make up work missed up to a maximum of 70%.

**While the parent/guardian may take a student out of school at any time, it is the administration's prerogative to excuse or not to excuse the absence, tardiness or early dismissal. This includes class absences in order to attend athletic events or other school activities during school hours.**

### ***Tardiness***

Punctuality is an essential characteristic of a responsible person. Any student not in an assigned room by the start of class indicated by a bell ringing is tardy. The teacher will record the tardy as excused or unexcused as part of the attendance procedure. Students who arrive late to school in the morning must receive a pass from the front office.

For High School students: A student who accumulates five (5) excused or unexcused tardies per semester from any combination of the above occurrences will receive Saturday School and parents will be notified. A student who accumulates an excess of 5 will receive administrative review and appropriate disciplinary action which may include ISS (In-School) or OSS (Out-of-School) suspension. Students who are late to a teacher's class can expect additional consequences from that teacher. These consequences may include detention, parent contact as well as other consequences determined by the teacher.

For Middle School students: A student who accumulates five (5) excused or unexcused tardies per semester from any combination of the above occurrences will receive a detention. A student who accumulates an excess of 5 will receive administrative review and appropriate disciplinary action.

For all other students: Excessive tardiness (five (5) excused or unexcused tardies) may result in a conference with the parents and administration and may result in disciplinary action.

### **Early Dismissal**

- Requests for early dismissal must be made in writing, in advance, by a parent/guardian of the student. The request must include the date and time of dismissal. The person

specified in the note must pick up the student in the front office. The reason for the absence should also be included. Emails should be sent to [frontdesk@smaschool.org](mailto:frontdesk@smaschool.org) and received by 8:00 a.m.

- Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to make personal/medical/dental appointments after school hours. We encourage you to check the school calendar and make these types of appointments on the pre-established faculty/staff in-services and days off, as well as on early dismissal days. **Extra days will not be allowed for work missed for planned appointments. The homework assigned on the day missed will be due the next class period. Students who miss a test or quiz for a partial day absence must be prepared to take the assessment on the same day.** Exceptions may be made by the Administration.
- Telephone requests will be honored only in emergency situations.

### **Make-up Work Due to Absence**

If a child is absent, students/parents may request missed work. To do so, please email your child's teachers. The work given will be at the discretion of the teacher, taking into consideration the instruction necessary to complete the work. One day's notice is necessary and the work may be collected at the front office before or after afternoon carpool. Assignments must be completed and returned to the respective teacher(s) within the time specified. Extended time to complete schoolwork may only be permitted for certain absences (illness or family emergencies) and will be given at the discretion of the teacher and/or administration.

Work missed due to planned or unexcused absences will be due the next class period. The student's work will be available on the homework site. Extra days will not be allowed for work missed for planned appointments or absences. The homework assigned on the day missed will be due the next class period. Projects and/or previously assigned work must be given to the teacher prior to the planned or unexcused absence. Students may see teachers at 7:30 a.m. for necessary work.

### **Make-up Tests Due to Absence**

Middle and High school tests must be made up either before or after school. Midterms and finals will not be administered prior to the scheduled date. If a test has been announced prior to the student's absence, the student must come prepared to take the test upon his/her return. Extended time to make-up tests is only permitted for certain absences (illness or family emergencies) when the teacher determines that additional instruction is necessary.

### **Family Vacations**

Family vacations should coincide with school vacation dates. If parents take students on family vacations that do not correspond to scheduled intercessions, the absence may be recorded as unexcused. In situations where absences cannot be avoided, families should complete an Informed Absence Form. This form may be obtained from the attendance office and should be completed three (3) days prior to the anticipated absence. Teachers may choose to give the student work to take along or have the work available when the student returns, depending on the grade level of the child and the type of work missed. Extended time to complete schoolwork is only permitted for absences due to illness or family emergency and is granted at the

discretion of the teacher and/or the administration. Students are responsible, under the supervision of their parents, for the mastery and completion of work missed during an absence. For each day of excused absence, the student will have one day upon return to make up missed work. Work that is not made up will be marked as incomplete and graded accordingly. In the case of extended absences, the teacher or the administration will determine a schedule to complete missed assessments.

Standardized tests missed because of vacation will be made up at the discretion of the administration.

### **Extended Care Program**

Please refer to the Extended Care Program policy on the [smaschool.org](http://smaschool.org) website.

### **Late Lunches/Missing Materials**

The education of our students is important. In order to keep interruptions to a minimum, please deliver all late lunches and missing materials to the front office. Your child may pick up his/her lunch or materials during lunch period.

### **On-Demand Transportation Services Policy**

On-demand transportation services (e.g., Uber, Lyft) are prohibited from transporting Archdiocesan students to and/or from Archdiocesan property unless a parent, grandparents, or guardian accompanies the student in the vehicle.

### **Field Trips/Athletic Events/Extracurriculars**

In order to participate in an athletic event and/or extracurricular activity that requires early dismissal or to participate in a school sanctioned field trip, a student must have no failing grades and no more than five absences and/or tardies, excused or unexcused. Exceptions are by administrative approval only.

### **Cafeteria**

Students may bring their lunch or purchase their lunch through Yay Lunch. Students are required to show responsible and respectful behavior in the cafeteria and to the cafeteria staff. Students are expected to behave and pick up after themselves. Middle and high school students may use the cafeteria microwaves. The vending machine is a high school privilege. No PK-8 grade students may get food or drinks from the vending machines, during school hours.

Students are never allowed to order food from a food service company such as Uber Eats or Grubhub.

### **Religious And Civic Responsibilities**

Each day begins and ends with prayer over the public announcement system. Following the Morning Prayer, students are led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Students are expected to stand and be respectful during prayer which begins each class. School-wide liturgical celebrations generally take place weekly. Many classes attend a "class retreat" once a year. Participation in

this retreat is obligatory. Failure to attend this retreat without administrative permission may result in disciplinary consequences.

### **Inclement Weather Conditions**

In case of inclement weather, St. Mary's Academy follows the instructions for the Fayette County schools. Television stations WSB-ABC Channel 2 and WXIA-NBC Channel 11 will carry officially authorized St. Mary's Academy closings. Students, parents, and faculty are responsible for listening to/watching these stations. Cancellations may also be posted on the school website, [through the Remind app](#), on the school Learning Management System (LMS), and Facebook.

### **Closing of Schools**

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak or any other circumstances which, in the judgment of the Superintendent of Schools, make it is infeasible, unsafe or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, all Archdiocesan schools shall resume as soon as practical via distance learning and/or other methods adopted and/or developed by the school administration and faculty and approved by the Office of Catholic Schools. Due to continuing financial obligations relating to operational costs, including administrative, faculty and staff salaries, there shall be no suspension, reduction or refund of tuition or applicable fees.

### **Audio/Video Recording Policy**

No audio/video recording devices may be used during school functions without the expressed permission of the Principal. Such events include, but are not limited to: classroom presentations, awards ceremonies, performances, parent conferences, administrative conferences, and religious services. This policy also includes recording of conversations either in person or by telephone by or among students, parents, teachers, or school administrators on school property or involving the use of the school telephone.

### **Book Bags**

All book bags or athletic bags are to be with the student, placed in lockers or on a hallway hook at all times except for school Mass and assemblies when book bags should remain in the locked classroom. Hallway floors should be cleared of all book bags at all times.

### **Phones**

Students who have a valid need to use a telephone during the school day must report to the office and receive permission from the office staff. Cell phones **MUST** be in the OFF position during school hours, or [until afternoon car line has finished](#). No phones are allowed to be used in the cafeteria during lunch. Phones may be taken by the teacher or staff and given to the school administration who will secure the phone and determine the disciplinary consequences, which may include a detention or long term confiscation of the device. Students who refuse to give up the device when requested to do so by faculty or staff will face additional disciplinary consequences to be determined by administration. High School students may use headphones/earbuds in the cafeteria in the morning until 7:30 a.m. Once students enter the

academic hallway in the morning, they may not use phones, headphones, Bluetooth devices, or earbuds until school is dismissed.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### **Clinic**

The school clinic provides first aid for minor injuries and illnesses, administers medication, and notifies parents if the symptoms appear more serious.

### **Clinic Procedures**

In the event that a student becomes ill during school hours, St. Mary's Academy clinic personnel will contact the custodial parent/guardian. If the custodial parent/guardian cannot be reached, the school will attempt to contact the persons noted on the Emergency Information Card.

If a child loses consciousness, 911 will be called.

If in the judgment of school authorities, the child is too ill to remain in school and the parents and emergency contact people cannot be reached, the situation will be treated as a medical emergency (911). The child's physician will be contacted and/or hospitalization may be required.

There is a 60-minute window during which a sick/injured child must be picked up from school.

For the purpose of attendance, students will be counted absent from the time clinic personnel determine that the child is too ill/injured to remain in school.

Once the nurse determines that a child is too ill to be in school, the child may not return to school at any time during that school day. Students who are sent home from the clinic during the school day may not participate in SMA-sponsored extracurricular activities/events and may not attend ECP on that day.

Parents should notify the school in the event a child is scheduled for surgery and will be out of school for a period of time. Arrangements will be made to keep the student up-to-date with school work in such an event.

### **Student Emergency Care Forms**

An Emergency Information Card must be on file by the first day of school. No child is allowed into the classroom until the form is completed and received by the school.

The form must be completed in its entirety, and all information must be accurate and legible. Phone or cell numbers are required of two people in the event parents cannot be reached.

Parents are required to update this information in writing when needed (i.e., change of address, phone numbers, doctors, etc.) throughout the year.

### **When to Keep Your Student Home**

Students must be kept at home for 24 hours after any of the following symptoms have disappeared, **without preventative medicine**:

- Any temperature of 100° or above. Children must be fever free without the use of medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Any vomiting or flu symptoms such as headaches, general aching, or diarrhea.
- Any unexplained pains or cramping.

### **Returning To School Following Illness**

Lice: Students may return to class once treatment has been completed. The school nurse must certify that the student is nit-free.

Vomiting: Any student who has vomited may not return to school or to ECP until 24 hours have passed since last vomiting. A child who vomits at 10:00 a.m. may not return to school the following day but may return after 10:00 a.m. on the second day, **without preventative medicine**.

Wounds: Contagious students with open wounds or lesions releasing fluid may not return until the wound/lesion has healed and/or documentation provided by a licensed physician.

### **Allergy Action Plan**

St. Mary's Academy is an allergen-safe campus, not a peanut-free campus. Every precaution is taken by faculty and staff to maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students.

An Allergy Action Plan is required for food allergies as well as for any allergy requiring medication should a reaction occur. Students must have a completed Form 5305A and 5305B if asthmatic, with allergies, or possibly requiring the use of an epi-pen or inhaler.

### **Immunizations**

State law requires that an updated "Certificate of Immunization" be on file for every child enrolled in the school. The certificate must be readily available in the event of a disease outbreak.

Health and immunization reports are due on or before opening day of school for all students. All forms are available on the school website.

### **New Students must have:**

1. A health information and physical exam form (Form 5320, pages 1 and 2) filled out by a parent and physician;
2. A GA Immunization Form 3231 obtained from their physician;
3. An Emergency Care Form (Form 5160).
4. Vision/Hearing/Dental (Form 3300)

### **Current Students must have:**

1. A health information sheet (Form 5320)
2. An Emergency Care Form (Form 5160);
3. An updated GA Immunization Form 3231 for rising 7th and 11th graders only, obtained from their physician, to reflect the Tdap Meningococcal conjugate vaccines.



## **Exemptions**

The Catholic Church does not recognize an immunization exemption based upon matters of conscience/religious convictions and does not accept any alternative or homeopathic immunization that has not been approved by the FDA. Medical exemptions are considered and are applicable when a child has a long-term condition that contraindicates immunizations.

Parents requesting a medical exemption from any Georgia State required immunization must list **the medical exemptions on form 3231 with the pediatrician's signature, the medical contraindication, and the expiration of the exemption.** The Archdiocese of Atlanta reserves the right to obtain a second medical opinion in such cases.

## **Medication Policy of the Archdiocese of Atlanta for Catholic Schools (Policy 5300)**

St. Mary's Academy follows Policy 5300 of the Archdiocesan Office for giving approved medications. Students must have a completed Form 5300 if requiring medication to be dispensed during school hours and the medicine must be provided by the parent.

## **Contagious Illness**

Parents are asked to contact the school when their child has been diagnosed as having a contagious condition. This includes, but is not limited to, strep throat, flu, head lice, pink eye, viruses, etc. Notice of the contagious disease is sent home to parents of students in the homeroom and other areas where contact may have taken place.

Schools are required to notify the State Department of Health and the local Health Department in cases of student absences due to a communicable disease.

## **Lice**

Parents are expected to check their child's head regularly and seek treatment for lice, as necessary.

If a student is found to have head lice, the parent will be called and the student sent home for treatment and removal of nits.

Upon returning to school, the student will report to the clinic with custodial parent/guardian to be checked for the absence or presence of nits.

Only when the student is found to be nit-free by clinic personnel will that student be permitted to return to class.

Parents will be notified when head lice are present in the classroom.

## **Epi-Pens & Inhalers**

**Epi-pens and inhalers may be carried by high school students with parental approval and the nurses' assessment of a student's ability to self-medicate. In either case, the student must report to the clinic so that the recording of medication can occur. Students who carry the epi-pen on their person must have a second epi-pen stored in the school clinic. If the child self-administers the epi-pen, he/she must alert the clinic immediately, and 911 will be called.**

In middle school, inhalers may be carried by students if the above rules are also followed. Students must always report to the clinic to record the use of medication, especially in the area of inhalers – students are prone to over-medicating and taking too many ‘puffs.’ The doctor’s written orders with the inhaler must be monitored. Middle School students may not carry epi-pens.

Students in grades PK-5 should not carry epi-pens, inhalers and any other form of medication.

Middle and high schools students who carry rescue inhalers and/or epi-pens on their person must provide:

- Form 5300 is on file in the clinic, AND
- A second inhaler is kept in the clinic.

### **Infectious Disease Policy**

The primary responsibility for the prevention and control of infectious diseases lies with individuals, families and public health authorities. Schools are not responsible for providing expert infectious disease advice or treating students; this is the role of medical practitioners and health authorities.

Attendance at any school may be denied to any student reasonably suspected of or diagnosed with a contagious or infectious disease that could make the child’s attendance harmful to the welfare of all other students, faculty and staff.

Schools reserve the right to require a statement from the student’s primary care physician authorizing the student’s return to school. Schools will respect all students’ privacy. Parents of other children attending the school may be notified that their child has been exposed to a communicable or infectious disease in a manner that avoids identifying the particular student identified with the disease to the maximum extent appropriate in each particular circumstance.

Local school procedures may include:

- Prevention techniques – hand washing education, coughing and sneezing education; hand sanitizers in classrooms; sanitizing wipes in classrooms for computers, desks, common areas, etc.; tissues in all rooms; sanitation procedures; and if appropriate, the use of facial masks along with social distancing.
- Preparedness – Schools may comply with CDC, State Department of Health guidelines, and directives from the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Response – Schools will follow the Office of Catholic Schools policy for school closures (Policy 5285) and directives from State and Local (County and Municipal) jurisdictions. The Office of Catholic Schools will provide a written Reopening of Schools Plan specific to the infectious or communicable disease present.
- Recovery – Schools may publish a return to school procedure in accordance with directives from the Office of Catholic Schools which aligns to the Reopening of Schools Plan approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

### **Student Supplemental Insurance**

St. Mary's Academy carries a supplemental insurance policy on all students. This supplemental policy is provided only for school related injuries. Families must file with their primary insurance company first. The supplemental policy pays on the uncovered difference.

### **Concussions**

Parents are required to notify the school clinic if their student has suffered a concussion. In accordance with the State of Georgia Return to Play Act of 2013, SMA reserves the right to refuse a student admittance to class following a concussion based on the discretion of the clinic staff /administration in conjunction with the student's healthcare provider.

### **Injury/Accident Reports**

Every effort is made to contact the parent or guardian directly if an injury or illness is judged to require medical attention. In the event the school is unable to reach the parent or guardian, the situation will be treated as a medical emergency (911). Accidents are reported in writing to the parents/guardian of the child involved.

### **Injury Requiring Crutches, Boot, or Other Appliance**

Both a doctor's note and a treatment plan are required for any student who requires the use of crutches, boots, or other similar appliances during school hours.

### **Pregnancy**

In accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, St. Mary's Academy assumes the position that all life is a God-given gift and is sacred. Such life is to be respected and preserved. Therefore, the school does not and will not consider abortion as acceptable under any circumstances.

Pursuant to Archdiocesan Policy #5260, in the event of a student pregnancy, St. Mary's Academy shall encourage the student parent (boy or girl) to continue the pregnancy to full term and delivery. The school shall support the student's pro-life choice by allowing the student's continued studies for as long as appropriate at the discretion of the principal. When a pregnant student withdraws from regular attendance, the school has an obligation to help the student with arrangements for educational alternatives.

The following guidelines will be implemented in order to ensure the best interest of the student(s), parents and school community: when pregnancy is known to school personnel, the principal will meet with the girl and her parents/guardians. The student is encouraged to begin professional counseling consistent with Catholic teaching to assist with the circumstances of the pregnancy and with making choices for the future of both parents and the newborn child.

If the father is identified, and if he is a student in a Catholic School, the principal of that school will meet with him and his parents/guardians and require that he be involved in the counseling program similar to that provided to the mother. The school will assist the

pregnant student to make arrangements for continuing her education by referring the student to an alternative program. Both students will be referred to their pastor for advice and counseling.

### **Marriage**

The Sacrament of Marriage is a life-long commitment intended for mature adults. The school strongly discourages early or student marriage precisely because a great majority of these end in separation or divorce. The school is designed to serve the formation needs of young men and women rather than married couples. Therefore, student marriage is strongly discouraged and will result in discontinuance of studies at SMA.

### **Abortion**

St. Mary's Academy strongly opposes abortion, the deliberate destruction of human life. The school provides available resources and nurturing support for a pregnant student out of respect for the absolute dignity of human life. In the event the school becomes aware that one of its students has willfully chosen to obtain an abortion, the student will be dismissed from St. Mary's Academy. For the same reason, other members of the SMA student body, including the father, will be dismissed if they have helped procure an abortion.

### **Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco**

Parents and students should be aware that Georgia law has established a school safety zone that includes the schools and areas within 1000 feet of those schools, in which tobacco products, drugs, alcohol, and weapons are strictly forbidden. SMA is a drug, alcohol, tobacco free campus at all times and during all events. SMA is required by law to report drug and weapon violations to the police.

The administration reserves the right to determine the school's involvement at the time of the incident or at the time the incident is reported to school administration.

The use, possession, sale, purchase or distribution of illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco products (including, but not limited to, "spice" and/or "herbal supplements" designed to mimic or produce effects similar to illegal substances) on or off our campus at any time, including but not limited to personal and/or after-school functions, is strictly prohibited. The use or possession of tobacco products, other nicotine delivery devices, or any type of electronic cigarette on school property or any school function is prohibited. Examples are, but not limited to, chewing tobacco and vaping. A school function is any activity in which the name of SMA is used whether the activity takes place on school grounds or not. The amount of alcohol/drugs/tobacco is irrelevant. The possession of drug-related paraphernalia or alcohol is likewise prohibited.

Students who demonstrate by their behavior that they may be involved in illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol could be subject to a drug test ordered by a member of the administration. In addition, students who are associated with other students in possession of alcohol, drugs or tobacco products in any vehicle are subject to the same disciplinary penalties. If the student refuses help or will not agree to abide by the school's policies; he/she will NOT be permitted to remain in the school community.

**Archdiocese of Atlanta**  
**Substance Abuse Policy/Random Drug and Alcohol Testing**

Parents have a responsibility to require, promote and model safe, ethical and legal behavior in regard to tobacco, vaporizers, drugs and alcohol use.

Substance abuse is considered to be behavior that is detrimental to the welfare, safety, or morals of all students and school personnel. It is considered a serious offense for any student to possess, use, abuse, sell, distribute or procure or be under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any other controlled substances. Any prescription or non-prescription drug not taken as prescribed is also considered substance abuse. This policy shall apply to any student on or off school property during a school sponsored activity.

All High School students must agree to the ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY and agree and sign the CHEMICAL SCREENING CONSENT AND RELEASE FORM and the PARENT/STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM.

This policy establishes the Archdiocese of Atlanta's position on the use or abuse of alcohol, drugs or other controlled substances by its high school students. It is a part of our commitment to safeguard the health of our students and to provide a safe environment for students to learn and to grow. Because substance abuse, either while at school or away from school, can seriously endanger the health and safety of students and render it impossible to create an environment conducive for learning, the Archdiocese of Atlanta has established this Drug-Free School Program to detect users, provide appropriate counseling and resources to support students and families and ultimately remove students who continue to abuse alcohol, drugs or other controlled substances. The Archdiocese of Atlanta is committed to preventing the use and/or presence of these substances in its school or on its property and to encouraging its students to say "no" to drugs and alcohol.

The elements of this policy are as follows:

1. **Anti-drug Policy:** The Archdiocese of Atlanta prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, presence, or use of alcohol, drugs, or other controlled substances on school property or during any school sponsored activities. Students violating this prohibition will be referred to rehabilitation, counseling and/or disciplined up to and including expulsion.
2. **Notice:** Notice of this policy will be posted in appropriate handbooks and policy manuals and copies of the policy will be available to students and/or their parents during regular business hours in the administrative offices.
3. **Acknowledgment/Copy to Students:** All students and parents will acknowledge notice and consent of this substance abuse policy by annually signing the Student/Parent Acknowledgment Form.

4. **Application of Policy:** This policy applies to all high school students grades 9-12.
5. **Policy Implementation Dates:** The mandatory drug and alcohol testing provisions of this policy became effective with the 2017-2018 school year. Parents or legal Guardians of all students enrolled for the 2023-2024 school year are required, as a condition of enrollment of their son or daughter at any archdiocesan high school, to acknowledge and consent to the Student Substance Abuse Policy, including the drug and alcohol testing procedures.
6. **Mandatory Drug Testing:** Archdiocesan high schools will utilize drug and alcohol testing to help administer this policy, beginning on the first day of classes for the 2018-2019 school year and each school year thereafter. Archdiocesan high schools reserve the right to drug and/or alcohol test students at any time, for any reason. Any refusal to take a drug and/or alcohol test will result in referral to rehabilitation and/or disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, depending on the circumstances. All parents/legal guardians of students and students will be required to sign the Chemical Screening Consent and Release Form prior to drug or alcohol testing as a condition of enrollment. Such consent is deemed valid for the entire school year. In general, the following types of testing will be used:
  - a. Random Testing. All students in grades 9 through 12 will be subject to random testing throughout the school year.
  - b. Reasonable Suspicion Testing. Students will be tested when reasonable suspicion exists such that their behavior or performance indicates possible alcohol or other drug use, in violation of this policy. The decision to test a student under reasonable suspicion rests with the high school principal.
  - c. Post Accident Testing. Students will be tested following serious accidents, which cause injuries requiring medical attention. Students will not be tested under this provision following accidents which only cause minor injuries, requiring only minor first aid treatment.
  - d. Follow-up Testing. Students will be tested when there has been an admission of alcohol/drug use, detection of alcohol/drug use, or when returning from counseling/rehabilitation, which was the result of a positive test and the involuntary referral of the student to rehabilitation. Follow-up testing shall be conducted at least three times a year for a two-year period due to the above conditions and without advance notice to the student and at the discretion of the High School Principal.
7. **Cost of Drug Testing:** Archdiocesan high schools will pay the cost of all mandatory drug and/or alcohol tests, initial and confirmation. A student and/or his/her parents shall pay the cost of any contested test, follow-up testing and any additional tests not subject to the student substance abuse policy programs.
  - a. Positive Drug Test: Medical Review Officer (MRO) - All positive drug test results will be reviewed by the Medical Review Officer (MRO). The MRO may contact the student and his/her parents in order to investigate the

reasons behind a positive drug test. Failure to cooperate with the MRO will result in immediate suspension pending disciplinary review. If the MRO is unable to contact the student and his/her parents, the MRO will communicate that fact to the appropriate high school principal. Once the MRO has finalized the investigation s/he will communicate the results to the high school principal.

- b. Confirmation/Notification/Retesting - All positive drug tests will be confirmed using gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) or an equivalent method. Within 5 school days after receipt of a positive confirmed test result from the MRO, a student and his/her parents will receive written notification from the school of such positive confirmed test result (Notification Form), the consequences of such results, and the options available, whereupon the student and his/her parents will have 5 school days to contest or explain the positive test result. If the student's or parent's explanation or challenge is unsatisfactory to the MRO, the MRO shall report a positive test result back to the high school principal.
8. **Students:** If a student tests positive (confirmed drug test), his or her parents shall be notified, and he or she will be referred to evaluation, assessment, counseling and/or rehabilitation at his/her or his/her parent's own expense. Students must enter and successfully complete an approved substance abuse counseling/rehabilitation program at their own expense to remain enrolled at an archdiocesan high school. Each school will maintain a resource file which contains information on rehabilitation resources. Refusal to agree to be referred to rehabilitation may result in expulsion.
  9. **Drug Testing Procedures:** The Archdiocese of Atlanta will utilize any type of drug and/or alcohol testing procedure that it believes is appropriate, in conformity with the law, including urinalysis, blood tests, breathalyzers, or any other method. All parents/legal guardians of students and their students, and/or students over the age of majority will be required to sign the Chemical Screening Consent and Release Form at the time re-enrollment occurs at each school, and such consent is deemed valid for the entire school year.
  10. **Drugs:** The Archdiocese of Atlanta will determine the controlled substances (including alcohol) for which testing will be performed.
  11. **Drug & Alcohol Arrests/Convictions:** Any student who is involved with, arrested or convicted, including a plea of nolo contendere or other pleas with respect to any alcohol or drug incident must report the details of the incident(s) immediately and in no case later than five (5) days to the Principal. Any such incidents that are not reported by the student or his/her parents or legal guardians will be treated as a serious violation of this policy and subject the student to immediate suspension pending a disciplinary committee review. Should a student be convicted of Driving Under the Influence (DUI), disciplinary action shall result in accordance with the

parent/student handbook and the Policy Manual for the Office of Catholic Schools.

12. **Resource File/Student Assistance:** Each high school will maintain a Resource File in the administrative offices containing information on substance abuse assistance programs and rehabilitation resources, where students and their parents may obtain information and/or counseling or treatment for rehabilitation from substance abuse, at parent/guardian expense.
13. **Disciplinary Action:** The Archdiocese of Atlanta reserves the right to use disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for any violation of this policy, any positive drug or alcohol test, tampered/adulterated test, refusal to take a test, or any refusal by a student to cooperate with any aspect of this policy. If a student tests positive a second time for a drug or alcohol test, it will be grounds for immediate expulsion.
14. **Confidentiality:** All information, test results, or other materials received by any of the high schools in the operation of this substance abuse program are confidential communications, which will only be utilized on a need-to-know basis. These confidential communications and information will not be released unless required by law or with parental consent.
15. **Designated Substance Abuse Program Official:** The high school principal is the designated Substance Abuse Program Official. All communications and the coordination of the program will be conducted through the designated Substance Abuse Program official.
16. **Searches:** The Archdiocese of Atlanta reserves the right to search any person, personal article, locker, vehicle or other items brought onto archdiocesan property. Refusal by a student to consent to a search will be grounds for immediate suspension pending a referral to the disciplinary review committee.
17. **Policy Changes:** The Archdiocese of Atlanta reserves the right to change, alter, or amend this policy at any time at its discretion.
18. **Definitions:** When used in this policy, the term:
  - a. "Alcohol" means ethyl alcohol, hydrated oxide of ethyl, or spirits of wine, from whatever source or by whatever process produced.
  - b. "Drug" means amphetamines, cannabinoids, cocaine, phencyclidine (PCP), methadone, methaqualone, opiates, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, propoxyphene, ecstasy or a metabolite of any such substances. The Archdiocese of Atlanta may test a student for any or all of these.
  - c. "Student" means any person enrolled at any archdiocesan high school.
  - d. "Nonprescription medication" means a drug or medication authorized



- pursuant to federal or state law for general distribution and use without a prescription in the treatment of human disease, ailments, or injuries.
- e. "Prescription medication" means a drug or medication lawfully prescribed by a physician for an individual and taken in accordance with such a prescription.
  - f. "Reasonable suspicion testing" means substance abuse testing based on a belief that a student is using or has used drugs or alcohol in violation of this policy drawn from specific objective and articulable facts and reasonable inferences drawn from those facts in light of experience.
  - g. "Substance" means drugs or alcohol.
  - h. "Substance abuse test" or "test" means any chemical, biological, or physical instrumental analysis administered for the purpose of determining the presence or absence of a drug or its metabolites or of alcohol.
  - i. "Age of Majority" means the legally defined age at which a person is considered as an adult as defined by the state of Georgia. Although a student may reach the age of majority, all students enrolled in archdiocesan schools are considered to be under parental control; the Archdiocese of Atlanta honors relationships with parents/guardians and does not enter into a formal relationship with emancipated and/or married students.
  - j. "Administration Designee" will be the High School Principal.

### **Consequences to Drug and Alcohol Testing**

The student who is honest when responding to the two preliminary questions prior to a sample being collected will be placed on the Health Track. He/she will be placed on a drug and alcohol contract and will be required to provide signed documentation of treatment and clearance to participate from a qualified professional counselor before resuming Athletic, Fine Arts, or other extracurricular activities.

Any student who tests positive without admitting drug or alcohol use will be placed on the Discipline Track. He/she will be suspended from school, placed on a Drug and Alcohol Contract, and will be required to provide signed documentation of treatment and clearance from a qualified professional counselor to participate in Athletics, Fine Arts or other extracurricular activities. Colleges may be notified of any school suspensions.

Additionally, a student who has been placed on the Discipline Track and who participates in the Athletic, Fine Arts, or other competitive, school-sponsored programs will be suspended for 20% of the total number of practices, regular season games, performances, or competitions. In the case of limited games, performances, or competitions, the suspension will be for at least one event or the 20% penalty, whichever is greater. The suspension will be served at the first available opportunity which includes post season play

or performances during the current school year.

This policy also applies to those students who provide support roles in Athletics, Fine Arts or other extracurricular activities.

### **Drug and Alcohol Contract**

Students are placed on a Drug and Alcohol contract when they have violated the drug, alcohol and tobacco policies as stated in this student handbook. Parents will be notified in writing when their student is placed on a drug and alcohol contract by the grade level assistant principal. Signed contracts (as well as all official school documents) must be returned to the grade level assistant principal. Should the student remain at St. Mary's Academy, a drug and alcohol contract will be in effect through graduation with the following stipulations. Additional stipulations may be required based on the individual case.

#### ***Drug and Alcohol Contract Requirements***

- The student must have negative results when randomly screened for drugs, alcohol, or tobacco from the time the contract is initiated until graduation. The student will be responsible for the cost of each random test.
- If outside psychological/psychiatric counseling must be obtained, the assigned St. Mary's Academy counselor must have contact authorization for consultation about treatment.
- A second alcohol or other drug related incident (as defined in the SMA Student Handbook) and/or any 'positive' drug tests (as outlined above) could result in expulsion.
- In compliance with T.A.A.D.R.A., §O.C.G.A. 40-5-22(a.1)(2), the school is responsible for reporting students involved with possession or sale of drugs or alcohol on school property or at a school sponsored event.

### **Weapons & Fighting**

The use or possession of a dangerous weapon or explosive compound is strictly prohibited on our campus at any time, including after-school functions. This includes, but is not limited to, all types of fireworks. SMA reserves the right to search any item that is brought onto campus. Toy weapons, pocket knives and other tools are included in this category.

Fighting is strictly prohibited before, during, and after school between our students, or between our students and others. If a student makes a choice to get involved in a physical confrontation with another student, then he/she makes the choice to accept the consequences, whether he/she initiated the action or responded to it. Students should be aware that the penalty for fighting may be imposed on all participants equally.

### **Searches**

St. Mary's Academy reserves the right to search any item that is brought onto campus or to school-sponsored events including, but not restricted to purse, book-bag, locker, and vehicle

and students should have no expectation of privacy respecting their devices if they bring them onto school property or school-sponsored events. The school reserves the right to search any person, personal article, locker, vehicle or other items brought onto archdiocesan property. Refusal by a student to consent to a search will be grounds for immediate suspension pending a referral to the disciplinary review committee.

If the school believes a student has been involved in possible criminal activity, including, but not restricted to suspected use or possession of drugs, illegal substances, abuse of social media, weapons, or stolen property, it may choose to conduct a search of a student's belongings. The school reserves the right to request police assistance in these investigations if it so chooses. Depending on the situation, parents may or may not be contacted prior to police involvement.

Such searches are intended for the safety of SMA students and to ensure that contraband (such as drugs, alcohol, or weapons) is never brought on campus. Dog searches may also be used as part of this process. Students assume the responsibility for items discovered in their possession.

All computers and other technological devices used by students are subject to search at any time without notice. Personal electronic devices brought on campus are also subject to search. Any activity on any St. Mary's Academy computer or network may be monitored and recorded at any time without any notice.

### **Harassment**

It is imperative to maintain an educational environment that encourages optimum human growth and development. Respect for the dignity of each person is essential to Catholic tradition. It is vital that each school program maintains a learning and working environment free of any form of harassment or intimidation of students by any other student, lay employee, religious, or priest. The school will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Substantiated acts of harassment will result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Students found to have filed false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to treatment that is hostile or intimidating because of the individual's perceived differences including, but not limited to race, creed, color, national origin, physical or mental impairment or sex. Harassment can occur any time during or after school or during school related activities.

It includes, but is not limited to, any and all of the following:

**INAPPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:** The posting of derogatory comments or images about students or adults in the SMA community is unacceptable and will be considered a serious discipline infraction. The identity of students reporting inappropriate postings will be protected and considered confidential.

**VERBAL HARASSMENT:** Derogatory comments and jokes, threatening words spoken to another person or communicated through a digital device.

PHYSICAL HARASSMENT: Unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement.

VISUAL HARASSMENT: Derogatory, demeaning or inflammatory posters, cartoons, written words, drawings or gestures.

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Conduct himself/herself in a manner which contributes to a positive school environment
- Avoid any activity that may be considered discriminatory, intimidating or harassing
- Immediately report all incidents to a supervising adult
- Discontinue the inappropriate conduct immediately when informed that he/she is perceived as engaging in intimidating, harassing or unwelcome conduct.

SMA has an absolute "NO RETALIATION" policy in regard to any discipline issues regardless of persons involved. Appropriate disciplinary penalties will apply to anyone involved in any form of retaliation.

### **Hazing**

Hazing is defined as any act committed against someone joining or becoming a member or maintaining membership in any organization that is humiliating, intimidating or demeaning, or endangers the health and safety of a person.

Hazing includes active or passive participation in such acts and occurs regardless of the willingness to participate in the activities. Hazing creates an environment and school climate in which dignity and respect are absent and therefore is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

No student, parent, teacher, administration or volunteer shall permit, condone or tolerate hazing. This policy applies to hazing behavior that occurs on or off school property and during and after school hours.

Invitation into campus organizations, athletic teams, and other activities undertaken by such organizations or individuals must be consistent with the stated purpose of the organizations and the educational mission of the schools of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Any activities that may be construed as hazing are prohibited. A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act.

Students found to be in violation of this policy are subject to discipline which may include but is not limited to detention, suspension or expulsion from the school. The Archdiocese of Atlanta will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, parent, teacher, administrator or other archdiocesan employee or volunteer who is found to have violated this policy. Civil authorities may also be contacted depending on the nature of the hazing incident.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of hazing or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall report the alleged acts immediately to the building Principal. The Principal will notify both the Superintendent of Schools and the Office of Safe Environment for the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The Archdiocese of Atlanta will undertake or authorize an investigation by an archdiocesan official or by a third party designated by the Archdiocese and a decision will be made regarding disciplinary action which may result in an expulsion.

## **Reprisal**

The Archdiocese of Atlanta will take appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion against any student, parent, teacher, administrator, school employee or volunteer who retaliates against anyone who makes a good faith report of hazing, or who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation or hearing about a hazing incident. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

## **Sexual Harassment And Sexual Violence**

SMA is firmly committed to providing a safe, positive learning and working environment for everyone in the school. For this reason, and in keeping with the goals and objectives of Catholic education, SMA expressly prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence in the school environment. This policy re-emphasizes the personal dignity of the individual and fosters positive sexual attitudes and respect for others.

## **Sexual Harassment Defined**

For the purpose of this policy, sexual harassment includes the following specific instances: verbal sexual abuse; disseminating obscene or sexually explicit material, whether in form of music, written lyrics, pornographic pictures or other literature, or having such material in one's possession in the school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities; obscene or sexually explicit graffiti anywhere in the school or on the school grounds; continuing unwanted written or oral communication directed to another of a sexual nature; spreading sexual rumors/innuendoes; obscene T-shirts, hats or buttons; touching oneself sexually in front of others; obscene and/or sexually explicit gestures; inappropriate exposure of body parts and any other inappropriate behavior of a sexually explicit or obscene nature that demeans or offends the recipient. The above list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but is intended to provide guidance as to what may constitute sexual harassment. Isolated trivial incidents are not sufficient to constitute harassment and will be handled according to the student discipline policy.

Allegations of any type of harassment are to be reported to the teacher and the administration. Parents of both the offender and the victim will be informed of the allegations. The matter is to be kept confidential by all parties involved. The parents of both the offender and the victim are obligated to cooperate in remedying the situation. If the allegations are substantiated, disciplinary actions will be taken. These will depend on the nature, frequency, and severity of the action, the ages of the offender and victim, the history of similar actions by this individual, and the circumstances in which the harassment occurred. Possible disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to any or all of the following:

- Verbal warning/reprimand and apology to the victim,
- A parent/student/Principal conference,
- Written warning/ reprimand and parent notification, entered in the student's file,
- Detention or removal from selected school activities and/or extracurricular activities,
- Discipline contract, possibly requiring professional intervention,
- Suspension or expulsion.

### **Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence is handled separately because of its potential criminal nature. If an incident of sexual violence occurs, the Principal or other school authority is required under state law to report the incident (GA. Code Section 19-7-5) that sexual abuse or violence has occurred involving a child less than eighteen years of age. The Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools will be contacted immediately in these situations. Generally sexual harassment should be construed as sexual violence when: the recipient is physically touched without his/her consent in a sexual manner; is expressly threatened or perceives a threat of physical harm for purposes of the offender's sexual gratification; or is the victim of sex offenses under Georgia law. In these cases, the Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately.

### **Gangs**

Youth gangs and gang-related activity are prohibited. A gang is defined as any non-school sponsored group, usually secret and/or exclusive in membership, whose purpose or practices include unlawful or anti-social behavior or any action that threatens the welfare of others. Gang activity could possibly include the following:

- Recruitment and/or initiation,
- A manner of grooming, hair style, and/or wearing of clothing, jewelry, head coverings or accessories which by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark, or other attributes denotes membership in a gang,
- Displaying gang markings (tattoos) or slogans on school or personal property or clothing,
- Possessing literature that indicates gang membership,
- Fighting, assault, hazing, extortion, establishing turf,
- Use of hand signals, gang vocabulary, and nicknames,
- Possession of weapons or explosive materials,
- Possession of alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia,
- Attendance at functions sponsored by a gang or known gang members,
- Exhibiting behavior fitting police profile of gang-related drug dealing,
- Being arrested or stopped by the police with a known gang member,
- Selling or distributing of drugs for a known gang member,
- Helping a known gang member commit a crime, or any other action directly resulting from membership or interest in a gang.

### **Consequences**

If a student is suspected or identified as being a member of a gang, shows interest in joining a gang, initiates or participates in any gang related activity, or has been approached for recruitment, any or all of the following steps may be taken:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and appropriate intervention initiated.
- A behavior contract will be prepared stating the conditions for the student remaining in the school.
- Students may be referred to counseling (personal and/or family).
- Students may be referred to the Department of Human Services or other welfare or childcare agencies of the respective county.
- Students may be referred to outside agencies or programs for treatment when use of drugs and or alcohol is involved.
- Students may be referred to the Task Force on Violent Crime.
- Police, Juvenile Court, and other appropriate authorities will be notified of violence and/or illegal activities.
- Students may be suspended and/or expelled as already outlined in the school discipline policies.
- Parents/students will be held liable and financially responsible for all forms of vandalism.

### **Jurisdiction**

Realizing that gang activity is a community concern, communication will be maintained with the police department and Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools on all matters related to gang activity within this community. Involvement and jurisdiction of school authorities in gang related incidents occurring outside the school or off school property will be determined in cooperation with archdiocesan legal authorities and the police, and will take into consideration the nature of the incident, the safety of the student, the effect of the incident on other students, and the good order and functioning of the school.

### **Welfare, Health, & Safety Policy of the Archdiocese of Atlanta for Catholic Schools**

The state of Georgia requires by law that any volunteer, Principal, teacher, counselor, or other school administrator report all cases of suspected abuse of children less than eighteen years of age. Georgia Law, Code Section 19-7-5, requires the report of injuries or neglect of minors, provides immunity for those reporting in good faith, and provides a penalty for violation of the law.

### **Emergency Drills**

Periodic emergency drills are necessary for the safety of the students and faculty. When the alarm sounds, students will follow designated instructions appropriate for the emergency drill. Students must be quiet until released to return to the school building. Students are to remain with their teacher at all times.

## COMMUNICATION

### **Communicating With The School**

Good communication between the home and school is an important part of fostering growth in the child. It is important for all stakeholders to do all that we can to promote communication and mutual understanding. One of the significant ways in which we can do this is by learning and working through the procedures followed by the institution. We ask, therefore, that you become familiar with the following procedures and use them when communicating with the school.

**It is the responsibility of each family to keep informed by reading all communications from the school and to be familiar with the following policies and procedures.**

### **General Procedures**

#### *Telephone Calls/E-Mails*

*The most effective and efficient way to reach a teacher or staff member is by email.* Teachers check email at the beginning of each school day. Because they are teaching during school hours, teachers may not answer emails that come in during the instructional period. Please allow 24 hours for a response. Teachers are not expected to check or respond to email during non-school hours. If there is an emergency, please call the front office for assistance.

Email addresses may be found on the St. Mary's Academy website ([www.smaschool.org](http://www.smaschool.org)). Faculty and administration will not respond to emails sent to their personal email accounts or phone numbers.

If you wish to talk with a member of the faculty or administration and they are unavailable when you call the school, please leave a detailed message with your contact information. Please allow 24 hours for a response.

### **Appointments**

It is important that parents who wish to meet with a member of the faculty or with an administrator call ahead to schedule an appointment. Due to the daily changing academic schedule "drop-in" visits on faculty members are not allowed. The presentation and instructional time is paramount. "Drop-in" visits detract from the normal schedules or the opportunity for the teachers to use their planning time to prepare for class, thus the need to schedule an appointment.

### **Grievances**

From time to time, parents may have concerns with school operations, policies or personnel. Parents are expected to follow school protocol in order to obtain information and resolution.

1. Seek fact, not rumor. Do not perpetuate rumors.
2. Contact and discuss the concern with the appropriate teacher or staff member.
3. If satisfaction is not obtained at step two, contact the Principal to schedule a meeting.



Anonymous letters, petitions, phone/text chains, informal parent surveys, and gossip will not be recognized. No one has the right to confront another parent, student, or any member of the SMA Catholic School family regarding personal matters on school property.

Family email addresses may not be used for solicitation of personal opinions or the distribution of personal or business matters not related to school activities.

### **Classroom Communication**

Classroom teachers use a variety of communication methods — newsletters, folders, assignment books, blogs, etc., which will be outlined in the orientation packet/syllabus for each class.

### **Weekly Principal Email Update**

A weekly update will be emailed to each family with news about the school. It is the responsibility of the family to maintain an updated email address with the school.

### **School Social Media Accounts**

The Archdiocese of Atlanta recognizes the powerful tool electronic media can be to evangelize and educate all people. St. Mary's Academy uses a variety of social media platforms to promote the school and to communicate to internal and external audiences. If you do not wish for your child to appear in social media posts, you must contact the school Principal in writing.

## **STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES**

### **Student Success Services**

The Student Success Team exists to support the teachers in their efforts to serve the students. Team members do this through the consultation model and/or by providing direct services to meet the student's academic, behavioral, or emotional needs.

### **Confidential Information**

Occasionally parents request that school personnel have contact (verbal or written) with an outside professional. This may include communicating with the student's tutor, speech therapist, or other professional. Parents may request that forms be completed for a physician, psychologist, or other individual. In all cases, a parent should first complete a Consent for Release of Confidential Information form, available from the school counselors, and return it to the school office. Completed forms will be sent directly from SMA to outside professionals. This policy exists to preserve the confidentiality of the student and the family.

### **Psychological-Educational Evaluations**

Psychological-educational testing alternatives are available to SMA students. The Archdiocese of Atlanta provides testing services that are performed at no cost to the parents. Parents also have the option to obtain testing through their local public school or by a private practitioner.

At all times, the report should be shared with the teachers, counselors, and administrators in order to create a plan of action that will meet the needs of the student. All of the psycho-educational records are held in the strictest of confidence and shared on a "need to know" basis with relevant school personnel.

### **School Counseling Program**

St. Mary's Academy provides counseling services which reflect our mission to create a nurturing environment grounded in the Catholic faith for all students. SMA employs counselors for all students.

Counseling services may take the form of individual meetings, small group guidance, student and parent consultation, and/or classroom guidance.

Students may be referred to the counselor by teacher recommendation, parent request, counselor initiative, self-request, or any other method that communicates a need for consultation.

SMA employs two school counselors. The School Counselor provides **general** counseling for students, while the College Counselor provides **academic** counseling **primarily** for students in grades eleven and twelve. The school counselors may consult with each other to meet the needs of students.

### **Student Success Team**

The Student Success Team meets to discuss alternative strategies as a first step to meeting individual student's needs. The resource teacher will implement a plan to assist the student.

The Student Success Team is comprised of:

- The resource teacher;
- The school counselor(s);
- The classroom teacher;
- Assistant Principal(s), or Principal (as needed)

### **Student Success Team Process**

The teacher shares with the appropriate Success Team personnel concerns about students who are exhibiting academic, social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties.

The teacher and the Success Team member develop a plan of assistance to help the student. The plan may include, but is not limited to, classroom interventions implemented by the teacher, direct support with the grade level teacher, observations of the student, parent conferences, and consultation with other staff members who work with the student.

If the student continues to struggle after implementation of the assistance plan, the teacher and member(s) of the Success Team will convene to review progress and develop additional strategies and interventions as needed.

### **Tutoring**

Teachers are available after school to tutor students until 3:30 p.m. by appointment. However, teachers are never allowed to tutor students in their current assignment, grade levels above or below, for remuneration.

## STUDENT REGULATIONS

### General Behavior

Students are expected to cooperate with all school personnel and with each other, and to behave appropriately at all times, especially at school functions on or off campus. Students can be disciplined for conduct, whether inside or outside of the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of SMA.

Discipline consequences will be determined by the administration/faculty/staff. Consequences can range from conferences with parents, denial of privileges, detentions, Saturday School, suspension or expulsion dependent upon the situation.

1. SMA has a concern with students whose conduct on or off our school campus brings discredit or harm to the name of the school or the reputation of its student body. Therefore, such conduct or behavior which is in opposition to our Catholic philosophy and moral standards, on the part of our students, could require a penalty or dismissal from the school. Students must adhere to SMA's regulations for student conduct at all times including but not limited to the time they leave home for school until they return home in the afternoon or evening. Any misbehavior or conduct unbecoming an SMA student which goes against Christian values in public places, including the internet, electronic devices or in vehicles of any sort that is reported to the school will be subject to investigation and penalty. Students may not bring discredit to the name of SMA.
2. It is considered a serious offense if students deliberately cause a disturbance on another campus or during an off-campus SMA sponsored event and shall be considered the same as if such actions were to take place on our campus.
3. Students are always expected to maintain order in the school. Students who repeatedly cause disturbances in class are liable to be suspended from the class. This may result in loss of credit for the course. Causing a disturbance in the Center for Innovation, another study area, cafeteria, gym, or auditorium will likewise result in removal from that area as well as other disciplinary action. Students disrupting the Center for Innovation during lunch will be restricted to the cafeteria. During lunch hours students using the Center for Innovation must be engaged in quiet study only.
4. The use of inappropriate, abusive, or profane language is strictly prohibited on our campus, at extracurricular events on another school's campus, or at off-campus activities sponsored by SMA.
5. Students may not go to the parking lot during school hours unless they secure permission from the Principal or Assistant Principal.
6. Students are not permitted to walk around or loiter in the halls during the school day, nor are they permitted to loiter in restrooms or empty classrooms during the school day. Students may never remain at any location on campus unattended by a school employee.

7. During school hours, students may not be in areas considered "out of bounds." "Out of Bounds" is a term used to describe any situation where a student is not where he/she is supposed to be. This includes before, during, and after school situations. Whatever the identified destination, students must not deviate from the logical route or take longer than should be expected to arrive at their destination. For example, if a student is going to the bathroom, he/she must go to the bathroom closest to his/her classroom or if a student receives a pass from the office to go to class, he/she should take no more than five (5) minutes to arrive at that classroom. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Bobcat Den
- Locker Rooms outside of P.E. class or sporting event use
- Cross Country trail if a coach is not present & any wooded areas
- Faculty rest rooms
- Inside the Academic Doors before 7:30 a.m. and after 3:00 p.m. without adult supervision
- Any storage areas on campus
- In the parking lot during school hours without administrative permission.

8. Students may only be in the main school building and Bobcat Den on regular school days between the hours of 7:10 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. with the supervision of a faculty or staff member. Students who attempt to gain access to the building after the doors have locked must enter from the main school building entrance. Pounding, knocking on doors and requesting admission through any other school door is not permitted. Outside of these days or times, students may only be in the school building if accompanied by a faculty or staff member.

9. Food and drinks (except for water) are not allowed in any area of the school building at any time before, during or after the school day apart from the cafeteria, unless it is a supervised event approved by the administration. Seniors are allowed to eat outside in the designated area during lunch. High School students are allowed to eat snacks during the break providing they clean up after themselves.

10. The chewing of gum and/or spitting of any type in the school building are not permitted.

11. Students may not sell tickets, candy, or other products in school without the approval of the Principal. Students may not run a 'personal business' on school grounds.

12. Students are required to turn in all official forms with parents' signatures within two (2) school days or on the dates specified by all school offices. This includes, but is not limited to class syllabi, discipline contracts, registration materials, etc.

13. Students are required to come prepared for class which includes but is not limited to bringing devices/books, homework and classroom supplies as directed by the teacher each day.

14. Students are to wear their uniform appropriately and within the guidelines stipulated in the handbook.

15. Gambling (e.g., pools concerning athletic contests), betting, and any other form of gaming are prohibited.

16. Students are never to give their locker combination to others. Only appropriate decorations are permitted inside the lockers. Lockers are not to be jammed in any way that prevents their closing because this may permanently damage the locking mechanism and allow for inappropriate access by other students. Magnets may be used to post notes, memos and photos to the *inside* of the locker. Do not use anything with an adhesive that is sticky. No tape of any kind may be used. **Nothing may be attached to the outside of the lockers without administration approval at any time.**

17. Students are not allowed to have visitors on campus during regular school hours, including lunch periods. Students from other schools (other than SMA alumni with administrative approval) are not allowed on campus during school hours and will be asked to leave.

18. Public displays of affection and other inappropriate physical conduct and verbal statements are unacceptable at SMA and will be corrected. Continued inappropriate displays of affection or other inappropriate behavior will be considered a serious disciplinary infraction.

### **Respecting Persons**

The good name, reputation and personal safety of each student, faculty/staff member, and adult volunteer are vitally important. In order to protect students, employees, volunteers, and the school itself, each student is expected to treat the good name and reputation of other students, school employees, volunteers and the school with dignity and respect and not engage in any activity or conduct, either on campus or off campus, that is in opposition to this guideline and/or is inconsistent with Catholic teaching or values, as determined by the school in its discretion.

Catholic teaching prohibits actions which violate respect for the dignity of the human person. Actions considered by the school to violate this respect, including those of a demeaning, harassing, derogatory, racist, or discriminatory nature, whether communicated by word or deed, in-person or electronically, by gesture, image or in any other manner, will result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension and/or expulsion from school.

Parents or guardians are to support this guideline in their relationships with school employees, students and their families; failure to do so may result in the parents being asked to withdraw their children from the school. Personal honor, integrity and respect for others are expected at all times of every student. Students, faculty and staff are required to be respectful to each other and expected to always portray that respectful behavior in their daily lives. Respect includes but is not limited to: Listening, Wording of speech, Body language, Tone of speech, Written Communication, Social Media

Discipline consequences will be determined by the administration/faculty/staff. Consequences can range from parent conferences, denial of privileges, detentions, Saturday School, suspension or expulsion dependent upon the situation.

1. Students shall always conduct themselves with due respect toward one another and faculty/staff members. Student disrespect towards the faculty and staff should be considered a most serious infraction.
2. It is considered a serious offense if students harass faculty and staff of SMA or if they invade their privacy by disturbing them at their homes, on their cell phones or on the internet. Students will be held accountable for negative comments on social media outlets written about the school, staff, or other students.
3. Students may express their points of view provided they do not seek to coerce others to join them in their mode of expression and provided they do not intrude on the rights of others. All meetings and assemblies on the campus, as well as the distribution of literature or buttons and/or display of materials, must have the prior approval of the administration.
4. Lying in order to cover up one's own misdeeds or the misdeeds of others is an offense against the school community. In more serious situations lying and/or refusing to furnish information during a school investigation can be grounds for expulsion.
5. Theft, damage, or destruction of the property of others or of the school - including but not limited to books and materials, graffiti, writing, marking, or defacing desks, tables, walls, books, lockers, etc.- are violations of the rights of others. If a student defaces or damages school property, the parents/guardians concerned will be notified and required to pay for the cost of repairs and/or replacement based on current replacement costs. It is important that our students have a deep respect for the property of SMA and others.
6. Failure to follow a reasonable request of a faculty or staff member will be considered insubordination and subject to a serious discipline sanction.

### **Mass Behavior**

Mass is the most important event in which our community participates. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Catholic faith. All conduct during Mass should be with the utmost reverence. It is a time in which we have an opportunity to show our love for God and strengthen our community.

The space in which our community celebrates the Mass is a holy place. To show respect for the holy sacrifice of the Mass we will treat the location of the Mass as a place of reverence and worship. All of our actions in Mass should contribute to our spiritual well-being rather than draw attention to ourselves. Students will go to Mass in silence. Any talking, distracting, and disruptive behavior on the way to or during Mass is a violation of who we wish to be as a community.

In order to engage our mind, body, and spirit we attempt to participate fully in all parts of Mass. This involves singing, responding, standing, kneeling, and observing proper silence throughout Mass.

Improper Mass behavior includes any actions that distract the community or draws attention to oneself such as, but not limited to:

- Personal conversations and talking during Mass
- Sleeping and/or slouching
- Distracting behavior in the communion line (high fives, shaking hands, talking)
- Not following Mass protocol
- Inappropriate laughing and noise
- Intentionally clapping off beat
- Any other actions that draw attention to oneself and away from the Mass

Any of the listed misbehaviors or other distracting behavior that occurs during Mass could result in a disciplinary referral.

### **Cameras**

School administrators may occasionally refer to camera footage to obtain more detail about an incident. To protect the confidentiality of all parties involved, camera footage is never shared with parents. However, the footage may be used by administrators to help decide appropriate consequences.



## TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA CENTER

Technology resources at SMA are provided for the purpose of supporting the educational mission of the school. The school's goal in providing these resources is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, scholarship, research, creativity, and communication.

Use of these technologies is a privilege that carries responsibilities and behavioral expectations consistent with all school rules and policies, including but not limited to those stated in the school handbook. It is understood that members of the SMA community will use all types of technology (including but not limited to Chromebooks, iPads, school computers, and Wi-Fi) in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner at all times.

**Students who are using a school-issued device are responsible for any damages that occur to that device while in their care. Parents understand that they may be financially responsible for repair or replacement of devices damaged by students.**

### **Internet Terms, Conditions, And Regulations**

The Internet is available for educational use within the school facilities. **Internet access is restricted to devices that have required client software installed by the school.** It is the policy of St. Mary's Academy to require the ethical use of the Internet and related technologies by all employees, volunteers, and students as set forth below. Access privileges may be revoked; school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action taken for any violations that are unethical and may constitute a criminal offense.

### **General School Internet Policies**

- Students will refrain from accessing non-educational resources during class time. Failure to follow teacher and classroom policy can result in the removal of access to the internet and/or technology resources.
- Access of obscene, inappropriate and/or pornographic material, including the printing of such materials, is strictly prohibited. If students find themselves in an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation on the computer, iPad, Chromebook, or Internet, students will stop immediately and tell the teacher or media specialist in charge.
- Cellular devices are NOT considered approved technology devices in the classroom and are therefore not permitted during class time. Student cell phones will not be added to the school network nor will they be managed by school IT.
- Students understand that they can download information from the computer or Internet to a storage device, but that St. Mary's Academy and the Archdiocese of Atlanta are not responsible for any virus, spyware, malware, or adware on downloaded files.
- Students will not tamper with school computers, Chromebooks, or iPads, including, but not limited to, physical modification or damage of the device, personalization (stickers, etc...), and changing of settings not expressly permitted by IT personnel.

- Attempts to modify the network's functionality through digital or physical manipulation or destruction of network infrastructure, including but not limited to, gaining or attempting to gain administrative privileges are prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

### **Acceptable Use**

The use of Internet and related technologies must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational and religious objectives of St. Mary's Academy. Electronic communications to or from St. Mary's Academy should reflect the Christian principles and educational goals of the school. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for these networks.

### **Unacceptable Use**

Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to copyrighted material; threatening, violent, or obscene material; or material protected by trade secret.

Additional examples of unacceptable use include but are not limited to pornography; information on bomb making; game playing; unauthorized "chat"; chain letters; inappropriate language and communications; flaming letters; texting of inappropriate material; commercial activities; product advertisement; and/or political lobbying.

### **Vandalism**

Acts of vandalism are prohibited. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user or to damage hardware or software. This includes but is not limited to the uploading or creation of computer viruses. *Unauthorized use of another's computer, accounts, and/or files is prohibited.*

### **Privileges**

The use of the Internet and related technologies is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in cancellation of those privileges. The faculty, staff, or parent/guardian may request the administrator or designee to deny, revoke, or suspend a specific user's access to the Internet and related technologies due to unacceptable use.

### **Copyright**

It is the policy of St. Mary's Academy that all employees, volunteers, and students will abide by the federal copyright laws. Employees, volunteers, and students may copy print or non-print materials allowed by:

- copyright law;
- fair use guidelines;
- specific licenses or contractual agreements;
- other types of permission.

Employees, volunteers, and students who willfully disregard copyright law are in violation of St. Mary's Academy. Anyone who disregards copyright laws does so at his/her own risk and assumes all liability.

## Other Technology Related Policies

- Security problems must be promptly reported to the supervising adult. Users will notify the supervisor immediately if any individual is trying to contact him/her for illicit or suspicious activities.
- Users shall not reveal their personal home address, phone number, or personal information about anyone else. A user's personal identifier on any email must use the school address only.
- No software of any kind may be brought from home for use in any school computer. All school software must be properly purchased or donated, including licenses.
- Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent other users on the network.
- Technology equipment such as 3D printers, Laser Cutters, robotics kits, etc. are considered property of the school and also fall under the policies and procedures set forth in this document. Use of such tools may only occur under the direct supervision of designated personnel.
- Use of devices such as Viewsonic interactive displays, printers, and other school hardware is not allowed without the express permission of authorized school personnel.
- Use of headphones, earbuds, and other listening devices during class time is strictly prohibited.
- Student owned gaming devices are prohibited.
- School owned gaming devices may be accessed by students who have completed the eSports student agreement, have the express permission of administration, or at designated events.

## **ATHLETIC & EXTRACURRICULAR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **General Policies**

**Privilege to participate:** All students are encouraged to be involved in athletics and/or extra-curricular activities; however, being part of a SMA team or activity is a privilege, not a right.

**School Attendance:** Students must attend at least four full periods (half day) in order to participate in any sports or extracurricular activities that same day. Only students who have a doctor's note, an approved and documented college visit, or the Principal's approval of the absence may be excused.

**Practices and games:** It is an expectation that student athletes & performing arts students who commit to play a sport or be in the performing arts programs at SMA attend ALL practices and games. Failure to keep this commitment may result in suspension and or even dismissal from the team.

**Late to school:** It is imperative that all athletes and performing arts students maintain good attendance records, particularly the day after an athletic event or performance. Students should not be tardy to school the day after a game or event or absent without acceptable documentation. It is the responsibility of the student to manage both academics and athletics/extracurricular activities. Failure to maintain attendance may result in disciplinary action within the student's activity (i.e.: sit out a quarter or half of the next game, have understudy take place).

**Locker & Dressing Rooms:** Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior in the locker and dressing rooms. They are also expected to help maintain the cleanliness of the rooms they are using. Misbehavior in a locker or dressing room may result in school disciplinary action as well as disciplinary action in their activity.

**Uniforms:** Uniforms are distributed at the beginning of each season. All issued uniform items MUST be returned to the team coach by the assigned date. Failure to return any uniform items will result in the student athlete's parents being billed for the original cost of the uniform (regardless of age of uniform) and the student athlete's grades may be withheld until the uniform is returned.

**Costumes:** Costumes are distributed for school plays. All costumes MUST be returned to the director by the assigned date. Failure to return any costumes will result in the student performer's parents being billed for the original cost of the costume (regardless of age of costume) and the student performer's grades may be withheld until the costume is returned.

**Academic requirements:** The Athletic Director, head coaches, and Fine Arts Chairperson are responsible for tracking and counseling students about their academic progress and eligibility for play. Each student's situation is considered individually. Students in academic difficulty will be excused from practices/events until they have addressed their academic needs.

Use of facilities: Students may only utilize SMA facilities on campus when supervised by a faculty or staff member. At no time are students allowed in the gym, the auditorium, on the fields or in/on any athletic facility on campus without SMA staff supervision. Students who ignore this policy may face disciplinary action. Parents must compensate the school for any damage to school property caused by their student.

Playing Time: Playing time is an issue that will only be handled through the coach involved. Neither the Athletic Director nor the Principal will entertain any conversations regarding playing time. It is our duty to allow our coaches to determine who gives them the best opportunity for the team's success.

Golf Carts: St. Mary's students are forbidden to drive any SMA vehicles or golf carts/gators/lawn mowers.

### **Athletic & Extracurricular Fees**

All students who participate in a sport, performing art or club at SMA are required to pay the fees associated with that activity. Parents have two weeks from the time that rosters are set to pay the full amount of the player fees via FACTS. If the fees are not paid by that time, the student may be suspended from the program until the fee is paid. No students with unpaid fees will be permitted to start a new activity in the next season until the unpaid fee is paid.

### **Student Publications Policy**

The following list of guidelines should be adhered to when an administrator gives permission for the production of a publication.

- The Principal is ultimately responsible for decisions regarding the suitability of subject presentation.
- The Principal reserves the right to edit all publications.
- Each student group involved in the production should be assigned a faculty/staff member who is responsible for monitoring and guiding the students.
- The tenets and teachings of the Catholic Church should be respected.
- Neither written text nor illustration should be implicitly or explicitly sexual in nature (including references to body parts and/or function).
- Standard English and correct grammatical structure should be used consistently.
- No publications may go to print or be distributed without the expressed approval of the Principal.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

St. Mary's Academy offers a wide variety of extracurricular activities. If a student is interested in an activity, he/she should contact the sponsor/coach to get more details.

## **HIGH SCHOOL POLICIES-ACADEMICS**

### **Graduation Requirements**

St. Mary's Academy is a college preparatory school. Minimum requirements for graduation are in line with local and state requirements. Students may earn up to 28 units. Theology is required each year of attendance.

Course	SMA Requirements	College Recommended
English	4	4
Theology	4	N/A
Mathematics	4	4
Science	4	3
Social Studies	3.5	3
Foreign Language	2	2
Technology/ Business	.5	.5
Health	.5	.5
P.E.*	.5	.5
Fine Arts	1	1

\*Students with exceptional academic priorities may apply to the administration for a review of this requirement.

College-preparatory curriculum must include Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and an advanced math course (Advanced Algebra, Pre-Calculus, etc.). It must also include Biology, Chemistry, Physics and an advanced science course. The courses listed above for graduation are considered minimum requirements. St. Mary's Academy requires students to take a minimum of two (2) years of the same foreign language. The typical graduate from SMA will have earned up to 28 credits toward graduation.

Advanced Placement courses are offered in American History, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, World History, Calculus (AB & BC), Chemistry, Physics, Economics, Government, French Language & Culture, Spanish Language & Culture, Biology, Psychology, Computer Science, and Statistics.

St. Mary's Academy will offer Dual Enrollment through a partnership with Georgia Military College. English 101 and 102 will be offered during the fall semester for seniors. Dual Enrollment Statistics is offered in the spring semester. More information can be found in the Dual Enrollment contract that all students must sign in order to enroll in Dual Enrollment courses.

AP test fees of approximately \$97.00 will be collected in January via FACTS. Students who register for AP courses are required to take the AP test. Failure to take the AP test will result in a failing grade for the course.

AP students who have more than five absences or who earn grades of 73 or lower in an AP class at the end of the first semester, except for AP Science classes, must change from the AP class to a regular class for second semester unless they receive the written permission of the AP teacher to remain in the class. Students who drop or are removed from an AP class after the first semester will be required to pay the AP test fee and the AP test cancellation fee.

Honors and AP courses are weighted. For Honors courses, the grade appearing on the report card and transcript has four (4) additional points added to the actual grade. For AP courses, the report card and transcript have an eight (8) point addition. Therefore, the maximum grade that a student can earn is 100 in a Standard level course, 104 in an Honors course, and 108 in an Advanced Placement course. However, no weight is added to a grade less than 70. That is, weight cannot change a failing grade to passing.

Seniors will be allowed to exempt their second semester final exam(s) with an unrounded average of 93 and permission by the instructor. Only seniors who have 5 or fewer attendance events (includes absences and tardies) in second semester, will be allowed to exempt. Exceptions to this rule will be reviewed by the Assistant Principal. Seniors must be present in class through the day before the exam in order to qualify for exam exemption.

### **Credits For Promotion**

Promotion to the next grade level will be determined in the following manner:

- Freshman to Sophomore – six (6) credits
- Sophomore to Junior – twelve (12) credits
- Junior to Senior – eighteen (18) credits
- Senior to Graduation– twenty-four (24) + credits

### **Student Course Failures**

Teachers are available to assist students after school until 3:30 pm and by appointment. Students are encouraged to first seek assistance from their teachers if they are experiencing difficulties in courses and may be asked by the teacher to stay after school for extra assistance. At SMA, students may also be supported in academic achievement by the Student Success Team which consists of the school counselor and members of the faculty and administration.

Students are expected to make up failures in summer school before moving to the next grade level. Summer School information is provided with the final grade report. Once admitted to SMA, students who fail semester courses at SMA may not repeat the failed courses at SMA. In addition, students who fail courses at SMA may make up no more than 2.0 credit hours (four classes) for credit transfer from local summer schools or other administration approved schools. All credit sources must meet SMA standards and receive prior approval from the Studies Office. Appeals for exception to this requirement must be in writing to the Studies Office and the Principal, who will make the final decision.

### **Curriculum**

Please see SMA Website under “Academics” for an updated listing. ([www.smaschool.org](http://www.smaschool.org))

### **Grading Policy**

The professional staff, under the supervision of the Principal, is responsible for reporting a student’s academic progress to parents. This reporting includes a mid-term report and semester report. **The most current grade information is available 24/7 in PowerSchool, the electronic online gradebook.**

St. Mary's Academy may use whatever format is considered effective for report cards. Report cards include a comprehensive listing of courses/subjects and a letter or numeric equivalent indicating achievement levels. In all cases, St. Mary's Academy uses the Archdiocesan grading scale.

<u>Average</u>	<u>Grade</u>
90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
74 – 79	C
70 – 73	D
0 – 69	F

Parents may make inquiries as to the assessments that resulted in the cumulative grade on a report card. Parents have five (5) days after the issuance of report cards to challenge a grade. The date of issuance is the date the report cards were (e)mailed. After five (5) days the grade will become permanent. Grade changes will not be made unless academic evidence warrants such a change. Furthermore, despite parent requests, comments will not be modified or deleted.

### **Semester Grades**

High School students at St. Mary's Academy receive final grades at the end of each semester. These grades will include a final examination that will count 10% - 9th, 15% - 10th and 20% - 11th and 12th of the semester grade.

### **Report Cards**

Report Cards are emailed or mailed home at midterm and at the end of each semester. These reports are a means of informing parents of a student's progress and of providing both the teacher and the student with objective criteria for evaluation. In accordance with school policy, all financial obligations must be met before report cards will be sent out. Report cards and/or transcripts may be held for:

- Non-payment of tuition and/or fees.
- Athletic equipment, Books, or Musical Instruments not returned.
- Unfulfilled disciplinary obligations.
- Computer or other school property not returned.

Students must contact the business office to clear deficiencies before receiving report cards or having transcripts mailed.

Potential Failure Reports may be mailed to parents as the deficiency occurs to inform them of the student's academic difficulty. If parents have questions concerning their student's progress, arrangements should be made to meet with the individual teachers. The student may be included in this meeting.

### **Student Records**

St. Mary's Academy adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy)



regarding access to student records. Parents/guardians have a right to review a student's permanent record with appropriate 48-hour notice to the Principal or Assistant Principal. The parent/guardian will be allowed to view the record in the presence of an administrator; no items are to be removed from the student permanent record.

Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a five school-day request to the School Office. All forms should be submitted to the St. Mary's Academy's school office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

### **Honor Roll**

To be considered eligible for either of the two (2) Honor Roll lists, a student must take at least seven subjects. The Honor Roll is based on the grades received during each grading period for courses in the following disciplines: Math, Science, Social Studies, English, Theology, and Foreign Language. All electives are excluded. Eligibility is as follows:

- Excellence Honors: Must have a 96+ Grade Point Average (unrounded) and no grade below 85.
- Honors: Must have a 90+ Grade Point Average (unrounded) and no grade below 80.

### **Valedictorian & Salutatorian**

Consideration for Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be based on the following criteria: graduating seniors with the highest cumulative grade point averages at the end of the seventh semester; attendance at St. Mary's Academy for a minimum of three (3) full years; successful completion of five (5) AP classes; no ISS or OSS, and exemplary attendance. The Principal in consultation with the Faculty Graduation Committee will make the final decision on the selection of the Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

### **Service Hours**

Students are required to complete ten hours of Christian Service\* for each semester (for a total of twenty hours for the year) to be submitted by the due dates established yearly by the Theology Department. In order to receive credit for service, students are to complete service hour forms as instructed by their Theology teacher. Incomplete forms will not be processed. As in the past, failure to complete the prescribed requirement will result in a deduction to the theology grade of one point for each hour (or part of an hour) left uncompleted.

Carryover from Summer and First Semester: Any hours completed since June 1, 2023 will count for the 2023-24 school year. Therefore, if students complete 20 hours over the summer, their requirement is satisfied for both semesters. However, they may only receive extra credit for hours once. Hours completed in previous school years (before June 1, 2023) are ineligible for satisfying the requirements for 2023 – 2024. For example:

If a student completes.... then the student will receive...

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 10 summer hours | Full credit for the fall semester; must complete 10 more for the spring semester.   |
| 20 summer hours | Full credit for both semesters and three extra credit points for the fall semester. |
| 26 summer hours | Full credit for both semesters and three extra credit points both semesters.        |

10 summer hours + 6 hours during the fall + 6 hours during the spring Full credit for both semesters, three extra credit points in the fall, and one extra credit point in the spring (because the 22 total hours exceed the requirement by 2 hours = 1 point).

\*Christian Service: Acceptable service hours will meet the following requirements:

- No compensation may be received for service performed. This includes both monetary and non-monetary compensation (i.e. free food, merit badges, etc.) The service must be “out of the goodness of your heart.”
- Liturgical duties (i.e. serving at the altar, as a lector, music ministry, etc.) are unacceptable because Catholics have an obligation to participate fully, consciously, and actively in the Liturgy.
- Household and neighborhood chores are unacceptable: Examples of such unacceptable service include mowing the lawn, babysitting, etc.
- Service required at SMA is unacceptable: For example, fulfilling team or club responsibilities or helping at SMA during the school day are not acceptable.
- Acceptable service hours will be works of mercy and foster Gospel values.

While pre-approval is not required, students should ask ahead of time if they have questions as to whether a project is acceptable.

## **Honor Code & Honor Council**

### **I. Philosophy**

The values of honesty, scholarship and trust are essential to the mission of St. Mary’s Academy. We strive to provide an environment that recognizes these values as instrumental to building the moral character of our students while stressing the importance of personal responsibility and fairness.

For this reason, students who attend St. Mary’s Academy will adhere to a strict Honor Code. The Honor Council will enforce the Honor Code and recommend any penalties for the offense to the Principal.

### **II. What constitutes an Honor Code Offense?**

A person who violates honor by lying, cheating, unauthorized collaboration / communication, plagiarism, unauthorized recordings / photographs goes through the Honor Council Process.

- Lying: an attempt to cover up one’s own misdeeds or the misdeeds of others; giving false information; misrepresenting the truth; falsifying the signature of another person on any document.
- Cheating: deliberately giving, receiving, or copying any unauthorized information on any quiz, test, exam, or other written work. It is passing off another’s work as one’s own (Including from the Internet). Merely having discussions in advance, notes, or other information on one’s person while taking a test could constitute an Honor Council Violation.

- Unauthorized Collaboration/Communication: sharing or exchanging information, news, or ideas with classmates verbally or through the use of an electronic device during any assessment (including take home test), writing project, or class assignment.
- Plagiarism: passing off the words or ideas of others as your own work without citing them properly whether published or unpublished. Using the computer to misrepresent information as one's own is considered computer fraud/plagiarism. **This includes Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) generators/tools.\*** Copying a computer file is the same as copying or having someone else write a paper/report/vocabulary answers and is not allowed for any reason.
- Unauthorized Recordings/Photographs: making or receiving any recordings (audio or video) or a picture made using any type of camera of assessments or academic assignments.

**\*Papers submitted through turnitin.com that detect A.I. may be submitted to the Honor Council.**

### III. Institution of the Honor Code

Students' and parents' signatures on the Handbook form indicate that they understand and will abide by/support the Honor Code.

### IV. The Process of an Honor Violation Case

Teachers will inform a student that they have made a referral to the Honor Council. The Assistant Principal will call to inform the parents of the time and date of the Honor Council meeting. The meeting with parents and students will last no longer than 30 minutes.

At the meeting:

- The Assistant Principal will explain the case to all present.
- The student and the parents are invited in.
- The student is invited to give his or her account of events.
- Honor Council Members will ask follow-up questions.
- The student and parents are excused, so that the council can review the evidence.
- Honor Council members discuss and vote amongst a minimum of three possible determinations: Guilty, Negligent, Not Guilty (Negligent means there is some negligent behavior, but no evidence of actual honor violation).
- Honor Council will make its recommendation to the Principal.
- The Principal will inform the parents of the final decision within 24 hours.

Appearances before the Honor Council that result in a decision of guilty or negligence will be recorded in the schools Student Information System (SIS).

### V. Number of Honor Council Violations

If a student accumulates one or two Honor Council violations reported by a teacher, staff member, or student, he or she will have a complete hearing with the Honor Council Committee. A student who is found guilty of a third violation may also appear before the Discipline Committee which determines continued matriculation at St. Mary's Academy. A first or second honor council referral could result in a minimum penalty of one detention or a maximum penalty

of permanent expulsion, after consultation with the Superintendent of Schools, depending on the severity of the initial referral. Historically, students who have received a third honor council violation have been permanently removed from the student body.

#### VI. Penalties

Penalties range from (but not limited to) detentions, Saturday School, lunch detentions, restitution, letters of apology, essays, school clean up, grade changes, or suspension (depending on the severity of the violation), potential loss of membership/participation in honor societies and athletics, or even expulsion from school. The penalties are recommended by the Honor Council and are reviewed by the Principal, who then informs the parents and the student of the penalty. Historically, students who have received a third Honor Council referral have been permanently removed from the student body.

## **HIGH SCHOOL POLICIES-DISCIPLINE**

The discipline system at St. Mary's Academy is an attempt to develop in the student the practice of self-discipline characterized by a sense of responsibility, maturity and respect for teachers, administrators, staff, and the rights of others. A student's enrollment at SMA indicates willingness by the student and his/her parents/guardians to accept and to support SMA's philosophy and objectives. Discipline policies allow for the creation of a safe and secure atmosphere for learning. Because every student is important, no one student will be allowed to inhibit the learning of others or the teaching process. SMA students are expected to know the school policies and behave appropriately; they are expected to report to all scheduled classes, assemblies, etc. on time and with the materials necessary for learning (pen/pencil, textbook, notebook, assignment, etc.). In the classroom, students are to conduct themselves respectfully and in a manner conducive to a learning environment. Similar responsible behavior is expected in the halls and other non-academic areas of the school campus.

The school reserves the right to review the academic, attendance, and disciplinary record of students at the end of each year to consider whether any students should be placed on academic and/or disciplinary probation or if they should not be permitted to return the following school year. Corporal punishment and verbal threats of physical harm are strictly prohibited.

A Disciplinary Review Committee composed of faculty and staff members advises and makes recommendations to the Principal on serious disciplinary matters as requested by the Principal. A Discipline Review Committee may be convened at any time if deemed necessary by the Principal. This committee will make a recommendation to the Principal concerning what action(s) should take place.

St. Mary's Academy has the authority to make reasonable and necessary rules governing the conduct of our students. Students whose conduct is unsatisfactory and/or disrespectful and who violate good order and common sense are subject to disciplinary action. The administration reserves the right to take action on any unforeseen, yet unacceptable, inappropriate behavior. Only the Principal and Superintendent have the authority to expel a student, and may do so at his/her discretion.

### **Discipline Policy**

It is the mission of SMA to ensure that each student has a successful school experience in a safe and supportive environment. Personal honor, integrity, and respect for others are expected of all students. In order to assist the student members of the SMA community in their attempt to live within the spirit of these expectations, guidelines for their personal conduct and penalties for failure to follow these guidelines are in place. These penalties can consist of denial of privileges, discipline contract, detentions, Saturday school, suspensions, withdrawal or expulsion. Teachers may request students to see them at an appointed time, such as after school, in order to help guide them in correcting misbehavior. If a teacher requests that a student see him or her, then it is the expectation that the student will comply with the request. If not, the teacher may give the student a discipline consequence. All discipline events, including detentions, ISS, OSS and

Discipline Committee meetings will be recorded in the schools Student Information System (SIS).

### **Denial of Privileges**

Students may be denied privileges that are normally accorded them when their conduct is not in keeping with the rules and regulations of the school. Extracurricular and athletic participation is a privilege; therefore, a coach, Administrator, or Principal may suspend or remove a player from a practice, competition or season for violation of any academic or discipline policies.

### **Social Probation**

Students who commit a serious infraction or who have a series of minor infractions may be given social probation which means that the student may not participate in any extracurricular or athletic activities. In addition the student will be required to be off the campus by 3:00 p.m. each afternoon.

### **Discipline Contract**

Students may be placed on discipline contracts by the administration when their conduct is not in keeping with the rules and regulations of the school. The discipline contract is designed to assist the student in correcting misbehavior so that he or she may remain at SMA and be successful. The discipline contract may include the assignment of a faculty counselor to help guide the student in correcting his or her behavior. Parents will be notified regarding the discipline contract. Contracts will remain in force until such time that the administration agree that the student has shown the ability to respect and comply with the expectations, policies, rules and regulations of SMA as set forth in the student/parent handbook. If while on a discipline contract a student's conduct is lacking in improvement, then the student may be subject to further disciplinary action. Parents will again be notified when the discipline contract is no longer in force.

### **Detention**

Any staff or faculty member may impose detention. It is the student's responsibility to schedule the detention in the detention coordinator's room the day the detention is received or the day after it is received. Detentions are held Tuesday through Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 3:50 p.m. If a student is not in the detention coordinator's room by 3:00 p.m., the student is considered late and will receive an additional detention to be served the next day along with serving the remaining time for that day. If a student is absent on the day that he/she is to serve a detention, the detention will be served the next day. **DETENTION TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER ALL OTHER EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES INCLUDING ATHLETIC CONTESTS AND WORK RESPONSIBILITIES.** Detention is an extension of the school day, and therefore students are to be in school uniform and school rules and policies still apply when serving detention. Failure to attend an assigned detention will result in a Disciplinary Referral.

Consequences for accumulated detentions are as follows:

- |              |                            |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| 1 detention  | Notation in student record |
| 3 detentions | Saturday School            |

5 detentions  
More than 5

ISS and/or meeting with parent/guardian and an administrator  
OSS and/or meeting with parent/guardian and an administrator

### **Disrupting Learning**

Because our primary mission is the education of all students, SMA will not tolerate behaviors which disrupt the learning of other students in classrooms. Students whose behavior draws inappropriate attention and requires consistent redirection will be subject to disciplinary action including removal from the classroom.

### **Saturday School**

Saturday School was established as an alternative to suspension for problems such as tardiness, truancy, and other infractions of school rules. The parents/guardians of students who are assigned Saturday School will be notified via email, a letter or telephone by the administration with the date of the Saturday School to be served. Saturday School is held from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Students are to be in school uniform when attending Saturday School. The fee for Saturday School is \$20.00 and will be deducted from the students FACTS account. Failure to attend an assigned Saturday School will result in disciplinary action and a fee of \$20. Parents will be charged an additional \$15 for every 15 minutes they are late to pick up their child from Saturday School.

### **In-School Suspension (ISS)**

Students who violate the discipline policy are subject to having to serve a class day or multiple class days in ISS. The parents/guardians of students who are assigned ISS will be notified via email letter from the administration with the date that it is to be served. Any ISS assignment received automatically disqualifies the student from any athletic or extracurricular practice/competition for the school days that the ISS is assigned. If the ISS date is assigned on a Friday the suspension may include Saturday practice or competition. Failure to attend a scheduled ISS will result in an automatic Out of School Suspension and administrative conference with the student and parents.

### **Out-Of-School Suspension (OSS), Expulsion, And Dismissal**

The Principal may impose OSS and expulsion or dismissal for serious offenses. It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed assignments or learning missed because of the suspension. Serious offenses, in addition to those outlined elsewhere in this handbook, include the following: stealing, cheating, plagiarism, vandalism, serious moral transgressions, defiant actions, civil disobedience, possession of any object that might reasonably be considered a weapon, vulgarities, or any other action that brings discredit upon the school or seriously impairs the rights of others.

Continued offenses of a less serious nature would give reason to believe that the student is either unable or unwilling to conform to the expectations of the school. Students must make up any and all work missed due to suspension on the day they return to school. Work that is not made up will result in a grade of zero.

Students under suspension may not attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities from the beginning of suspension to their return to school. Parents/guardians will be notified of any suspension and generally will be required to meet with administration.

### **Expulsion**

As a definition, expulsion is considered a termination of enrollment. Expulsion shall be used only as a final measure or in response to an egregious offense. Expulsion results from repeated refusal to obey school rules or from conduct which endangers self and others, property, health or safety of others, and is deemed to be in the best interest of the school community. One extremely serious offense may also be cause for expulsion.

Students asked not to return the following year for behavior reasons are not considered expelled. The student has not been accepted for re-enrollment in the next academic year because of prior behavioral problems. Students not allowed to return due to failure to meet required academic standards are not considered expelled. The Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools will be informed before any action leading to expulsion is taken.

All disciplinary actions taken by St. Mary's Academy shall be preceded by internal procedures and supported by defensible records. In those cases, where the code of discipline has reached or exceeded the allowable accumulated infractions, the Principal may expel a student after consultation with the Superintendent. Established policies and procedures must be evident during the period of accumulation (i.e., notification of parents, parent conference, behavioral contract, suspension, and/or etc.). The parents may make an appeal of expulsion to the Superintendent.

In those cases of serious breach of discipline that may result in Out of School Suspension or Expulsion the Principal may elect to convene the Discipline Review Committee to examine the specific details of the situation and make a recommendation for consequences. Parents should be given twenty-four (24) hours notice as to the assigned date of the Discipline Review Committee meeting. Upon request by the parents, such notification may be waived. The committee will meet with the student and parent and make a recommendation to the Principal who will communicate his/her final decision in writing.

The final disciplinary action rests with the Principal. An appeal of expulsion is made to the Superintendent for review of the decision within ten (10) days. The decision of the superintendent is final. The address for the Superintendent of Catholic Schools is: Catholic Center, 2401 Lake Park Drive S.E., Smyrna, GA 30080-8862.

Before the hearing is held, the parents and the student are informed of the possible recommendations of the committee and that once the hearing is in progress the student may not have the right to voluntarily withdraw in lieu of expulsion, unless that is the recommendation of the committee. If the decision to expel the student is made, the parents are notified in writing. When a specific disciplinary issue arises from outside St. Mary's Academy resulting in direct repercussions for a school of the archdiocese, the Principal will contact the Superintendent. In



those cases, SMA will follow its handbook procedures in order to ensure established policies are followed in assigning discipline. However, in cases involving students from more than one Archdiocesan School and where expulsion could be considered, the Discipline Committee is convened and makes a recommendation to the Superintendent. The decision for expulsion or other disciplinary action in such cases rests with the Superintendent with appeals made to the Office of the Archbishop.

In those situations that arise for which no policy exists, the Superintendent in consultation with the Office of the Archbishop will render a final decision. In keeping with Canon Law, the Archbishop or his designee reserves the right to make decisions in all matters regarding archdiocesan elementary and secondary schools.

## HIGH SCHOOL POLICIES-DRESS CODE & SCHOOL RULES

### **Dress Code For School**

Students are expected to follow the guidelines for school uniforms and those who do not adhere to this policy will be considered out of uniform and subject to the discipline policy. Students who are out of uniform may receive a detention. More serious violations of the dress code will result in parent contact, referral to the administration and possible In-School Suspension. Please refer to our school website ([www.smaschool.org](http://www.smaschool.org)) and/or our uniform vendor Flynn O'Hara ([www.flynnohara.com](http://www.flynnohara.com)) for specific information.

### **Modesty in Dress Code**

Through its uniform code, St. Mary's Academy seeks to form students in a manner consistent with the teachings of the Catholic faith on the virtue of modesty, as stated, for example, in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2521-2524).

Students are expected to wear the uniform correctly and proudly. Students should be in full uniform when they enter the school building in the morning.

### **Dress Code for Mass**

Students are expected to wear the winter uniform and may not carry purses or book bags. Students without a Mass uniform may receive detention.

### **Fall/Spring Uniform**

Worn from the beginning of school until Thanksgiving and from after spring break until the end of school. This uniform includes the polo, white button collar shirt, or blouse.

### **Winter Uniform**

The winter uniform is worn from Thanksgiving until after spring break. This uniform includes the white button collar shirt or blouse and optional sweater, vest or letter jacket. Boys must wear ties with collar buttoned.

### **General Uniform Guidelines**

#### **Boys and Girls Slacks**

All students will wear navy blue slacks purchased from Flynn O'Hara. Boy's slacks should be fitted to the waist and be hemmed properly. Pants worn on or below the hips are not permitted. Solid black or solid brown belts must be worn by boys and girls.

#### **Girls Skirts/Skorts**

Girls may wear the official plaid skort. Senior girls may wear the plaid skort or a plain blue skirt. All of these items must be purchased from Flynn O'Hara. Skirt length must be determined as appropriate by teachers and administrators. Skirts may not be rolled at any time in order to alter the length. No pins may be worn in a skirt. Girls whose skirts are determined to be inappropriate will receive a detention and may be sent home.

### **Fall/Spring Uniform Shirts**

Polo shirts must be embroidered with the St. Mary's Academy emblem and they will be available only from Flynn O'Hara. All shirts must be tucked in.

### **Shirts/Blouses**

All students will wear white oxford shirts with a button-down collar. They may be short or long sleeve. If students choose to wear long sleeves, they must be rolled down and the cuffs buttoned. Boys must always have the top button buttoned when the tie is worn. Oversized blouses and shirts are not allowed. Seniors have the option of wearing a commemorative senior sweatshirt. All shirts and blouses must be tucked in. Athletic team shirts or club shirts are not permitted to be worn during the school day unless permission is granted by the administration.

### **Shoes**

Both boys and girls must wear the shoes properly at all times. All shoes must have scuff-proof soles. If the shoes have laces, they must be tied.

### **Socks**

Argyle socks or socks with print designs or logos may not be worn. Please visit the website for approved socks. Boys are to wear only black dress socks. Girls wearing pants are to wear only black dress socks.

### **Sweaters and Jackets**

Students may wear the OFFICIAL sweater, cardigan or vest or official SMA letter jacket or school approved jacket. The sweaters must be purchased at Flynn O'Hara.

Other brands will be considered out-of-uniform and may not be worn. Sweaters and jackets must be worn properly. For example, students may not tie them around their student waist. SMA outerwear other than the letter jacket may not be worn during the school day.

Note: All students should own a sweater or a letter jacket because out-of-uniform sweaters, jackets, t-shirts, sweatshirts, and sweatpants may not be worn in the school building during the school day.

### **T-Shirts**

All t-shirts worn under the uniform must be completely white and unadorned and should not be visible at the sleeves. Long sleeve t-shirts are not permitted to be worn under a short sleeve SMA shirt. No shirts with advertisements or concert promotions are to be worn at any time.

### **Ties**

Boys must wear the school approved tie with the winter uniform. Senior boys have a unique senior tie they must wear.

## **Hats**

Hats may not be worn on campus during the school day nor should they be carried in any part of student's clothing. Hats may be confiscated and turned in to the administration. Detentions may also be issued. No ear warmers, bandanas, or scarves can be worn in the buildings.

## **Hair Styles**

Hair, in general, must not be distracting. The school reserves the right to control the extremes in hairstyles. *Hair should not be dyed unnatural colors.* Hair accessories must be plain, no greater than two inches in width, and either red, blue, or black in color. Beads must be red, blue or gold. It is impossible to include and define every conceivable hair style. Therefore, parents and students should consult the administration if there is a question. Acceptable length of hair for boys is to the eyebrows in front and trimmed above the collar and the bottom of the ear on the rear and sides. Hair longer than this must be neatly tied back. The administration reserves the final word on what constitutes acceptable hairstyles. Students who violate the hairstyle policies will receive a detention and may be sent home until the hair style is corrected.

## **Facial Hair**

Male students must be clean shaven (no visible hair on face). Students who violate this policy will receive a warning and will need to shave that evening before returning to school. After a warning, students will receive a detention and may be sent home until corrected. **Students who choose to wear a mask may be asked by an administrator or teacher to briefly remove their mask to check for facial hair.**

## **Jewelry**

Students should not wear excessive, inappropriate, or expensive jewelry to school. Jewelry for both boys and girls should be modest. Only necklaces that have a light chain and bear a religious medal or symbol may be worn outside the uniform. Rosaries are not permitted to be worn. Girls may wear one small stud/hoop earring in each ear. No bars are allowed. Male students are not permitted to wear earrings or spacers on campus. No other piercings or piercing plugs are acceptable for boys or girls. Thick chains, beaded, leather, woven or stone necklaces or bracelets are not permitted. Only one bracelet or watch is allowed to be worn on each arm. The Principal reserves the final word on what constitutes acceptable jewelry.

## **Tattoos**

Temporary or permanent tattoos must never be visible when a student is on campus or participating in any activity that is school related.

## **Other Specific Dress**

Chains, metal studs, and/or unusual markings/designs on clothing and/or accessories are prohibited. This includes designs or colors on contact lenses. Writing on or otherwise defacing uniform clothing or shoes may be subject to disciplinary action.

Any clothing that does not comply with uniform guidelines or the dress code for special events is subject to confiscation without return.

### **Dances Sponsored by Any School Group**

Attendance at school-sponsored dances is a privilege, not a student right. Only SMA students and their guests, and persons connected with the band will be admitted to a dance. To attend dances, students must have parental and administration approval. The cost of these dances varies and is announced in advance. It is important that students follow all announced deadlines for formal dance reservations. Students are expected to observe good taste in their dress, behavior, and dancing. Those unable to comply may be refused admittance or be removed during the dance.

The following policies apply to St. Mary's Academy dances:

- Only current SMA students and their dates may attend.
- All school policies are in effect and strictly enforced.
- No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products are permitted at the dance.
- Once students leave the dance, they will not be permitted to re-enter and the school will not be held responsible for their actions.
- Any lewd/vulgar dance is unacceptable and prohibited.
- No book/gym bags, extra-large purses, etc. are allowed.
- SMA is not responsible for lost/stolen personal items.
- Students assigned discipline ineligibility may not attend.
- Students will not be permitted to loiter on the grounds after the dance.
- Any disruptive behavior may result in loss of privileges to attend future dances.

### **Dress Code For Special Events and Out-Of-Uniform Days**

On occasion, out-of-uniform days are allowed. Dress is according to the themes dictated by the special day. In all cases, students are expected to be neat and well groomed. Students are not permitted to come to school in shorts or jeans with holes, pajama bottoms, tank tops, low-cut or revealing tops, nor in sheer-type blouses or shirts. Skirts must adhere to the uniform skirt length. Hats are not to be worn in the building. No garment may ever be worn that is cut off, ragged, or torn. Blouses or tops which expose the midriff when wearer is in any position may not be worn. No shirts with reference to alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, drug use, inappropriate moral messages, racial, or prejudicial statements or inferences may be worn. Leggings, stretch tights, jeggings or any other tight fitting pants should not be worn. Should a student come to school in uniform on an out-of-uniform day, that student is to remain in uniform with all components properly worn. In all cases, students whose clothing does not meet the expectations of the school will be sent home or their parents must bring them proper clothing. A detention may also be issued.

Note: Because of the unique and constantly changing nature of fashion, the school reserves the right to classify any style of dress or grooming as inappropriate.

### **Driving on Campus**

All students must be in compliance with state laws regarding driver's licenses and permits. Driving to school and parking on the SMA campus are privileges not rights. Students should observe speed limits in the parking lot and should not engage in behavior that may cause injury to others.

## ACADEMIC POLICIES - LOWER & MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Archdiocese of Atlanta prescribes the curricular standards and benchmarks that must be achieved at each grade level for each subject. St. Mary's Academy implements the prescribed curriculum.

### **Grading**

St. Mary's Academy uses the grading policy of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

### **Grading Scales**

#### Grades PK-1

##### Academic

- S = Secure
- D = Developing
- B = Beginning
- N = Needs Improvement
- \* = Not Assessed

#### Grades 2-8

##### Academic

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 74-79
- D = 70-73
- F = 69 and below

Note: INC (Middle School Policy) = Incomplete: If work is not completed within two weeks after the semester ends, the Incomplete becomes a numeric grade. In extenuating circumstances, a student may appeal for a time extension.

#### Conduct 2-8

- S = Satisfactory
- N = Needs Improvement
- U = Unsatisfactory

### **Incomplete**

If a student is taken out of school before the end of the academic year and class work and final exams are not completed prior to the departure of the student, the student may receive Incompletes as grades on his/her final report card.

### **Alternative Educational Placement**

Students in grades three through eight may not fail (definition: earned grade of "F" as a final year average) more than two core courses in one academic year. Students who fail one or two core subjects in one academic year will be required to remediate the coursework according to the parameters set by the school (see "Academic Probation"). Failure to successfully remediate

according to school guidelines indicates a parent's choice to seek alternative educational placement.

Should a student fail three or more courses in an academic year, alternative educational placement may be required.

### **Academic Probation**

Students in grades three through eight who have failed two core courses in one academic year and who have successfully remediated may return to the school in the following year with the status of academic probation. Should a student fail one core subject (final year average) within the year while on academic probation, alternative educational placement will be required.

### **Report Cards**

The professional staff, under the supervision of the Principal, is responsible for reporting a student's academic progress to parents. The reporting includes:

- Ongoing parental access to the online grade book.
- Report Cards – issued at the conclusion of a grading period, four times a year.

Parents may make inquiries as to the assessments which resulted in the cumulative grade on a grade report. However, grade changes will not be made unless academic evidence warrants such a change. Furthermore, despite parent requests, comments will not be modified or deleted. Any inquiries regarding grade changes must be made in writing to the teacher within one week of receipt of the grade.

Parents in grades 2-8 may always check current grades which are available 24/7 in PowerSchool, the electronic online gradebook.

### **Homework**

A reasonable amount of homework will be given daily. The assignment will be an outgrowth of class work to supplement learning, to review independently what was taught in class, and to provide opportunity to use research skills. Time allotments for homework depend on the type of assignment and on the age and grade level of the student. No definite time limit can be determined for all, since children work at different rates of speed.

### **Standardized Tests**

Standardized testing dates, established by the Archdiocese and enacted by St. Mary's Academy, are a required component of student enrollment.

### **Iowa Assessments**

The school administers the Iowa Assessments to students in grades K through eight.

### **Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)**

The Cognitive Abilities Test is administered to students in grades two, five, and seven.

## **ACRE**

The NCEA IFG: ACRE is administered to students in grades five and eight and is a standardized Catholic religion assessment.

If a student is absent due to illness, the school will make every effort to administer missed subtests. No make-up tests will be administered for students who were absent due to vacation.

## **Student Records**

Parents have the right to review their child's educational records under the terms and conditions of the Buckley amendment (The Family Educational Right of Privacy Act 1974). We do not communicate with outside professionals unless authorized to do so by parents. If you would like a teacher to complete forms or share information with an individual outside the school (i.e. physician, tutor, psychologists), please sign the school's Consent For Release of Confidential Information form which can be obtained from the counselor's office. Forms will be mailed directly to the authorized personnel.

## **Parents' Role**

A student's work should be his or her own. A parent's role is to support the child's efforts by providing a proper setting, necessary materials, and guidance regarding the directives. Assignments completed at home are the student's opportunity to practice skills and concepts that have been taught. If a child encounters difficulty at home, it is important for the teacher to become aware of that. He or she can then assist the student by providing additional instruction.

## **Parent Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled each year in October and March to promote a greater understanding of the needs of the student, as well as strengthen home and school communication. If additional conferences are necessary, an appointment may be made with a teacher for a mutually convenient time. Parent conferences in October are mandatory and these days are conference days, not vacation days; please be available for your child's scheduled conference. Parent conferences are held with all teachers participating in the child's education. Parents must attend conferences that are scheduled by teachers, parents, and administrators.

## **Honor Roll (Middle School)**

The purpose of the honor roll is to reward outstanding scholastic achievement for students in grades six through eight. The honor roll is divided into First, Second, and Third honors.

### Qualifications for First Honors

- Average of grades between 93-100 in all subject areas.
- No core subject grade lower than 88.

### Qualifications for Second Honors

- Average of grades of 90 and up in all subject areas.
- No core subject grade lower than 85.

### Qualifications for Third Honors



- Average of grades of 85 and up in all subject areas.
- No core subject grade lower than 80.

### **Math Placement (Grades 7-8)**

Students who participate in the advanced mathematics course in 7th grade or the 8th grade algebra course must meet the criteria set forth by the Archdiocese of Atlanta (adopted February, 2000; reviewed April, 2012 & March, 2017).

Math placement is determined by the established Archdiocesan criteria and is not subject to parental requests for placement. The following minimum criteria (5 out of the 6 areas) must be met for a 7th or 8th grade student to qualify for advanced placement:

- Minimum of 80 percentile on the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test (Algebra readiness test).
- Minimum of 80 percentile (NPR) in the IOWA test in the mathematics category. New students should have achieved an equivalent national percentile on their previous year's achievement or basic skills test.
- Minimum of 80 percentile (NPR) in the IOWA test in the computation category. New students should have achieved an equivalent national percentile on their preceding year's achievement or basic skills test.
- Maintained a minimum score of 85 percent math test average during the preceding (sixth grade for seventh grade consideration and seventh grade for eighth grade consideration) school year. New students must be evaluated.
- Maintained a minimum score of 85 percent average for their mathematics class report card during the preceding (sixth grade for seventh grade consideration and seventh grade for eighth grade consideration) school year. New students must be evaluated.
- Teacher recommendation indicating that the student demonstrates consistent, successful completion of homework, classwork and positive classroom performance (maturity level, positive work habits, participation) as defined by the current level mathematics teacher

For a student to remain in the 7th grade advanced math course or the 8th grade algebra course, he/she must earn a grade of 85% or higher each quarter. If the student falls below the average during the quarter, he/she may be required to attend tutorials. Should the student's average fall below the 85% mandated average at the end of the quarter, the student may be reassigned to the 7th grade general math course or the 8th grade pre-algebra course.

Seventh grade placement in the advanced mathematics course does not guarantee placement in the algebra course in the 8th grade year. All rising 8th graders must meet the established criteria. Likewise, placement in the 8th grade algebra course does not guarantee placement in advanced high school mathematics. High school placement is dependent upon SSAT performance and a math placement test.

## DISCIPLINE POLICIES - ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Purpose

The purpose of the Student Behavior Program is to promote among the students a sense of responsibility for one's actions, an understanding of the element of personal choice in determining one's behavior, and an understanding of consequences for one's behavior both during and outside of school hours.

It is the student's responsibility to

- Conduct himself/herself in a manner which contributes to a positive school environment.
- Avoid any activity that may be considered discriminatory, intimidating, or harassing.
- Report all incidents to a supervising adult.
- Discontinue conduct immediately if informed that he/she is perceived as engaging in intimidating, harassing, or unwelcome conduct.

Other inappropriate behavior not mentioned in this handbook or any conduct unbecoming of a student in a Catholic school is not tolerated. Conduct or disciplinary actions involving a student will only be discussed with the parents of that student.

### Behavior Consequences

#### ***Citation Form***

A Citation Form is a written communication that is issued to students who fail to follow the school/classroom rules. Parents will receive an email informing the parent of a citation.

#### ***Detentions, Loss of Privileges, and Parent Meetings***

Only students in grades 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> will receive detentions based on the accumulation of citation points. Detentions are typically served on Tuesday or Thursday afternoon (3:00 – 3:50 p.m.) the calendar week following the week the detention was issued. Any student arriving to detention after 3:00 p.m. will serve the detention the following Tuesday or Thursday and may receive an additional consequence.

Detentions are issued upon the accumulation of 6 citation points and every three citation points after that (i.e., 9, 12, 15, etc.)

<b>Upon the accumulation of:</b>	<b>Consequence(s)</b>
6 points	Detention
9 points	Detention; possible additional consequence, based on infraction
12 points	Detention; parent meeting, may lose privilege to attend field trips for eight (8 weeks)
15 points	Detention; parent-student conference may be scheduled with an administrator to outline behavior plan/contract to

	assist students in maintaining appropriate conduct.
18 points	Detention; parents receive official written warning of behavior plan infraction.
21 points	Parent/student/administrator conference; student is placed on behavior probation. This may jeopardize the student's re-enrollment for the subsequent years.
24 points	Possible one-day, in-school suspension; parent/student/administrator conference; the suspension is served the day following parent notification. This may jeopardize a student's formal disciplinary record.
27 points	Possible two-day, out-of-school suspension; parent/student/administrator conference; the suspension is served the two days following parent notification. This may jeopardize a student's formal disciplinary record. The parent/student may be given the opportunity to withdraw from St. Mary's Academy.
30 points	Possible expulsion.

The Principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rule for just cause at his/her discretion. It is the right and responsibility of the principal to determine appropriate consequences for all disciplinary measures.

**Probation/Discipline Contract**

A student may be placed on probation/Discipline Contract for a period by the school Principal.

**Suspension**

Suspension is a severe measure. Prior to suspension, the student will be advised of the reason for the suspension and the custodial parent/guardian given prompt notice of the suspension and the reason for the action.

Suspension may be given in cases of extreme disrespect, inappropriate behavior, or an accumulation of points based on the Student Conduct Program.

**Disciplinary Committee Hearing**

In the cases of serious breach of discipline or excessive accumulation of citation points, the Principal may elect to convene the Discipline Review Committee to examine the specific details of the situation and make a recommendation for consequences. The minimum penalty which may be administered is consequences already assigned, and the maximum penalty which may be administered is permanent expulsion.

**Expulsion**

As a definition, expulsion is considered a termination of enrollment. Expulsion shall be used in

response to an egregious offense. It may also be used when an excessive number of citation points are accumulated. Please refer to page 70 for more information about expulsion.

## **Citation Point Guidelines**

Point values may increase for repeat offenses. This list is not all-inclusive; other infractions will be assigned a point value by the teacher/the administration.

### 1-Point Offenses

- Chewing gum
- Dress code violation
- Improper behavior
- Not following directions
- Not prepared for class
- Running
- Speaking loudly in the hall, cafeteria, assemblies, etc.

### 3-Point Offenses

- Class disruption
- Inappropriate language/gestures/actions
- Lying
- Not being in appropriate location
- Not keeping hands, feet, and objects to one's self
- Throwing objects or food
- Technology violation

### 6-Point Offenses (Serious Offenses)

- Any violation of state or local law
- Bullying/Harassment
- Cheating/academic fraud
- Defiance toward faculty/staff
- Deliberate absence from class/school
- Fighting
- Immoral behavior
- Stealing
- Willful vandalism

## ES/MS DRESS CODE POLICIES & SCHOOL RULES

### Dress code for school

Students should follow the high school guidelines for hairstyles and facial hair.

### Jewelry and Make-Up

PK-8 girls may wear single-post earrings only—no dangle earrings or hoops. PK-8 girls may not wear make-up; however, concealer is permitted.

### Fingernails

Middle School girls may wear nail polish/gel. It can be any color, but only one single color. No artificial nails of any type. No embellishments. PK-5 girls may not wear fingernail polish.

### Uniforms

The school dress code at St. Mary's Academy is designed to promote an atmosphere on campus that is appropriate for a school setting. These uniform regulations are intended to reduce distractions and to allow students to focus on their academic responsibilities in a manner demonstrating that we are one in community. Students are expected to wear the school uniform and gym uniform correctly, and parents are expected to support these regulations. Students out of uniform will serve a silent lunch/recess supervised by faculty.

Through its uniform code, St. Mary's Academy seeks to form students in a manner consistent with the teachings of the Catholic faith on the virtue of modesty, as stated, for example, in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2521-2524).

Students are expected to wear the uniform correctly and proudly. Students should be in full uniform when they enter the school building in the morning.

### Sweaters and Jackets

Students may wear the OFFICIAL sweater, cardigan or school approved jacket. The sweaters must be purchased at Flynn O'Hara. Other brands will be considered out-of-uniform and may not be worn. Sweaters and jackets may not be tied around a student's waist during the school day.

### Out-of-Uniform Days

It is expected that students participating in out-of-uniform days will come to school dressed in appropriately-fitting, comfortable clothing and shoes. If there is any doubt about the appropriateness of clothing, then the student should wear the regular school uniform.

The following guidelines will be enforced during out-of-uniform days:

- Students should not wear tank tops, spaghetti straps or short tops with bare midriff.
- Students should wear neat, properly-fitted jeans/pants without holes that do not appear worn (no pajama pants, running tights, or sweats).
- Shorts and skirts must be knee length. Leggings are not allowed.

- Flip-flops are not allowed.
- Hats are not to be worn inside the school unless on a designated day.
- Hair should not be dyed unnatural colors.
- Excessive jewelry should not be worn, as it can be a distraction in the classroom.
- T-shirts should not have inappropriate or controversial wording or advertisements such as alcohol and tobacco, or any message that conflicts with our school mission or identity.
- Students scheduled for P.E. must change into their P.E. uniforms.
- School administration will make the final determination of appropriate attire.

### **Spirit Days**

Certain days throughout the school year will be designated as Spirit Days. On these days, students will be permitted to wear a St. Mary's Academy logoed spirit shirt. All other components of the required uniform for that grade level (pants/skorts, shoes, etc.) are to be worn.

### **Acceptable Dress for All School Events**

All school-sponsored events reflect St. Mary's Academy students and its mission to the school and outside communities. The following guidelines pertain to such events during and after school.

- Casual, comfortable clothes suitable for a Catholic school.
- Straps must be at least three fingers wide and must cover all undergarments.
- No crop or tube tops are appropriate for any occasion at SMA.
- Skirts and dresses should be an appropriate length; no mini or micro skirts or dresses.
- Girls should not wear tops that bare their shoulders or midriff.
- T-shirts worn should have appropriate sayings. They should not be in conflict with our Catholic identity.
- School administration will make the final determination of appropriate attire.

### **Birthday Recognition**

**Birthdays will be recognized by the classroom teacher and announced on the announcements. In an effort to support nutrition expectations from the home and in consideration of allergies, there will be no class birthday treats permitted for 6-12 grade. For grades PK-5, a small store-bought treat may be provided, but treats must be coordinated with the homeroom teacher before 48 hours of the birthday.**

**Parents are welcome to join their child on his/her birthday for lunch. Parents may bring a special lunch and/or treat for the birthday child only. Sharing is not permitted.**

### **Classroom Parties**

Four (4) SIMPLE classroom parties are held each year. These include Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day and/or End of the Year.

1. Party times are coordinated by the classroom teacher(s). In grades 6 - 8, these parties may be held during lunch.

2. Treats and paper goods should be simple with an emphasis on function rather than elaborate decoration.
3. **Teachers** are expected to communicate with **the administration** so that grade level parties will be similar.
4. Service learning projects and solicitations for project supplies should not be done during class parties.

### **Invitations to Social Events**

Correspondence for any type of social events is not to be distributed at school. Parents are asked to mail such correspondence directly to the home of the person.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are educational excursions that are pre-planned learning experiences related to the curriculum of the specific grade level and followed by evaluation. Written parental permission is obtained prior to each excursion. Cost of field trips is an extra fee charged per student. No electronic equipment or cell phones may be taken on field trips.

The school reserves the right to refuse a student's permission to participate in a field trip if his/her behavior is inappropriate or could jeopardize the personal safety of self or that of the group.

### **School Dances**

**There is one middle school dance each year.** Please adhere to the following rules:

1. Students may not leave the school until the dance is over.
2. Parents are responsible for students once the event is over.
3. No cell phones or electronic equipment are allowed.
4. All other school policies apply.
5. Students must attend at least ½ day of school in order to attend the dance and may not attend if sent home for illness.





# St. Mary's Academy

MAGNIFY THE LORD

## Student/Parent Handbook Agreement Form 2023-2024 School Year

For continued enrollment in the school, signing and returning this form is required of all families.

I have received and reviewed the 2023-2024 St. Mary's Academy Student/Parent Handbook. I agree to abide by the policies, rules, regulations, conditions and requirements of the school as stated in this Handbook as well as those policies of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

This handbook may be amended by the school administration at any time during the year with proper notification of these changes being communicated in writing to Parents and Students.

**Please print and complete this form. Parent/guardian and student(s) must both sign. Have your student(s) return this form to school by Friday, August 11, 2023.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date