



St. Mary's Academy

Lower School Family Handbook

Policies and Procedures 2020-2021

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Introduction

Welcome to St. Mary's Academy Lower School. As with any healthy community, SMA has a mission, set of beliefs, traditions, policies, and procedures that provide structure and guide interactions. This handbook is meant to inform and clarify the above. Thank you for taking the time to read and understand the contents of this handbook.

*Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic some of our school's typical processes and procedures as outlined in this handbook have been adjusted to ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff. Please refer to the High School "Readiness to Reopen Plan", accessible on our website at stmarys.academy/sma-2020-21-reopening-plan. This web page remains updated with the most current information pertaining to the 2020-2021 school year. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to Lower School Principal, Karen Smith, at ksmith@smanet.org.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary's Academy fosters excellence in each child through academic achievement, spiritual development, and service. The Loretto School Values of faith, community, justice and respect provide the foundation for students to be powerful agents of change.

VISION STATEMENT

Inspiring leaders to act with integrity, seek justice, build community, and change the world.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

As an independent school in the Catholic tradition, and committed to the Loretto School Values of faith, community, justice, and respect, St. Mary's Academy is committed to diversity in its many forms. Diversity includes the human facets of race, ethnicity, national origin, geography, religion, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, age, physical ability, learning style, and marital, parental or economic status.

St. Mary's Academy affirms the inherent dignity and value of each individual. Our school embraces the distinct identity of each person and helps students to appreciate their own identities and those of others. St. Mary's Academy actively seeks families, faculty, and staff who bring a range of experience to the school.

We believe diversity increases the ability to formulate and nurture ideas and relationships resulting in a school community where all opinions and views are respected.

St. Mary's Academy provides a scholarly learning environment for an educational experience that prepares students to participate in an increasingly complex global society.

We believe that in an inclusive society, developing competency, the will and ability to create authentic and effective relationships across differences, and embrace diversity is crucial to being a responsible and compassionate world citizen.

Beliefs and Assumptions

At St. Mary's Academy, we offer a values oriented education that emphasizes the dignity of the individual. In carrying out these values, we believe:

...that spirituality is an essential dimension of the human experience; therefore, we base our educative mission on religious values that are rooted in, but not limited to, those in the Judeo-Christian tradition;

...that each student should be guided to an appreciation of aesthetics, a growth in wisdom, and an understanding of the interconnectedness of all learning;

...that commitment to a diverse community is an essential support for learning;

...in empowering each student to make ethical decisions and to act for the good of the whole community;

...that personal attention given the student increases academic learning and development;

...we respect and encourage differences of learning and teaching styles;

... that each student needs substantive knowledge, the ability to think critically and broad-based skills for success in the present and the future;

...that the curriculum should allow for a smooth transition from one level to the next;

...that the effectiveness of our program demands constant professional re-evaluation.

History

More than 150 years ago, before the Colorado Territory was formed in 1861, a key necessity was missing in Denver: a stable educational experience for the children of families new to the frontier. In 1864, three courageous and selfless Sisters of Loretto traveled by mail coach from their home in Santa Fe, New Mexico to Denver to open St. Mary's Academy. In the introduction to St. Mary's Academy - 150 years, former Colorado State Historian William J. Convery described the founders as transplanting knowledge from the East but also, "tolerance and respect for diversity, and a commitment to justice." SMA conferred the first diploma in the Colorado Territory to Jessie Forshee.

Today the Sisters of Loretto continue a long and vital tradition of education by sponsoring St. Mary's Academy and The Havern School in Denver, Loretto Academy in El Paso, and Nerinx Hall in St. Louis.

Guided by the Loretto School Values, the ethos of St. Mary's Academy is deeply rooted in the spirituality and mission of Loretto. The intangible imprint of Loretto is interwoven into the very fabric of our school where the Loretto School Values of faith, community, justice and respect serve as a touchstone for all aspects of our community.

Every year St. Mary's Academy provides experiences for students, teachers, and administrators to deepen the bond with Loretto and with the other schools. Since 1988 teachers have traveled each spring to the Motherhouse in Kentucky for an intensive weekend immersion in the community's rich history and vibrant mission of today. For almost as many years, high school students from the Loretto schools spend a week of service at the Motherhouse, learn advocacy skills in El Paso and participate in a leadership conference in Denver culminating in a Loretto Leadership Statement to guide their year's work.

As a school dedicated to educating young people to be powerful agents of change, we embrace the Constitutions of the Sisters of Loretto that encourage us to "educate others as well as ourselves to truth, beauty and the ways of peace, in the spirit of Jesus."

Loretto School Values

Loretto encourages an approach to all life that promotes mutuality, collaboration, and compassion and rejects relationships based on dominance or submission. We embrace the following values:

Faith

Experiencing the enduring love of God, we build hope, foster community, and act in charity and service.

Community

We strive to build interdependent relationships, which are affirming, inclusive, empowering and compassionate.

Justice

We promote change in systems and in relationships that are oppressive.

We work to create systems in which people, especially women, are treated fairly and impartially.

Respect

We are open to differences and believe in the potential of each person.

We promote the dignity of each person and protect the sacredness of all creation.

Policies and Procedures

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

These Lower School years are marked by significant developmental changes, which create unique academic challenges. A key goal of Lower School teachers and programs is to help students learn how to apply their strengths to their advantage and compensate for their weaknesses, and to realize that often our greatest strengths are also our greatest weaknesses. Another key goal is to guide students in the discovery of their passions for particular academic subjects, the arts, sports, and/or service. Passion sparks motivation, purpose, curiosity and fortitude.

Nearly every Lower School student encounters some degree of academic difficulty and challenge. Most difficulties are resolved in context through the academic support provided by classroom teachers during regular class time or outside of class time before or after school or during office hours. Only occasionally would an outside, parent-contracted tutor be recommended and then only in cases of specific remedial needs and after analysis by the learning specialist, teaching team, and principal. Additional resources and support are made available to students with professionally diagnosed learning disabilities wherever compatibility exists between the prescribed accommodations and St. Mary's Academy's program.

When a student is unable to find academic success and demonstrate his/her knowledge over time, considerable communication will take place between school and home to discover and implement strategies and solutions.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities - Students with professionally identified learning disabilities have and do thrive in SMA's Lower School's academic program. Keys to success include the student's determination and commitment, the family's support of the student, and collaboration with the faculty. The Lower School has two full-time instructional specialists to assist in the support of students with learning disabilities. In this role, the instructional specialists will assist in the design and implementation of classroom accommodations in consultation with the family, educational evaluator, and classroom teachers. Accommodation plans are individually developed and may include extra time on tests, specific seating, oral testing and use of assistive technology, etc. The instructional specialists can also help the family find an appropriate learning specialist or tutor if more support is necessary.

Educational Evaluations and Testing – Families applying to SMA are encouraged to share during the application process any educational testing their student may have completed. If testing has been completed in between the time of application and the time the student starts in the Lower School, please forward the testing to the Lower School instructional specialists. Occasionally, if no testing exists, the Lower School recommends educational testing when they note academic struggles that are ongoing or outside of the developmental norm. A

recommendation for educational testing comes from the Principal of the Lower School or the Lower School instructional specialists in conference with the student and parents.

Academic Accommodations for Special Circumstances – Academic accommodation plans are also developed for students with chronic medical conditions or other special circumstances such as for students for whom English is a second language.

ATTENDANCE

EXCUSED/UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

The connection among being on time, regular and consistent attendance, academic achievement, and social competency is a strong one. We do not want students with a fever to attend school. Otherwise, students are expected to attend school daily, be on time for all classes and to remain on campus throughout the school day. Because attendance and participation in class are the most significant part of the learning experience, **excused absences** should be limited and include illness, emergencies, and religious holidays. Students who are absent are strongly encouraged to meet individually with each of their teachers to determine a schedule for make-up work.

Unexcused absences include extended school holidays, pleasure trips or family vacations, and disciplinary suspension.

Note: Since absence and tardiness jeopardize academic success and are disruptive, chronic absences/lateness for any reason will result in a family meeting with the principal and teachers where a plan and benchmarks for attendance will be set. Holidays are sprinkled throughout the school year to accommodate family vacations and trips. Please consult the calendar before planning trips.

Note: Parents/guardians are requested to telephone the Lower School Office (303-762-8300 Ext. 250) by 8:00 a.m. if their child will be absent or late for any portion of the school day. Prompt notification enables us to better serve the individual and community. Note: The parent/guardian contributes to the safety of the student by signing out the student in the Lower School office.

BEHAVIOR

BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS OFF CAMPUS

Students are held to the same behavioral expectations, policies, and standards when representing SMA off-campus as when they are on-campus. Examples of off-campus activities include but are not limited to field trips, community service excursions, socials, overnight trips, arts performances, and sports events.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

Offending act or an action committed outside of school hours, during breaks from school, during non-school-sponsored activities and/or off of school property that disrupts school life may result in loss of school privileges and other disciplinary action. A disruption of school life may occur when acts committed by an SMA student or students outside of school and not associated with a school-sponsored activity threatens the safety of SMA students and/or interferes with the learning environment when school

is in session. If such acts are deemed contrary to the mission of the school, impinge on the rights of other students, employees or members of the school community, or have a direct or immediate effect on the discipline or general welfare of the school by the principal in concert with the president of the school, the school reserves the right to take action.

BULLYING

St. Mary's Academy is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and positive learning environment for all of its community members. The School will not tolerate any action or behavior that restricts any person's right to physical and emotional safety. This policy shall include any action that takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, and on a school bus. It also includes actions that take place off of school property, if the result of those actions substantially interferes with a student's ability to attend school and/or be educated in a safe, non-hostile environment.

Definition

Bullying is defined as unwanted, intentional, aggressive and intimidating behavior, repeated over time, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

There are four different types of bullying:

Verbal bullying– involves using words (spoken or written) with the intent to hurt someone. Verbal bullying can include: name calling, threatening, mocking, teasing, taunting, racial or discriminatory words, and unwanted nicknames.

Relational bullying– involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Relational bullying can include: exclusion from a social group, gossiping, shunning, spreading rumors, or behavior that has the intent to make a person feel bad or embarrassed in front of others.

Physical bullying– involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying can include: pushing, hitting, kicking, spitting, throwing objects at someone, taking someone's possessions, making mean gestures, and unwanted touch.

Cyberbullying– involves using technology as a means to bully. Cyberbullying can include: spreading hurtful and/or defamatory information and communication using the Internet, email, cell phones, chat, social media sites, text blogs, or any other form of technology.

Note: Bullying is different from the typical disagreements or conflict that occur between friends or classmates. It can be difficult to tell the difference between teasing and bullying. Teasing may involve two or more friends who act together in a way that is intended to be fun for all involved, with some reciprocity, but it never involves physical or emotional abuse. It is possible for teasing to get out of hand, with feelings being hurt, and still not constitute bullying.

Policy in Action

The best disciplinary procedure is one that does not have to be enforced; it comes from a clear understanding of behavioral expectations, good leadership, and appropriate and fair supervision. Our hope is that we are able to address and correct most issues early on, which benefits both the student(s) and the School. We understand that it is developmentally appropriate for students to make mistakes, and we want to be able to support them when they do, and also acknowledge and celebrate the many wonderful things they do in support of each other and the School.

The Lower School will again be incorporating the acronym P.A.W.S., and our Loretto School Values of faith, community, justice, and respect as the common language which will form the foundation of our community building efforts. P.A.W.S. stands for:

Pactice Kindness
Acept Responsibility
Work and Play Safely
Show Respect

The image below visually represents this very important work:



In addition, we have developed the following chant as a means to help students celebrate their successes together and become centered in our work as a community:

*We are the Wildcats and we're here to say,
The four Loretto School Values guide our way.
There's faith, community, justice, and respect.
We work together and have a growth mindset.
Our school is special and we're proud to say, we are the students of SMA!
Go Wildcats!*

Our community agreements will be developed and shared via assemblies, classroom discussions, morning announcements, displays on bulletin boards, posters, etc. We will also build incentives and rewards for

students and classrooms as a way to acknowledge and celebrate the ways in which our students model appropriate behavior.

DISCIPLINE

St. Mary's Academy Lower School seeks to establish an environment where students are empowered to learn. Students at St. Mary's Academy exercise developmentally appropriate self-discipline, conducting themselves in ways that support the mission of St. Mary's Academy and the Loretto School Values. When they make a wrong choice, discipline is delivered respectfully, thoughtfully and with the intention of supporting the disciplined student and community. St. Mary's Academy understands that Lower School is a time of significant physical, psychological, and emotional growth. Social-emotional development takes time and is accompanied by mistakes. Adults are charged with helping students reflect on behavioral choices, especially when they hurt another and the community.

DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES AND CONSEQUENCES

The determination and nature of disciplinary action will vary in accordance with the seriousness or frequency of the disciplinary infractions. Disciplinary actions include but are not limited to lunch or recess detention, assigned school service, daily check-in at the Lower School office before and/or after school, a loss of privileges, a behavioral contract, behavioral probation, suspension, or expulsion. The Discipline Committee of the Lower School may place chronic or serious offenders on disciplinary probation or a behavioral contract. During the probation or contract period, regular meetings will occur among the student, parents, teachers, and principal to note progress.

Note: In conference between the Lower School Disciplinary Committee and the President of the Academy, SMA reserves the right to discontinue the enrollment of a student who is unresponsive to correction or whose behavior inside or outside of school is disruptive to the learning and teaching process within school or interferes with the safety or welfare of students or other members of the school community.

Learning from our or other's mistakes: The school reserves the right to raise at any school meeting any issue of discipline regarding a student for the purpose of furthering the educational and learning experience of students and the school community overall.

Circumstances can differ greatly between cases, and the Lower School Disciplinary Committee and the President of the Academy may modify the procedures in a particular case in order to reach a timely and just decision.

What follows are examples of behaviors that may require intervention:

Minor infractions - Minor infractions may include, but not be limited to incomplete classwork or homework, not following directions in class, not having the appropriate materials, interrupting class, making disruptive noises, being out of dress code, cursing or making disrespectful comments, being dishonest, engaging in running/horseplay in the building, name calling, using or taking others'

belongings, inappropriate language or gestures, throwing objects, not keeping hands/feet to self, inappropriate phone/technology use, etc.

Major infractions - Major infractions may include, but not be limited to repeated minor infractions, destruction of property, inappropriate language, leaving the classroom or building without permission, physically hurting oneself or others, stealing, possessing or using objects that may cause harm to others, inappropriate use of technology, plagiarism, frequent or serious disruption to the learning environment, and other behaviors that are considered “bullying.”

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY

The entrance and exit to the Lower School building is through the front, north doors that face the Sanders House administrative building. All Lower School doors remain locked throughout the day. All parents/guardians and visitors to the Lower School are asked to enter through the north doors and sign in at the desk in the Lower School office that is directly to the left of the entry doors.

ARRIVING OR LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY OR LATE

For safety, when students arrive at or depart from school between 8:05 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., parents/guardians sign students in and/or out in the Lower School office. If a student knows that he/she will be arriving late, it is helpful if the parent/guardian calls the Lower School office with this information.

SECURITY AND SUPERVISION

Because student safety is an issue that must be taken seriously at all times, please note the following policies. Your support is appreciated.

- Lower School students are to be in line-of-sight supervision of a faculty member during the school day and during school functions/programs.
- Musical or theatre performance participants or students staying for a rehearsal or game must be under direct supervision of their teachers.
- Students attending athletic contests at the end of the academic day must be at the games in the gym or by the playing field. They must remain in the gym or at the playing field until they meet their parents/guardians to leave campus.
- Student spectators waiting for the start of a game must be supervised. They may not walk among the buildings or in the buildings during these times without adult supervision.
- With prior arrangement, a student may remain in the building after the end of the academic day to work on a project or meet with a teacher as long as the teacher is directly supervising the student.

CARPOOL

CARPOOL GUIDELINES

The safety of our SMA students is the #1 priority for every procedure listed below. Please make every effort to be courteous and kind. **Note: As outlined in our Reopening Plan, our carpool guidelines have been adjusted.**

SOUTH LOT: LOWER SCHOOL

- Only PK - 5 students should be dropped off in the south parking lot.
- Please form two lines and do not change lanes. This helps get cars off of University Boulevard.
- Students must be dropped off in the carpool lanes. Carpool lanes are indicated by orange cones. Students enter through the gymnasium.
- In order to keep the line moving, please have students ready to get out of the car (coats on, backpacks in hand, etc.)
- The driver should not get out of the car. If this is necessary, please park in a parking space.
- If you plan to stay for Lower School assembly, please park in the north lot once the south lot parking spaces are full
- Parent volunteers, members of the SMA Advancement Team, and members of the SMA Admissions Team will be assisting the Lower School Principal with carpool every morning beginning at 7:45 am.
- If you arrive early, please turn off your engine rather than idling.

CELL PHONES

Students in grades three through five may have a cell phone. All cell phones must be turned into the Lower School office at the beginning of the day and can be picked up at the end of the school day. Teachers and administrators reserve the right to confiscate cell phones that are used inappropriately. If this occurs, parents will be notified and will be required to pick up the phone in the front office at the end of the day.

COMMUNICATION

Parents and students are encouraged to first contact the school adult most directly involved and capable of answering your question or addressing your concern. While your student's teacher, principal, or other school adults are available and willing to listen and counsel, the most respectful, effective and efficient method of avoiding potential misunderstandings and to support an environment of trust is to first contact the primary person involved. If your question or concern is not addressed to your satisfaction and you are in need of advice or counsel on how to proceed, please contact the principal. If your question or concern, following your conversation with the principal, is not addressed to your satisfaction, please contact the academy president.

Please contact the Lower School Administrative Assistant if you are retrieving your child during the school day at a time other than the usual retrieval time. Thank you.

CONTACTING STUDENTS

As a courtesy and to minimize distraction and disruption in the learning environment, please call the Administrative Assistant in the Lower School Office or drop by the office to leave messages or

belongings for your student rather than directly contacting your child through text or email or entering a classroom. The office delivers messages and belongings during passing periods to minimize interruption and lost focus. Teachers and students appreciate your respect of this request.

Note: Students are encouraged to call parents/guardians from the Lower School Office in cases of emergency or changes in the daily schedule.

COMMUNITY ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

For the health of the community and student life, parents/guardians are asked to conduct their communications and activities with the four Loretto School Values as their guide. Exercising faith, community, justice and respect strengthens the necessary and valued dialogue between home and school and among parents. Parent interactions with each other, students, and teachers play a significant role in the day-to-day experience in the Lower School.

SOCIAL EVENT GUIDELINES

SMA parents are encouraged to follow these guidelines when hosting a non-school-sponsored social activity for SMA students.

- Whether the social event is large or small, line-of-sight adult presence and oversight is recommended during the lower school years.
- Whether inviting few or many guests, use of discretion when issuing invitations minimizes hurt feelings in the community. Remind your hosting student to invite his/her guests in private. Remind guests that posting photos of the event on social networks can be very hurtful to those not invited.
- Please avoid having a celebratory group picked up in carpool line. The sense of exclusiveness is hurtful even to those who are only tenuously connected to the host.
- Establish a specific starting and ending time.
- Educate yourself about your legal responsibilities when hosting a social gathering.
- Attempt to speak with the parents of invited students before the event to convey starting and ending times as well as behavioral expectations. Ask for help with chaperoning.

When your child has been invited to a social event consider taking the following actions:

Call the hosting parents ahead of time to:

- Introduce yourself and learn more about the specifics of the event.
- Ascertain the starting and ending times of the event.
- Ensure that the parent and adequate chaperones will be present.
- Obtain and give contact information.
- Offer assistance if possible.
- Be clear with your child about your behavioral expectations of him/her.
- Discuss possible compromising situations and the protocol for handling them.

- Specify alternative contacts – a neighbor or friend – to call if needed.

Special treats - The Lower School allows birthday treats for students. We ask that parents bring treats for each student and that they are considerate of known dietary restrictions and allergies.

COMPUTER ACCEPTABLE-USE POLICY

Students and parents are required to read, accept and sign the SMA Acceptable-use Agreement governing use of computer devices at school before the student is allowed to use the devices and school Internet connection. The agreement can be found by [HERE](#). A similar procedure is required for the Chromebook User Agreement.

CONFERENCES

There are two formal conference days offered twice each year to provide students with the valuable opportunity to develop communication skills at a table with significant adults. Parents and teachers share successes, challenges and plans. Never feel you must wait for these dates to request time with your child's teacher or one or members of your child's teaching team. We are partners for the benefit of the child, and will meet as often as necessary to ensure we are doing all we can to most effectively support our students.

Formal conferences occur in October and March on Wednesday evening, Thursday, and Friday. An on-line sign-up form is provided ahead of time. Please know we welcome and encourage parents and students to contact the teacher or principal throughout the school year to review their child's progress or to discuss situations that may be affecting their child's attitude, academic performance, or behavior.

COUNSELOR

The St. Mary's Academy Lower and Middle School counselor is available to support students in need of help with personal or relational problems. Students and parents may arrange a time to see the counselor by communicating with the teacher or by asking the school's administrative assistant to help make the connection. Teachers, advisors, or the principal may refer students to the counselor. As an active participant in teaching team meetings, the counselor in Lower and Middle School brings expertise and context in support of a student's personal and academic success.

CRISIS PLAN

St. Mary's Academy has a school-wide crisis plan for unexpected situations that disrupt the normal flow of events and call for extraordinary measures. A crisis could be, among other situations, a fire, tornado, blizzard, injury, threat of injury, or death. For that reason, the School is prepared with procedures and drills that are reviewed and practiced throughout the year. Should immediate evacuation from the school be required, students will be evacuated to the LDS Church at 999 East Tufts Avenue.

DRESS CODE

In order for students and teachers to optimize their time together, SMA insists on modest attire. The school reserves the right to require offending students to cover themselves, change clothes, or remove distracting jewelry or make-up. If a student receives three dress code infractions, he/she will check in each morning before attending classes for a designated period of time. In some cases, per grade-level, a dress code infraction precludes being free to participate in a dress-down day. Thank you for supporting the dress code.

Tops (all tops must be plain, solid color, collared, no logo allowed other than SMA, tops may be tucked in or out)

- Any polo, t-shirt, or sweatshirt with an SMA logo.
- Solid color polo shirts, long or short sleeve, must be plain with no logo - unless SMA logo.
- All tops and dresses must have sleeves (no sleeveless).
- Vests must be plain and a solid color.
- Turtlenecks or t-shirts in any plain, solid color may be worn underneath the polo shirt.
- Sweatshirts, sweaters, and fleece in any plain, solid color may be worn over polos.
- No outerwear jackets may be worn inside during school hours.

Bottoms for boys (cotton twill or corduroy)

- Solid color navy blue, black, brown or khaki pants or shorts.
- Nice cargo pants (similar to Lands' End) or shorts (no more than one inch above the knee).

Bottoms for girls (cotton twill or corduroy)

- Solid color navy blue, black, brown or khaki pants, shorts, cropped pants, skirts, jumpers or skorts.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be an appropriate length, no more than one inch above the knee.
- Leggings or tights may be worn under skirts and dresses and must be solid color navy blue, black, white, or brown.
- Leggings may not be worn without a skirt or dress over them.

Shoes, Boots and Socks

- Socks must be worn with shoes, must match and be a plain, solid color.
- Crocs and sandals are NOT allowed.
- Boots are NOT allowed other than snow boots which cannot be worn in class - only at recess.
- No shoes with wheels.
- One pair of indoor only PE shoes are required for every student.

Jewelry/Accessories

- Belts may not be worn over shirts. Chain belts, very wide belts, or belts that dangle may not be worn.
- Girls may wear earrings that are no longer than one inch.
- Other jewelry should be limited to one bracelet and one necklace.

- Hats may not be worn inside during school hours.
- No make-up may be worn other than lip balm and lip gloss.

APPEARANCE

Students are expected to have neatly groomed, clean hair. Mohawks or similar hairstyles are not allowed. Boys' hair length may not extend over the bottom of the collar. Hair must be out of the students' eyes. Natural hair colors only - no dyed hair (blue, pink, purple, etc.)

SMA SCHOOL SPIRIT BLUE & WHITE DAYS

All students are required to have a pair of navy blue slacks (girls may wear a navy blue skirt if preferred) and a clean, white, collared polo shirt for all special "Blue & White" days. Blue & White days include assemblies, Mass days, May Crowning, certain field trips, and other designated days. Shorts will be allowed during the hot weather months on these special days.

PROCESS FOR STUDENTS OUT OF DRESS CODE

Parents will be notified when their child is out of dress code and will be asked to bring appropriate clothing. We expect parents to ensure their children adhere to the guidelines. Thank you!

ON DESIGNATED "DRESS DOWN" DAYS, STUDENTS MAY WEAR:

- Sweatpants (no holes please).
- Jeans (no holes please).
- Shorts - no more than one inch above the knee.
- Dresses - no more than one inch above the knee.
- Skirts/skorts - no more than one inch above the knee.
- Sport team shirts.
- Shirts with logos or patterns.

STUDENTS MAY NOT WEAR:

- Clothing torn or with holes.
- Shorts, skirts, skorts, or dresses that are more than one inch above the knee.
- Clothing that displays violence or a negative message.
- High heeled or open toed shoes.
- Sleeveless tops, tank tops, halters, or tops with spaghetti straps, tops/dresses with an open back.

GIFT POLICY

St. Mary's Academy employees (faculty and staff) may not accept cash gifts, gift cards, favors, services, or tickets from SMA students or parents. This policy is established to avoid the impropriety and the implied or actual influence upon an employee's impartial judgment towards students and their families.

Group gifts from more than one family are not allowed, as such gifts place parents in the difficult position of soliciting funds from other parents.

The SMA Annual Fund generously provides for employee appreciation throughout the year including a cash Christmas gift and an employee appreciation luncheon. The most effective way to support SMA employees is to make a gift to the Annual Fund. This ensures equitable treatment for all SMA employees and needed resources in the classroom.

While St. Mary's Academy families' appreciation for faculty and staff is greatly valued, the community's observance of this policy is essential to establishing equity and integrity within the school community. Please remember that handwritten notes, homemade treats, and/or a personal sharing of genuine appreciation is always welcome.

GRADING

Written evaluations are sent home in December and the last day of school. Letter grades are not given in the Lower School. Teachers write narrative reports in all subject areas.

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

Homework is typically assigned Monday through Thursday beginning in Kindergarten. We believe that homework should be a reinforcement of skills that are taught in the classroom. Homework should be purposeful, meaningful, and provide an opportunity to solidify skills and knowledge. Homework times vary by grade level and will generally increase throughout the grades. Additionally, daily reading is essential and students are expected to read nightly. This can include reading aloud, being read to, silent reading or paired reading.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

SCHOOL CLOSING OR DELAYED START FOR WEATHER

Parents are encouraged to use their own judgment about the safety of roads on snowy days. Being tardy on severe weather days is fine. If you decide to forego the drive to school even if the school is not officially closed for weather, the absence will be excused.

In the event of inclement weather, St. Mary's Academy might call a "Delayed Arrival." On a delayed arrival day, classes begin at 9:00 a.m. in the Lower School. For students who might arrive earlier than the 9:00 start time, school personnel will be present in the school buildings beginning at 8:00 am. Lower School students report to the gym. Regular school hours should be assumed in the absence of cancellation announcements.

The decision to announce a Delayed Arrival day will be made according to the following factors: quantity of snow fallen or forecasted; ability of students and staff to travel to school; ability to clear and maintain parking lots and pathways; ability of school function (heating, water, etc.)

As soon as the decision is made to change the schedule, notification will be sent out via text, email and/or voicemail through *PCR*. We will also post announcements on the school website, www.stmarys.academy Usually this decision is made and posted by 6:00 a.m.

When school is in session and we have inclement weather, decisions related to activities/athletics will not be made until after 1:30 pm. Weather changes quickly in Colorado. If school is cancelled due to weather concerns, activities and athletics will be cancelled. Information about cancellation of events or school closing is available by calling the school at 303.762.8300 and watching the school's website and *PCR*.

LOCKERS & BOOK BAGS

Students are assigned a shared locker in first through fourth grade; fifth graders receive their own locker. Backpacks must be able to fit into the shared locker space and cannot be stored in the classrooms or in the hallways. The Lower School administration reserves the right to open and search any student backpack or locker without notification to the student or parent if safety is an issue. Should a student's backpack or locker be searched, at least two adults will be present during the search. If unlawful conduct is suspected, a student's personal bag may be held until a parent/guardian is notified and present for a search of its contents. Note: As outlined in our Reopening Plan, students will not use lockers this year as a result of the pandemic.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found items are deposited on a rack located near the Lower School office. Unclaimed items are donated to community charities at regular intervals. Note: Please mark all belongings and items of clothing with the student's name.

LUNCH

Grateful Plate is our lunch provider in the Lower and Middle School. Two hot entree options, sides and salads are offered each day. This can be paid through a pre-loaded account. Students may also bring packed lunches from home. White or chocolate milk is available each day. Microwaves are not available to Lower School students. Note: As outlined in our Reopening Plan, the lunch procedure has been adjusted.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

SMA requests that medical/dental appointments be made outside school hours whenever possible. A note should be sent with the student on the day of the appointment indicating the time the student will be leaving.

SCHEDULE

The school day begins at 8:05am and students are expected to be in their classrooms when the bell rings. The day ends at 3:00pm. The homeroom teacher will provide classroom schedules to families.

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

In the event of circumstances beyond the School's reasonable control including, but not limited to, any fire, act of God, war, government action, act of terrorism, epidemic, pandemic, natural disaster, or other major upheaval, the School may immediately suspended classes and instruction without notice until such time as the School, at its discretion, determines that it may safely and adequately resume performance. In addition, the School may alter its calendar or provide alternative means of instruction, including but not limited to on-line or long-distance instruction, in its sole discretion.

SECURING BELONGINGS

Please do not bring valuable items to school such as expensive jewelry, large sums of money, or other objects. The Lower School is not responsible for the loss or theft of a student's belongings. While theft is the exception at SMA, it has occurred. In addition, valuable items become symbols of social power and influence and are not conducive to the learning environment and sense of community that SMA promotes and supports.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

St. Mary's Academy will respond with disciplinary action in the case of sexual harassment of students, employees or other members of the school community by anyone, whether on school property or off. This includes work-related assignments or events and other school-related events such as social functions.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or related to a person's sex when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing, or opportunities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment, or academic standing or school-related decisions affecting that individual;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.

Some examples of sexual harassment include: sexual innuendo; verbal harassment, including derogatory comments or slurs, or inappropriate comments about a person's body or appearance; physical harassment such as unwanted touching, patting, or pinching, or physical interference with movement or work; or visual harassment such as derogatory cartoons, drawings, posters, or graffiti.

Any student who believes he/she has been harassed or witnessed harassment should report such actions to the principal, counselor, advisor, or trusted teacher. For anonymous reports, call the Colorado Safe2Tell at 1-877-542-7233 or make an anonymous report at www.safe2tell.org

Following a complaint of harassment, St. Mary's Academy will conduct such investigation as is necessary to appropriately respond to the complaint and ensure that no further harassment or retaliation occurs. Complaints will be maintained in confidence to the extent possible considering the school's obligation to take appropriate and responsive action.

Appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken against anyone found to have sexually harassed another. Some forms of sexual harassment are considered violations of criminal law or covered by mandatory reporting obligations, and may need to be reported to legal authorities.

Students are also protected from any retaliation for making a good faith harassment complaint or for participating in a harassment investigation. Any student with a concern that he or she is being retaliated against should immediately bring the retaliation to the attention of the principal, counselor, advisor, or trusted teacher.

OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT

Other non-sexual harassment may occur when someone tries to humiliate or intimidate another person, such as:

- Making racist comments;
- Making derogatory comments about a person's religion;
- Making cruel, personal jokes;
- Teasing a person about his/her sexual orientation.

Anyone who believes that he/she has been harassed as described above should report such action to the principal, counselor, or trusted teacher. The school will investigate thoughtfully and respectfully.

TUTORING ON CAMPUS

Prior to any tutoring by outside individuals takes place on campus, communication with the homeroom teacher/advisor, division head, learning specialist and tutor must occur. Outside tutors working with students on campus must have completed a background check by the school.

VISITORS

Visitors are not allowed in the Lower School during the day unless approved by the Lower School Principal.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Parents/Guardians are valued and warmly welcomed members of the Lower School community. Though there are fewer opportunities to be in school alongside students, there are numerous ways to contribute and make a positive difference. Please contact the Lower School Parent Reps for more information and look for the volunteer sign up at orientation and the Back-To-School night for parents.

Examples of Lower School volunteer opportunities include Tuesday Treats, Fall Festival, Holiday Parties, Field Trips, and classroom assistance.

WEAPONS POLICY

Unless authorized in writing by the Academy Principal or otherwise required by applicable law, the school prohibits the possession of any weapon, including, without limitation, any firearm, imitation firearm, pellet gun, or any other type of gun or firearm, knife, Taser, crossbow, or other dangerous weapon, ammunition or fireworks on school grounds. Any such item may be confiscated and, if appropriate, turned over to law enforcement.

Consistent with best practices, SMA reviews and updates the Lower School Handbook on a periodic basis. This sometimes includes revised language and sometimes includes substantive changes.