

2025-26

St. Mary Catholic Schools

Elementary Handbook

St. Gabriel Elementary

900 Geiger St, Neenah, WI 54956

Phone: (920) 725-4161

St. Margaret Mary Elementary

610 Division St, Neenah, WI 54956

Phone: (920) 729-4565

St. Mary Elementary

540 2nd St, Menasha, WI 54952

Phone: (920) 725-5351

*This Handbook is subject to change throughout the school year.
The most current version of the handbook can be found on the SMCS System Website.
Questions can be directed to the individual site principals.*

Table of Contents

[Mission Statement/Accreditation](#).....

[Absences and Attendance Issues](#)

[Animals in School...](#).....

[After School Care](#)

[Arrival and Dismissal of Students](#)

[Athletics, Activities & Programs](#).....

[Behavior Expectations](#).....

[Bicycles](#)

[Birthday Treats](#)

[Book Care](#)

[Bus Service and Rider Conduct](#)

[Change of Address](#)

[Dress code](#).....

[Extended Care](#)

[Field Trips](#)

[Food Service](#)

[Head Lice](#)

[Homework & Assessment](#)

[Legal Information](#)

[Liturgy](#)

[Lost and Found](#)

[Parent/School Communication and Phone Calls](#).....

[Parent/Teacher Conferences](#)

[Personal Electronic Devices](#)

[Publicity and Photo Permission](#)

[Registration, Admission and Withdrawal of Students](#)

[Religious Formation](#).....

[School Closings](#)

[School Library](#)

[School Pictures](#)

[School Policies](#)

[School Security](#)

[Snacks](#)

[Supervision](#)

[Testing Program](#)

[Tuition, Tuition Assistance and Fundraising](#)

[Uniform & Dress Code](#)

[Volunteering](#)

[Winter Clothing](#)

In addition to the policies described in this handbook, SMCS abides by the policies and regulations of the Board of Education defined by the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay. Not all diocesan policies are duplicated in this handbook. A copy of all policies is available upon request in the school office. SMCS retains the right to amend the handbook for just cause. SMCS families will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

Mission Statement/Accreditation

Preparing and inspiring students to lead meaningful lives, rooted in the teachings of Christ in our Catholic tradition. Cognia has accredited St. Mary Catholic Schools. In addition, the schools are in good standing with the National Catholic Educational Association.

Absences and Attendance

Children are required by state law to attend school, and the law that defines excused absences is very specific. According to state statutes, a child who is “absent part or all of one or more days from school during which the school has not been notified of the legal cause of the absence” is considered truant (Wisconsin State Statute 118.15). If a child is sick, we ask that he/she not come to school. This is for the welfare of your child, as well as the other children. The school office needs to be notified by 8:15 a.m. as to the reason for the absence.

If the office does not receive notification by 8:15 a.m., the school administrative assistant will contact the parent/guardian to determine the reason for the absence. If the office is not able to reach a parent or emergency contact by 10:00 a.m., the police department may be called to do a welfare check on your child. This is a safeguard for your child and helps to prevent truancy.

Illness

If your child exhibits symptoms of illness, please keep your child at home. Children must be free of fever and vomiting for at least 24 hours without the use of medication and should be healthy before returning to school. A child who has a communicable or contagious disease is to be kept home until the child is no longer contagious. Please inform the school administrative assistant if your child has a contagious disease or condition, e.g., strep throat, Covid, influenza, chicken pox, lice, etc. Children who develop a fever of 100.3 degrees or higher during the school day will need to be picked up. Screen at home for the following symptoms prior to reporting to school:

- fever greater than 100.3 or chills
- sore throat
- headache
- body aches
- fatigue
- runny nose
- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- change in ability to taste or smell
- cough and shortness of breath
- chest pain, bluish lips or face, or new-onset mental confusion

Illness During The School Day

Any student who becomes ill during the school day will be sent to the office by his/her teacher. A member of the school staff will care for the student temporarily. If the student continues to feel ill after resting, a parent or emergency contact person will be notified. In the event of a serious medical problem, the school may contact emergency medical personnel. We ask for sick students to be picked up within 45 minutes of being in the sick room.

Appointments

Please try to schedule appointments outside of the school day. If it is necessary to schedule appointments during the school day, please make every effort to vary the time. This reduces the possibility of a child frequently missing the same subject. Students must be signed out by a parent/guardian from the school office if they leave during the school day. If a child arrives late to school due to an appointment or returns to school after an appointment, parents must sign their child in at the school office.

Vacations

Vacations are discouraged during school time. Grades may suffer due to missed daily participation, as classroom involvement cannot be made up. Personal contact with the classroom teacher is encouraged before a planned absence to see if alternate assignments can be arranged. The teacher will provide material **after** the child returns to school to help the parent cover the missed material. All assignments provided by the teacher must be completed. The teacher and parents will work out a reasonable timeline for completion of assignments.

Attendance at School for Concerts and Other After-school Events

To participate in concerts and other after-school events or performances, students must be in school the entire school day. Students who are too ill to attend classes are too ill to perform in after school events. Exceptions to this rule include serious illness or death in the immediate family, medical or dental appointments that cannot otherwise be avoided, and special situations for which prior approval has been obtained from the administration.

School Hours

School begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m.

Tardiness

Students who arrive at school after 8:00 a.m. will be marked tardy.

Arrival/Departure During the Day

Any time a student leaves the school building during school hours, the parent/guardian must come into the office and sign the child out of the building and sign them back in upon their return. Students must report to the office to check in when they arrive late or return to school after leaving. Please notify the school office of any early dismissals or late arrivals due to medical or other reasons by sending a written note or email. Any student who arrives after 9:30 a.m. will be marked absent for the morning session. Any student who leaves school between 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. will be considered absent for the entire afternoon session.

After School Care

After School Care is available at each elementary campus on the days when school is in session. This program is available to families who would like additional childcare when the elementary school is dismissed at 3:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. This program is available to preschoolers at the discretion of the building administrator. Families enrolled in After School Care will receive a separate handout explaining program fees, expectations, and other pertinent information.

Animals in School

Prior approval must be received from the principal before any animals are brought into the school.

Animals in schools shall be planned and approved in accordance with established procedures.

SMCS recognizes that animals have educational value in the school setting, but only under conditions that ensure the safety and well-being of the students, staff, and the animal. Live animals in the classroom provide opportunities to learn about diversity, habitat, humane care, animal growth and development, and behavior. A teacher must have a clear understanding of, and a strong commitment to, the responsible care of living animals before making any decision to use live animals for educational study.

When Comfort Animals or Guide Animals are in use, families will be notified ahead of time and students will be able to participate based on parent approval and student comfort.

Arrival and Dismissal of Students

St. Gabriel Campus

Parents who drop off and pick up students by car should follow the cones in the parking lot. Traffic should flow by entering the “in” driveway off of Geiger Street and proceed around the “U” shaped markings and exit the “out” driveway. Parking is available on the south side of the lot. Buses will line up on Geiger Street in front of the parish offices. Students may enter the school building after 7:15 a.m. where they will be supervised in the hallway near the office. After 7:30, students go to the gym where supervision is provided until the bell rings.

St. Margaret Mary Campus

Arrival: St. Margaret Mary School will begin supervising the arrival of students at 7:15 a.m. in the gym. We have two arrival and dismissal spots. Families whose youngest child is in preschool, 4K, or kindergarten will drop off and pick up all family members at the back-lot playground doors on Washington St. If your youngest student is in 1st-5th grade you will drop off and pick up all family members at the gym doors on Division St. Do not drop your children on the south side of Division Street. If parents/guardians are going into school, they should use the school parking lot or park on Washington Street.

Example: If you have a kindergartener, 3rd grader and 5th grader they will all be dropped off and picked up at the back lot. If you have a 1st grader, 3rd grader, and 4th grader they will all be dropped off and picked up at the gym doors.

Dismissal: Families will be provided with a name card on orientation day. Please place it in the front window of your car to identify the family or carpool being picked up. Additional name cards will be available if you have multiple people picking up children. Make sure the school is on the passenger side of your car and have your children exit the car from the passenger side only.

3K and Half-day 4K – 11:00 a.m. Dismissal:

Dismissal will be 11:00 a.m. for 3K and half-day 4K students. Families will pull up to the gym doors on Division Street and teachers will direct students to their cars. Four cars will load at a time. Please pull all the way forward once all four cars have pulled away so the next group of students can load. Please stay in your cars and staff will walk your child to your car.

St. Mary Campus

St. Mary Elementary School will begin supervising the arrival of students at 7:15 a.m. These students need to report to the hallway outside the main office. Students who arrive after 7:30 a.m. should go to the gym where supervision is provided until the bell rings.

Parents dropping off their children by car should NOT park in the “school bus zone” during this time. This area in front of the school is reserved for the school buses. Violators will be ticketed by the Menasha Police Department. At dismissal, students’ homeroom teachers will lead them out of the building. Parents may pick up their children in front of the school building by the Mary statue.

Athletics, Activities and Programs

Band

Students in grades 4 and 5 may participate. A \$150 fee is charged for band in addition to tuition fees and any instrument rental fees. Band members are from all SMCS elementary schools.

Basketball

Students in grade 5 play competitive basketball games with other schools in the area and may participate in tournament games beyond the regular season. All students on the team participate in each game. Good sportsmanship and skill development, rather than winning, is emphasized. Students in grades 3–5 have the opportunity to join Zephyrs Basketball Club for tournament play.

Girl Scouts

Students in grades K–5 may participate. This activity is dependent on parent volunteers.

Soccer

Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 may participate in the SMCS soccer program in the fall. Students in grades 3 and 4 are placed on SMCS soccer teams to compete with local teams. Students in grade 5 join the grade 6 students from St. Mary Catholic Middle School to compete with local teams through the Neenah Soccer Club’s fall program.

Behavior Expectations

SMCS schools are nurturing communities focused on building a foundation of faith and care for others. We are committed to making our schools safe and caring places for all. We will treat each other with respect and we expect respect in return. It is the responsibility of all students, parents, and school staff to work together to maintain a positive, safe, orderly and faith-filled atmosphere where learning is maximized.

The following four phrases are the keys to educating students on appropriate behavior in school and will guide conversations with students regarding school behavior and character development:

- Be respectful (includes being mindful of others, quiet in hallways, etc.)
- Be responsible (clean up your area, get ready for the day, stay organized, stay on task, etc.)
- Be kind (be compassionate, helpful, generous, etc.)
- Believe (in yourself, in each other, in your faith)

School staff will support students by having restorative conversations when students are struggling to meet behavioral expectations. More serious behaviors will be addressed with teachers, school administrators, and parents. School administrators will determine the appropriate consequence based on the age of the student and nature of the student’s actions, which may include out-of-school suspension, and/or expulsion in accordance with SMCS policies and Green Bay Diocesan policies.

Bicycles

Every family should keep a record of the serial number of their bikes. Students are asked to wear helmets whenever they ride their bikes. Students are encouraged to lock their bicycles while they are at school. The school assumes no responsibility for bicycles. Any student who ignores the safety and courtesy rules while riding a bike to and from school will have this privilege taken away. Students must walk bikes on school grounds.

St. Gabriel Campus: Bicycles are to be parked in the rack on the west parking lot.

St. Margaret Mary Campus: Bicycles are to be parked in the racks located on the side of the gym.

St. Mary Campus: Bicycles are to be parked in the rack located on the east side of the '52 building (kindergarten/preschool wing).

Birthday Treats

Students may bring a treat for their birthdays. The schools encourage non-edible treats (e.g., stickers, pencils, etc.). However, if bringing an edible treat, it is recommended to provide pre-packaged or store-bought items. Please consider the nutritional value of the snack and food allergies of other children in the classroom. All families are asked not to distribute birthday party invitations at school unless the entire class, including all boys and all girls, is invited.

Book Care

The school furnishes all books. Children are expected to take good care of the books they use. A large book bag or backpack is required for taking books home. Children are responsible for any damage done through carelessness or neglect.

Bus Service and Rider Conduct

Menasha:

Menasha Public School District has contracted with Lamers Bus Company to provide transportation service. The driver of the bus is responsible for the orderly conduct of his/her passengers. When on the bus, the student is under the authority of and directly responsible to the driver. If a student behaves inappropriately on the bus, the driver will notify the school and parent/guardian of the problem. Continued disorderly conduct may lead to a student being denied transportation by bus. All parents and children who will use the bus service are required to sign a transportation agreement. This agreement states the policies and regulations that the school district and Lamers expect of all individuals using this service. Violations of the rules/agreement may result in the loss of busing services for the student. Questions regarding busing should be directed to the school office or Lamers (832-8800).

Neenah:

Any student living within the City of Neenah and attending a school located within the City of Neenah will not be eligible for transportation. However, there are instances where busing is available to St. Gabriel, and 4K students are eligible for busing. The Neenah Joint School District will contact families who are eligible for busing.

Change of Address

It is imperative that parents/guardians keep SMCS informed of any changes in address, phone numbers, or email, using the PowerSchool app under the forms option.

Dress Code: Kindergarten - 5th Grade (see bottom of this section for PK)

Every Friday, during the 2025-26 school year, will be a Zephyr Spirit Day. On these days, students may wear Zephyr spirit items or school colors with comfortable bottoms (athletic bottoms, jeans, leggings, etc.).

Bottoms (Girls & Boys):

All bottoms must be solid navy or khaki. SMCS plaid jumper is permitted for girls.

- Pants: navy blue or khaki solid-colored dress pants and cargo pants are allowed (no excessively tight or baggy, loose, long styles, sweatpants, athletic pants, leggings or yoga pants).
- Shorts and Capris: Solid navy blue or khaki shorts and capris may be worn in August, September, May, and June.
- Skirts: navy blue or khaki with tights, leggings or shorts required underneath.
- Skorts: navy blue or khaki must resemble a skirt with attached shorts.
- Dresses/Jumpers: solid navy, khaki or SMCS plaid jumpers must be worn with a collar (attached or on the shirt underneath). Polo dress may be worn in navy or light blue

Additional Guidelines:

- Leggings: Solid white, khaki, or navy leggings are permitted only when worn under skirts, skorts, or jumpers. Leggings or tights are required from October through April.
- Modesty/bicycle/cartwheel shorts are required under skirts or jumpers in August, September, May, and June.
- Length: All shorts, skirts, skorts, jumpers, and polo dresses must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee.
- Prohibited: Overalls, rompers, and jumpsuits (any fabric or color).
- All dress code items must adhere to the specified colors.

Tops (Girls & Boys):

All tops must be solid navy blue, light blue, or white. Logos, if present, must be no larger than 2"x2". Sleeveless tops are not allowed.

Approved tops include:

- Polo shirts (short or long sleeve)
- Oxford shirts or dress shirts
- Turtlenecks
- Blouses with a collar
- Cardigan sweaters (button or zip front)
- Pullover sweaters (crew-neck or v-neck)
- Sweater vests
- Crew-neck sweatshirts
- SMCS crewnecks, ¼ zips, or full zips (must be purchased from SMCS or an approved vendor)

Additional Guidelines:

- Tops worn under sweaters, vests, or sweatshirts must be a collared dress shirt, polo, or turtleneck in navy blue, white, or light blue.
- SMCS hooded sweatshirts and t-shirts are only allowed on Zephyr Spirit Days (Fridays) or Out of Uniform Days.

Footwear (Girls & Boys):

- Shoes must be weather appropriate and securely fastened.
- Tennis shoes are highly recommended.
- Sandals may be worn in August, September, May and June, and must have a strap around the ankle.
- Flip-flops or any backless sandals are not allowed.
- Socks or tights are required when wearing closed-toe shoes (not sandals). Colors must be solid navy blue, khaki, light blue, or white.
- Indoor boots (without heels) are allowed during the school day.
- A second pair of non-marking or light-bottomed tennis shoes (tied or Velcro) must be kept at school at all times for physical education.

Mass Day Dress Code (Girls & Boys):

Mass Days at SMCS should be treated as a special occasion. Students should wear their regular dress code items.

- Hooded sweatshirts of any type may not be worn to Mass.
- Shirts must be tucked in.
- Out of Dress Code passes may NOT be used on Mass days.
- All jewelry must be modest and appropriate for the church setting.
- Because students may have a free dress day on their birthday, if the birthday falls on a Mass Day the student may change after Mass.
- Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, students will be required to wear a polo shirt featuring the SMCS logo to Mass. It will be optional during the 2025-2026 school year. Ordering info coming soon.

Miscellaneous (Girls & Boys):

- Make-up is not permitted.
- Extremes in jewelry or accessories (hair decorations, belts, etc.) are not allowed.
- Only natural-grown nails are allowed (no artificial nails).
- Hair must be clean, neatly combed, out of the eyes, and of reasonable style and a natural shade.
- Clothing should fit well, with nothing being too tight or too loose.
- Hats and/or headgear (including hoods) are not to be worn in the school building during the school day.
- Smartwatches are not permitted during the school day.

PreSchool (Girls & Boys):

- Preschool students should wear comfortable play clothes that are appropriate for the weather and modest for our faith-filled environment.
- Shoes should be appropriate for running, skipping and jumping. Socks should be worn when appropriate for the weather and shoe-type. Sandals can be worn in August, September, May and June.
- Girls wearing skirts and dresses should always wear modesty shorts underneath.

- Graphic t-shirts and other apparel should be appropriate for a Catholic school setting.
- Shorts can be worn in August, September, May and June.
- A clean, spare set of clothing should be on hand at all times in the child's backpack (shoes, socks, underwear, shirt and bottoms)
- When snow is on the ground students should come prepared to play in the snow (hat, mittens, coat, boots and snow pants). Families who need assistance with these items can let the front office know and we will do our best to connect you with community resources.

Extended Care

Extended care is available at each elementary campus for preschool and 4K children on the days when school is in session (per the school calendar). Supervision will be provided from when preschool and morning 4K are dismissed until 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Families enrolled in extended learning will receive a separate handout explaining program fees, expectations, and other pertinent information.

Field Trips

At various times throughout the year, teachers may choose to take students on a field trip to expand the curriculum beyond the school walls. The parent/guardian must sign a permission form and return it to the campus office. Information describing the field trip will be provided with the permission form. At times, parents are asked to chaperone. All chaperones must be safe environment compliant (Virtus trained, background check, and signed pastoral code of conduct) in order to volunteer. Please visit the [Volunteer Hub](#) on our website for details.

Food Service

All menus meet nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, conform to good menu planning principles and feature a variety of healthy choices that are tasty, attractive, of excellent quality and are served at the proper temperature. A monthly menu is posted in the school office and on the SMCS website (www.sm Catholicschools.org). Please keep in mind that the menus may be subject to change. Every effort will be made to notify you of any change in advance.

SMCS Food Service uses PowerSchool to allow families to check their balance and make payments. All families participating in the school meal program need to set up a family account in PowerSchool. If you need help, please contact the SMCS Food Service department.

Whether you are purchasing a meal or bringing one from home, SMCS asks that you not bring "fast food" (McDonalds, etc.) or soda into the cafeteria. SMCS Food Service also offers a sack lunch for field trip days. Check the appropriate box on the field trip permission slip to purchase a sack lunch.

Breakfast

Breakfast is provided each morning from 7:30-7:45 a.m.

Lunch

For lunch students may select from a variety of healthy meal options.

Super Lunch - A super is an extra main entrée. Any student regardless if they are a paid, free or reduced lunch will be charged the additional \$1.50 for a super if chosen. Parents please discuss this option with

your students so you don't accumulate unwanted charges. If a student has a negative balance this option will not be available to them.

Head Lice

It is not uncommon for elementary school children to contract head lice. Please contact the school office immediately if your child has head lice. Your identity will remain confidential. Notification allows us to take the necessary precautions to prevent the further spread of the lice.

While we understand that having lice in one's home is a concerning thing, we also need to follow the CDC's recent recommendation that lice not be considered to be on the same level as a serious illness. They state that students should not be unnecessarily excluded from class for a condition that does not cause illness or physical harm. So while we will continue to monitor situations concerning lice as they occur in our school, our main goal and objective will be to return students to the classroom as quickly as possible after being identified as having lice.

Recommendations by the CDC and the State of Wisconsin

It is no longer recommended that students be excluded from school unnecessarily because of head lice. The likelihood of transmission in a school setting is actually quite low. For this reason, we will generally follow the guidelines as described by the CDC and the Wisconsin DPI, with one exception. We will inform parents whose children have live head lice about the situation and ask that they take their child home early to be treated for the condition. Students with no evident live lice or with nits further than 1/4 inch from the scalp need not be sent home from school. Parents will, however, be notified by phone call or note of this finding so that they can discuss this situation with their caregiver or treat as they see fit. We will work with the family to monitor the situation.

Returning to School

Children who have been diagnosed with live head lice will be allowed to return to school on the day following proper treatment of the condition. Children who have not been treated, or who receive insufficient treatment may not return to the classroom until it can be shown to office personnel that there are no live lice or nits close to the scalp. As a general rule, and following the advice of the CDC and State of Wisconsin, entire classes will no longer be screened for head lice because a child in the classroom has been identified as having lice. Notification letters may be sent home to alert parents so that they may check their own children, if desired.

Homework & Assessment

Homework

Students may receive homework assignments. Individual teachers' expectations will be communicated to parents/guardians.

The purpose of schoolwork is to reinforce the understanding of the class study. Any work that is not completed during provided study times in school must be taken home to be completed. Parents should encourage good study habits in their child at home. However, it is not the parents' responsibility to do or correct the work for them. Parents are asked to take an interest and look over the completed work to make sure students have accomplished the necessary assignments.

If your child is absent, he or she will need to complete missing assignments. The teacher and parents will work out a reasonable timeline for completion of assignments.

Students in grades 3 through 5 will be provided with an assignment notebook at the start of the school year. It will be used to communicate homework assignments. At times, parents are asked to sign these books.

Assessment

The evaluation and communication of pupil progress is an essential element of the teaching/learning process. Parents, as the primary educators of the children, need to know the educational expectations of the school and how effectively their child is meeting those academic, behavioral and affective expectations. Progress reports are distributed quarterly. Parents/guardians are to review their child's (or children's) progress report and sign and return the envelope to the school.

Legal Information

Alcohol/Drug/Smoking

The possession, sale or use of alcohol, drugs, or any other controlled substance on the school campus is strictly forbidden. There is no smoking on school premises at any time during school hours or any school-related activity. Violations will be reported to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Harassment/Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the educational programs governed by the diocesan board of education to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from any form of harassment. No employee, volunteer, or student associated with these programs shall be subject to harassment or sexual harassment. Any form of harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability constitutes discrimination and, as such, violates civil law and the policies of SMCS.

Immunizations

Immunization schedules are available through the Winnebago County Health Department and Menasha City Health Department. When children's immunizations are current, they are better protected from childhood diseases and help prevent the spread of those diseases to others. Current information must be provided for each child.

Early Education

Children entering preschool and 4K are required to be three years old and four years old, respectively, on or before September 1 of the school year in which they are enrolling. Children must be fully potty trained prior to participating in preschool and 4K programs.

Kindergarten

Children entering kindergarten are required to be five years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they are enrolling.

Lockers/Desks

Desks and lockers are the property of the schools. The school reserves the right to search them. School authorities cannot be responsible for missing money, clothes, food or personal belongings. All belongings should be labeled.

Medications

Teachers are not permitted to administer any medication. Children must report to the office to receive their medication. In order for the campus to dispense prescription medication to a student, the parent/guardian must provide the school office with a Medication Consent Form. Medication must be brought to school in a bottle/container labeled by the pharmacist that indicates the proper dosage. Parents may send non-prescription medicine (i.e. aspirin, cough drops) for office personnel to dispense as long as a signed permission slip that contains dosage directions and timing of the medication is included with the medication. The medication must be in the original container. Until these steps are completed, the school will not dispense any medication.

Non-custodial Parent

The school will release a child to either parent in the absence of a court order. If there are any court orders related to child custody or placement, the parents are responsible for supplying the school with the most current orders.

School Records

A student's official file is kept in the campus office. This file contains the student's report cards, standardized testing results, attendance records and immunization records. A parent/guardian

wishing to review this file must provide a written request to see the file 24 hours before the desired time to review the file. In the absence of a court order, the school will provide the information to either parent. Each parent has the right to challenge the accuracy of their child's records and to deny release of these records.

Weapons/Firearms

The possession or use of firearms, weapons or other dangerous objects by employees, volunteers or students is not permitted in the school building or on parish/school grounds. A weapon is any device that may inflict harm on a person or animal. Any object that is used to threaten another in a manner that may inflict harm on a person or animal is considered a dangerous object. Weapon replications are not allowed. Police shall be notified if an employee, volunteer or student possesses or uses or threatens to use a firearm, weapon or other dangerous object in school or on parish property. Parents of students who bring firearms, weapons or dangerous objects to school or who use or threaten to use objects in a dangerous manner will be notified immediately.

Liturgy

All campuses: Students in grades K – 5 will attend Mass on a weekly basis. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to join the students at Mass. Changes to the Mass schedule will be announced in the weekly news update.

St. Gabriel Campus: Mass is on Wednesday mornings.

St. Margaret Mary Campus: Mass is on Thursday mornings.

St. Mary Campus: Mass is on Tuesday mornings.

Lost and Found

Lost and found articles are kept near the school office. Please encourage your child or children to be responsible for their belongings. **Please make sure all items are labeled**, especially inside jackets, gloves, etc. Any unclaimed items that are usable are given to a worthy cause.

Parent and School Communication and Phone Calls

Communication with the building administrator and teachers is encouraged. If it is necessary to contact a teacher during school hours, a message may be left in the office or through SMCS email. SMCS email addresses follow the format: first name initial + last name @smcatholicschools.org.

Only extremely important phone messages will be delivered to a student during school hours. Arrangements for picking up your child after school or after-school activities should be made before they leave home. Cell phones are not allowed in classes.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. However, parents/guardians are encouraged to confer with the teacher at any time during the school year, and the child's teacher should be contacted directly to schedule an appointment when desired.

Personal Electronic Device (PED) and Smartphones

A personal electronic device (PED) is a device that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message, or otherwise summons or delivers a communication to the possessor. The following devices are examples of PEDs: cellular and wireless telephones, pagers/beepers, smartwatches, personal digital assistants (PDAs), smartphones, Wi-Fi-enabled or broadband access devices, two-way radios or video broadcasting devices, tablets, laptops, and other devices that allow a person to record and/or transmit (on either a real-time or delayed basis) sound, video, or still images, text, or other information. *PEDs may NOT be carried during the day.* If a student needs to bring one to school, it must be turned off and kept in their backpacks during school hours.

During school hours, parent(s) wishing to contact students must call the school office.

If a student fails to follow the guidelines for PEDs, the PED will be confiscated and kept in the school office until the end of the day and parents will be notified.

No expectation of confidentiality will exist in the use of PEDs on school premises/property. Administration reserves the right to check the content of confiscated PEDs. If the PED is password-protected, the student must enter the password for administration and unlock it.

Students are personally and solely responsible for the care and security of their PEDs. SMCS assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, damage, or vandalism to PEDs brought onto its property, or the unauthorized use of such devices

Publicity & Photo Permission

Registration in SMCS grants permission for photos, publicity and inclusion in a participant list unless we are notified in writing. Find form at <https://smcatholicschools.org/resources/forms/>.

Registration, Admission and Withdrawal of Students

Registration

Registrations for the current school year are welcome at any time. Early registration begins in the fall of each school year. Check the SMCS website for online registration procedures.

Admission

SMCS does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, or national origin in the enrollment and participation of students or the employment of personnel. Any child transferring from another school

must present official certification of grade level. This is usually a transfer slip and a progress report from the former school. A record of immunizations is required before a child can be admitted. In addition, SMCS reserves the administrators' right to accept an individual child based on social or academic needs.

Transferring to Another School

The parent/guardian of a child transferring to another school must:

- Notify the principal in advance
- Settle fees and other business

School Initiated Withdrawal

All members of the St. Mary Catholic Schools community, including parents, family members, and guests, are expected to comply with all school rules and policies while on campus, at school-related events, and in all communications with the school. Community members are expected to act respectfully, cooperate with school administration, and avoid behavior or communications that are disruptive, intimidating, overly aggressive, or that interfere with the orderly operation and mission of the school.

Behavior by parents, family members, or guests that disrupts school operations may result in restrictions on that individual's access to campus or participation in school activities. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, harassment or threats toward school personnel and refusal to respect school policies, instructional methods, or disciplinary decisions. Such behavior, separate from a student's conduct, may require further action by the school, including administrative withdrawal of the student.

Religious Formation

To assist parents in their lifelong duty as the primary faith instructors of their children, the school provides instruction in the doctrine and beliefs of the Catholic faith at all grade levels. Students plan and participate in liturgies. Sacramental preparation is a parish responsibility and is coordinated with the parish religious education departments.

School Closings

If St. Mary Catholic Schools (SMCS) is closed or delayed, there will be a posting with local media stations and on Facebook. SMCS will be shown as a separate listing and if SMCS is listed, all five schools are included in the closing or delay. If Neenah or Menasha public schools are closed or delayed, SMCS will also be closed or delayed.

Whenever there is a delayed beginning of school, all afternoon programs are held at the regular times. If school is canceled at any point during the day, all after school events that are in any way connected to school are automatically canceled.

SMCS employs a notification system called Simple Texting. To receive notifications of unexpected events such as school closings or early dismissal due to weather, etc., please:

Enroll your smartphone/phone number by texting SMCS to (844) 947-5948. You will receive a

confirmation text and a text indicating that when you want to opt out of this service, you simply need to reply STOP. You may enroll multiple cell phone numbers using that same process (text SMCS to (844) 947-5948).

School Library

The library provides material to enrich and encourage interest in a variety of areas and monitors books to reflect Catholic philosophy. Reference materials are available. Books may be checked out if previously checked-out books have been returned. A fine may be charged for overdue books, and the child must pay for a lost or damaged book.

School Pictures

School pictures are taken. Parents and guardians have the option to purchase their child's or children's pictures and a school yearbook. Please check the SMCS calendar for these dates.

School Policies

Complaint/Grievance Procedure

Any person who has a concern with a staff member must first discuss the issue with the person involved. If a resolution cannot be reached, the next step is to communicate with the principal/supervisor regarding the issue. If a resolution is not reached at this point, contact the SMCS president within five days of communicating with the supervisor. Each grievance to the SMCS president must be in writing. A copy of the grievance will be given to the party against whom the grievance is filed. The SMCS president will take action on the grievance within 10 days of receipt of the written notice if possible. If the decision of the SMCS president is not satisfactory, the complaint should be forwarded in writing to the diocesan superintendent of schools for a final decision.

Illness/Injury

In case of illness or injury while at school, school personnel will render minimal first aid treatment only. In case of minor illness/injury, if a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the school will contact the alternate emergency contact as indicated on the emergency information card completed at the beginning of the school year. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the school will call 911 and contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact. For this reason, it is very important that the school have up-to-date emergency contact information. Expenses incurred from emergency treatment will be borne by the parent or guardian.

SMCS Attendance Policy

(Compliant with Wisconsin Compulsory Attendance Law and Applicable to All Students)

I. Purpose and Scope

This attendance policy promotes student success, supports regular instructional engagement, and ensures compliance with Wisconsin compulsory attendance laws (Wis. Stat. §§ 118.15 and 118.16).

This policy applies to all students, regardless of enrollment pathway or funding source.

II. Definitions

A. School Day

A school day is defined as a period of student instruction meeting minimum requirements as set by the State of Wisconsin.

Saint Mary Catholic High School Specific: A student is expected to attend all scheduled class periods. Absence from any period without a valid excuse may be counted as a partial-day absence.

B. Excused Absence

- An absence will be marked excused if reported within 24 hours and verified as one of the following:
- Illness or medical appointment
- Death or serious illness in the immediate family
- Family wedding
- Religious observance
- Court or legal obligation
- Pre-approved family vacation (max 5 days/year)
- Circumstances approved in writing by school administration

C. Unexcused Absence

- An unexcused absence occurs when:
- The absence is not reported or does not meet criteria above
- Tardiness exceeds administrative limits
- A student leaves school without permission
- Family travel exceeds pre-approved limits or is not coordinated

D. School-Sponsored Events

Absences due to verified school-sponsored activities do not count against attendance limits.

III. Attendance Expectations

To ensure strong academic progress:

Maximum Excused Absences: 10 days per academic year

Maximum Unexcused Absences: 5 days per academic year

If a student exceeds either limit, the school may initiate a formal intervention process.

IV. Academic Responsibility During Absences

Students must proactively communicate with teachers to retrieve missed work. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences may not be eligible for credit. Remote learning is not offered for discretionary absences.

V. Intervention Process for Excessive Absences

A. Initial Threshold Reached

If a student exceeds the excused or unexcused absence limit:

A mandatory meeting will be scheduled with parents/guardians

An Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP) will be created, outlining required supports, expectations, and follow-up. The AIP is a formal agreement designed to help the student regain consistent attendance.

B. Continued Absenteeism

If attendance does not improve despite implementation of the AIP:

The school may engage local truancy authorities as provided by state law

Additional meetings or updated AIPs may be required

The school may conduct a formal enrollment status review (see Section VI)

VI. Formal Review and Termination of Enrollment

If, after significant documented efforts to support improved attendance, a student continues to demonstrate chronic absenteeism the school may initiate a formal enrollment review process. This process includes:

Written notice of the concerns

An opportunity for the student and parent/guardian to respond

A meeting or hearing with designated school leadership

A final decision issued in writing regarding whether continued enrollment is in the best interest of the student and school community

A student may be removed from enrollment after this process is complete.

VII. Re-Enrollment Decisions

Students who have failed to meet attendance expectations, even after supports and formal review, may be:

Declined for re-enrollment in the following school year

All decisions regarding re-enrollment will be made in compliance with school policy and applicable state reporting requirements.

VIII. Appeals

Families may appeal any decision regarding removal or non-continuation of enrollment by submitting a written request to the School System President within three (3) school days of receiving notice. The President's decision will be final.

IX. Compliance

This policy is designed to comply with:

Wis. Stat. §§ 118.15 & 118.16 – Compulsory Attendance and Truancy

Wis. Stat. § 120.13(1)(c) – Grounds and process for student removal (when applicable)

All applicable Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requirements for private and Choice schools

The school ensures that all disciplinary and attendance actions are applied equitably and in compliance with state and federal law.

School Security

In an effort to maintain a safe environment, all entrances to the schools are locked during the day. All persons, including volunteers, coming into the school building are required to check in at the office and sign the register. A badge should be worn while in the school and returned to the office when leaving. Visitors are to sign out when they have finished their business at school.

A parent/guardian bringing items such as forgotten books, lunches, or picking up a child for early dismissal is to come to the office and drop off the items rather than disrupt the child's classroom. The items will be forwarded to the child.

Parents/guardians/visitors who would like to visit a classroom should make arrangements with the principal prior to the visit. All volunteers must have a background check and complete VIRTUS training prior to volunteering.

Snacks

Mid-morning and/or mid-afternoon snacks may be allowed, as directed by the child's teacher. Snacks should be healthy. Severe food allergies may require limitations on snack choices. Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle labeled with their name. Water bottles may only contain water.

Supervision

SMCS accepts the responsibility to supervise students from the first bell until dismissal bell, except for students who are involved in a school-sponsored activity or after-school care program. Students need to leave school grounds as soon as they are dismissed.

Testing Program

For the 2024-25 school year, the Green Bay Diocese will use the Renaissance Star 360 as the assessment tool. More information will be shared as it becomes available. Data from standardized tests is used to assist teachers in identifying student strengths and areas of need for individualizing instruction.

Elementary students in grades 3-5 will also take the Wisconsin Forward Exam each spring. This assessment measures academic growth from year to year in the areas of math, reading, science (grade 4 only), and social studies (grade 4 only).

Tuition, Tuition Assistance and Fundraising

Tuition Payment Policies

Tuition plans are managed through Blackbaud Tuition Management Software at school.smarttuition.com/Account/Login. For more information or questions, please contact Shelley Wautlet at 920-967-0021 ext. 851 or via email at swautlet@smcatholicschools.org.

Tuition Assistance

Tuition assistance applications for the following school year will be available with registration in early January. Families must complete a tuition assistance application each year and return the completed application with a copy of their most recent tax forms and W-2s to the SMCS Business Office. SMCS also participates in Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP), which is a state program that offers financially eligible students the possibility of attending SMCS at no

charge. Applications for both tuition assistance and WPCP are strictly confidential. For more information or questions, please contact Shelley Wautlet at 920-967-0021 ext. 851 or via email at swautlet@smcatholicschools.org.

Fundraising and Third Source Funding

St. Mary Catholic Schools relies on the generosity of supporting parishes, alumni, benefactors, and the community to offer excellence in Catholic education. These events build lasting relationships while helping St. Mary Catholic Schools achieve its mission.

RaiseRight gift cards (Formerly known as Scrip) – This easy and convenient program puts tuition credit directly in the pockets of SMCS families. Participants can buy full value gift cards for a wide variety of merchants through the RaiseRight app or in person. A percentage discount (from 2%-20%) of the value is applied to the tuition bill of the family.

Giving Week – Held the week after Catholic Schools Week, this annual campaign invites families, alumni, and supporters to contribute to the SMCS Annual Fund. Tuition covers only a portion of the true cost of education. Donations during this week help bridge the gap, keeping tuition affordable and Catholic education accessible for all students.

Annual Fund – This annual campaign invites supporters of the SMCS community to contribute directly toward the operating budget for St. Mary Catholic Schools.

Zephyrfest – The premier fundraising gala in Northeast Wisconsin, and the single largest fundraiser for St. Mary Catholic Schools.

Zephyrs Connect – Supports all extracurricular programs, including athletics, Fine Arts, and STEM.

Greater Zephyrs Open – Supports Athletics

Z-Cabaret – Supports Fine Arts programming

Zephyrs Gold Raffle– Tickets are available to sell in September. Eight tickets (at \$25 each) are designated to each family, with the corresponding \$200 total placed on the tuition bill. Families have the option to sell the tickets to offset the \$200 charge, or they may complete them with their own names to be entered into the Zephyrs Gold Raffle drawing.

Uniform and Dress Code

It is always expected that one's clothing and personal appearance will be respectable and appropriate. Extremes in hairstyles, dress, jewelry, and accessories will not be permitted. Please refer to the St. Mary Catholic Schools Dress Code available [online](#) and at each campus.

Volunteering

We welcome parent, family, and community volunteers in our schools. All volunteers must be safe environment compliant (VIRTUS trained, background check, and signed pastoral code of conduct). Please visit the [Volunteer Hub](#) on our website for details.

Winter Clothing

Children in all grades go outdoors for recess as weather permits. Students will go outside for recess if

the temperature is above 0 degrees Fahrenheit with wind-chill. Children should dress appropriately for the weather. Students must have hats, gloves, boots, and snow pants to play in the snow. It will be up to the recess teacher's discretion when students may take off their coats.