

The Student Handbook and Code of Conduct

Guide for Secondary School Students

School Year 2026-2027

St. Mary's County Public Schools



Student Handbook & Code of Conduct

NOW Online

[2026-2027 STUDENT HANDBOOK & CODE OF CONDUCT](#)

Want a printed copy? Contact your school administrator.

Student Handbook & Code of Conduct

Know your rights and responsibilities



Attendance



Rights &
Responsibilities



Student
Welfare



Code of
Conduct

Attendance Matters



ATTENDANCE

Every child who resides in St. Mary's County and is 5 or older and under **18** must attend school regularly

Regular Attendance

- Academic success
- Participation
- Greater understanding

Unlawful or Excessive Absences

- Poor/failing grades
- Retention
- Ineligible for activities

Need help?

Talk to:

- your teacher
- your counselor
- your pupil personnel worker

WHAT IS A LAWFUL ABSENCE?



- Death in the immediate family
- Student illness (a physician's note may be required)
- Pregnant and parenting student
- Court summons
- Hazardous weather conditions
- Work (approved or sponsored by the school)
- **Participate in approved civic engagement activities**
- Observance of a religious holiday
- State of emergency
- Suspension
- Lack of authorized transportation
- Other emergencies or circumstances as determined by the principal

UNLAWFUL ABSENCES



Absences for any reason other than those listed as lawful.

Family vacation absences are unlawful (exceptional circumstances may be reviewed by the principal/designee).

MAKE-UP WORK



If you are absent from school, you should request make-up work.

Lawful Absence

- may receive full credit
- allowed to make up assignments, take alternative exams and tests
- five (5) school days to turn in completed assignments

Unlawful Absence

- may forfeit the opportunity to earn credit

ALL ABSENCES MUST BE DOCUMENTED WITH A REASON



Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) can notify the school by-

- phone
- email
- school website portal
- written note

No documentation within three (3) days=UNLAWFUL

Chronic Absenteeism



Ten percent (18 days) or more days...

Responses may include:

- referral to the Pupil Services Team (PST)
- retention for the following year
- withholding credit for opportunity to learn and master grade level skills and/or course content

Tardy for School



Present documentation stating reason for tardiness or have your parent(s)/legal guardian(s) sign you in.



Tardies are marked either lawful or unlawful.

Missing the bus or running late is marked **UNLAWFUL**.



Student Welfare

- When to stay home
- Medication at School
 - Playing sports

DON'T FEEL WELL?

Tell your mom, dad, or caregiver before you come to school. Tell your teacher or an adult if you become sick at school



Do You Require Medication at School?



Your parent/legal guardian must:

- provide Medication Authorization Form ([PS 109](#)) completed by physician and signed by physician and parent
- give form ([PS 109](#)) and medication in original pharmacy container to nurse
- immediately notify school nurse of any medication changes
- pick up unused or discontinued medication from the school nurse

Students must NEVER bring medication to school (this includes over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol, aspirin, etc.)

Are you eligible to play sports?



Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 or above is required

YOUR MARKING PERIOD GRADES determine your GPA

Every marking period, you can become eligible or ineligible

CAUTION

You may be **INELIGIBLE** for high school activities **IF you are:**

-  suspended from school
-  assigned in-school intervention
-  debts and fines at the end of the marking period
-  absent from school

Signing Out a Student



A valid photo ID is required.



Rights and Responsibilities

- Dress Code
- Drug Free Schools
- Student Conduct



What Are You Wearing?



Students are expected to follow the SMCPS Student Dress Code.



Dress or grooming which is likely to cause the disruption of the instructional program or which creates a potential safety hazard is prohibited.

SCHOOLS ARE DRUG-FREE ZONES



SMCPS prohibits the possession, and/or use of illegal substances on school grounds.

Canine drug scans may be used to scan buildings and school grounds to protect and further ensure the safety of students.



Are you in a situation and need help? Talk to the school nurse, teacher, school counselor, social worker or administrator to get resources.

TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT



- no selling or use of tobacco or tobacco products/devices in any form
- prohibited in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses and in vehicles

No VAPE Zone



Vaping May Cause Serious Health Risks/Consequences

E-cigarette aerosol is NOT harmless “water vapor”.

E-cigarette vapor can contain harmful and potentially harmful substances:

- Nicotine
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs
- Flavoring such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease
- Cancer-causing chemicals
- Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead

[Information provided by Center for Disease Control & Prevention](#)

No VAPE Zone



Why Is Nicotine Unsafe for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults?

- can harm brain development
- can harm parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control
- may increase risk for future addiction to other drugs

Information provided by Center for Disease Control & Prevention

SMCPS

Student Handbook and Code of Conduct



Know the Consequences

204 - Tobacco or Tobacco Products

Possession, use, sale, or distribution of tobacco, tobacco products, and/or devices (e.g., cigarette lighters, e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and matches).

Level 1-3

Using/possession tobacco/e-cigarettes. First time offense.

Level 4

Repeated use/possession of tobacco/e-cigarettes.

Level 1-4

Distribution

Reporting to law enforcement is required.

No Smoking



No Vaping

Inappropriate Use of Personal Electronics

Code 802- Unauthorized or inappropriate use of any electronic device carried, worn, or transported by a student on school property to receive or communicate messages.

- Devices include, but not limited to mobile phones (smartphones and traditional cellphones), tablets, wireless audio devices (wireless earbuds, headsets, and speakers) and wearable technology (smartwatches, **smart glasses**, and fitness trackers).

Level 1-4

Unauthorized or inappropriate use of any electronic device.

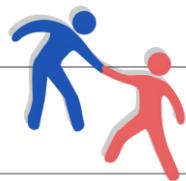
Level 4-5

Unauthorized use to include photographing, recording, sharing, and/or publishing inappropriate pictures, videos, or recordings, including fights or other disturbances.

- may be confiscated by an administrator for inappropriate use
- parent/legal guardian may be required to meet with an administrator
- school assumes no liability for lost, stolen, or broken devices



Discipline for Cell Phone Misuse



Offense	Consequence
1	● Phone confiscated, students pick-up phone at end of day from office. ● Incident recorded in student discipline record as Code 802 Inappropriate Use of Personal Electronics, additional codes if warranted. ● Student refusal will lead to additional codes/discipline.
2	● Phone confiscated, parent/legal guardian pick-up phone during school business hours from office. ● Incident recorded in student discipline record as Code 802 Inappropriate Use of Personal Electronics, additional codes if warranted. ● Student refusal will lead to additional codes/discipline.
3+	● Phone confiscated, parent/legal guardian pick-up phone during school business hours from office. ● Incident recorded in student discipline record as Code 802 Inappropriate Use of Personal Electronics, additional codes if warranted. ● Additionally Code 702 Insubordination and 1 day ISI will be assigned. ● Student refusal will lead to additional codes/discipline.

Welcome to Class!

Please remember to

Turn cell phones

OFF

&

Put cell phones

AWAY



MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

YES!
YOU CAN USE
YOUR PHONE...

- ✓ **Before school**
- ✓ **After school**



DO NOT
USE YOUR
PHONE...



-  **During instructional time**
-  **At lunch, recess, or in hallways**
-  **To record or photograph others**
-  **In a matter inappropriate or not aligned with the code of conduct**



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

YES!
YOU CAN use
YOUR PHONE...



- ✓ **Before school**
- ✓ **After school**
- ✓ **During Lunch**
(high school only)

DO NOT
use YOUR
PHONE...



-  **During instructional time**
-  **In hallways**
-  **To record or photograph others**
-  **In a matter inappropriate or not aligned with the code of conduct**



Using Your Phone During Restricted Times?

- In classrooms: Administrator/designee will direct student to turn off phone, phone will be stored in secure location in the administrative office.
- In hallways: Administrator/designee can confiscate phone and store in secure location in the administrative office.



School Issued Electronic Devices



- **Illegal activity**
- **Commercial for profit activities**
- **Invasion of other people's files, passwords, settings**
- **Disruption or destruction of hardware, software**
- **Malicious use of the network to harass others**
- **Illegal installation of copyrighted software**
- **Access to obscene or pornographic material**

Every year, please update your SMCPs Acceptable Use Policy [Form](#)

Student Handbook/Code of Conduct Updates

Student Dress Code



Standards for appropriate attire and accessories shall include the following:

- Students must wear clothing that covers certain body parts and undergarments. Clothes must be worn in such a way that the chest, midriff, pelvic/groin area, and buttocks are covered with opaque material.
- Clothing displaying or suggesting profanity; sexual activity through graphic images, words, or innuendos; weapons; drugs/alcohol or drug paraphernalia; violence; or tobacco products may not be worn, visible or displayed.
- Clothing with identifiable gang/crew representation or paraphernalia may not be worn, visible, or displayed.
- Symbols or messages generally accepted to promote intolerance, hate, racial slurs (for example Confederate flag, swastika, Ku Klux Klan or KKK) may not be worn, visible, or displayed.
- Head coverings may only be worn indoors so long as the student's face is visible and it does not interfere with instruction or student safety. Ski masks may not be worn indoors.
- Shoes must be worn that are safe for all activities.
- Official St. Mary's County Public Schools' athletic uniforms may be allowed at the discretion of the coach and school administrator.
- Student dress for school-sponsored activities must be in compliance with the Student Dress Code.

Student Handbook/Code of Conduct Updates



Telehealth Services

Telehealth aims to enhance student health and well-being by increasing access to various healthcare services within the school environment, such as primary and specialty care, as well as behavioral health services while minimizing the loss of instructional time.

- Now offering confidential space for telehealth appointments for students at each high school, one day per week during the designated “One Lunch” period.
- Families must arrange and coordinate these appointments in advance with their high school and healthcare provider.
- Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) must sign their student out of school and remain with their student for the duration of the appointment.
- Families are responsible for bringing their own device to connect with their personal healthcare provider.

806 - Destruction of Property



Damage, destruction, or defacement of property belonging to the school or others.

Restitution is to be made. The restitution may be in the form of monetary restitution not to exceed the lesser of the fair market value of the property or \$2,500.00 or the student's assignment to a school work project, or both.

(Maryland Law § 7-305(h) and COMAR 13A.08.01.11.D)

- Schools should consider the following factors:
 - the monetary value of the destroyed property
 - whether student knew the property was valuable or expensive to replace
 - whether student acted in the heat of the moment, as opposed to planning ahead
 - the student's age
 - the reason student destroyed the property
 - whether the behavior is persistent/habitual.
- Apply extended suspension and expulsion only to grades 6-12
- Level 5: If the school administrator decides to request an expulsion conference, the school administrator or designee must contact the Department of Student Services within two (2) days of the alleged offense to request an expulsion conference.

806 - Destruction of Property

Level 1

Causing accidental damage.

Level 1-3

Intentionally causing damage to school/other's property.

Level 2-5

Intentionally causing damage to school/other's property, where the act is especially serious based on the listed factors.



701- Disrespect



Making inappropriate or offensive gestures, symbols, and/or comments to teachers, staff members, or others in any format (written, verbal, and/or electronic).

- Apply extended suspension and expulsion only to grades 6-12.
- Level 5: If the school administrator decides to request an expulsion conference, the school administrator or designee must contact the Department of Student Services within two (2) days of the alleged offense to request an expulsion conference.

Level 1-2

Making intentional and harmful gestures, verbal or written comments, or symbols to others (e.g., verbal put-downs, cursing, talking back)

Level 2-5

Being insubordinate: repeatedly or persistently disrespectful, in defiance of authority.

Gang Activity/Disruptive Behavior



- gang activity/illegal group behavior/similar destructive behaviors
- retaliation against those who report behavior

Consider this...

- this behavior is reported to the police.
- report this behavior to an adult at the school by using the “Gang-Related Incident Reporting Form.”

Fighting



- A physical confrontation involving two (2) or more students.

Consider this...

- fighting leads to suspension
- this behavior may be reported to the police

Bullying

- Intentional unwanted, demeaning behavior among students (written, verbal, electronic, or physical gestures) that involves a real or perceived power imbalance



Bullying



- Must be intentional
- Students who bully use their physical, emotional, social, or academic power to control, exclude, or harm others
- Bullying behaviors happen more than once or are highly likely to be repeated based on evidence gathered

Sexual Harassment

- Unwanted sexual attention from students, teachers, or other adults
- It may occur once or be repeated over time

An adult needs to know so that corrective action can be taken.

Say NO

REPORT it to an adult (school counselor, teacher, parent(s)/legal guardian(s), administrator, or the Title IX designee).

Bullying/Harassment~Need Help?

SAY SOMETHING- Report this behavior to an adult such as your school counselor, teacher, administrator, or parent(s)/legal guardian(s)

An adult will take appropriate action

Also complete:

[Bullying, Harassment, & Intimidation Reporting Form \(Online\)](#)

[Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation Reporting Form \(Print\)](#)

[Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation Form \(Spanish version\)](#)

Forms are also available in the school main office

Sexual Assault

- unwelcome sexual contact, either directly or through clothing
- committed by threat or by force
- without consent of the other person
- behaviors may include deliberate inappropriate touching/pinching/grabbing of a sexual nature, attempted rape, or rape

SAY SOMETHING- Report this behavior to an adult such as your school counselor, teacher, administrator, Title IX designee, or parent(s)/legal guardian(s)

An adult will take appropriate action.

WEAPONS



- You will be reported to the police and the superintendent of schools or his/her designee immediately
- The Gun Free School Act of 1994 and other public laws require expulsion from school for a period of not less than one calendar year

Behaviors reported to Sheriff's Office

Alcohol

Arson/Fireworks/Explosive

Firearms, Stun Guns, Other
Guns, Other Weapons

Illegal Drugs/Intent to Sell

Fighting

Physical Attack

Sexual Assault

Tobacco or Tobacco

Trespassing

Vandalism

Theft

Gang-Related Behavior or Activity



SMILE: You might be on camera



**Video and Audio recording devices may be
“in use” in school or on your bus**

WHY?

- **Monitor behavior**
- **Enhance safety & security**

YOU MAY BE SEARCHED IF:



Principal or Assistant Principal has **reasonable belief** that in your possession is an item that is in violation of any federal or state law, or violation of a SMCPS rule or regulation.

The school building, furnishings, and lockers may be searched.

THINK BEFORE YOU ACT

**LONG-TERM SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION
MAY MEAN...**

YOU CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS

YOU CANNOT ATTEND PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

PLACEMENT IN AN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM



We want you to succeed!



Have you heard of MTSS or PBIS?

- School Wide Behavior Expectations
- Classroom Behavior Expectations

Do you know your school's expectations?

Need to be Responsible & Respectful

Work with Integrity

Honor Diversity

Strive for Excellence



Student Behavior Matrix

School-wide Expectations	Hallway Expectations	Cafeteria Expectations	Outside Areas Expectations
Need to be Responsible and Respectful	Sit so that there can be two-way traffic in the hallway. Walk and not run. Keep free from congregating during class change. Use inside voices. Keep hallways free of litter. NO PDA.	Sit properly at cafeteria tables Keep free from congregating during lunch period. Use inside voices NO PDA.	Sit so that there can be two-way traffic in the hallway. Walk and not run. Keep free from congregating during class change. Use conversational voices. NO PDA.
Work with Integrity	All cell phones, music players, and non approved electronic devices are off and out of sight.	All cell phones, music players, and non approved electronic devices are off and out of sight.	All cell phones, music players, and non approved electronic devices are off and out of sight.
Honor Diversity	Use appropriate and non offensive language. No Profanity.	Use appropriate and non offensive language. No Profanity.	Use appropriate and non offensive language. No Profanity.
Strive for Excellence	Will not wear any head gear inside.	Dispose of all food properly and clean all trash from tables when leaving. Will not wear any head gear inside.	Keep our grounds free from litter. Will refrain from horseplay and physical confrontations.

If you see something...



**If you SEE something,
SAY something.**



If you see something on social media:

- Take a screen-shot and show it to an adult.
- Tell a teacher; tell an administrator; tell a school resource officer.
- Report it through our website.
- Do not like, share, or re-post.

Don't contribute to the rumors.



**REPORT it,
don't REPEAT it.**

www.smcps.org

**IF YOU SEE SOMETHING,
SAY SOMETHING**
CLICK HERE

**If you SEE something.
SAY Something.**

- ✓ Take a screen shot.
- ✓ Tell a teacher, administrator, or resource officer.
- ✓ Report it through our website or app.
- ✓ Do not like, share, or re-post.

Tips for Success

- Follow Schoolwide Expectations
- Stay Positive
- Establish a routine
- Stay on track
- Set goals
- Make the most out of your resources
- Ask for help if needed



READ Your Handbook/Code of Conduct



You are accountable for knowing everything in it