

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School

**Embracing the Family
Nurturing the Spirit
Challenging the Mind
Supporting the Journey
Preparing the Way**

**INTRODUCTION**

The *School Handbook for Students and Parents* is intended to describe the philosophy, services and structure of the school's educational program. The school administration reserve the right to make changes and/or additions to this Handbook without prior notice. The school administration is the final interpreter of the content of this Handbook.

As parents, you have the primary right and duty to educate your child. When you delegate some of the work of education to the school, you assume the obligation to cooperate with the school. A child receives maximum opportunity for achievement and growth only when there is a genuine spirit of cooperation and understanding between home and school.

Each student and parent is required to sign and return a Policy Compliance Agreement and will be held to that agreement.

FOR EASY LOCATION OF INFORMATION, USE THE QUICK FIND INDEX LOCATED INSIDE THE BACK COVER OF THIS HANDBOOK.

HISTORY

The history of St. Mary Help of Christians School goes back to the turn of the century. Established by Ursuline nuns in 1900 as a boarding school for wealthy young ladies, St. Angela Academy received its name from the Ursulines' foundress, St. Angela Merici. In 1906, six years later, at the request of their bishop, the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy from Charleston, South Carolina, assumed the school's operation. The school then served the educational needs of female boarding students as well as both male and female day students. In 1939 Bernard Baruch, a friend of James Byrnes, helped the Sisters finance a red brick building, an addition to the old school which is now a part of St. Mary Help of Christians Parochial School.

When the Savannah River Plant came to Aiken in 1950, the Catholic population skyrocketed. Bishop Emmet Michael Walsh wanted a parochial grammar school established. Accordingly, the brick building on York Street became St. Mary Help of Christians Parochial School supported by student tuition and the hard work of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy. Thus St. Angela's private grammar school ceased to be and only the high school retained that name. The Sisters continued in the grade school, a parochial school under the jurisdiction and support of St. Mary Help of Christians Parish.

In 1955 the Dominican Sisters from Adrian, Michigan, took charge of St. Mary Help of Christians School, staffing it until 1970 when they left. Again the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy assumed the administration and continued to provide a Catholic education to those parents seeking one for their children at St. Mary Help of Christians School until the close of school in June, 1997. Since that date, the administrative duties of the school have been the responsibility of a Catholic lay principal.

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS, VALUES, VISION, AND MISSION

BELIEFS: The community of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School holds these Beliefs:

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

VALUES: The community of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School holds these Values:

That God's love embraces all.

That all of our students are unique, each one being a child of God.

That their parents are our students' first teachers and that Catholic education is an extension of their role and a partnership between home, school and church.

That Jesus Christ is the Center, Model, and Inspiration of our school.

That the Catholic faith and practice are taught to and practiced by our students.

That a strong academic program is provided to our students.

That each student develop a lasting respect for self, life, each of God's children, and the environment.

VISION: The community of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School envisions a school in which:

All students live God's love in their lives and grow spiritually in the Catholic faith, through Scripture, Tradition and Catechism, to enable them to live a new life in Christ, and to help them to play their part in serving in society and in the Church.

All students grow strong in the practice of their faith, in prayer, the Mass, the sacraments, and following the moral life in Christ, to lead them into a lasting and eternal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Continuous effort is made to make a Catholic education available to all students of our parish, and improvements in instructional methods, materials, technology, and facilities are made to meet the needs of all students and to maintain high standards of academic achievement.

All of our students are provided with a challenging academic program, through a variety of learning opportunities and teaching strategies, to enable them to reach their highest potential, morally, intellectually, spiritually, physically and culturally.

A disciplined environment exists, promoted by a commitment to our students' developing good character traits, self-discipline, respect for and responsibility to others.

The uniqueness of each student's need for growth and development are assessed and the school directs its resources towards those needs.

All of our students are encouraged to become "good citizens of this world, loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the Gospel, and who will also be citizens of the world to come, thus fulfilling their destiny to become saints" (Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools).

MISSION: The community of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School has this Mission:

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School, under the guidance of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, embraces the uniqueness, dignity, and potential of all of God's children. We are committed to providing a well-rounded Catholic education: both in faith and in reason, in catechetics as well as academics. We strive to build character, while teaching and modeling compassion, all under the patronage of Our Blessed Mother, Saint Mary Help of Christians. By providing instruction in the Catholic faith, and in its practice, in prayer, in the Mass, in the sacraments and in following the moral life in Christ, we strive to strengthen our children in spirit, in mind, and in body, and to prepare them to lead lives based on Christian faith and good reason.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Through acceptance of each person and through motivation, the teachers try to challenge the student intellectually and personally to reach his potential. Realizing that each student possesses the human drives to construct, communicate, play and give vent to other forms of creative and aesthetic self-expression, we aim to use these drives in the learning process, which should result in total education. We strive to give the child an education for social progress by concentrating on his responsibility for others. We accentuate the positive in the child's self-image and

encourage self-imposed discipline which we expect to be further reinforced at home. Specifically, our objectives are to:

(1) Develop in our school a Catholic/Christian environment permeated by prayer and love.

(2) Assist each child in realizing that he is unique and valuable because he is a child of God.

(3) Help the student to develop Christian moral values and to apply them in daily life.

(4) Enable each student to realize his potential by providing the best academic opportunities available. This will enable each student to develop skills necessary that will prepare each student for future educational and occupational choices.

(5) Provide opportunities for various patterns of interaction based on Gospel values: (a) between students, (b) between students and teachers, (c) between teachers and parents, and (d) between school community and civic community.

(6) Promote self-discipline by training a student to be reverent, respectful, consistent, appreciative, responsible and thorough in his attitude, character and actions.

SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES

"To Teach as Jesus Did" is the purpose of the Catholic school system. To teach the Christian message, to form a Christian community, and to reach out in service to all our neighbors is the primary reason for the existence of a parochial school. The religious program offered at St. Mary Help of Christians School, we believe, to a great extent achieves this end.

Through daily prayer, daily religious instruction, weekly Mass (and reception of the sacraments for Catholics), and through the

performance of some of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, our students grow closer to their Creator and learn to recognize Him in His people.

The home must do its share to foster this spiritual development of the child as parents are, by Divine Plan, the primary teachers of their children. Catholic parents of children receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation are required to attend evening classes when these are scheduled in the parish. Approximately once each week and/or on Holy Days, a liturgy is scheduled with our pastor or parochial vicar. It is a special Mass (at 8:30 a.m. at St. Mary Help of Christians Church) for our students and planned by them. Parents are always welcome. On rainy days, liturgies may be held in St. Angela Hall or cancelled.

We encourage our students to make personal sacrifices and to truly live the Gospel message to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. For holidays and special occasions, during Advent/Lent, students are asked to contribute food, service or money to aid the needy and the poor.

PARENT PRAYER GROUP

Prior to each school liturgy, parents of school children meet in Smith Hall at 8:00 AM. The Parent Prayer group provides an opportunity for parents to pray for their children, for other children, families, and teachers. Students submit prayer intentions during the week and these are collected and read at the Parent Prayer group. The Parent Prayer group is open to all parents of St. Mary's students, as well as parents of preschoolers, public school, and home-schooled students. (Babies and preschoolers are welcome!)

SCHOOL OVERSIGHT

DIOCESAN OFFICE OF EDUCATION

St. Mary Help of Christians School operates under the auspices of the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina. The Diocesan Office of Education is responsible for directing the program of education in 30 elementary schools and two high schools. This office provides services to our schools by:

- (1) Developing policy statements and setting standards for the overall operation of the school.**
- (2) Providing in-service programs for pastors, principals, teachers and Advisory School Board members.**
- (3) Developing curriculum guides for the subject areas of the school curriculum.**
- (4) Providing statistical information regarding the school's performance in the national testing program administered in September or October (Iowa Test of Basic Skills).**
- (5) Providing advice and assistance in obtaining Federal funding through Title I and II.**

ACCREDITATION BY S.A.C.S.

Since 1974, St. Mary Help of Christians School has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Each year, a report must be sent to SACS of improvements made during the past school year and the school's plans for continuing to improve its educational program. Any accreditation standards not being met must be reported and the school's plan to remedy the situation in the near future must be clearly stated. Every five years, a self-study must be undertaken by the school staff and a visiting committee of at least three persons is invited to come to evaluate the school's program in

relation to the self-study. Following the recommendations of this committee, the school receives the status of continuing accreditation or is advised to improve its offerings lest it jeopardize its standing as a member of SACS. St. Mary Help of Christians School successfully completed its five-year review and its on-site visitation from a SACS committee in the spring of 2004.

ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

The pastor of St. Mary Help of Christians Church, along with the principal, administers the operation of St. Mary Help of Christians School. The principal is assisted by a Vice Principal.

The faculty and administrative staff of St. Mary Help of Christians School are dedicated to the well-being of the students. Teachers either maintain teaching certification or otherwise meet the requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

St. Mary Help of Christians School has on staff a school guidance counselor. Parents and students are encouraged to avail themselves of her services.

The office staff consists of one full-time secretary and one part-time office assistant. The secretary is First Aid Certified and provides minor health care for students and faculty.

Administration

Pastor of St. Mary Help of Christians Church	Fr. James LeBlanc
Principal	Marguerite B. (Peggy) Wertz
Vice Principal	Laura Webster
School Secretary/Office Manager	Catherine Green
Bookkeeper/Human Resources	Annette Danfy

Faculty

5K	Alisa DeMass
5K Aide	Ruth O'Brien
First Grade	Loretta Noel

First Grade Aide		Sandra Vine
Second Grade	Kerry DalSanto, Darlene Mastromonico	
Third Grade	Jeri Carroll, Michelle Nelson	
Fourth Grade	Danielle Bajoit, Kerry Rains	
Fifth Grade	Carol Sherburne, Laura Webster	
Sixth, Seventh, Eighth Grades	Annmarie Gorenssek, Kelly Malyszek, Bonnie Martin, Collette Miller, Trudy Ortner, Lynn Yurcan, and Ann Ward	
Art		Karen Stoner
Computer Literacy		Julie Guy
Foreign Language	French	Chris Trezza
	Spanish	Kelly Malyszek, Elba Quiles
Library		Annmarie Gorenssek
Music, Physical Education, and Health		Jim Paczynski
Religion 1-7		Karen Henry, Trudy Ortner

Support Staff

Athletic Director		Laurie Ulmer
Cafeteria Supervisors	Alma Kranjc, Maria Nguyen, and Michelle Smith	
Early Care		Lisa Welsh
Extended Care Program Director		Annette Danfy
Extended Care Program Assistants	Vickie Armstrong, Mary O'Rourke	
Office Aide		Sandra Vine
Recess Supervisors	Vickie Armstrong, Sonia Bronikowski	
Daytime Custodian		George Sapp

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

The task of St. Mary Help of Christians School Advisory Board is to advise the pastor and principal on the educational programs and needs for St. Mary Help of Christians School. These needs and programs are subject to such regulations as proceed from the Diocesan Office of Education and the Office of the Bishop of Charleston. Board members are appointed by the pastor; they may be members of St. Mary Help of Christians Church and/or

Catholic parents of students. The faculty is represented at Board meetings also.

The School Advisory Board meets monthly in closed "Executive Sessions." Parents of students at St. Mary Help of Christians School may send to the Board, through the principal or pastor, a written request to address the board. If deemed appropriate for the School Board (for information or action), the item will be included on the next meeting's agenda. The guest speaker will be present only for that specific portion of the Board meeting.

Ex Officio Members

**Fr. James LeBlanc, Pastor, St. Mary Help of Christians Church
Marguerite B. (Peggy) Wertz, Principal
Rosemarie Adams, PTO President
Carol Sherburne, Faculty Representative
Laurie Ulmer, Athletic Director
Laura Webster, Vice Principal**

Appointed Members

Mickey Anaclerio	Carrie Morgan
Michele Bullington	Donna Pierce
Omar Cardona	Monique Rabin
Jim Driscoll	Bette Ross
Dr. Wayne Frei, President	Mike Serrato

PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

The purpose of St. Mary Help of Christians School Parent/Teacher Organization shall be to work with the principal and teachers of St. Mary Help of Christians School in accordance with the philosophy and goals that are established to help effect the best education for its students, giving financial support and volunteer services, also to stimulate interest, enthusiasm and communication among the parents.

PTO general meetings are scheduled during the school year. Parents are encouraged to attend these meetings and to work

with the teachers and administration in promoting the welfare of their children. Membership dues are \$10.00 per family and are collected at the beginning of the school year. Volunteers for the various PTO activities will also be solicited at the beginning of each school year.

PTO Officers

Rosemarie Adams, President

Mary Frei, Vice President

Holly Weisert, Secretary

Sandra Vine, Treasurer

Volunteers

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School is greatly dependent upon the loyal volunteers who support the school. All of the coaches, lunch distributors, room parents, library assistants, PTO officers, Board members, recyclers, concessions workers, Chocolate Festival and Gingerbread Day organizers and workers, and field trip chaperones volunteer their time and talents to benefit the students, staff, and families of St. Mary's School.

In order to volunteer, it is required that volunteers participate in VIRTUS training, submit to background screening, complete a volunteer application, read and acknowledge receipt of the Diocese of Charleston's Sexual Abuse Policy, Confidentiality Statement, and Volunteer Code of Conduct. All forms are available in the school office. VIRTUS training registration must be handled on-line at www.virtus.org.

Diocese of Charleston Volunteer's Code of Conduct

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Volunteer's Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth of The Diocese of Charleston.

As a volunteer, I will:

- ***Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.***
- ***Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth at School/Church activities.***
- ***Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.***
- ***Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children and/or youth or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.***
- ***Refrain from giving expensive gifts to children and/or youth without prior written approval from the parents or guardian and the pastor or administrator.***
- ***Report any suspected abuse to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor and the appropriate local agencies. I understand that failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities.***
- ***Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth***

As a volunteer, I will not:

- ***Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth.***
- ***Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering.***
- ***Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.***
- ***Pose any health risk to children and/or youth (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations).***
- ***Strike, spank, shake, or slap children and/or youth.***
- ***Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and/or youth.***
- ***Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.***
- ***Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and/or youth.***
- ***Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.***

ADMISSION INFORMATION

ADMITTANCE POLICY

St. Mary Help of Christians School admits qualified students regardless of sex, race, creed, national or ethnic origin with preference first to siblings of presently enrolled students, then to Catholic children of St. Mary Help of Christians Church and finally to all other children.

Admission is not final until all of the following steps are completed and accepted by St. Mary Help of Christians School:

- (1) Kindergarten children must be five years of age by September 1 to enter 5K.**
- (2) Registration forms (Application and Student Information Sheet) must be completed and the following documents provided: Birth Certificate; Social Security Card; South Carolina Certificate of Immunization; Baptismal Certificate for Catholic students and, if applicable, a copy of Custody/Adoption papers.**
- (3) Payment of registration fee with registration application.**
- (4) Completion of F.A.C.T.S. Automatic Tuition Payment Agreement if applicable;**
- (5) Copies of records from previous schools (standardized test scores, report cards, attendance, conduct, etc.) must be submitted.**
- (6) New kindergarten and first grade students are generally required to take a readiness evaluation prior to the start of school. New students registering for other grades must provide a copy of the most recent report card and recent standardized test scores and/or take a placement test.**

(7) Students wishing to transfer from local schools must be able to provide documentation that the student exhibited good conduct and attitude while attending that school.

(8) Declaration of special educational needs, if any.

(a) In the best interest of the student, parents are strongly encouraged to provide St. Mary Help of Christians School a summary of any psychological tests or reports that might be beneficial in serving the student's needs. If special testing is recommended, parents will be asked to sign a release form authorizing the release to the school of pertinent information obtained as a result of said testing.

(b) St. Mary Help of Christians School is aware that some children have been diagnosed to have special needs. It is the parents' responsibility to provide documentation and information to the principal prior to registration regarding personal conditions which may require special services by the school. In these cases, each situation will be evaluated from these two perspectives: the educational standards of the school and the school's financial ability to provide the service.

(9) Other forms (e.g., School Policy Compliance Agreement, Walking Field Trip Permit, Health Information, Publicity Release Form, etc.) will be sent home for signature on the first day of school and are due back the second day of school.

(10) The education of a student is a partnership between the parents and the school. Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

A student must reapply for admission each year. A final decision on acceptance will be made after the conclusion of the current year. Placement of students in classes at each grade level is accomplished with consideration for what is best for the student and the class as a whole. Parent requests for particular placements are not encouraged and may not be accommodated.

This policy is in compliance with the "NCEA Handbook: Legal Considerations" and the policies of the Diocese of Charleston.

FEES AND TUITION

St. Mary Help of Christians School is completely self-supported through tuition and Parish subsidy. Families who wish to enroll their children at St. Mary Help of Christians School, but who are experiencing financial hardship, are encouraged to apply to the Financial Aid Committee. The Financial Aid Committee will make a recommendation to the Pastor for appropriate assistance once all required information has been submitted by the family.

Registration fees are due at the time of registration. All fees are nonrefundable.

Tuition may be paid by one of three methods: (1) prepayment in full by mid July with 3% discount; (2) payment in two semester payments on July 15 and December 15; (3) or by monthly automatic bank withdrawal from a personal checking or savings account. Late fees will be assessed for late tuition payments. Any checks returned for insufficient funds will incur a \$15 charge per check.

Active parishioners of St. Mary Help of Christians Church receive a discounted tuition rate. "Active parishioner" is defined as one who is a registered member of St. Mary Help of Christians Church, attends Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, and contributes to St. Mary's Church using personal checks or the envelope system. An affirmation of active parishioner status is required annually. In addition to at least one parent being registered, attending, and contributing, the child/children attending St. Mary's School must be Baptized and members of the Catholic Church.

April 10, 2006

Dear Parents of the School Students of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church Sunday School and Grade School,

COME TO CLASS

I applaud you parents for choosing to have your sons and daughters educated in a Catholic School, our Sunday School or Grade School. An education is incomplete if it does not include God, just as our lives are empty without Him. God is our origin and our end. God created us and He redeemed us. At every moment, God holds us in His heart and He sustains us in our very existence.

All of our teachers are striving to provide your children with an education focused on God. I am very proud of their work. I delight in what they will accomplish even yet for you and for your children. Our Sunday School teachers are volunteers. Even our Grade School teachers, although paid, are teaching in our Catholic schools as a labor of love.

Our teachers' efforts are built on the foundation of their students' regular attendance at their classes, and their being ready, willing and able to learn while in class. To receive all the benefits of their teachers' loving, hard work, our students need to attend their classes as scheduled, without absences and tardiness, and to come to their classes always prepared to learn. I will be most happy to ask our teachers to continue to work so hard and so lovingly in favor of your children's education so long as their students always come prepared to learn from their efforts.

Many of our students have perfect or nearly perfect records of attendance at their classes. Sadly, some do not. Good class attendance is, of course, its own reward. Those students who have built up records of tardiness or absenteeism, or of lack of preparation for their classes, need their parents' help in your bringing them to class on time, and always ready to learn, bringing with them their books and their completed homework. Please make it their motto, "Come to Class and Come to Mass."

COME TO MASS

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is announced - first and foremost - in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Just as any education is incomplete without God, any Catholic education is incomplete without worship of God, in and through Jesus Christ, in the midst of His people gathered at the Sunday Mass each week. For a Catholic child genuinely to experience a Catholic education, especially in preparation for receiving Christ's sacraments of Penance, Communion and Confirmation, that student must participate in weekly Sunday Mass. Parents seeking a Catholic education for their children are responsible for their children's Sunday Mass attendance every week.

Some parents strive to provide their children with a truly Catholic education, including weekly Sunday Mass attendance. I thank those parents; and I commend you for taking advantage of the very rich blessings that Jesus Christ has in store for your family. The value that your children will reap from their experience of weekly Sunday Mass will far exceed all of our expectations and, even, our understanding.

Sadly, some parents have not fulfilled their responsibility to bring their children to Sunday Mass weekly. To those parents, I make this plea that you prayerfully consider this issue. Through the Mass, we receive Jesus' graces as He directs our hearts to God our Father. He brings true happiness into our lives. To be truly Catholic is to attend Mass every Sunday, worshiping our Lord and God in His Eucharist. Without Sunday Mass, we are ill equipped to handle the challenges and the difficulties of the coming week. Please make it your family resolution, "Come to Class and Come to Mass."

THE BENEFITS OF ACTIVE PARISH MEMBERSHIP

In the Catholic Church, we are members not only of the Mystical Body of Christ but also parishioners of a specific parish church, for example, St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church. We become members of the Body of Christ through Baptism. We maintain our spiritual unity with the Body of Christ by our continued participation in the Sacraments, by our resisting sin and by our growth in virtue. We become and remain active parishioners of a

parish by being registered in that parish, by our continued support of that parish, and by our participation in the life of that parish.

Membership in the Body of Christ and membership in our parish church are both very important. Active membership in our parish church is required in order to enjoy "active parishioner" status in and for our Sunday School and our Catholic Grade School. Our school students and their families must be Active Members of our parish church - which means Registered, Attending and Contributing Members of St. Mary's, determined as follows:

- 1. By your being Registered in the Parish for a sufficient period of time having filled out a Registration Form;*
- 2. By your faithfully Attending Mass on all Sundays and all Holy Days of Obligation; and*
- 3. By your Contributing to the support of our Parish, through our envelope system, or by your checks, given into our Offertory Collection.*

If you are members of another Catholic parish church - other than St. Mary Help of Christians - and your child attends St. Mary's Grade School, then you should be Active Members, as defined above, in your own parish church. If you are not now an Active Member in your own parish church, as above, please take steps to become Active now. Get registered; attend weekly Sunday and Holy Day Mass; contribute your support to the parish. Enjoy the benefits that active participation brings. Failure of our school students and their families to attend Sunday Mass weekly suggests that such persons might be more interested in a subsidized private education (which is not the mission of our Catholic Schools) than in a truly Catholic education. Certainly, it means that such persons are missing out on the very greatest benefit our Church and your parish have to offer. If you and your family are now enjoying the benefits of active parish membership, simple honesty requires that you become Active in your parish membership. Justice, as between you and the other Active members of your parish, demands that you continue to be Active, that you give your support to your parish, as you call upon the parish

to give its support to you in carrying out your obligation to provide a Catholic religious education for your children. If you are to enjoy our tuition-free Sunday School and the reduced rates of tuition at our Catholic Grade School, in the school year 2006-2007 and in the future, which rates are meant to be available to our active parishioners, then you yourself must be Active in your parish membership. Use of our offertory envelope system has the intended additional effect of providing a record of your attendance at weekly Sunday and Holy Day Mass. So, please, make it your constant practice, "Come to Class and Come to Mass."

FOR THE FUTURE

In the future, as a matter of simple justice, also plain common sense, families not meeting the requirements of Active Membership in their parish, as above, will not be accorded active parishioner status and the parish membership benefits that come from such status. No one, least of all your pastor, wants to see any of our members falling away from active membership in their parish church. Might we all, rather, work together more and more as active members of the one Body of Christ, and also of our home parish churches, rooting ourselves ever more firmly in our faith so that we may experience the complete joy that Our Lord desires for all of us (John 15:10-11).

Very sincerely yours,

Rev. James L. LeBlanc

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES**SCHOOL SECURITY/SAFETY PROCEDURES**

The faculty and staff at St. Mary Help of Christians School make every effort to provide for a safe environment. St. Mary Help of Christians School is very "security aware" and has policies and procedures in place to ensure a safe environment for our students. The school's Crisis Plan was written using the U. S. Department of Education's "Early Warning, Timely Response, A Guide to Safe Schools" as a guide and information source. Monthly fire drills are conducted. Tornado, earthquake, and "lock-down" drills are conducted periodically.

The perimeter of the campus is secured by fences, gates, and locked doors. This security is only as reliable as staff, parents, and visitors make it. All parents and visitors must sign in at the office and wear a visitor's pass when on campus.

Parents are requested to not enter school grounds through the double iron gate by St. Angela Hall. The Fairfield Street gate code does not work on this gate, therefore access through this gate must be requested by using the gate intercom and granted by the school office.

Parents are provided the access code to the Fairfield Street gate. Parents should refrain from sharing the code with anyone other than adults or babysitters who are authorized to pick up students from school or extended care. Students in grades 4-8 will be issued a demerit for using the gate access keypad, whether during or after school hours. Students in grades K-3 will also be penalized for using the keypad.

All school employees, coaches, chaperones, and volunteers who come into contact with minors on a regular basis must attend a VIRTUS session. Since all parents are expected to volunteer and participate in activities such as the Chocolate Festival, it is recommended that all parent attend a VIRTUS class. There is no

cost for the VIRTUS training sessions. To check availability of sessions and to register, go online to www.virtus.org. Look to the left of the screen, click on *Registration* and follow the instructions given. Volunteers are also required, by the Diocese of Charleston, to have background screening results on file, to complete and submit a volunteer application, and to sign a confidentiality statement and policy acknowledgement statement. Volunteers who have previously attended a VIRTUS session should call or come by the school office to verify that the required items are on file.

Students are encouraged and expected to behave in a safe manner. Additionally, to promote and maintain a safe environment, the school/parish is co-tenant of lockers and desks and reserves the right to inspect them at any time without notice.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

All schools in the Diocese of Charleston participate in a compulsory Student/Athletic Accident Insurance Plan provided by Sadler & Company, Columbia, SC. The following parties are also involved in providing this coverage: (1) Mutual of Omaha - the insurance company, and (2) Maksin Management Corporation - the claims administrator. Claim forms are available from the school office. Parent contact will be directly with Maksin Mgmt. Corp. Coverage is as described in a policy brochure which is distributed to each family at the beginning of the school year. A fee for this compulsory Student/Athletic Accident Insurance is collected as part of registration fees.

NEWSLETTERS & OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

Because communication is such an important aspect of school and home working together for the good of our children, monthly newsletters and calendars are prepared and distributed to inform parents of coming events, etc. These will be sent home during the last week of each month. Please read and keep them for reference.

To assure open communication, parents are encouraged to write in with suggestions and/or constructive criticisms (stating concerns and offering solutions). If parents wish to confer with administration and/or staff, it is requested that an appointment be made.

All teachers will provide to parents an e-mail address. Teachers will check e-mail daily on school days and will respond to emails within 48 hours not including weekends and holidays.

POLICY REGARDING PARTIES AND GIFTS FOR STUDENTS

Ordinarily, class parties are limited to Christmas and Valentine's Day for Grades K-5. Easter treats may be distributed at the end of the school day to students in Grades K-5. Homeroom parents are asked to assist the teacher with these by arranging for and serving refreshments and helping with other activities. The older students may be permitted to have an evening dance (Grades 6-8). Parents may send in special treats for birthdays which are to be shared AT LUNCH. No other holiday parties or treats will be allowed unless specific permission is granted by the principal.

For personal parties held outside of school, we require that invitations not be distributed at school unless everyone in the class is to be invited. Gifts should not be brought to school and given to honorees.

Please do not send balloons or flowers to your children at school as delivery will not be made to students until the end of the school day.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

St. Mary Help of Christians School Asbestos Management Plan is available in the office for anyone who cares to read it.

COMPLIANCE WITH BUCKLEY AMENDMENT

St. Mary Help of Christians School complies with the Buckley Amendment which acknowledges the rights of non-custodial parents.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

St. Mary Help of Christians School endeavors to insure good School-Community interaction. Students participate in a wide range of activities sponsored by local civic organizations and businesses such as parades, art contests, academic competitions and various service projects. St. Mary Help of Christians facilities are used by both school and parish families for religious and other educational programs.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

CURRICULUM

The curriculum at St. Mary Help of Christians School is formulated according to diocesan directives. Inherent in the curriculum is a solid commitment to excellence in the development of basic skills in reading and math. The academic program also includes religion, language arts (English, spelling, handwriting, phonics, vocabulary development and composition skills), social studies and science, health and safety. Enrichment is provided through courses in music, art, physical education, foreign language (French and Spanish), computer education, library skills instruction, algebra, and drama.

An ongoing process of evaluation of curriculum needs is maintained in order to provide for growth and improvement of the program. The benefits of the curriculum at St. Mary Help of Christians School for the individual child have been documented by the results of national testing and the school's status as a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

INTERNET USE POLICY

St. Mary Help of Christians School offers students access to the Internet. Along with access to computers and people all over the world comes the availability of materials that may not be considered appropriate. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials. Ultimately, the school staff, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying standards that students should follow when using media and information sources.

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computers just as they are in a classroom. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. Access to the Internet is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible

manner. Access is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, based upon the guidelines outlined in this policy, the school staff will deem what is inappropriate use and their decisions are final. The administration, faculty and staff of St. Mary's School may deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges at anytime. The user is expected to abide by the following network rules of etiquette:

- (1) Internet use will be restricted to accessing instructional and reference material on the Internet. This may include the use of e-mail.
- (2) Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language. Sending or receiving offensive messages or pictures from any source will result in immediate suspension of privileges and disciplinary action.
- (3) Do not reveal the personal address or phone number of yourself or other students. Do not communicate any credit card number, bank account number, or any other financial information.
- (4) Do not use the network in such a way that would disrupt the use of the network by others.
- (5) Students may not download or install any commercial software, shareware or freeware unless they have written permission from school personnel.
- (6) Students who post inappropriate information about SMS students, faculty, staff, or volunteers may be subject to the school's disciplinary actions.
- (7) Students are prohibited from accessing the internet on phones or electronic games before, during, and after school.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Homework should be a part of each child's day as a means of reinforcing material that has been taught during classes.

Children are required to keep a homework assignment pad for this purpose. Daily "pop" quizzes on material assigned for reading and study may be a part of a teacher's daily plans. A student is expected to be prepared for these unscheduled quizzes.

Recommended homework times are: 30 minutes for Grades 1 and 2; 45 minutes for Grades 3, 4 and 5; an average of 15-20 minutes per subject per night for students in Grades 6, 7 and 8.

The general school policy concerning weekend homework is that teachers will, insofar as it is feasible, avoid making homework assignments on Friday that are due the following Monday. Homework over Christmas or spring break may be assigned only with the principal's approval.

MAKE-UP WORK

It is the responsibility of the parent and/or student to obtain assignments, notes, books and make-up work or tests as determined by the individual teacher. Classwork and homework will be gathered for an absent student throughout the school day and may be picked up between 3:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. from the office.

All make-up classwork and homework must be completed in a timely manner, commensurate with the length of the absence. All make-up tests must be taken promptly, generally within five days after the student returns to school.

Students in Grades 6-8 who miss major tests may not make them up during class time. These students should arrange with the teacher to attend a make-up test session from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The monitor will have all necessary test materials except paper, pencil and pen. A notice confirming the make-up test will be sent home. Quizzes may be made up at the teacher's discretion, either during lunch period or in a make-up test session.

Failure to make up classwork, quizzes, or homework promptly will result in a zero being given for the missing work, regardless of the reason for the absence. In the case of medical absence of long duration, please consult directly with the teacher.

Please note that teachers are not obligated to allow students to make up work or tests that are a result of an unexcused absence. A grade of 50 may be assigned for work missed as a result of an unexcused absence or tardy.

FORGOTTEN ASSIGNMENTS, BOOKS, SIGNED PAPERS

Teachers and office staff will, within reason, allow an infrequent phone call from a student to a parent regarding a forgotten assignment, book, paper, or permission slip. Teachers and the office staff do, though, reserve the right to deny permission for a child to make such a call. Parenting experts discourage the practice of parents accommodating children by bringing forgotten items to school, for children have a much greater sense of responsibility if faced with the consequences of their forgetfulness. (A great deal of respect is held for the parent, who when receiving an “I forgot” call from school, denies the child’s request to bring the forgotten material to school.)

Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to call home to get dress day clothes when he/she has forgotten and has worn his/her uniform. There are always other students at school who chose to wear their uniform, also forgot, or lost their dress day privileges. Dress days are typically announced each morning several times prior to the dress day and notices sent home via the monthly school calendar or separate flyer.

Books and assignments that are left at school may be retrieved between 3:00 and 3:30, when the school office is still open. Parents must check in at the office first. Parents/students should not ask the Extended Care staff for access to classrooms. Again, parenting experts encourage parents to allow their children to learn the lesson of “natural consequences” for leaving needed

materials at school or in their lockers. Parents who accommodate children by returning to school to pick up materials, should limit such returns by stating and enforcing a specific boundary (*once per semester, once per year per child, no more than three times, never again, or whatever is considered reasonable for the child and parent*).

Parents of students with special needs regarding organizational issues, homework assignments, and materials should meet with the teacher/s and principal as soon as the school year begins, or when issues begin to surface. Exceptions and accommodations can be made and agreed upon to best meet the needs of the student.

Students in grades 3 – 8 are required to utilize the school assignment pads. Parents should continue to review assignment sheets (grade 2) and assignment pads (grades 3-8) until such time as the student has demonstrated that he/she has successfully mastered the organizational skills needed to prepare for long and short term assignments. Students are often instructed by their teachers or the administration to record some reminder in their assignment pad. These reminders (school pictures, formal uniform, bake sale, etc.) are intended to assist students and their families in keeping up with classroom and school events.

For other helpful parenting tips, go to www.rosemond.com or www.ParentTeacherSupport.org . These two sites provide some “common sense parenting tips” that recognize the challenges of today’s world, as well as the needs of children and parents. John Rosemond’s site provides a parenting quotation of the day. The faculty and staff are partners with parents! Let us know how we can help.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are planned by the teacher(s) with the principal's approval. They must be educational to be of value. Parents must sign permission slips for children to attend. For other than walking

trips or in-town trips, a chartered bus or our parish bus will be used to transport the children.

Students who do not attend field trips are required to be in school. Failure to attend school, without a medical excuse, may result in disciplinary action. Eighth graders will be ineligible to participate in the end-of-year trip if they have not participated in all other eighth grade trips unless medically excused.

STUDENT SUPPORT

ACADEMIC AND GUIDANCE TESTING

Placement tests may be given to new students at the school's discretion. National standardized aptitude and achievement tests are administered in September to students in Grades 1-8 to assess strengths and weaknesses. Parents receive a copy of the results. These are important for you to read and keep in your child's file at home.

Semester examinations will be given to all students taking eighth or ninth grade classes. These test scores will count as 20% of the semester average.

SPECIAL EVALUATION FOR REMEDIATION SERVICES

St. Mary Help of Christians School strives for excellence in education and seeks to meet the needs of individual students. Tutoring may be provided by the school or through cooperation with private tutors.

In cases where a student's testing and remediation needs cannot be met by the school, referrals will be made to local agencies and/or public school programs. For any special testing, parents are encouraged to follow the recommendations made on their child's behalf and to insure that appropriate documentation is placed in the child's permanent file in the school office.

Residents of Aiken County are entitled to psychoeducational evaluation services through the Aiken County Public Schools' Special Education Department. Please contact Mrs. Jane Morrow, Lead School Psychologist, at 641-2621 to schedule screenings and/or evaluation.

FORMAL ACADEMIC REPORTS

Interim Progress Reports

At mid-quarter, a report of a student's progress will be given to the student. These reports are to be signed by a parent and returned to the teacher on the next school day. On occasion, at the teacher's discretion, tests and other work papers requiring parent's signature may be sent home and must be returned to the teacher on the next school day. (See School Regulations and Discipline Code.) Parents are encouraged to arrange for special conferences concerning student's progress by calling the school or emailing the teacher.

Report Cards and Parent/Teacher Conferences

Report cards are prepared at the end of each nine week session (October, January, March and May) and are distributed as follows:

- (1) Parent/teacher conferences will be held with parents at the end of the first quarter (October 28, 2009). Report cards will be distributed at that time.**
- (2) Second quarter report cards will be given to students to take home for signature in Grades 5K-8 on January 21, 2010.**
- (3) Third quarter report cards will be given to students in Grades 1-8 on March 31, 2010.**
- (4) Fourth quarter report cards for students in K-8 are to be picked up by parents at school on dates determined by**

administration. All accounts must be clear before final report cards will be given to parents.

A parent may call for a conference if there is a need to share or gather information.

MARKING SYSTEMS

5K - 5K report cards will reflect a student's progress in Reading Readiness, Language Development and Listening Skills, Math Readiness, Motor Skills, and Behavior. The report card will indicate one of the following: acceptable, needs work/time to develop, or improving.

Grades 1-8 - The marking systems are as follows:

Grades 1-2, All Subjects

E+	97-100
E	93-96
G+	89-92
G	84-88
S+	79-83
S	74-78
W	73 and below

Grades 3 - 8, Academic Subjects

A+	98-100	C+	80-82
A	95-97	C	77-79
A-	92-94	C-	74-76
B+	89-91	D	70-73
B	86-88	F	Below 70 or
B-	83-85		Incomplete
Numeric grades will be given for			
Grades 6, 7 and 8.			

Grades 3-8, Special Subjects

- **In grades 3-6, S+, S, S- and U will be given in Art, Music, Handwriting, Physical Education and Computer.**

- **In grades 7-8, S+, S, S- and U will be given in Computer Curriculum (CC), Handwriting and Physical Education.**

- **In grades 7-8, the quarterly courses of Computer, Health, Art, and Music will be graded utilizing the Grades 3-8, Academic Subjects numeric grading scale. These classes will be considered**

academic subjects. Grades in these classes will be used to determine honor roll and Beta Club.

HONOR ROLL

Pastor's Honor Roll - Student must receive "A's" in all academic subjects and satisfactory grades in all other areas.

Parochial Vicar's Honor Roll - This honor is awarded to any student in Grades 3-8 who receives no grade lower than a "B-" in all academic subjects and satisfactory grades in all other areas.

SUMMER SCHOOL

A student who does not pass a major subject in Grades 5-8 will be required to attend summer school or complete summer work that will be assigned in that subject area. All arrangements must be approved by the principal during the first week of June. The student may be tested on material before re-entry in August.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive a diploma from St. Mary's, a student must pass all eighth grade-level subjects listed on the report card with a year average of "D" or better.

Students who fail ninth grade-level subjects will receive a diploma but these classes must be repeated in ninth grade. A Certificate of Attendance will be issued to any student who does not meet the requirements.

St. Mary Help of Christians School's accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is recognized by the public school system. Therefore, graduating eighth graders may receive a maximum of three high school credits for English I, Algebra I, and French I or Spanish 1 taken at St. Mary Help of Christians School. English I credit requires a final average of "C" or higher and teacher recommendation in Lit 9 or 9A, English, and

Spelling/Vocabulary. A final average of "C" or higher and a teacher recommendation are required in order to receive credit for Algebra I. Students may also be eligible to enter higher level foreign language classes, with or without credit, upon teacher recommendation. The school will also provide assistance, as requested, to aid students wishing to enter special programs.

THE SCHOOL DAY

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

The office of St. Mary Help of Christians School is open from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Bells will ring as follows:

At 7:55 a.m., the first bell will ring. At this time students will line up outside at designated areas and be met by their teachers. Roll call will commence with the 8:00 a.m. bell. Morning prayers, pledge, patriotic song, and announcements will begin at 8:07 a.m.

Classes begin after announcements.

SCHEDULE FOR GRADES 6-8

Period 1	8:00-8:55	K-8 LUNCH SCHEDULE	
Period 2	8:58-9:40	Kindergarten	10:45
Period 3	9:43-10:25	Grade 1-2	10:50-11:30
House	10:25-10:35	Grades 3	11:10-11:50
Period 4	10:38-11:20	Grades 4-5	11:15-11:55
Period 5	11:23-12:05	Grade 6-8	12:05-12:35
Period 7	12:38-1:20	DISMISSAL	
Period 8	1:23-2:05	Grades K-4	2:50
Period 9	2:08-2:50	Grades 5-8	3:00
House	2:50-3:00		

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Children arriving/leaving by car are to be dropped off and picked up curbside in the designated zone on the St. Mary's side of Fairfield Street only.

Students who walk or bike to and from school must provide a note to the school office, signed by a parent, specifying dates and destination if other than home.

Students are not permitted to cross Fairfield Street during morning arrival (7:15-8:00 a.m.) or dismissal (2:45-3:15 p.m.) unless directed by a teacher on duty. This is a safety measure recommended by Aiken Department of Public Safety. Parents should not walk up to get students. Walkers will be dismissed only after waiting cars have been loaded. The sidewalk must remain clear for loading students. Parents leaving school grounds during loading and unloading should go by the office and ask staff to open the gate by St. Angela Hall. It is imperative that the sidewalk be kept as clear as possible.

Cars using the drop-off zone on the school side of Fairfield (zone indicated by yellow curb) are to go as far as possible in this lane before stopping. This will allow others to pull up behind and expedite the safe arrival and departure of the students.

For the safety of our children, please observe the NO PARKING signs and curb markings. Bikers also must enter and exit by the Fairfield Street gate. Bicycles must be walked on school property. No skating of any kind is permitted on school property. (See School Regulations and Discipline Code.)

In the morning, the children are to go directly to the Cafeteria where they will be supervised. At 7:45 a.m., students will line up by class at designated areas and await the 7:55 a.m. bell. No playing and no playground equipment, including balls, will be permitted to be used before school. On very cold or rainy

mornings, students will wait in the cafeteria until a teacher escorts them to their classrooms.

Students are not permitted to enter the classroom buildings before 8:00 a.m. without teacher permission. Students may not re-enter the classroom buildings without permission. During school hours, parents and other visitors to the school will enter the school grounds at the pedestrian gate on Fairfield Street and check in at the school office.

After school, students will be dismissed to cars only when their names are called. All parents must participate in the car line pickup. The sidewalk needs to be kept clear for teachers to supervise traffic and assist students to their cars. Teacher supervision will be provided in the school yard until 3:15 p.m.. Students are to remain in the playground area adjacent to the Fairfield Street gate until their ride leaves. No playing is allowed during pick-up time. After 3:15, students who are not picked up must report to Extended Care and will be charged for the supervision they receive.

Students and parents are expected to obey the teachers on duty. Students may not leave the school yard for any reason other than to depart with their carpool unless alternate arrangements have been made with the school office. (See School Regulations and Discipline Code.)

In the event of rain, all students will be dismissed from the primary building at the door facing Fairfield Street. The teachers on duty will notify the students as their carpools arrive. It would facilitate smooth dismissal if carpool drivers held up signs displaying students' names.

Students who are leaving school (riding or walking) with someone other than their parent or regular carpool driver must present a note to the office.

ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

Parents are requested to notify the school office by phone if a student stays out of school for any reason. Parents who do not call an absence in to the school may be called by office staff to assure the student is where he/she is supposed to be. (This notification does not take the place of the required written excuse following an absence.)

South Carolina's Compulsory Attendance Law requires parents/guardians to have children in school unless: (1) the child is ill, (2) it is a recognized religious holiday, or (3) there is a death in the immediate family. See below for details.

When a student returns to school after an absence, a note of explanation from the parent, guardian, or physician must be submitted within five school days. Failure to submit notes for absences within five days will result in the absence being recorded as unlawful regardless of reason.

The number of Excused Absences, Unexcused Absences and Times Tardy will be shown on the quarterly report card and permanent record.

Lawful Absences

(1) Students who are ill and whose attendance would endanger their health or the health of others may be temporarily excused from attendance. A statement from a physician or other health provider is required in cases of frequent or extended absences (in excess of three days).

Chronic illnesses require certification from a physician or other health care provider, to be provided with registration or at the time of diagnosis. Such statements will become a part of the student's permanent record.

(2) Students in whose immediate family there is a serious illness or death may be temporarily excused from attendance. A

statement from a physician or other health provider may be required.

(3) Students may be excused from attendance for recognized religious holidays of their faith.

(4) Students may be excused for emergencies as approved by the principal.

Absences of up to ten per year will be considered lawful if the reasons for the absences are defined as lawful according to this policy. A student must attend a minimum of 170 days to be considered for promotion unless excessive absences are approved by the principal.

Student attendance will be recorded on a daily basis. To be counted present for the day, a student must attend at least half of the school day. Students arriving at school after 10:00 a.m. or leaving school prior to 1:00 p.m. will be charged with one-half day absence.

Unlawful Absences/Intervention

An unlawful absence is defined as a student's willful absence from school without the knowledge of the parents or a student's absence from school without an approved reason with or without the knowledge of the parents.

South Carolina State Law requires that (1) "school officials shall immediately intervene to encourage the student's future attendance when the student has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences, and (2) the administration shall promptly approve or disapprove any student absence in excess of ten days." Parents of a child with three consecutive unlawful absences or five unlawful absences will be required to attend a conference with the principal.

To "intervene" means to identify the reasons for the student's continued absence and to develop a plan in conjunction with the student and parent/guardian to improve future attendance. The school will maintain evidence of intervention activities, e.g., copies of letters to parents, intervention plans, etc. Failure of the parent/guardian to cooperate with the school may result in a parent being referred to the Department of Social Services.

State law further states: "Any parent or guardian who neglects to enroll his (school-age) child or ward or refuses to make such child or ward attend school shall, upon conviction, be fined not more than fifty dollars or be imprisoned not more than thirty days; each day's absence shall constitute a separate offense; provided, the court may in its discretion suspend the sentence of anyone convicted of the provisions of this article."

Please note that teachers are not obligated to allow students to make up work or tests that are a result of an unexcused absence.

TARDY TO SCHOOL

Students arriving in the classroom after the 8:00 a.m. bell will be considered tardy.

A parent/guardian must either sign in a tardy student in the office, call to notify the office of an anticipated tardy or send a signed note with the student for a tardy to be considered excused. Students are not permitted to sign themselves in or out. Students will be given a Tardy Slip by the office which they are to give to their teacher in order to gain admittance to class.

Students in Grades 4-8 will be assigned a demerit for each tardy after the third tardy per quarter.

SIGNING IN/SIGNING OUT DURING SCHOOL DAY

Parents are encouraged to make appointments for their children after school hours. In extenuating circumstances, a student may

be excused from school only if he presents a note at 8:00 a.m. roll call from a parent/guardian or, in an emergency, the parent calls the school office. At the time of departure and return, parents are to sign a record sheet in the office where the student is to be picked up and readmitted. No student will be permitted to sign himself in or out. Students will not be released to older siblings or people unfamiliar to school personnel without specific written permission.

Students who miss school, arrive at school after 10:00 a.m. without a medical "admit" slip, or sign out at or before 1:00 p.m. will be ineligible to participate in after-school or evening athletic or social activities on that same day.

LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS

It is the responsibility of the student to bring a lunch each day or to order lunch from PTO's Optional Lunch Program (lunches catered by local restaurants). If your child does not order a special lunch, he is to bring his regular bag lunch. Please be sure to mark a lunch from home with the student's name.

Students who occasionally forget lunch may call home to request that it be brought to school. Lunches should be dropped off in the office - not taken to classrooms; the office staff will see to it that lunches are given to students.

Milk and water are offered at lunch time and may be paid for daily, weekly, or monthly. Ice cream will be sold by the PTO on Fridays. Checks for milk and/or ice cream should be made payable "St. Mary's PTO."

Parents are invited, once a month on a designated day, to join their child(ren) for lunch. Eating lunch with students on a day other than those designated must be approved by the office.



St. Mary's School is proud to expand our recycling program to the lunchroom. With the agreement of the City of Aiken, faculty and students will be recycling glass, aluminum cans, number 1 & 2 plastic containers, newspapers, catalogs, office paper, and cardboard (including Friday's pizza boxes). Students are encouraged to place recyclables in the clearly marked containers in the lunchroom.



POLICY REGARDING MEDICATION

The Diocese of Charleston has mandated that the following medication policy be adopted and practiced by Diocesan schools.

Only necessary medication (such as for epileptics, asthmatics, diabetics, or ADD/ADHD) may be given at school. All medication should be given outside of school hours if possible. When necessary, medication can be given at school only under the following conditions:

(1) If medication is needed in order for a student to remain in school, a Diocesan form which is available from the school office must be completed by the parent/guardian, signed by the physician, and returned with the medication to the school office.

(2) All medication, including "over the counter," must be prescribed by a doctor or dentist and must be in the original container and labeled with a current pharmacy prescription label. Medication sent in baggies or unlabeled containers will not be given.

(3) The parent is responsible for bringing all medication to the school office and picking up unused medicine or it will be destroyed.

(4) Antibiotics may not be given at school by school personnel. If the parent feels the antibiotic must be given during the school day, the parent may come to the school office and administer it.

(5) All medications will be kept in a locked cabinet in the school office.

(6) Inhalers must be kept in the school office unless there is a physician's statement that the student needs to keep it with him.

(7) Only designated school personnel or the parent may administer prescribed medications including nebulizer treatments.

(8) Students may not keep medication, either prescribed or OTC, in bookbags, lunch boxes or lockers to be taken at their own discretion. ALL medications must be handled as described above. Violation of this medication policy will be considered a serious infraction of school rules and will be referred to the principal.

(9) Students in third grade and above may use cough drops at school if they also bring a dated, signed parent note to the office. The cough drops may only be consumed during the time period specified in the note.

TELEPHONE USE BY STUDENTS

The school telephone is a business phone and student use is limited to calls approved by the office. All phones other than the office phone are off-limits to students. Please refer to "Forgotten Assignments, Books, Signed Papers" in the section titled "Academic Program."

Students are not permitted to use personal cellular phones at school. Cellular phones which are necessary for after-school activities must remain OFF and in lockers during the school day.

PARENT/GUEST/OTHER VISITS TO SCHOOL

Parents and other visitors are welcome at school. We value your interest and involvement! However, in an effort to secure the safety of students and personnel, the following security policy is in effect.

During regular school hours, parents and other visitors to the school will enter the school grounds at the pedestrian gate on Fairfield Street and check in at the school office. No individuals other than clergy and school staff and faculty shall be allowed in any school building or on the playground at any time without first checking in with the office and obtaining a Visitor's Pass, a Volunteer Pass, or a Substitute Pass. These passes must be visible. Faculty and staff are instructed to personally escort any unauthorized visitor to the office if they do not positively respond to a request to check in with the office.

Parents are provided the access code to the Fairfield Street gate. Parents should refrain from sharing the code with anyone other than adults or babysitters who are authorized to pick up students from school or Extended Care.

Parents and other visitors may not go into buildings or classrooms during the school day unless the visit is prearranged. This policy is primarily for security, but it is also intended to minimize classroom interruptions. Messages or items that need to be given to your child should be brought to the school office; please do not take them to the classroom.

All parents are asked to take leave of students in the school yard prior to the 7:55 a.m. first bell. Please do not accompany students to their classroom door.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom. Fire drills are held approximately every month and tornado drills twice a year so that students and teachers will be prepared in the event of an emergency. An Emergency Alert Monitor is used in the office for serious weather and other emergency alerts from the Aiken County Emergency Preparedness Center.

UNEXPECTED CLOSING OF SCHOOL

In case of inclement weather, hurricane or tornado warnings, please listen to local radio stations for information regarding the closing of school. Generally, our closing schedule will coincide with that of Aiken County Schools. However, since we do not have the problem of running school buses in hazardous weather conditions, St. Mary Help of Christians School may be able to reopen sooner than the public schools. Listen to the following radio and television stations for announcements:

WBBQ 104.3FM/1340AM	WAJY 102.7FM	WJBF TV6
WZNY 105.7FM	WRXR 96.3FM	WRDW TV 12

St. Mary Help of Christians School utilizes an automated calling system to alert parents of school or weather emergency information as well as other school information. It is imperative that parents notify the school office if phone numbers/contact information changes. Parents are asked to complete the emergency contact information form at the beginning of the school year so that the necessary numbers are called in the event of a school emergency, early dismissal, or general school announcement.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

All students in Grades K-8 must wear complete uniforms beginning the first day of school. All uniform components are available on-line from Educational Outfitters. To avoid potential problems with compliance with the uniform code, it is recommended that you order from Educational Outfitters. The uniform should fit well and be neat, clean and worn properly as designed. *The administration reserves the right to determine what clothing and accessories are acceptable.*

FORMAL UNIFORM - St. Mary's Formal Uniform is appropriate for any school day. It **MUST** be worn on days designated Formal Uniform Days (most Wednesdays for weekly school liturgy, Holy Days and other days as announced).

Girls' Formal Uniform

- Gr. K-4 – School jumper or skort with white oxford shirt (button-down collar preferred); approved socks; approved footwear
- Gr. 5 – School jumper, skort or box-pleated skirt with white oxford shirt (button-down collar preferred); approved socks; approved footwear
- Gr. 6-8 – School box-pleated skirt or skort with white oxford shirt (button-down collar preferred); approved socks; approved footwear

Boys' Formal Uniform

- Gr. K-8 - Approved school tie; white oxford shirt; approved slacks; approved socks; approved footwear

CASUAL UNIFORM - Appropriate for boys and girls for all days except Formal Uniform Days: choice of white golf shirt (SMS logo or no logo), plain white blouse (girls) or oxford shirt (no turtlenecks or collarless shirts); approved shorts or slacks;

approved socks; approved footwear. The Formal Uniform as described above may also be worn on Casual Uniform days.

PE UNIFORM

Girls - athletic shoes as described below and modest navy or white shorts under skirts/jumpers which are to be removed for PE (no knit or stretch shorts; e.g. bike shorts). In cold weather, navy warm-up pants may be brought to school to pull on for PE only (not to be worn in classroom).

Boys - athletic shoes as described below and whatever uniform is worn to school.

All students must wear outerwear appropriate for weather conditions.

IMPORTANT UNIFORM CONSIDERATIONS/DEFINITIONS

(1) The accepted length of shorts, skorts, jumpers and skirts is longer than finger-tip length. This length applies to uniforms and dress day clothing.

(2) "*Approved Slacks*" and "*Approved Shorts*" are defined as navy blue dress slacks or shorts, preferably twill, with brown, black or navy belt if item contains belt loops. No top-stitching, jeans styling, cargo pockets, etc. Slacks are not to be cuffed or rolled at the hem. No leggings, stretch pants or sweatpants.

"*Approved Socks*" is defined as plain white or navy crew socks (boys and girls), white or navy knee socks (girls), or white or navy tights (girls). Socks must cover ankle bones. No leggings or hose may be worn.

"*Approved Footwear*" is defined as neutral-colored dress shoes or white, black or navy athletic shoes (with minimal colored trim; no colored laces; no blinking lights). We encourage students to routinely wear athletic shoes. Most dress shoes are hazardous

on our asphalt playground surface. Athletic shoes with cleats or skate wheels are prohibited. No boots, clogs, sandals, flip-flops, backless, or open-toed shoes are allowed.

(3) A plain navy or plain white sweater or school-approved sweatshirt may be worn in the classroom with Formal or Casual Uniform. (No sweatshirts other than school-approved sweatshirts may be worn.) Sweaters/sweatshirts must be worn with uniform shirts underneath. (Sweaters/sweatshirts are not to be tied around the waist or shoulders when not being worn.) No hooded sweaters or sweatshirts may be worn in the classroom or in church.

(4) Girls' and boys' hair is to be neat, clean and styled conservatively in keeping with the uniform. Boys' hair should not hang down over the eyes and must be cut short enough that it does not cover the ears or touch the collar of his shirt. The use of temporary or permanent hair color or extreme hair styles are not appropriate for either girls or boys.

(5) Accessory Guidelines

Girls - Jewelry and hair ornaments must be worn in moderation and in uniform colors. Earrings may be no larger or longer than a nickel and must be in silvertone, goldtone, or in uniform colors. No more than one earring per ear may be worn. NO choker-style necklaces are allowed. NO nail polish or makeup may be worn.

Boys - NO earrings are allowed. NO choker necklaces are allowed.

(6) Please label all clothing, bookbags, lunch boxes, etc. with student's name.

(7) Demerits will be given for chronic infractions of the uniform code.

"DRESS DAYS"

For special occasions, students will be granted "dress days." Participation in dress days is optional. Students are expected to dress according to the theme of the day or wear their school uniform. Dress-day shorts/skirts/dresses must conform to required uniform lengths. No stretch shorts/pants/leggings. Girls' tops must be modest in style - no tank tops, crop tops, etc. For boys, no sleeveless shirts. No backless footwear may be worn. Students may be given athletic dress days for special events. Criteria for appropriate dress for these events will be announced as necessary. The scheduling of dress days will depend largely upon how students use this privilege. Dress days are not intended to be "dress down" days. Students are always expected to be good ambassadors of our school. Students who forget to wear dress-day clothes are not permitted to call home in order to request that a parent bring the clothes.

BOOKBAGS AND CARE OF BOOKS

All students are encouraged to use backpack-style bookbags. Rolling bookbags are permitted for students in second grade and above, but students should be educated as to their proper use. Rolling bookbags should be carried up and down stairs.

Students are expected to take care of books and workbooks which are issued to them, keep them covered at all times, and to not scribble or write in or on them. All books, including workbooks, are to be covered the first day of school and kept covered all year. Workbooks should be covered with clear contact paper. Do NOT use self-stick covers for textbooks; these damage the books. If stretchy book covers are used for textbooks, please do not use ones which are too small; these damage book bindings. Please use extra-large stretchy covers or paper. The cost of damage or loss of textbooks or workbooks must be reimbursed to the school since these will have to be replaced. The amount to be assessed will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

CODE OF CONDUCT - GRADES K - 8

St. Mary's Code of Conduct is in place to:

- **create a Christian atmosphere of mutual respect and concern among faculty, students, and parents;**
- **insure the physical well-being of students and faculty;**
- **provide an environment conducive to learning and academic achievement;**
- **teach students self-respect and self-discipline.**

Parents and students are expected to be familiar with these regulations and to support them fully. Enrollment at St. Mary's constitutes a commitment to follow school policies. All students and their parents confirm this commitment by signing the registration form and the Parent/Student Policy Compliance Agreement.

One or more demerits up to five may be issued at teacher discretion in any of the following areas:

(1) Attendance (refer to Policies) - Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) unexcused tardiness to class**
- (b) failure to provide notes/excuses relevant to attendance**
- (c) failure to observe procedures for early dismissal, check-in, or check-out**
- (d) failure to attend scheduled make-up testing sessions without a written excuse**
- (e) chronic tardiness to school (> three per quarter)**

(2) Dress Code (see Policy) - Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) violations of the uniform code**
- (b) inappropriate attire on dress days**
- (c) inappropriate attire at other school functions (dances, field trips, etc.)**

- (d) **inappropriate hair length for boys or styling for boys and girls**

(3) Care of Books and School Property

- (a) **Textbooks and workbooks are to be kept properly covered. Refer to “Bookbags and Care of Books.”**
- (b) **Students are required to use bookbags.**
- (c) **Writing on texts, desks, etc. is prohibited.**
- (d) **Littering in school buildings, on school grounds, or at school events is prohibited.**

(4) Communication Between School and Home - Students are required to deliver report cards, progress reports, permission slips, tests, newsletters, notices, etc., to/from teachers/parents the day they receive them, and to return them the next school day.

(5) Preparedness for Class - Students are expected to have an assignment pad in all classes and to have all appropriate books, supplies, and assignments at their desks at the beginning of each class. (See section on *HOMEWORK DETENTION*.)

(6) Behavior in the Classroom - Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) **writing, reading or passing notes**
- (b) **bringing inappropriate printed materials, tapes, tape players, radios, games, etc.**
- (c) **excessive talking**
- (d) **talking out of turn**
- (e) **leaving one's place without permission**
- (f) **throwing objects (spitballs, paper, rubber bands, pens, etc.)**
- (g) **failing to observe other rules of behavior established by the teacher**
- (h) **possession of electronic devices, including cell phones**

(7) Behavior in Other Areas - Students are expected to maintain quiet and good order and to observe rules throughout the school, especially:

- (a) during fire or tornado drills**
- (b) in lines before, during and after school**
- (c) in church and en route to/from liturgies**
- (d) in hallways during school hours**
- (e) during assemblies, homeroom periods, etc.**
- (f) in the cafeteria during lunches or other activities**

(8) Eating or Chewing Gum

- (a) Eating outside the cafeteria without permission is prohibited.**
- (b) Chewing gum on school grounds at any time or at any school activity without permission is prohibited.**

(9) Safety Precautions - Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) rough play, throwing rocks, sand or berries, skateboarding, bicycling, climbing trees or fences on the playground; inappropriate behavior on playground equipment**
- (b) dangerous behavior around the streets**
- (c) sliding or running in hallways or on stairs; sitting on railings, pushing other students, holding doors shut**
- (d) playing with electrical equipment (e.g., bells, clocks)**
- (e) bringing dangerous objects, matches, lighters, etc. to school**
- (f) picking up/lifting others**

(10) Serious Offenses (see *Automatic Detention, Suspension, or Expulsion* below)

- (a) leaving school grounds without permission**
- (b) fighting, carrying weapons, or otherwise endangering the physical safety of self or others**
- (c) profanity, vulgarity, or threatening language**
- (d) lying, forging, cheating (including copying homework and plagiarism), stealing**

- (e) vandalism of school property or the property of others**
- (f) failure to attend a scheduled disciplinary or homework detention without prior administrative approval**
- (g) disrespect verbally, in writing, attitude or body language to faculty and responsible adults**
- (h) chronic and/or deliberate disobedience to faculty or repetitive violation of any school rule, especially Rule 6**
- (i) possession/use of contraband (drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons)**

AUTOMATIC DETENTION, SUSPENSION, OR EXPULSION

Students will be given an automatic detention or considered for suspension or expulsion when:

- (1) the moral or physical well-being of the student body or the faculty is endangered.**
- (2) there has been a serious offense which is in violation of state or federal law.**
- (3) there is any promotion of any type against faith or religion.**

Such automatic detentions, suspensions, or expulsions will be accompanied by two to five demerits and will be included in the student's disciplinary record.

Students who are suspended are prohibited from attending the next field trip, with the administration being able to withhold any remaining field trips or dances for the remainder of the year.

In addition to receiving demerits for serious offenses, the student may be sent home, suspended, or kept in the office at the discretion of the principal. Parents will be notified promptly of any infraction which requires such action. Any suspension time

will count as a disciplinary detention; however, make-up work and testing during such a suspension will be determined at teacher discretion.

Students who receive more than two demerits under section “(10) Serious Offenses” will be removed from Beta Club and/or Student Council.

The school administration will notify police upon immediate knowledge of any student in possession of a weapon or in possession of drugs. Parents will also be notified immediately. Students will be considered for expulsion.

THE DEMERIT AND DETENTION SYSTEM

Demerits

The demerit system has evolved for faculty and staff to utilize in enforcing the school rules. Faculty members may, at their own discretion, elect to use alternate methods of discipline which are acceptable within the scope of the school's philosophy and guiding principles.

Students are responsible for informing their parents of each demerit received and for keeping a record of their own demerits. A demerit notice will be sent home for parent's signature. Parents should assist the students in this task by regularly questioning the students about demerits received and by promptly signing and returning all notices.

Students who wish to discuss a demerit should conference with the teacher in question or request his/her parents to do so promptly after receiving the demerit. The principal will discuss a demerit with parents only after the parents have talked to the faculty member who issued the demerit.

A parent-teacher conference will be required when any teacher issues a third demerit to a student.

Generally only one demerit is assigned for each infraction of Rules 1 through 9. For serious or repeated offenses covered under Rule 10, teachers may assign two or more demerits, up to a maximum of five.

The first and second demerits of the school year will usually be considered warnings (no detention assigned). If a third demerit is issued, and for each subsequent demerit, an after-school detention will be assigned.

Detentions

Attendance at assigned detention or make-up testing sessions is mandatory. It is generally held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week from 3:00-4:00 p.m. in a designated classroom. Occasionally students may be scheduled to attend detentions on Monday or Friday, depending on the availability of faculty supervision.

If a student is absent on the day of an assigned detention, he/she is expected to present a written excuse to the detention monitor and to stay for the next scheduled detention.

If a serious commitment makes it impossible for a student to attend a scheduled detention or make-up testing session, he/she should present a note stating the reason to the detention monitor BEFORE the scheduled date. The detention will then be rescheduled. Students may NOT be excused early from any detention. Attendance at athletic practices and competitions does not warrant rescheduling of homework or behavior detentions.

Homework Detentions

Homework plays a major role in reinforcing the material taught in the classroom and in teaching young people a sense of responsibility. At teacher discretion, a student who fails to

complete assigned work may be penalized in one of the following ways:

(1) He/she may receive a zero or a point deduction from his/her grade for the assignment; or

(2) He/she may receive a demerit under Rule 5 for that assignment; the student is still responsible for completing the work and turning it in to the teacher. If a student fails to complete the work, additional consequences are determined at teacher discretion; or

(3) He/she may receive a homework detention for that assignment. If the teacher chooses to use this method, the teacher may also deduct from the grade for a late assignment.

(4) Excessive homework detentions may result in a suspension of field trip and dance privileges.

Make-up Testing

Make-up testing is NOT viewed as a disciplinary action. It is, however, held at the same time and place as homework and disciplinary detentions, and attendance is mandatory under the same guidelines.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS - GR. 4 - 5

Demerits for Grades 4 and 5 will be grouped in three categories:

(1) Homework, (2) Attendance (tardy to school or class), (3) Behavior.

After each accumulation of five demerits for violation of the rules pertaining to HOMEWORK in any one quarter, the parent will receive a notice and the child will serve an after-school homework detention. In this area, the student will begin each quarter with no demerits.

Parents will also receive notification of each accumulation of five demerits for ATTENDANCE and BEHAVIOR, and students will serve after-school detentions. Attendance and behavior demerits accumulate for the entire year.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS - GR. 6 - 8

The following actions will be taken based on a student's behavior during any one quarter.

At the beginning of each new quarter the student will begin again with a zero demerit count for determining field trip and dance eligibility. Exception: Students who exceed 20 demerits for the entire school year will not be permitted to participate in the end-of-the-year field trip. (These students will, however, be permitted to participate in all other graduation activities, with approval of the administration.)

A notice of disciplinary action will be sent home for signature for each demerit issued. These must be returned to school signed on the next school day.

Copies of a student's discipline record may also be requested through the Principal. The record will show the teacher who assigned the demerit(s), the date the demerit(s) was given, and the number (as shown in the handbook) of the rule violated.

Total demerits accumulated throughout the year are considered in determination of suspension or expulsion.

At 1 & 2 demerits:

- **Considered warnings. A Demerit Notice will be sent home to parents which must be signed and returned to school the next day.**

At 3 demerits:

- **Demerit and Detention Notices will be sent home to parents which must be signed and returned to school the next day**
- **One-hour after-school detention.**

- At 3+ demerits:**
- For each subsequent demerit received, notices will be sent home to be signed and returned the next day and student will be assigned a one-hour detention.
- At 5 demerits:**
- Notices will be sent home to parents which must be signed and returned to school the next day.
 - One-hour after-school detention.
 - Conference between student and principal.
 - Suspension of the next field trip and dance privileges* at five demerits for the quarter or 10 demerits for the semester.
- At 10 demerits:**
- Notices will be sent home to parents which must be signed and returned to school the next day.
 - One-hour after-school detention or possible suspension.
 - Conference between student, parents, teachers, and principal.
 - Continued suspension of field trip and dance privileges.*

***Exceptions: (1) school retreats, (2) school service projects**

Penalties For More Than 12 Demerits in One Quarter - Students who accumulate more than 12 demerits in one quarter will be considered for suspension or expulsion.

Penalties For More Than 20 Demerits - As stated in the previous section, students who exceed 20 demerits for the entire school year will not be permitted to participate in the end-of-the-year field trip. Students accumulating more than 25 demerits in one school year will be considered for suspension or expulsion.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Involvement in extracurricular academic activities foster many desirable character traits. Students may be eligible for elected positions of respect and responsibility in some of these organizations based upon the individual's previous academic and disciplinary record. Eligibility requirements may be obtained from the faculty sponsors of each activity.

Student Council

The purpose of this service organization is to help promote a Christian atmosphere in the school, to strive for a harmonious relationship between the faculty and the student body, to help guide and direct other school functions and organizations, to provide a form of student expression, and to promote the general welfare of the school.

National Junior Beta Club

The purpose of this organization is to encourage and support academic excellence within the student body of St. Mary Help of Christians School middle school (6-8); to foster and develop leadership; to aid in character development using the Christian philosophy of this school as a guideline; to encourage the attitude and desire for individual achievement and to develop a willingness to offer service. Junior Beta Club membership is open to all students in Grades 6-8 who maintain for two consecutive marking periods at least a B- (83-85) in each subject. The students must also exhibit characteristics of leadership and personal integrity. Students who have earned greater than three demerits are not eligible for induction in the Beta Club.

Other Academic Contests and Activities

St. Mary Help of Christians School students regularly participate in contests and competitions which the school judges to be of value to the curriculum. These may include, but are not limited to, the following: SRS Safety Art Contest and other art contests

related to ecology and public safety, Area I Spelling Bee (sponsored on the local level by the public school system), MATHCOUNTS (sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education in conjunction with numerous professional organizations), American History Essay Contest (sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution), and Model United Nations (sponsored by Georgia Southern University). Students may also participate in a Regional Science Fair. The administration, in consult with the faculty, regularly reviews and recommends school/student participation in these and other special programs.

Drama Production - At Christmas, students in Grades 6-8 participate in a Christmas Pageant. In the Fall, students in Grades 7-8 may participate in a musical production. The teacher moderator will set requirements for participation.

Christmas and Spring Programs - Students in Grades K-5 usually present a Christmas program in December and a Spring program. Students are expected to be present for these programs.

Catholic Schools Week - Special programs and activities are planned to focus on a national theme set by the National Catholic Education Association. One day during this week is set aside for parents and interested persons to visit the school and observe classroom teaching. The theme this year is "Dividends for Life."

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM

St. Mary Help of Christians School offers students in Grades 6, 7 and 8 the opportunity to participate in competitive sports. At present, basketball, cheerleading, soccer, golf, tennis, volleyball, track & field, and cross country are available to students. All events are under the jurisdiction of St. Mary Help of Christians School Administration, Principal, Athletic Director, or their designate. Good sportsmanship by participants and spectators will be maintained at all events. All coaches are volunteers and are required to participate in VIRTUS training.

Since there is a great range in individual differences among boys and girls of this age (i.e., body build, interest, ability, experience, health, and the stages of physiological, emotional and social maturity), the athletic program is based on the principle of "*the greatest good to the greatest number of participants involved*". The interscholastic athletic program will supplement rather than serve as a substitute for an adequate program of required physical education, intramural and physical recreation for all students. It must be suited to the needs of boys and girls of this age. It will contribute to desirable growth and development of its participants physically, socially and otherwise. The welfare of the youth concerned is of greatest importance. All other needs and problems will be secondary. This interschool competitive program will be operated from as broad a base as possible to offer experience to many boys and girls. The program will place emphasis on: companionship among the participants on a squad and among squads of different schools; sportsmanship; and physical skills, techniques and training.

Rules and Regulations

- (1) Students below the sixth grade may not participate in interscholastic athletics.
- (2) Students are eligible for only one school-sponsored sports activity per season unless approved by the Athletic Director and Principal. Exception: track & field and cross country may be played in conjunction with another sport.
- (3) Students will not be permitted to practice without having a parent-signed permission form and waiver and a current physical examination.
- (4) Students who are absent from school, sign in after 10:00 a.m. without a medical "admit" slip, or miss the second half of the day (sign out at or before 1:00 p.m.) are not permitted to participate in, or attend, any school-related activities including practices or games that day.

(5) Drivers of car pools must have minimum liability insurance coverage of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per accident. Except under special circumstances, when a bus is used, transportation to and from athletic events is the responsibility of the parents.

(6) Certified athletic officials will be provided in all cases possible. When this is not possible, competent adults will be obtained who are mutually agreed upon in advance by the schools concerned. High school students shall not be used as game officials.

(7) Communicable disease procedures will be followed.

Academic and Behavioral Requirements

(1) All sixth, seventh and eighth graders will be eligible to participate in the athletic program at the beginning of the school year.

(2) Academic eligibility will be assessed at approximately four and one-half week intervals (called marking intervals) during the school year. This assessment will occur on the dates indicated on the school calendar for interim progress reports and quarterly report cards.

Grades in all major subjects will be reviewed to establish eligibility. Major subjects are defined as religion, reading/literature, English, spelling/vocabulary, math/prealgebra/algebra, science, social studies, and foreign language.

(3) To retain athletic eligibility a student must have a grade of D or higher in each academic subject at the end of each marking interval.

A student who has one or more F's in a major subject for a marking interval will be placed on probation for the subsequent marking interval. A student placed on probation will be allowed to participate in athletic practices and competitions.

A student who has one or more F's in consecutive marking periods will be deemed academically ineligible to participate in athletics.

(4) All athletes will be required to pay a \$30.00 fee per sport/per season before the first game.

Other Requirements (Attendance, Demerits, Detentions, Make-up Testing)

(1) Students who miss the second half of the day will not be permitted to participate in after-school or evening athletic or social activities on that same day.

(2) Athletes who are assigned a disciplinary detention or a homework detention may not reschedule the detention to attend athletic practices or competitions. There will be no early dismissal from disciplinary detention or homework detention.

Athletes who are assigned a make-up test may reschedule ONLY if the make-up test is in direct conflict with a competition. Athletes who are assigned a make-up test may request an early dismissal by bringing a note from the parent. Athletes who have missed several tests due to absence may be required to complete the tests before returning to full athletic participation.

(3) Athletes who earn excessive demerits or homework detentions (three demerits in one quarter) may, at the discretion of the Principal, be suspended from the athletic program.

OTHER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

ATHLETIC BOOSTER CLUB

St. Mary Help of Christians School offers parents an opportunity to support our interscholastic athletic program by becoming

financial supporters of St. Mary's Athletic Booster Club. Please come to the games and support our sports programs.

EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM

St. Mary Help of Christians Extended Care Program (ECP) is a service to working parents and their children who are attending St. Mary Help of Christians School. The program is guided by the philosophy and policies of the school administration. Employees are responsible for the implementation of the goals and policies of the program, subject to the supervision of the school principal.

Goals

The goal of ECP is to provide a Christian atmosphere conducive to constructive growth experiences for our students who must be cared for away from their families on days when school is in session. The program also seeks to provide a place and time to accomplish homework. Please refer to "Policies" for information regarding "Study Hall."

Program Schedule

The program begins on the first day of the school and ends on the last full day of the school year. Care is provided from 2:50 until 6:00 p.m. on days when school is in session. ECP closes PROMPTLY at 6:00 p.m.

ECP will not be open on Friday, October 2, 2009; Friday, December 18, 2009; Thursday, June 3, 2010; or any days that school is closed.

If a decision is reached by the Principal that the school should close during school hours due to inclement weather or other reasons, ECP will also close. Snacks will be provided from 3:15-3:30 p.m. After snacks, children are free to go to Study Hall or play.

Registration and Rates

Registration is a one-time charge each year of \$15.00 per student, not to exceed \$25.00 per family. The fee will be used to cover the cost of supplies and other program expenses. The registration fee is nonrefundable. The fee will be included in your first bill. Bills will be sent home every five weeks. The ECP rate schedule is \$4.00 per child and \$6.00 per family per hour. Staff members are employed only until 6:00 p.m. It is common courtesy to respect the time of closure. A substantial fee of \$6.00 for every 15 minutes per family will be charged for late pickups. We suggest for practical purposes that families should consider the last pickup time to be 5:45 p.m. to prevent any additional charges. Our staff is to leave promptly at 6:00 p.m. to assure that custodial services can conclude in a timely fashion and the cafeteria is vacated for evening activities.

Discipline Policies

Each student is expected to: (1) abide by the rules of the program, (2) respect staff members and other students, (3) and respect all property. School rules (as stated in the School Handbook for Students and Parents) must be followed by all students attending ECP. Repeated or severe violations will be discussed with the parents. In each case, the Principal will be notified of each offense and action taken.

After-School Activities

St. Mary's ECP accepts no responsibility for escorting students to after-school activities (e.g. basketball in St. Angela Hall). There will be no exceptions. ECP students who want to leave ECP to attend St. Mary's School sporting events in St. Angela Hall may do so only with written parental permission. The children must be picked up at St. Angela Hall; they may not check back into ECP. Students who attend ECP before or after an after-school activity must check in and out to avoid misunderstandings.

Payment of Fees

Bills will be distributed in the classroom to the youngest child in the family monthly. Payment should be turned in as soon as

possible. If you do not pay the amount due promptly, ECP reserves the right to refuse the use of ECP to your family. Payment to ECP should be made by check (payable to "St. Mary's ECP"). Send the check in an envelope marked "Extended Care Program." Students may give the envelope to their regular classroom teacher to be sent to the office. Additional areas of parental responsibility are in the matters of prompt fee payment and prompt pick-up of children in the late afternoon. Regular and prompt payment will assure the continued employment of personnel and the provision of supplies and equipment. If a parent or guardian fails to meet the ECP fee payment deadline and does not make adequate arrangements with the ECP director, the child(ren) will not be allowed to continue in the program. We will do everything possible to assist you, but we must be made aware of the needs.

Late Pickup

When a child has not been picked up and no parent contact has been received, the following steps will be taken: (1) The staff will try to contact the parent. (2) Persons listed on the Emergency Information Sheet will be contacted in order to locate someone who can pick up the child(ren) immediately.

Study Hall

Study Hall is open from 3:15-4:15 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Study Hall is not mandatory unless requested by a parent. Since Study Hall is included with ECP, it is to your child's advantage to attend. Please note: ECP will not be responsible for homework or attendance at Study Hall. This is up to students and parents.

Personal Belongings

Students are responsible for all supplies needed to complete homework. All books and possessions must be secured in the cafeteria when reporting to ECP to prevent personal injury to the students. Personal items, book bags, lunch boxes, clothing, etc., must be labeled with your child's name. Toys and other special items may be brought to ECP. However, the ECP staff assume no responsibility for the loss of or damage to these items. (These

items are not allowed to be removed from bookbags during the school day.)

Medication

ECP employees will dispense medication according to diocesan and school policy. Please refer to the medication section in this handbook.

Communications

We invite your questions, comments and suggestions. However, we ask that you share non-emergency communications with us during off-hours. You may leave a phone number and the best time you can be reached with the school office. Your children require our undivided attention during ECP operating hours.

Attendance

All ECP students must report to the cafeteria and check in promptly from classroom dismissal. Books, clothing and personal items will be stored safely in the cafeteria. The students must also report directly to the ECP director when leaving with their parent or guardian.

CHURCH LEAGUE BASKETBALL

St. Mary Help of Christians Church and the City of Aiken Department of Parks and Recreation offer students of St. Mary Help of Christians Church and School the opportunity to participate in Church League Basketball. The older teams may enter the Diocesan Basketball Tournament.

ENDOWMENT FUND

To ensure the future of St. Mary Help of Christians School, an endowment fund was begun several years ago. Contributions to this fund are welcome at any time, in any amount. Memorials made to the endowment fund are a special way to remember loved ones. We ask that you consider this fund when you plan

your annual charitable contributions. Contributions may be made to "St. Mary Help of Christians School Endowment Fund."

"HELP A CHILD" PROGRAM

There are children who would like to attend our Catholic school but whose parents are having great difficulty affording the tuition. Although our tuition level is below other Aiken private/parochial schools, some parents are not as well off as others. We certainly want to take these children into our school and assure them of a good Catholic education. At the present time, we are endeavoring to do this. Still, we do need to meet our bills and pay salaries as well as do all we can to keep St. Mary Help of Christians School the leader in education that it presently is. If you would like to help a child in our parish go to our Catholic school by being that child's sponsor, please contact our pastor or our principal. This will be a great help to the children concerned and to the parish as well. This "gift to Catholic education," which would be in addition to your regular Sunday collection offering to the parish, may be a sacrifice, but it will be a great benefit to a child right here in our own local area. Thank you for your consideration. Contributions can be made to "St. Mary Help of Christians School Scholarship Fund."

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION - Please let St. Mary's know if you are an alumnus of our school and keep us up to date as to your address. A newsletter will be periodically mailed to friends of St. Mary's.