

2022/2023 Parent/Student Handbook



Saint Mary Help of Christians Catholic School

The mission of Saint Mary Help of Christians Catholic School is to prepare the way with a high-quality education in the caring spirit of the Beatitudes.

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I. ST. MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

A. PHILOSOPHY

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School prepares the way for students to grow in their faith and be challenged intellectually. While recognizing parents as their child's primary educator, the faculty is committed so students can meet the demands of an ever-changing world. We strive to develop the student's self-discipline skills and recognize the unique talents God has given each child. We model and teach Catholic doctrine and values by providing students opportunities for prayer, worship, and service to others in our Church and society in the caring spirit of the Beatitudes.

B. HISTORY

The history of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School goes back to the turn of the century. Established by Ursuline nuns in 1904 as a boarding school for wealthy young ladies, St. Angela Academy received its name from the Ursulines' foundress, St. Angela Merici. In 1906, 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 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 part of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic 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 Catholic 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 exist 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 Catholic 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 Catholic 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.

C. SCHOOL OVERSIGHT

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School operates under the auspices of the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina. The Catholic Schools Office is responsible for directing the program of education in 28 elementary schools and 5 high schools. This office provides services to our school by:

- Developing policy statements and setting standards for the overall operation of the school.
- Providing in-service programs for pastors, principals, teachers, and School Advisory Council members.
- Coordinating the development of curriculum guides for the subject areas of the school curriculum.
- Providing statistical information regarding the school's performance.
- Providing advice and assistance in obtaining Federal funding through Title I and II.

D. ACCREDITATION

Since 1974, St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Each year, a report must be sent to Cognia, formally known as AdvancED, 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. In the spring of 2017, all schools in the Diocese of Charleston had their external review resulting in renewal of Cognia accreditation.

E. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Saint Mary Help of Christians Catholic School is to prepare the way with a high-quality education in the caring spirit of the Beatitudes.

F. GOALS

As Catholic educators entrusted with the growth and development of each child, we strive:

- To recognize the primary responsibility parents have for the education of their child and the necessary involvement of home and school.
- To teach and reinforce values based on Sacred Scripture and principles of social justice.
- To emphasize a Catholic community and foster experiences of prayer and worship.
- To create an environment that encourages excitement for learning.
- To implement Diocesan Curriculum Standards that make it possible for each student to accept increased responsibility for his/her own learning and achievement.
- To encourage interaction and cooperation in curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- To provide educational experiences appreciating fine arts and diverse cultures.
- To model and teach self-discipline skills.

G. RESPONSIBILITIES

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School believes strongly in promoting a relationship between parents, students, and the school. Below are responsibilities for each shareholder that help facilitate a positive learning environment:

Student Responsibilities

- To do all they can to help themselves learn.
- To respect the God-given dignity of their fellow man.
- To respect the teacher's right to teach.
- To follow classroom and school rules and procedures.
- To communicate their academic progress to their parents.
- To be honest, self-disciplined, and dependable.
- To behave in a safe and orderly way.

Parent Responsibilities

- To nourish their child's faith life.
- To help their child succeed in school.
- To make sure their child is at school by 8:00 am and stays until school dismissal.
- To promote personal responsibility in their child.
- To support and respect administration, faculty, and staff, and the guidelines set forth in the Handbook.
- To become involved in their child's education. For example, check assignment book and homework, monitor progress, attend conferences, and volunteer at school.
- To be supportive of decisions made by the administration, child study team, and teachers concerning student's behavior and academic performance.
- To monitor their child's Internet and social media (Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, etc.) usage.

Administration, Teacher, and Staff Responsibilities

- To uphold the school's mission statement in all things.
- To lead by example in Christian principles and Gospel action.
- To be an advocate for students, parents, and the ministry of Catholic education.
- To create and maintain a safe, orderly, and respectful campus-wide learning environment.

II. ADMISSION

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School gives first preference in admission to siblings of present students and Catholic students of families registered in St. Mary Help of Christians Parish; second, to Catholic students in other parishes; third, to inactive Catholics or students of other faiths. St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, or national origin.

Accommodations for students with special academic or physical needs can be made only within the limits of our resources. If a student develops an academic or physical need while enrolled at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School and the need cannot be addressed within our limited resources, the administration will assist the family in finding an appropriate learning environment that can address the need.

All applicants are evaluated for academic readiness.

A. New Students

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School seeks to admit new students in kindergarten and first grade who are developmentally ready for school. For a child to find success in kindergarten, and the following years of school, he or she should ideally be developmentally five at the time of entry. Developmental age may or may not be consistent with chronological age. It is not unusual or abnormal for a child to be developmentally six or more months younger than his or her chronological age. Acting in the best interest of the child, St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School utilizes a developmental assessment to help identify the best placement for the child. This evaluation, performed by a primary grade teacher, offers information related to a child's general level of maturity – separate from academic and intellectual ability. Students entering kindergarten must be five by September 1 and developmentally 5-5 ½ at the time of entry. Those entering grade 1 must be six by September 1 and developmentally 6-6 ½ at the time of entry.

Admission decisions for students in grades 1 through 8 are based on the student's academic record, standardized testing results, and a grade level placement test administered by St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School. A grade level placement test is given to all new students in grades 1 through 8. This is to determine whether the school can provide an appropriate educational program and for proper grade level placement.

New students entering grades 1 through 8 must provide copies of standardized testing results and any existing Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan if applicable. St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School **cannot** honor IEP or 504 plans. A student may be denied acceptance if he/she does not meet school criteria. Additional student documentation may be requested by the principal.

New students transferring to St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School from another private or Catholic school must be in good financial standing with their previous school before enrolling.

B. Returning Students

Re-enrollment begins in January of each year. Payment of the registration fee are paid online through FACTS SIS at the time of re-enrollment.

III. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

A. Tuition

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School is completely self-supported through tuition and parish subsidy. Tuition is charged on a per-student basis and is dependent upon the family's parishioner status as approved by the pastor.

Tuition is for the academic year. If a family experiences financial hardship and would like their children to remain at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School, they are encouraged to apply for tuition assistance through FACTS. It is recommended they notify the school bookkeeper and/or the principal for further support.

Tuition is pro-rated for new students who enroll after the start of school by the number of school days the student will be attending St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School. A new family is required to pay the family registration and technology fees at the time of enrollment.

B. Registration Fees

The registration fee is due at the time of enrollment/re-enrollment. The registration fee is not refundable. Re-enrollment starts in January. The registration fee can be paid online through FACTS SIS.

C. Payment Procedures

Financial obligations to the school consist primarily of the family registration in addition to the yearly tuition fee, which is based on the number of students attending St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School and the family's parishioner status. Additional fees may be charged, including but not limited to: field trip fees, sports fees per season, lost or damaged book fees, late fees, returned check fees, and returned ACH fees.

Tuition may be paid by one of four methods:

1. Full Payment
2. Split payments
3. 10 monthly payments
4. 12 monthly payments

Prompt payment of financial obligations is expected from all families and failure to pay tuition on time may result in automatic withdrawal from school. Families must be current in their payments of all financial obligations by March 31 of the current school year or registration monies for the following school year will automatically be applied to the outstanding balance. This action will make registration for the following year incomplete and could result in the loss of class placement. Students will not be admitted into class at the start of the following school year if the family has any unpaid financial obligations from the previous year. Additionally, student records will be held until all financial obligations have been met should a family with an outstanding balance choose to move their child(ren) to another school.

D. Bookkeeper

The school's part-time bookkeeper is Mrs. Kathy Sowards. Please feel free to contact Mrs. Sowards with any questions you may have regarding tuition balances or payment options, changes to FACTS, discrepancies in your and the school's records, or returned checks/overdrafts. Mrs. Sowards handles all deposits except those that are earmarked for PTO. She can be reached by calling the school office or by e-mail to smsfinance@charlestondiocese.org.

E. Late Charges/Returned Check and ACH Charges

Statements or notices will be sent to families whose payments have not been received or have been denied by their financial institution. The school office may call families with past due tuition accounts as well. A \$25 NSF fee will be assessed to any family who writes a check which is returned to the school. This fee is in addition to any fees that might be charged by FACTS or the family's financial institution.

F. In-Parish Tuition Rate

It is the school's desire that all St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School families be active, participating members of St. Mary Help of Christians Parish as this helps create a sense of community and further enriches the spiritual life of our students, families and the parish community. The In-Parish Tuition Rate is reserved for families who regularly attend liturgy, actively participate in parish ministries, and participate in the parish offertory program by using personal checks, the envelope system, or through St. Mary Help of Christians Church Online Giving.

An affirmation of active parishioner status is required annually. In addition to at least one parent being registered, attending, and contributing, the child(ren) attending St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School must be baptized and members of the Catholic Church. Registered and active parishioners of Our Lady of the Valley and St. Gerard's also qualify.

G. Student Records

Divorced or separated parents must file a court-certified copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree with the school office. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known. Visiting rights must be noted in the court-certified decree. Changes in the custody decree must be submitted to the school office. Both parents, custodial and non-custodial, have access to information about the student's progress as mandated by law.

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

The principal of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School will permit the release of student information to parents and/or legal guardians in accordance with the following procedure:

1. The presentation of a written statement of your request to review student records.
2. Legal proof of your relationship to the child.
3. An appointment to meet with appropriate school personnel at a time mutually convenient for the purpose of the record review.

IV. STUDENT LIFE

A. Attendance

1. School Hours

The school office is open from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm. At 8:00 am, the first bell will ring. Students will go directly to their classrooms at this time. Roll call will commence at the 8:00 am bell. Morning prayer, pledge, and announcements will begin promptly at 8:00 am.

School hours are:

8:00 am – 3:00pm

Child(ren) must not be on the school grounds outside of regular school hours, unless they are involved in a school sponsored activity or are participating in the Extended Care program.

2. Absences

Excessive absences affect student performance. In an academic setting like St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School, it is necessary that students remain current in their studies. This can only be accomplished by their attending all class sessions; therefore, removing students from school for vacations, etc. is contrary to school policy. South Carolina's Compulsory Attendance Law requires parents/guardians to have children in school unless (see below for further details):

- The child is ill.
- It is a recognized religious holiday.
- There is a death in the immediate family.

In case of illness, these procedures should be followed:

- A courtesy call to the school office to inform of the child's absence (803-649-2071) before 8:00 am. A message may be left on the voicemail system.
- A student shall be in class at least two hours to be considered in attendance for one-half day. A student shall be in class at least five hours (Kind.-8th) for a full day.
- When a child returns to school after being absent, a written excuse must be brought to the teacher/school office 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. It is not enough to have called in an absence to the school office, though this should be done also.
- A written note is state mandated.
- The number of Absences and Times Tardy will be recorded on the quarterly report card and permanent record.

A visit to the doctor or dentist constitutes an "excused" absence. If possible, the child's teacher should be informed the day before the appointment. To be dismissed from school for an appointment, a student must present a written excuse to the teacher. Parents must sign out the child at the office. When a child is absent more than a week from school because of an illness, she or he will need to provide a note from a doctor for the absence to be excused.

Families leaving for an extended period must notify the school office in writing in advance of the dates of an absence.

A student returning after an absence will have the same number of days he/she missed to hand in the missed assignments. (Exception: Accelerated Reader points and long term projects are due on the due date.) It is the responsibility of the student to obtain the assignments from the teacher.

A student who misses a test must make arrangements for make-up the day of his/her return. The student may be required to take the test the day of his/her return.

Parents who are leaving and placing their children in the care of another adult must inform the School Office in writing of this temporary assignment of guardianship. For example, a business trip or vacation days away from their children.

A student who accumulates ten or more absences, excused and/or unexcused, during a quarter may be eligible for retention for the following school year as decided by administration.

Lawful Absences

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 five 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.

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. Students may be excused for recognized religious holidays of their faith. 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

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.

3. Tardiness

Tardiness is a serious matter, since it affects not only the tardy student, but also other students. Tardiness reflects an attitude inconsistent with St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School's pursuit of excellence and emphasis on the whole child. Tardiness also represents a lack of regard for education and a lack of cooperation with the school.

It is imperative that all students be present for Morning Prayer and Pledge as this is the time where common patriotism and our Catholic identity are reinforced. It is also the time when important announcements are made including sports and extracurricular activities. It is the time for prayer and special intentions making it an inherent, key part of a Catholic student's day.

The school day starts at 8:00 am. A student is tardy if he/she has not entered the gate by 8:00 am. A student who is marked with five or more tardies during one quarter may receive detention or other disciplinary action decided by administration. A student is marked absent for a half day if he/she arrives after 10:00 am.

Parents must walk their child(ren) into the school office to sign them in if they arrive after 8:00 am. A school official will provide the student with a pass which must be given to the teacher upon entering the class. Unexcused tardy students arriving during or after Morning Prayer and Pledge may be detained in the school office until an appropriate time so as not to interrupt the learning for the whole class.

4. Backpacks & Care of Books

All students are encouraged to use a backpack for school. Rolling bookbags will not be allowed without prior approval from administration on a case-by-case basis. Rolling bookbags are a major safety concern to our other students.

Students are expected to take care of books and workbooks which are issued to them and keep them covered at all times. All books, including workbooks, are to be covered within the first week 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 to 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.

B. Extended Care Program (ECP) Policies & Procedures:

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School's ECP is a service to working parents and their children who are attending St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School. The program is guided by the philosophy and policies of the school administration. The Extended Care Director, Michele McDermott, and school employees are responsible for the implementation of the goals and policies of the program, which are subject to the supervision of the school principal. The Extended Care Director can be contacted at ecp@stmaryschoolaikn.com.

Goals

The goal of ECP is to provide a Christian atmosphere conducive to constructive growth experiences for students who must be cared for on days when school is in session. The program also provides a silent study hall for students to work on homework.

1. Program Schedule

The program begins on the first day of the school year and ends on the last full day of the school year. Care is provided until 5:30 p.m. on days when school is in session. ECP closes promptly at 5:30 p.m. ECP will not be open on days that school is not in session. 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.

2. Registration & Rates

Registration is a one-time charge each year of \$15.00 per student, not to exceed \$25.00 per family. The ECP registration fee is paid online through FACT SIS. This fee is used to cover the cost of supplies and other program expenses. The ECP registration fee is nonrefundable. The ECP rate schedule is \$5 per hour for one child, \$8 per hour for two children and \$9 per hour for three or more children. A substantial fee of \$10.00 for every 15 minutes per family will be charged for late pickups. Parents will be billed through FACTS SIS for the use of the Extended Care Program and can

pay their bill online through FACTS SIS. Any ECP bill not paid within 60 days of the billing due date will be assessed a 10% late fee. Any ECP bill not paid within 90 days of the invoice date will result in your child's dismissal from ECP. Parents or guardians should make adequate arrangements with the ECP director if a payment cannot be made. We will do everything possible to assist you, but we must be made aware of the needs.

3. Payment of Fees

Payment for ECP can be sent to school payable by check made out to St. Mary's ECP. Payment should be placed in an envelope marked "Extended Care Program." Students may give the envelope to their regular homeroom teacher to be sent to the office. If paying by check, your canceled check is your receipt. If paying by cash, a receipt will be issued and sent home with your child. Please keep all invoices for your tax records. A written tax statement can be provided, if necessary, showing payments received. These must be requested 30 days in advance. Regular and prompt payment will assure the continued employment of personnel and the provision of supplies and equipment. If parents request mailed invoices, self-addressed, stamped envelope should be given to the ECP director.

4. Late Pickup

Staff members are employed only until 5:30 pm. We suggest for practical purposes that families should consider the last pickup time to be 5:15 pm. to prevent any additional charges. Staff is to leave promptly at 5:30 pm. 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 ECP Registration Form will be contacted in order to locate someone who can pick up the child(ren) immediately; and (3) at 5:45 pm, if all contacts have been futile, the principal will be contacted.

5. Check In/Out

Children will be checked in as they enter the cafeteria each afternoon. Children who are staying after school for tutoring, extra help, choir, or any activity that begins immediately after carline are not allowed to check in with ECP. They should remain with their teachers until carline has ended. Any child who enters the cafeteria is considered to be staying in ECP and parents will be charged. ECP accepts no responsibility for escorting students to after-school activities (e.g. sports, play practice) 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.

Children coming from other on-campus school activities to ECP must check in with a staff member. Students may not check in to ECP after participating in an activity in the gym. Any child leaving with a person not listed on the ECP Registration Form Contact List must bring a note stating the name of the person with whom they will be leaving. That note must be turned in to the school office that morning. If a student has permission to walk home from ECP, a note must be turned in to the school office.

6. Snacks

ECP provides a snack and a drink immediately following carline. Any child checking in to ECP after another on-campus school activity will be given a snack at that time. Children will not be given snacks prior to going to tutoring, choir, make up testing, etc. Snacks are only provided for children who have signed in to ECP. Children's allergies are taken into consideration and alternate snacks are available for those with food allergies. Please list any food allergies on the ECP registration form.

7. Outdoor Time

Weather permitting, children will have supervised playtime on the playground following snack. Outdoor time can last for up to two hours. ECP provides balls, jump ropes, etc. for children to

use. Children are given permission to go back into the cafeteria for a short water and/or bathroom break. Children will not be allowed to sit inside unsupervised during outdoor time.

8. 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, bookbags, lunch boxes, clothing, etc., must be labeled with students' names. 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.) ECP staff will use their discretion on the use of personal belongings. If a toy or other item causes disruption, the child will be asked to return it to his/her bookbag and it will not be allowed back in ECP.

9. Electronic Devices

Students are not allowed to bring or use personal electronic devices in ECP. Cell phones must remain in bookbags. The use of a cell phone for texting and/or calling during ECP will result in the phone being confiscated and not returned until a parent/guardian has picked their child up. If there is an emergency, ECP staff have access to phones in order to call parents/guardians. Please do not text or call your children while they are in ECP. If you need to contact your child, please contact the ECP Director. Absolutely no cameras are allowed in ECP.

10. Medication

ECP employees will dispense medication according to Diocesan and school policy. Please refer to the medication section in the student handbook for more information. Parents will be contacted immediately should a child become ill or suffer a major injury during ECP. All ECP staff members have had certified First Aid and CPR training. All ECP staff members have also been trained in the use of epinephrine pens.

11. Discipline Policy

All students are expected to: (1) abide by the rules of the program, (2) respect staff members and other students, (3) 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 or vice principal will be notified of each offense and action will be taken.

C. Drop-Off/Pick-Up Protocol

1. Morning Drop-Off Procedures

Children arriving/leaving 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 to go directly to the cafeteria, starting at 7 am, where they will be supervised in Morning Care after drop-off. At 7:45 am, students will be directed to their classrooms. No playing and no playground equipment, including balls, will be permitted to be used before school.

Students are not permitted to enter the classroom buildings before 7:45 am without permission from the school office or a staff member.

2. Afternoon Dismissal Procedures

Cars using the drop-off zone on the school side of Fairfield 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.

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 3:20 pm. Students are to remain in the playground area adjacent to the Fairfield Street gate. No playing is allowed during afternoon dismissal. After 3:20 pm, students who are not picked up must report to Extended Care.

3. Dismissal Protocol

Students are not permitted to cross Fairfield Street during morning arrival (7:00-8:00 am) or dismissal (2:45-3:20 pm) 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. Parents leaving school grounds during loading and unloading should go by the school office and ask staff to open the gate by St. Angela Hall.

Students and parents are expected to cooperate with 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.

Students leaving school (riding or walking) with someone other than their parent or regular carpool driver must present a note to the office at the beginning of the day. If a last-minute change of plans is necessary, please call the school office before 2:30 pm.

V. Student Health

A. Wellness Policy

All schools shall comply with South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 44-29-180 and South Carolina Regulation 61-8, the **2022/2023** Required Standards of Immunization for School Attendance. These laws state that no child may attend school unless such child can present to the school a verifiable immunization record against listed communicable diseases or a plan for immunization as specified by the South Carolina Department of Health Services. Requests for exemption will be granted only in accordance with South Carolina law.

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School is committed to providing an environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and the ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activities. The connection between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. The purpose of this policy is to offer students the tools and knowledge necessary to make healthy choices for their body.

SC DHEC revises its School and Childcare Exclusion List each January and requires that it be distributed to school families. St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School distributes this Exclusion List at the start of school each year. Parents should review the Exclusion List and keep it in a convenient location for reference. Students and staff with certain conditions must be excluded from school until the reason for exclusion has resolved and appropriate documentation has been provided to the school. Appropriate documentation may be a parent note or a medical note, depending upon the illness and duration.

Briefly, students with an axillary temperature of 100.0F or an oral temperature of 101.0F or greater are not to return to school unless the parent provides a signed note that the fever has resolved for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Students should be kept home if vomiting has occurred two or more times in a 24-hour period or for vomiting and fever (101.0F or higher), for green or bloody vomit, or for vomiting combined with not urinating for eight hours. A parent note is required upon the student's return to school.

1. Injury or Illness

In case of an injury or illness during the school day, the student will be sent to the school office. The school office staff/principal will then determine if the child should be sent home or return to class. Parents will be notified by phone to pick up sick or injured children. Parents are to keep all emergency information current by calling the school office to let us know about changes in telephone numbers.

2. Medication

- Diocesan dictates prescription medications will be administered when necessary.
- Medications should be taken at home whenever possible. The first dose of any new medication must be given at home to ensure the student does not have a negative reaction.
- Diocesan medication forms are required for each prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medication administered in school and may require a physician signature.
- All medication taken in school must have a parent/guardian signed authorization. No medication will be accepted by school personnel without the accompanying complete and appropriate medication authorization form.
- The parent or guardian must transport medications to and from school.
- Medication must be kept in the school office during the school day. All medication will be stored in a locked cabinet or refrigerator, within a locked area, accessible to authorized personnel, unless the student has prior written approval to self-carry a medication (inhaler, Epi-pen). If the student self carries, it is advised that backup medication be kept in the school office.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for submitting a new medication authorization form to the school at the start of the school year and each time there is a change in the dosage or the time of medication administration.
- A Licensed Health Care Provider (LHCP) may use office stationery, prescription pad or other appropriate documentation. The following information written in lay language with no abbreviations must be included and attached to this medication administration form. Signed faxes are acceptable.

- * Student name and date of birth
- * Diagnosis and signs or symptoms
- * Name of medication to be given in school
- * Exact dosage to be taken in school
- * Route of medication
- * Time and frequency to give medications, as well as exact time interval for additional dosages.
- * Sequence in which two or more medications are to be administered
- * Common side effects
- * Duration of medication order or effective start and end dates
- * LHCP's name, signature and telephone number
- * Date of order

- All prescription medications, including physician's samples, must be in their original containers and labeled by a LHCP or pharmacist. Medication must not exceed its expiration date.
- All Over the Counter (OTC) medication must be in the original, small, container with a label. Medication sent in baggies or unlabeled containers will not be given.
- Students are NOT permitted to self-medicate. The school does not assume responsibility for medication taken independently by the student. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for students who demonstrate the capability to self-administer emergency lifesaving medications (e.g. inhaler, Epi-pen).
- Within one week after expiration of the effective date on the order, or on the last day of school, the parent or guardian must personally collect any unused portion of the medication. Medications not claimed within that period will be destroyed.
- Immunization: All needed immunization records must be on file prior to the child attending school classes.
- Diagnosis: It is not the role of the office staff to diagnose a chronic condition. A sick child should not be sent to school for diagnosis and treatment by the health aide.
- Picking Up Sick Child: Upon receiving a call from school to pick up a sick child, parents should report to the school office to sign out their child. Sick children should be picked up promptly.
- Long Distance Field Trips: For all long distance field trips, parents are required to provide medication for their child one week in advance of their trip. All medical forms should be completely filled out and returned to the school health aide along with the medication in a zip lock bag labeled with the child's name. All medication to be distributed to students MUST be provided to the school by the parent.

3. Student Accident Insurance

All schools in the Diocese of Charleston participate in a compulsory Student/Athletic Accident Insurance Plan administered by Gerber Life Insurance Company. Claim forms are available from the school office. Coverage is described in a policy brochure, which is distributed to each family at the beginning of the school year. A fee for this compulsory insurance is collected as part of the school registration fee.

B. Faith Life

Religious instruction at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School is considered a sacred trust. Through prayerful reflection on Scripture, Church and National Catechetical documents, teachers strive to be faithful to their call to be Catholic educators. With this in mind, students are led to a deeper understanding of their own faith and are provided opportunities for experiencing this faith in prayer and action.

Through daily prayer, regularly religious instruction, weekly Mass (and reception of the sacraments for Catholics), and through performance 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 Mass is scheduled with our pastor or parochial vicar.

Community: Community is at the heart of Christian education. St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School fosters Christian friendships, trust and love, and awareness in students that they are children of God.

Eucharistic Celebrations: As an essential part of the religion program at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School, students have the privilege to attend the Eucharistic liturgy weekly and on special occasions during the liturgical season. Various classes will have opportunities to help with the readings, petitions, and gifts.

Parents are encouraged to join in these weekly celebrations. Catholic students are expected to attend Sunday Mass with their families.

Reconciliation: The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available to classes during Advent and Lent. Students who have received the Sacrament of First Reconciliation have the opportunity to participate in this sacrament. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered weekly by the parish and we strongly encourage families to receive this sacrament on a regular basis.

Prayer: At St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School, teachers strive to give each child a positive attitude toward prayer. Children are expected to learn the common prayers of the Church, as well as participate in other forms of prayer during the school day. Parents are strongly encouraged to pray with their children daily.

Religious Education Classes: Formal religion classes are taught in the classroom each day, except on days when children participate in the Eucharistic liturgy.

Sacramental Programs: The sacramental program at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School recognizes the child is not only catechized and formed in faith within the classroom, but is also nurtured in faith within the family and parish. Thus parent, school, and parish participation are important for the child's growth in the faith community.

St. Mary Help of Christians Parish policy regarding the preparation and reception of sacraments is as follows:

- Parents and children are involved in a two-year preparation program for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Parents are required to attend the adult classes and a retreat on the sacraments if they wish their child to receive the sacrament.
- Children in 2nd grade are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Children in 8th grade are prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Parents may request their children in grades 4 – 8 who have not been baptized or have received the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation to be prepared for these sacraments.

Other Religious Practices: Traditional religious practices and celebrations are taught and experienced throughout the liturgical year - Advent, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. Students also participate in devotions to Mary, saints, and Stations of the Cross.

Sundays: The parish is the primary Eucharist worshipping community. Ordinary school sponsored activities will not be held that conflict with Sunday parish liturgies. School athletic or social events should be avoided during the Easter Triduum.

C. Birthday Policy

Students are allowed to bring class treats to school. 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. No party invitations may be distributed to students at school unless invitations include all students or all the girls or all boys in the class. All other invitations must be sent by mail or by telephone to the child's home.

D. Class Parties & Solicitation

Ordinarily, class parties are limited to Valentine's Day, Christmas, and End of Year for Grades K-5. Homeroom parents are asked to assist the teacher with the parties 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).

Students may not sell items for other non-profit or profit organizations or solicit financial support for personal projects on campus without permission from the administration. Such permission must be requested in writing in advance. The office staff will not be responsible for distribution of materials or orders.

E. School Uniform Regulations

For the 2022/2023 school year, please note the following school uniform regulations. School uniforms are mandatory at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School. If a child is issued three or more school uniform violations in a quarter, he/she may receive detention, or another form of disciplinary action deemed appropriate by administration. Uniforms are to be laundered, maintained, and worn as they are designed to be worn; skirts and shorts may not be rolled up, shirts must be tucked in and not folded under, long shirt sleeves may be neatly rolled up to the elbow. The uniform should reflect a positive attitude of pride in self and school. Students must be in proper uniform from the time they arrive on campus until they leave. Uniforms and shoes should be in good shape, free from holes, stains or fading. Any hairstyle, hair color, mode of dress, or ornamentation deemed inappropriate in the judgment of the school administration/faculty will be prohibited. School uniforms may be ordered online at www.dennisuniform.com. Our school code for Dennis Uniform is NVSMCS. If you choose to order through Dennis, during peak season (August- September), please allow up to seven-ten business days. All Dennis Uniform orders will be shipped directly to the parent's personal residence. If you choose not to order from Dennis, you can have our school logo embroidered by Pitter Patter, located here in Aiken.

Boys

- **Pants:** Khaki dress pants (No top stitching, jeans styling, or cargo pockets). Pants may be worn year-round but must be worn on Mass days and other special events. Elastic waist band pants are allowed in kindergarten thru 2nd grade. If there are belt loops, a belt must be worn.
- **Shorts:** Khaki shorts (No top stitching, jeans styling, or cargo pockets). Elastic waist band shorts are allowed in kindergarten thru 2nd grade. Shorts may be worn year-round, except on Mass days and other special events.
- **Oxford Shirt (Kind. -8th grade):** SMS white oxford shirt with the logo is required to be worn for Mass days and other special events. The oxford shirt must be clean, not wrinkled, and always tucked in.
- **Plaid School Tie:** School tie or bow tie is required to be worn for Mass and other special events. The tie must be worn with the oxford shirt. Neck ties and/or bow ties are acceptable at every grade level. Clip- on neckties are not permitted at the junior high level.
- **Belt:** A black, brown, or a navy solid-color belt must be always worn with pants. (Unless elastic waistband)
- **Polo Shirt:** A navy blue polo shirt with the logo is required to be worn daily. Shirts must be always tucked in. No turtlenecks or visible t-shirts may be worn under the polo shirt.

- **Jackets/Sweatshirts/Sweaters:** The white, navy blue, gray, or gold Saints sweatshirt (sold annually by SMS Athletics Department) is allowed. Navy blue fleece jackets or navy blue/white cardigan sweaters are also allowed. Solid navy-blue hoodies with the school logo are allowed. Other outerwear, including sweatshirts and hoodies, will not be allowed to be worn in the classrooms except in cases of an 8th grade privilege. Kindergarten and 1st grade students should have no drawstrings in their outerwear jackets. Drawstrings present a choking hazard on playground structures.
- **Socks:** Solid white, navy blue, gray, or black socks only – socks must be clearly visible above the shoe.
- **Athletic Shoes:** Must be worn every day with socks. **Athletic shoes may be a solid white, navy blue, gray, black, tan, or a combination of up to three of the previously mentioned colors. Appropriate advertisements, for example, a Nike swoosh or Adidas stripes, in the previously mentioned colors, are also allowed.** No sneakers with wheels are allowed. No shoes that light up are allowed. No sandals or boots. Shoelaces must be tied tightly with the knot on the outside of the shoe. Shoelaces must be either solid white, navy blue, gray, tan, or black. **No other colored shoelaces are allowed.** Athletic shoes need to be in good condition.
- **Grooming:** Hair must be conservative in style, short, above the eyebrows and the collar of the shirt. Excessive hairstyles (Mohawks, fauxhawks, etc.) will not be allowed. Hair coloring, bleaching, highlighting, and tinting are not allowed. No facial hair. No visible tattoos either permanent or temporary are allowed.
- **Jewelry:** Boys may not wear earrings or bracelets. Necklaces with a cross or religious medal on a fine linked chain may be worn. One ring is allowed. One In addition a watch may be worn. **Smart watches are not permitted to be worn at any time on campus. (Per diocese)** Medical bracelets or medical necklaces may be worn.
- **Cologne:** Students may not wear perfume including any type of body spray.

Girls

- **Plaid Jumper/Plaid Skort (Kindergarten–2nd grade only):** Students entering Kindergarten through 2nd grade must wear the uniform plaid jumper or skort. Girls are required to wear shorts underneath the jumper. The jumper or the skort may be worn for Mass. Skirts may not be rolled at the waist and a modest length is required (maximum of 3 inches above the crease behind the knee).
- **Plaid Skort/Plaid Skirt (3rd-5th grade only):** Students entering 3rd through 5th grade must wear the uniform plaid skort or skirt. Skirts may not be rolled at the waist and a modest length is required (maximum of 3 inches above the crease behind the knee). Girls are required to wear shorts underneath the skirt. Warm-up or pajama pants may not be worn underneath the skirt.
- **Plaid Skirt/Plaid Skort (6th-8th grade only):** Students entering 6th through 8th grade must wear the uniform plaid skirt or skort. Skirts may not be rolled at the waist and a modest length is required (maximum of 3 inches above the crease behind the knee). Girls are required to wear shorts underneath the skirt. Warm-up or pajama pants may not be worn underneath the skirt.

- **Pants (Kindergarten-8th grade):** Girls may choose to wear khaki dress pants (no top stitching, jeans styling, or cargo pockets allowed). Pants may be worn year-round, except on Mass days and other special events. Elastic waist band pants are only allowed in kindergarten thru 2nd grade.
- **Shorts (Kindergarten-8th grade):** Khaki shorts are acceptable (no top stitching, jeans styling, or cargo pockets allowed). Shorts may be worn year-round, except on Mass days and other special events.
- **Oxford Shirt (3rd-8th grade only):** SMS white oxford shirt w/logo is required to be worn for Mass and other special events. The oxford shirt must be clean, not wrinkled, and always tucked in.
- **Belt:** A black, brown, or a navy solid-color belt must be always worn with pants. (Unless elastic waistband)
- **Oxford Shirt/White Peter Pan Collared Shirt (Kindergarten-2nd grade only)**
- **Polo Shirt:** A navy blue polo shirt with the logo is required to be worn daily. Shirts must be tucked in at all times. No turtlenecks or visible t-shirts may be worn under the polo shirt.
- **Jackets/Sweatshirts/Sweaters:** The white, navy blue, gray, or gold Saints sweatshirt (sold annually by SMS Athletics Department) is allowed. Navy blue fleece jackets or navy blue/white cardigan sweaters are also allowed. Solid navy-blue hoodies with the school logo are allowed on Fridays only. Other outerwear, including sweatshirts and hoodies, will not be allowed to be worn in the classrooms except in cases of an 8th grade privilege. Kindergarten and 1st grade students should have no drawstrings in their outerwear jackets. Drawstrings present a choking hazard on playground structures.
- **Socks:** Solid white, navy blue, gray, or black socks only – socks must be clearly visible above the shoe.
- **Tights/Leggings:** Solid navy blue/black/gray/white tights or leggings with no ornamentation or design may be worn with the jumper, skort, or skirt. Tights/Leggings must be in good condition and free from holes. Socks must be worn with leggings.
- **Athletic Shoes:** Must be worn every day with socks. **Athletic shoes may be a solid white, navy blue, gray, black, tan, or a combination of up to three of the previously mentioned colors. Appropriate advertisements, for example, a Nike swoosh or Adidas stripes, in the previously mentioned colors, are also allowed.** No sneakers with wheels are allowed. No shoes that light up are allowed. No sandals or boots. Shoelaces must be tied tightly with the knot on the outside of the shoe. Shoelaces must be either solid white, navy blue, gray, tan, or black. **No other colored shoelaces are allowed.** Athletic shoes need to be in good condition.
- **Grooming:** No makeup is allowed. Junior high student may use a blemish concealer or light foundation. Hair must be neat and clean and conservatively styled. Headbands/hair accessories are limited to SMS uniform plaid or uniform colors. **These colors are white, yellow/gold, royal blue, and navy blue.** There should be no excessive ornamentation (flowers, beads, etc.). No nail polish or artificial nails are allowed. Hair coloring, bleaching, tinting, most highlighting, or excessive ornamentation is not allowed. Natural highlighting is also discouraged, but “Natural hair color highlights” are acceptable in grades 6-8. Only non-color chapstick is allowed. No shiny or colored lip-gloss may be worn. No visible tattoos either permanent or temporary are allowed.

- **Jewelry:** Only one necklace with a cross or religious medal on a fine chain may be worn. Only one bracelet may be worn. One ring is allowed. In addition, a watch may be worn. ***Smart watches are not permitted to be worn at any time on campus. (Per diocese)*** Medical bracelets or medical necklaces may be worn. Only one pair of single post earrings (no larger than 4 mm and one solid color) are allowed. Dangling earrings or hoops can be a hazard; therefore, they are not allowed.
- **Perfume:** Students may not wear perfume including any type of body spray.

F. Dress Day (Non-Uniform Days):

On days when the students do not have to wear their uniform to school, the following guidelines for appropriate free dress must be followed:

- No sleeveless or strap style shirts or blouses, no low-cut necklines
- No tight-fitting clothing (leggings, spandex)
- No excessively bagging clothing
- No low-slung pants or short tops that expose the midriff
- No short skirts or shorts (maximum of 3 inches above the crease behind the knee)
- No athletic shorts, but athletic pants are allowed
- No ripped or torn clothing
- No inappropriate logos, slogans, or advertising on clothing
- Shoes must have backs and be close-toed
- Make-up and jewelry rules remain the same

****Same uniform regulations apply for dress days to boys & girls.****

Students may be given athletic team 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. Make-up is not allowed on dress days.

G. Physical Education Program

P.E. classes are a part of the regular curriculum. Students are expected to attend P.E. classes as other classes in the curriculum.

A student may be excused as follows:

- From classes because of a temporary illness if a note is sent by a parent. This note should explain the nature of the illness. If more than three classes are to be missed, a doctor’s written excuse is required. Students restricted from P.E. because of PAR (Physical Activity Restriction) may not participate in after school sports or recess on that day.
- From classes because of illness or physical impairment. A note from a doctor must be on file in the school office before a child can be excused, and the duration of nonparticipation must be clearly stated.
- From a particular exercise or activity because of illness or physical impairment. A parent’s note is required for a temporary impairment stating the nature and duration of the impairment. A doctor’s note is required for a long-term absence from P.E. (long term is more than three classes.)

H. Library

Kindergarten through fifth grade have one library period per week. Junior high students may use the library during open library time. Students may check out books as long as they do not have overdue books. If a book is lost, the student will be charged the replacement cost.

I. Lunch

It is the parents' responsibility to see that their children have a nutritious lunch each day. Lunches are stored in the classroom so items that do not require refrigeration should be packed. Lunches from home, "sack lunches" should be sent in with the student. Parents may also order school lunches online through FACTS SIS. The school lunch program is catered by several local restaurants and overseen by the school lunch coordinator, Michele McDermott. She may be contacted at lunch@stmaryschoolaiken.com. The school lunch menu is posted one month in advance online through FACTS SIS and a hard copy is sent home. Parents are to order their child's lunch online through FACTS SIS by a designated deadline. If your child arrives to school and does not have a sack lunch or a school lunch has not been ordered for him/her, they may call home from the school office. Student lunches are to be dropped off in the school office marked with the child's name. The school office will notify the student's teacher a sack lunch is there for the child.

Milk is offered at lunch time and may be paid for daily, weekly, or monthly. Milk can be paid for in advance through FACTS SIS, by cash, or with a check payable to "St. Mary's School". Parents are invited to join their child(ren) for lunch on Fridays. Eating lunch with students on a day other than Friday must be approved by the school office.

J. Extracurricular Activities

1. Standards for Extracurricular Participation

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

2. Conduct

Participation in a school sports team or activity is a privilege. Students are expected to follow the school's discipline plan in order to participate in the school's sports program and extracurricular activities. Students are subject to the guidelines of behavior set up by the school.

3. Absences

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.

4. Athletics

a. Philosophy

The athletic program at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School follows the philosophy of providing a program of developing leadership and sportsmanship. The program promotes a Christian atmosphere in which athletes grow in respect and concern for others in their own environment as well as in society as a whole. Emphasis is placed on the development of game fundamentals and encouraging athletes to give their best while competing. The ultimate objective of the program is for the athletes to improve their skills while learning sportsmanship and having fun.

b. Athletics Participation Physical Form

Students need a current athletics medical authorization to play. Documentation of a physical examination taken after June 1st must be on file in the school office. This form can be downloaded from the school's website under Athletics.

c. Diocesan Athletic Consent & Waiver Form

Parents must complete the Diocesan Athletic Consent and Waiver form each school year for their child(ren) to participate in sports. This form must be turned into the school office. This form can be downloaded from the school's website under Athletics in the student dropdown menu.

d. Athletics Program

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School offers students in Grades 5, 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 Catholic 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 take *Safe Haven - It's Up to You* and turn in required paperwork which includes background screening forms. Coaches and volunteers are asked to take *Safe Haven* as soon as possible and submit the certificate of completion to the Athletic Director or school office.

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 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.

e. Athletics Code of Conduct – Student Agreement

As a student participating in St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School Athletics Program, I agree to abide by the following guidelines:

- I will treat players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, gender, school, creed or ability.
- I will exhibit good sportsmanship in my words, actions, facial expression and body language.
- I will take care of my uniforms and any team equipment.
- I understand that if I am assigned to detention, I may not ask that it be rescheduled due to a game, meet or practice.
- I understand that if I am assigned to make-up testing, the session may be rescheduled once if I turn in a written request from my parent.

f. Athletics Code of Conduct – Parent Agreement

As a parent of a student participating in St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School Athletics Program, I agree to abide by the following guidelines:

- I will provide positive support, care and encouragement for all players, coaches and officials at practices and games.
- I will not discuss rules or official calls with players, coaches or officials of our team or our opponent's team during, or immediately following the competition. All questions will be directed to Mrs. Ulmer, St. Mary's Athletic Director, who may then make a formal inquiry.
- I will require my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect, regardless of race, gender, creed or ability.
- I will model and encourage good sportsmanship.
- I will require responsibility by my child, in taking care of uniforms and equipment and in communicating with coaches.
- I understand that homework and/or behavior detention will not be rescheduled for practice or games.
- I understand that make-up testing may be rescheduled once.

g. Athletics Rules & Regulations

Students in the fifth through eighth grades that meet the age requirements may participate in interscholastic athletics. 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 one other sport.

Students will not be permitted to practice without having a parent-signed permission form and waiver and a current physical examination.

Except under special circumstances, when a bus is used, transportation to and from athletic events is the responsibility of the parents. The coaches, athletic director, and school staff are prohibited from arranging carpools or assigning students to drivers.

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.

h. Athletics Academic & Behavioral Requirements

All fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth graders will be eligible to participate in the athletic program at the beginning of the school year. 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 "academic subjects" will be reviewed to establish eligibility.

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 on an interim or a report card will be deemed academically ineligible to participate in school sponsored athletic events or club competitions/shows. It is the responsibility of the student to see administration each Friday to check on any grade improvement. Once a "D" average or higher is reached in every subject, the student may rejoin school sponsored athletic events or club competitions/shows.

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.

i. Athletic Fees

All athletes will be required to pay a \$40.00 fee per sport per season before the first game.

5. 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

Eligibility to run for office is determined by the Junior High faculty and the Principal based upon the following standards:

- ✓ Written application. An acceptable written application as approved by junior high faculty.
- ✓ One written teacher recommendation.
- ✓ Students with a suspension from school during the current school year may not be eligible to run for executive office.
- ✓ "C" or better in all subjects for all 2 previous quarters and at time of application.
- ✓ Approval of qualification for candidacy by junior high teachers at time of application.

Failure to follow established campaign procedures will lead to immediate disqualification. All elected officers and representatives are expected to maintain these high standards throughout their tenure.

Removal of Officers

Officers who fail to maintain the academic qualifications for office at posted school-wide grade check dates will be ineligible for two weeks. If grades have not improved at the end of the two week period, the officer will be permanently removed from office. If an officer becomes ineligible for a second time in a quarter, the officer will be permanently removed from office. An officer who receives a Detention Form will be ineligible to conduct the duties of office for a period of two weeks. An officer who receives a second Detention Form will be permanently removed from office. An officer will be permanently removed from office in cases of serious behavior infractions (as determined by principal) suspension, or expulsion. Vacancies created by removal of an officer will be filled by a special election process determined by administration to meet the needs of the particular situation.

6. 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 Catholic School Junior High (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 (86-88) in each subject. The students must also exhibit characteristics of leadership and personal integrity. Students who have earned greater than three detentions are not eligible for induction in the Beta Club. Students who are suspended for any reason are not eligible for induction that school year. If already a Beta Club member, students become inactive for the remainder of the current school year.

In order to maintain full membership status, an average of at least a B- (83) in each "academic subject," is required. One C on a quarter report card will result in the student being placed on probationary member status. The student will then have one quarter to bring the C up to a B. If this is not achieved, or if one or more other subjects falls below 83, the student will lose membership status.

VI. ACADEMICS

A. Curriculum

The curriculum at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic 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, science, and health/safety. Enrichment is provided through courses in music, art, physical education, foreign language, computer education, and library skills instruction.

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 Catholic 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. Diocesan curriculum guides are available to parents at <https://charlestdioocese.org/schools/diocesan-curriculum-for-our-catholic-schools/>.

B. Academic/Behavioral Evaluation for Services

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School strives for excellence in education and seeks to meet the needs of all students. The principal oversees student intervention programs. In addition, the principal develops Student Service Plans, schedules parent/teacher meetings, monitors student progress, provides faculty/staff training, and additional resources to students who have been formally identified needing additional academic support in the classroom. In cases where it has been determined by the principal, the teacher, and the parent, the principal communicates with Aiken County School District for further evaluation and/or observation. Residents of Aiken County are entitled to psychoeducational evaluation through the Aiken County Public Schools' Special Education Department. If it has been identified that St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School cannot provide the appropriate student/classroom accommodations needed for academic success, referrals will be made to local agencies and/or public school programs. Parents are encouraged to follow the recommendations made on their child's behalf and to ensure that appropriate documentation is placed in the child's permanent file in the school office.

For more information on Aiken County School District Special Programs, contact the Child Find Secretary at 803-641-2624 to schedule screenings and/or evaluation.

C. Parent/School Communication

1. FACTS SIS

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School seeks to work collaboratively with students and parents to promote student responsibility. By empowering students to be accountable for their own learning, the school seeks to develop within students the traits of independence and responsibility. These traits are nurtured early on with students walking themselves to classes, bringing homework to school, submitting assignments on-time, making up assignments when absent, accepting consequences for behavior, and asking teachers for help when needed. Students are encouraged to discuss their progress directly with their teachers. If a student experiences academic or social difficulty, the first intervention taken by the parent should be to redirect the student back to the teacher. Follow-up action taken by the parent should be one that supports the role of the teacher in the classroom and the student as responsible for his/her own learning.

To foster effective communication between home and school, St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School utilizes FACTS SIS, a web-based school management system. Each family creates a user name and password at the beginning of the school year. This log in access provides pertinent

information regarding the following: your child(ren)'s academic progress, attendance, school newsletter, announcements, sports, reminders, list of activities/events, forms, schedule parent/teacher conferences, pay school lunches and Extended Care online, download progress reports and/or report cards, and view/print the school calendar. It is important parents update their contact information (home/cell/work phone number) and provide the name of their cell phone carrier to ensure they receive text messages sent by the school, including those regarding important or emergency information. Communication is also done via phone, e-mail, and conferences upon request. Through the school website, parents can also access the school calendar, forms, and the Parent/Student Handbook. The teacher workday is from 7:50 am to 3:20 pm. Teachers are available for meetings with parents by appointment only.

2. Social Media

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School's website is linked to the school's Facebook® page. The Diocese of Charleston has strict regulations concerning the use of social media. As such, any links to the school must meet certain requirements and administrator rights must be assigned as specified in the guidelines. If an additional page, for example a PTO page, is approved and established, that source will be communicated to parents via the monthly newsletter.

Any groups of parents, volunteers, or event chairs who have set up blogs or pages on Facebook®, Twitter®, Instagram®, or other social media sites, have not done so within the guidelines established by the Diocese of Charleston and these should not be considered official school sites. These sites, though helpful to groups of parents or friends, should not be considered sources of any official school information and should not be used to post information about students or staff.

Any postings via photos, texts, e-mails, blogs, on any Internet sites that include defamatory comments or images regarding the school, the faculty, the parish, the students, or the students' parents should be reported to the school administration and will be reviewed and handled in the manner most appropriate to the situation and/or offender.

D. Student Agendas

Students in grades 3-8 utilize a student agenda. The purpose of the agenda is to teach students organizational and time management skills. At the beginning of the year, teachers instruct students in the use of the agenda. In keeping with the school's philosophy of student responsibility, students are responsible for logging announcements, homework assignments, tests, and long-term projects in their agenda. Parents are responsible for reviewing the agenda each day with their child and checking to see that work is complete. If students are not fulfilling their responsibility to fill in the agenda, parents are encouraged to have a consequence at home. Students are to keep agendas in good condition. Students are not to deface the agendas in any manner, or they will be required to purchase another one.

E. School Website/Communication

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School's website will be continually updated with information. The school's website address is www.stmaryschoolaiken.com. News alerts and emergency notifications will be posted on FACTS SIS and sent to parents via text message or email.

To assure open communication, parents are encouraged to write suggestions and/or concerns. If parents wish to confer with administration and/or staff, it is requested that an appointment be made. Teachers will check e-mail daily on school days and will respond to emails within 24 hours not including weekends and holidays.

F. Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are normally held annually in October. A second parent/teacher conference may be held in the spring (end of February) at the request of the teacher or parent if there appears to be an academic/behavior concern.

If there is a question concerning a child's progress or behavior, the procedure used at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School is as follows:

- Consult with the teacher first.
- If the problem or concern continues, the parent should bring the matter to the attention of the principal.
- The pastor is the final recourse for unresolved problems.

G. Standardized Testing

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School follows the Diocesan Testing Program. The Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) is given to students in kindergarten-8th grade in September, January, and May. Results are distributed to the parents during the November parent/teacher conferences. Special testing through the public school districts may be requested either by parents or the school to identify special instructional needs or placement.

H. Grading Scale & Report Cards

A report card will be sent home at the end of each quarter (approximately every 9 weeks). Parents are to sign the report card envelope indicating they have received and reviewed the report card. They are to then return the report card envelope to school by the due date indicated on the report card envelope.

Grades 1 – 8 (Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language 7-8 only, Religion 6-8 only)

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

Grades 1 – 8th Grade (Specials, Religion 1-5)

E	Excellent
G	Goods
N	Needs Growth
U	Unsatisfactory

The kindergarten report card utilizes the grading scale listed below for the following subjects: Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies. Development of a Kindergartener's progress on mastering fine and gross motor skills as well as specific academic skills is also reflected on the kindergarten report card.

E	Excellent	90-100
G	Good	80-89
N	Needs Growth	70-79
U	Unsatisfactory	69 or below
NI	Not Introduced	

1. Honor Roll & Awards

Pastor's Honor Roll – This honor is awarded to any student in grades 6th-8th. Students must receive "A's" in all core academic and special area subjects and a "S" or higher in enrichment subjects.

A-B Honor Roll – This honor is awarded to any student in grades 6th-8th who receives no grade lower than a "B-" in all core academic and special area subjects and a "S" or higher in enrichment subjects.

2. Placed/Promotion/Retention

A student can be placed or promoted each year on the recommendation of the teacher and the principal. When making an evaluation of the student's progress, the teacher will consider the social, emotional, moral, as well as, academic development of the student. A student may be retained if he/she has not made sufficient academic progress in meeting current grade level standards by May 1st. The decision to retain a student is determined during a Child Study Team meeting consisting of the parent, teacher(s) and the administration.

3. Summer School

A student who does not pass a core academic subject in Grades 3-8 may 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.

4. Graduation

In order to receive a diploma from St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School, 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 Catholic School is accredited by Cognia and is recognized by the public school system. Therefore, graduating eighth graders may receive high school credits for English I, Algebra I, Geometry, German or Spanish. 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 and Geometry. 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.

Graduation is a school-sponsored ceremony. The function of the graduation ceremony is to recognize the scholarly endeavors of the students. Participation in graduation exercises is a privilege, not a right. Students may not participate in graduation activities until their educational, financial, and disciplinary obligations to the school are met.

Male participants in the graduation ceremony will wear a royal blue cap and gown and female participants will wear a white cap and gown. No decorations, pins, corsages, stoles, etc. may be worn on the gown.

A student may be excluded from participation in the graduation exercises for reasonable cause or consequence as deemed by the principal. Repeated and/or serious violations of the rules and spirit of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School handbook, frequent absences and tardies, uncompleted coursework are causes for exclusion from the graduation ceremony or activities.

5. Child Study Team

The Child Study Team is a committee of faculty, staff, administration, and district personnel which meets to identify, assess, and review interventions and special needs of students - academically, socially, and behaviorally. Students not making academic progress are referred to the Child Study Team either by a parent, teacher, or principal. Necessary modifications to the curriculum, assessment, learning environment, and other support services will be provided upon review of the Child Study Team.

6. Grade Placement

Students who carry an "F" average in one or more core academic subjects for the year may not be promoted to the next grade. Students who successfully complete summer school may be considered for promotion.

7. Homework

The purpose of homework assignments is to develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction in the student, and to provide further opportunity to master skills taught in the classroom. Recommended homework times are: 15 minutes for kindergarten, 30 minutes for 1st and 2nd grade; 45 minutes for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade; an average of 15-20 minutes per subject, per night in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. 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 breaks may be assigned.

Homework may consist of:

- Assignments not completed in school.
- Long or short range projects.
- Memorization of certain prayers, prose, poetry, math facts, words, etc.
- Handwriting practice.
- Reading of assigned materials or studying - Not all homework has to be written.

8. 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. Students will be expected to attend a make-up testing session. A notice confirming the make-up test will be sent home.

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 principal.

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 0 may be assigned for work missed as a result of an unexcused absence or tardy.

9. Missing Assignments, Books, & Signed Papers

Teachers and office staff will, within reason, allow a 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.

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. 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.

10. Internet Use

Students are responsible for good behavior when utilizing the Internet during the school day. 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 any time. 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. This may include the use of e-mail.
2. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, gestures, poses, inappropriate emoji, 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, comments, or photos about SMS students, faculty, staff, parents, or volunteers may be subject to the school's disciplinary actions.

7. Students are prohibited from accessing the Internet on any personal device before, during, and after school.
8. Students are prohibited from wearing “smart watches” to school.

11. School Technology Use Policy

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School provides iPads for student use in kindergarten thru 2nd grade and Chromebooks for students in 3rd-8th grade. Students and parents are required to review and sign the Parent/Student Technology Usage Agreement at the start of each new school year and submit it to the school office by a specific deadline. Failure to do so will limit the child’s access to the Internet and/or use any school issued devices.

Use of all school issued electronic devices (computers, iPads, or Chromebooks), electronic textbooks, applications (apps), electronic tools, reference materials, software, and online information is a privilege that carries responsibility and behavioral expectations consistent with all school rules and policies including, but not limited to, those stated in the Parent/Student Handbook. It is understood that members of the SMS community will use all type of electronic devices and the school’s network, if authorized, in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner at all times.

SMS retains sole right of possession of electronic devices and related equipment. SMS administration and faculty retain the right to collect and/or inspect all electronic devices at any time and to alter, add, or delete installed software or hardware.

1. School Issued Electronic Devices/Lost, Stolen, Damaged School Issued Electronic Devices

1.1 Student Access to School Issued Electronic Devices

Students will have access to use electronic devices (computers, iPads, or Chromebooks) as needed to enhance student learning. All students need to sign and return the school’s technology and electronic device use agreement before access will be given.

1.2 General Precautions

- Electronic devices (computers, iPads, Chromebooks) are school property and all users will follow the SMS Acceptable Use Policy.
- Cords and cables must be inserted carefully into electronic devices to prevent damage to the cords.
- Electronic devices must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels.
- iPads/Chromebooks should always be within the protective case when in use.
- iPads/Chromebooks must never leave the classroom unless authorized by a teacher or administration.

1.3 Screen Care

The iPads/Chromebooks screens can be damaged if subjected to rough treatment. The screens are particularly sensitive to damage from excessive pressure.

- Do not lean on the top of the iPad/Chromebook when closed.
- Do not place anything near the iPad/Chromebook that could put pressure on the screen.

2. Use of Electronic Devices at School

iPads/Chromebooks are intended for use during school.

2.1 Photos

Photo/Image/Video storage on the iPad/Chromebook will be for school projects only. Storage of personal photos or downloaded images is not allowed.

2.2 Sound, Music, Games, or Programs

Students may not download music from iTunes or any other music-sharing site. Music is only allowed on the iPad/Chromebook if provided by the teacher for educational use. Sound must be muted at all times unless permission is obtained from the teacher for instructional purposes. Internet games are not allowed on the iPads/Chromebooks.

3. Acceptable Use

The use of the SMS technology resources is a privilege, not a right. The privilege of using the technology resources provided by the school is not transferable or extendible by students to people or groups outside the school and terminates when a student is no longer enrolled in the school. This policy is provided to make all users aware of the responsibilities associated with efficient, ethical, and lawful use of technology resources. If a person violates any of the policies named in this Acceptable Use Policy, or any changes to the policy, privileges may be terminated, access to the school's technology resources may be denied, and appropriate disciplinary action shall be applied. The SMS School Code of Conduct shall be applied for student infractions. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension/expulsion. If use is potentially in violation of the law, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

3.1 Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Talk to your children about values and the standards your children should follow regarding the use of the Internet.

3.2 School's Responsibilities are to:

- Provide Internet access to all students and a school issued email account to 5th-8th grade students.
- Provide Internet blocking of inappropriate content.
- Provide digital citizenship curriculum and instruction to all grade levels.
- Provide staff development to aid students in conducting research to ensure student compliance of the technology usage policy.

3.3 Teacher's Responsibilities are to:

- Periodically check all students' iPads/Chromebooks, randomly, individually, or as a result of suspicious action on the part of the student.
- Monitor student use of iPads/Chromebooks.
- Provide clear instructions about assignments and provide technical assistance, especially as related to teacher's requirements.
- Keep his/her classroom locked when iPads/Chromebooks have been left in the room and the room is unoccupied.
- Turn in any iPad/Chromebook to the school office found in a location other than a locked classroom or a secure location identified by SMS teachers.

3.4 Student Responsibilities are to:

- Use computers/iPads/Chromebooks in a responsible and ethical manner.
- Obey general school rules concerning behavior and communication that apply to computer/iPad/Chromebook use.
- Use all technology resources in an appropriate manner so as to not damage school equipment. Damage includes, but is not limited to, the loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries or service interruptions caused by the student's own negligence, errors, or omissions. Use of any information obtained via SMS designated Internet system is at your own risk. SMS specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.
- Help SMS protect our students and the computer system/device by contacting a teacher or administrator about any security problems that may be encountered.
- Monitor all activity on their account(s).

- Turn off and secure their iPad/Chromebook after they are finished working to protect their work and information.

3.5 Student Activities Strictly Prohibited:

- Illegal installation or transmission of copyrighted materials.
- Any action that violates existing school policy or public law.
- Sending, accessing, uploading, downloading, posting, or distributing offensive, profane, threatening, pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit materials.
- Use of chat rooms or sites selling term papers, book reports, and other forms of student work.
- Use of the iPad/Chromebook to make any purchases, including upgrading.
- Use of any messaging services- i.e., MSN Messenger, ICQ, AIM, IMO, etc.
- Internet or computer games, except those provided by SMS.
- Use of outside data disks or external attachments without prior approval from the administration.
- Changing of iPad/Chromebook settings established by school.
- Downloading apps.
- Spamming-Sending mass or inappropriate emails.
- Gaining access to other student's accounts, files, and/or data.
- Use of the school's Internet/e-mail accounts for financial or commercial gain or for any illegal activity.
- Use of anonymous and/or false communications such as, but not limited to, MSN Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, email, etc.
- Students are not allowed to give out personal information for any reason over the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, setting up internet accounts, including those necessary for chat rooms, eBay, e-mail, etc.
- Participation in credit card fraud, electronic forgery, or other forms of illegal behavior.
- Vandalism (any malicious attempt to harm or destroy hardware, software, or data, including, but not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses or computer programs that can infiltrate computer systems and/or damage software components) of school equipment will not be allowed.
- Transmission or accessing materials that are obscene, offensive, threatening, or otherwise intended to harass or demean recipients.
- Bypassing the SMS iPad/Chromebook security module.
- Recording (audio and/or video) of any student, faculty/staff member, or classroom without explicit teacher permission.

3.6 Legal Propriety

Students must comply with trademark and copyright laws and all license agreements. Ignorance of the law is not immunity. If you are unsure, ask a teacher or parent. Plagiarism is a violation of the SMS Code of Conduct. Give credit to all sources used, whether quoted or summarized. This includes all forms of media on the Internet such as graphics, movies, music, and text.

3.7 Student Discipline

If a student violates any minor part of the above policies, the following disciplinary steps will be followed:

- 1st Offense – Warning. Parents will be notified by the principal.
- 2nd Offense - Student will not have use of the iPad or Chromebook during the school day.
- 3rd Offense – A full quarter (9 week) suspension of use of the iPad or Chromebook or any other school issued electronic device. (Student still responsible for all required work.)
- 4th Offense – Loss of use of the iPad or Chromebook and all other school issued electronic devices for a length of time determined by the principal.

***Violations of a more serious nature will be handled on a case-by-case basis,
with immediate revocation of use of the iPad or Chromebook.***

VII. STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND CONDUCT

A. St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School Behavior Rules:

1. Respect yourself, others, and things.
2. Contribute to the learning environment.
3. Follow all school rules and classroom procedures.

Teachers in grades Kindergarten through 3 may employ a variety of techniques, i.e. stamps, sticker cards, green lights, charts, etc. All teachers develop discipline cycles that reflect the consequences of student behavior that detracts from the learning environments and that may be harmful to the student or others.

B. Code of Conduct

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School students will:

- Be courteous, and show respect to one another and to all school personnel.
- Use appropriate language in speech and writing.
- Behave in a safe and orderly manner in the church, classroom, cafeteria, playground, Extended Care and on field trips.
- Respect church and school property and property of others.
- Be honest at all times.
- Come prepared for class.
- Follow directions as they are given.
- Remain on supervised areas of school grounds during school hours.
- Be responsible for having parents sign all teacher/parent communications, including behavior and progress reports, and return them to school the following school day.
- Participate respectfully in Mass and Paraliturgies.
- Clean up after themselves at all times.
- Not remove any item from a classroom without the teacher's expressed permission.
- Not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind.
- Not engage in harassment or bullying of any kind against students or teachers.
- Not make threats in speech or writing.
- Follow the guidelines set forth in the pre-teaching checklists.

C. St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School 24/7 Policy

Students of St. Mary's represent the school in and outside of the school day. Any conduct both in and out of school that reflects negatively upon the reputation of the school may be subject to disciplinary action. The school reserves the right to discipline a student for actions committed off-campus if they are intended to have an effect on a student or they adversely affect the safety and well-being of a student or staff member while in school. (Please see below in regards to electronic media).

D. School Identity Policy

Students are not allowed to identify the school including through the use of the school logo or school uniform, for any purpose outside the school without written consent from the school principal including photos posted electronically on FaceBook, Twitter, SnapChat, etc. Violation of this policy may result in suspension or expulsion.

E. Procedures of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School

- ✓ Roller skates/blades, skateboards, and motorized scooters are not permitted on school grounds.
- ✓ The library is used for quiet study, activities, and/or reading.
- ✓ It is necessary to be on time for class.
- ✓ Gum is not permitted on school grounds.
- ✓ Food and beverages (other than water) are to be consumed in Mercy Hall or other assigned areas at assigned times.
- ✓ Only designated areas may be used during recess, lunch recess, and before school in the morning.
- ✓ No glass bottles or containers are allowed on campus.
- ✓ Playground equipment may be used only during recess in designated areas.
- ✓ Rough play and throwing objects at each other are not permitted.
- ✓ Running in the classroom, sidewalks, or multi-purpose rooms is not permitted.
- ✓ Proper dress code is to be followed on all school days.
- ✓ Students must get permission before leaving supervised areas.
- ✓ Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated including: cheating, forgery, copying homework, and plagiarism. (Please refer to Section J: Academic Dishonesty)
- ✓ Physical, sexual, emotional bullying or harassment will not be tolerated (Please reference K: Harassment Policy)
- ✓ The following items are not permitted on school property: knives, firearms, fireworks, matches, lighters, smoking materials, drugs, alcohol, and obscene or offensive material.
- ✓ Students are not to enter an unoccupied classroom. Further, classrooms are not to be entered after school by students or parents to retrieve forgotten backpacks.
- ✓ In the instance when a teacher leaves a room for an emergency, students are required to follow the posted directions in the classroom. Students are to stay seated, remain quiet, and work on the assignment.

G. Electronic Devices/Cell Phones

Students should not bring their cell phone or any electronic device (including smart watches) to school. If he/she does so, then it must be kept in his/her backpack at all times and be turned off. Talking on a cell phone or text messaging during school hours or while in Extended Care is not permissible. If the student removes the cell phone from his/her backpack at any time while on school campus, the school faculty, staff, or administration may confiscate the phone and place it in the school office. The student's parent will then be responsible for picking up the cell phone from the school office. Other electronic devices are not permitted anywhere on campus including afterschool sports, Extended Care, recess, etc. St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School is not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen cell phone or electronic device.

In all cases of confiscation, the principal reserves the right to check for any inappropriate information that may be stored, received, or sent on any student's confiscated communication or electronic device during the school day or any school-sponsored event. When deemed necessary, this information will be downloaded and/or printed.

H. Playground Rules

Teachers and aides supervise the school and playground areas during recess and the lunch period. There is NO SUPERVISION after school hours except in our Extended Care program.

I. Misbehavior

Behavior unbecoming to a young Christian boy or girl will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the administration. Students must realize that they, whether in uniform or not, represent St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School when they are off campus. One reason for dismissal from St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School is any conduct, on or off campus, marring the name of the St.

Mary Help of Christians Catholic School & Parish Community. This rule will be enforced when it pertains to student behavior in the school's residential and commercial neighborhood. Of course, this rule applies to all behavior, no matter where it occurs, which is contrary to St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School's principles. As a partner with parents in the education of children, the principal will notify parents when there is cause to be concerned about a student's activities or behavior, whether it is on or off campus and/or through electronic means.

J. Academic Dishonesty

Submitting work that is not one's own is a serious offense. Academic dishonesty with homework includes, but is not limited to, giving one's work to another student, copying homework, submitting assignments of substantially the same nature under different student names or submitting material which is not the student's personal work. Academic dishonesty with regard to tests includes, but is not limited to, communicating with another student during a test, having other students take an AR test or taking an AR test far below one's reading level, copying from another student, and lending or receiving materials.

The consequences for Academic Dishonesty – for all parties involved are:

- 1st offense - Behavior report, zero credit, detention
- 2nd offense - One day suspension
- 3rd offense - Will result in re-evaluation of the student's continuance at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School.

These consequences are subject to change based on the severity of the infraction.

K. Harassment Policy

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School believes that all persons have a God-given right to be treated with dignity and respect. In light of this belief, any form of harassment by students, employees, parents, and school volunteers will not be tolerated. Bullying/Harassment Prevention and Intervention Incident Forms are located in the school office.

The aim and goal of the school's harassment policy is as follows:

- To promote a Catholic educational environment in which harassment is not tolerated.
- To take positive action to prevent harassment from occurring through a well communicated and clear policy.
- To inform students, parents, faculty, and staff of the school's expectations and to foster a productive partnership among the school's stakeholders which helps maintain a positive school environment.

1. Harassment Defined

Harassment is unwanted, repeated, harmful behavior that is directed at an individual or group on the basis of appearance, race, sex, or national origin. It is about intimidation, control, misuse of power, and the attempt to deny the victim of equality. Demeaning behavior, if reoccurring, is a form of harassment. Harassment can occur any time during school or during school-related activities. Harassment can occur whether the intended victim is present or not. It includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- Verbal Harassment: Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, imitations or comments.
- Visual Harassment: Visual contact such as derogatory and/or sexually orientated posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures.

- Physical Harassment: Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements or interfering with work, study, or play.
- Sexual Harassment: Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests for certain benefits, unwelcome sexual advances.

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School strongly opposes and prohibits all forms of harassment (e.g. harassment based on an individual's race, color, age, religion, sex, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, appearance, ancestry, and disability), whether verbal, physical, or environmental. Any person who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including required withdrawal for students.

L. Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying behavior is repeated and systematic harassment of a victim or victims by individuals or groups of individuals. Bullying can be demonstrated through physical or verbal behaviors such as pushing, shoving, kicking, hitting, name-calling, teasing, or insults. Relational and reactive bullying includes behaviors such as exclusion and retaliation. In a classroom, bullying can disrupt the learning environment. St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School strives to establish and maintain a school culture that fosters student safety and well-being by:

- Creating a social climate in the school that is warm and accepting of all students.
- Setting high standards for behavior between students and teachers.
- Providing adequate adult supervision.
- Providing consistent and immediate consequences for aggressive behaviors.
- Parents are required to monitor their students' online and cell phone habits. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School. Any person who participates in cyber bullying will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including required withdrawal for students.
- Students are encouraged to report bullying behaviors. Reports will be followed up by the teacher and principal. Students demonstrating bullying behaviors will be processed through the St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School Discipline Cycle.

M. South Carolina's Child Abuse Reporting Statute

South Carolina's Child Abuse Reporting Statute requires the mandatory reporting of child abuse by any school employee who reasonably believes that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury (even "incidents in which children injure each other while on school grounds"), abuse as defined in S.C. Code Ann. §§ 63-7-20, 63-7-310, 63-7-360, 63-7-410 (2009).

N. Abuse of Teacher

Under South Carolina law, "Any person who knowingly abuses a teacher, or other school employee on school grounds or while the teacher or employee is engaged in the performance of his duties is guilty of a class 3 misdemeanor."

O. Violence

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School has zero tolerance for threatened or actual violence. Disciplinary action will result in either case.

P. Weapons

According to diocesan policy, any incident involving an unemancipated minor, unaccompanied by a parent, grandparent or guardian or a certified firearms safety instructor knowingly carrying or possessing a firearm on his person within his immediate control or on a means of transportation on school grounds

must be reported to an administrator who must report to a peace officer. Threat, possession, or use of a weapon on school premises or at school sponsored activities will result in disciplinary action and/or required withdrawal from school.

Q. Crimes and Threats

Any suspected crime against a person or property that is a serious offense or that involves a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument or serious physical injury and any conduct that poses a threat of death or serious physical injury to employees, students or anyone on the school property must be reported to Law Enforcement. The suspected student will be placed on suspension until the investigation is completed by police. The suspected student must be evaluated by a mental health professional to determine if able to return to school without being a threat to self or others.

R. Damage or Theft of Property

Damage or theft of property, either real or personal, by a student, whether malicious or accidental at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School, will be paid by the parents or guardian. This includes damage to or theft of textbooks and educational materials, computers, athletic equipment as well as damage to structures on or the grounds of the campus.

S. Tobacco, Alcohol, and other Drugs

According to diocesan policy any incident involving a person intentionally present to sell or transfer marijuana, peyote, prescription only, dangerous or narcotic drugs or in the possession or use of all of the above except prescription only drugs or involved in manufacture of dangerous drugs on a school campus must be reported to an administrator who must report to law enforcement.

Possession, use, or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol or illicit drugs, is prohibited on school premises and at all school sponsored activities. The possession, use, sale or attempted sale of tobacco, alcohol or illicit drugs will result in required withdrawal from the school. Prescription and over the counter medications must be given to the school office.

T. Discipline

Each teacher will have a classroom management plan that includes several parent contacts. After behaviors reach that level, administration will be notified. Once parent contact has been made by administration, administrative before school detention, a parent conference with administration, suspension, a second parent conference with administration, probation, a request by administration to withdrawal, and expulsion will be employed in that order.

*****Serious infractions and consequences, as determined by the administration and the pastor, will be handled on a case-by-case basis.**

Serious infractions as defined by the principal could result in immediate action such as: detention, probation, suspension, or expulsion.

A consequence of detention may be assigned for conduct violations including, but not limited to the following:

Repeated violations of class or school rules that have continued despite verbal warning and parent communication.

- Repeated tardiness to school and/or class
- Dress code violations
- Class disturbances
- Failure to return signed documents

- Profanity
- Behaviors deemed inappropriate by the school administrator

Serious violations will receive immediate consequences. Serious conduct violations include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment / Bullying
- Repeated and/or disruptive behavior in class
- Physical aggressiveness (fighting, horseplay, roughhousing)
- Academic Dishonesty
- Unethical Behavior

a. What is the Purpose of a Detention?

The purpose of an after-school detention is to give the student an opportunity to reflect on the behavior that was responsible for his/her detention. Detention is not a study hall.

b. Recess/Lunch Detention/Morning Detention

The purpose of detention is to provide an immediate consequence to the student for a minor infraction. Habitual assignments to lunch detention may result in suspension. Detentions are given at the discretion of the teacher/principal.

c. School Suspension

A suspension is invoked when a student demonstrates a serious disregard for St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School guidelines. The student's parents will be informed that their child has been suspended. Suspensions may not be appealed. Suspension is generally served for one to five weekdays. The suspension will be served in or out of school depending on the severity of the disciplinary action.

A suspended student will not be allowed to attend or participate in any school sponsored or athletic activities during the period of suspension.

In as much as the student will not participate in class, he/she will be considered absent and will be responsible for completing the class work provided by the teacher and all homework assignments. It is the student and parent's responsibility to pick up all assignments each afternoon for the days of out-of-school suspension. All assignments are due immediately upon the student's return to his/her classroom.

d. Immediate Suspension from School

The principal at his/her discretion has the authority to place any student on immediate suspension for any reasonable suspicion of the following:

- Endangerment of other students, faculty, staff, or self. This includes physically harming, or potentially harming, another student.
- Possession of drugs, alcohol, weapons, or tobacco, illegal paraphernalia, obscene or offensive material.
- Through attitude or action, demonstrating serious disrespect for a teacher, administrator, fellow student and/or disrupting the orderly process of learning.
- Harassment/Bullying
- Failure of past disciplinary actions to effect improved conduct.
- Falsification or misinterpretation of notes sent to/from parents or guardians.
- Serious violation of the school's technology user's agreement.
- Failure to report to detention.
- Second offense of academic dishonesty.
- Violation of the St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School 24/7 Policy or School Identity Policy

- Any other serious infractions of the school rules or behavior code at the discretion of the school administration or pastor.

e. Probation

After suspension or other serious misconduct, including excessive behavior reports, or at the recommendation of the administration, a student may be placed on disciplinary probation. The student and his/her parent(s) will receive a probationary letter explaining the conditions of this probation. A student who violates the conditions of his/her probation is liable for expulsion.

f. Expulsion

There are three general guidelines for consideration for expulsion:

1. When the moral or physical well-being of individual students, staff or the student body is endangered.
2. When there is prolonged and/or open disregard for school authority and/or the student violates probation.
3. When a student is on academic probation for more than three quarters.

g. Reasons for Expulsion

Conduct of any kind that is in conflict with the values for which our Catholic community stands is grounds for expulsion from St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School. Reasons for immediate expulsion include, but are not limited to the following:

- Possessing, using or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs, on school premises or at any school-sponsored activities.
- Flagrant insubordination.
- Further misconduct after being placed on probation.
- Violating civil law of the reasonable rights and dignity of others.
- Carrying a weapon or anything that may be reasonably considered to be a weapon. Threat, possession, or use of a weapon on school premises or at school sponsored activities.
- Theft of or malicious damage to parish property or the personal property of teachers or students.
- Third incident of academic dishonesty.
- Harassment or Bullying.

h. Disciplinary Review

In the case of a student's required withdrawal from a school, a parent of the student may appeal the decision of the administrator to the pastor. The appeal must be made in writing within 5 calendar days.

The Pastor of St. Mary Help of Christians Parish has the final decision on the expulsion of any student from the school.

i. Faculty/Staff Expectations:

Teachers must treat all students with equality, dignity and respect in a pastoral way. Teachers will also greet their students at the door and do a uniform check as the students are entering their classroom.

j. Verbal & Physical Abuse

Corporal punishment is not allowed as a method of discipline. **Pushing, grabbing, or pulling a student is inappropriate and not tolerated. This type of behavior is documented and placed in the employee's personnel file. Two documented incidents may lead to dismissal.** Verbally abusive behavior toward a student is unacceptable. Inappropriate language (any language considered inappropriate for students, threats, racial slurs or put downs, bullying behaviors, etc.) is not tolerated. As above, incidents will be

documented and two or more incidents may lead to dismissal. (Diocese of Charleston and Procedures for the Protection of Minors, Code of Ethics.)

k. Required Drug Testing

The school reserves the right to require drug testing of any student suspected of using illicit drugs.

l. Grievance Procedures

Every attempt should be made to resolve a conflict at the lowest possible level. Occasionally, matters may arise which will require an objective review by third parties in order to assure the maintenance of positive relationships within the school community. To facilitate reconciliation, communication and the strengthening of the community of faith, the following general guidelines shall be followed: In any conflict, an effort shall first be made to resolve the issue in a spirit of fairness and justice by following the ordinary and regular communication channels between the people involved. If the conflict cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved, recourse may be made to the person with the next higher level of accountability up to and including the school administrator. If the administrator is believed to be acting contrary to diocesan or local school policy, then a parent may have recourse to the pastor. The pastor determines if the decision is a proper subject for appeal. Student suspensions may not be appealed.

m. Appeal of Required Withdrawal of a Student Appeal Process

When a parent or a student (at least 18 years of age) wishes to appeal the decision of the principal, the person will submit the appeal in writing to the pastor and include the following items.

1. The subject of the appeal
2. Any factual data, other than hearsay, the person considers appropriate
3. The efforts that have been made to resolve the issue

An appeal is to be made within 10 working days of the communication of the decision. The pastor may designate another person to hear the appeal. The pastor's decision is final and binding and concludes the appeal process. The Pastor and Principal of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School may waive any and all regulations for just cause at their own discretion.

n. Right to Search

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School reserves the right to search and inspect desks, backpacks, lunch boxes, bags, electronic equipment (cell phone, flash drives,) etc. when those in authority deem it necessary to do so.

IX. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Field Trips

Throughout the school year, teachers schedule field trips. Field trips in junior high may be overnight and out of town. The purpose of a field trip is to provide experiences for children that directly relate to academic development or experiences that enrich their knowledge. Field trips are for class group activities not parent-child bonding. Teachers may contact parents to help supervise children on some field trips. The preferred modes of transportation are buses or walking. Private automobiles may also be used. The school is responsible for having two chaperones per vehicle. In all cases, written permission is required before a child can participate. The school will provide forms for this purpose. A St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School permission slip signed by the parent must be returned to the teacher before the child can go. The school cannot accept a note or phone call. Field trips are a privilege. A student may be denied a field trip for failure to do work assigned or lack of proper behavior.

1. It is **MANDATORY** that chaperones:

- Are not taking medication that would affect their supervision of students.
- Supervise students who are under their care and report misconduct, etc., to the teacher as soon as possible.
- Assist the teacher as much as possible during the field trip so that it can be a learning experience for the students.
- Not leave the site of the field trip without the approval of the teacher.
- Not bring other children and adults on a field trip.
- Enforce school rules.
- Consult teacher prior to giving student use of a cell phone.
- Have participated in the Diocesan *Safe Haven – It's Up to You* program.
- Parent volunteers should not smoke while chaperoning a field trip.

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School does not provide transportation for its extracurricular sports programs. Parents are responsible for transporting their own children. School volunteer coaches may not transport students to games or practices unless accompanied by another adult.

B. Visitor Regulation

Parents and other adults should never go directly to the classroom when coming to the school. All visitors to a classroom must have permission from that teacher. If parents are helping a teacher or accompanying a class on a field trip, they must sign in at the school office. 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 visitors will enter the school at the pedestrian gate on Fairfield Street and check in at the school office. No individuals shall be allowed in any school building or on the playground at any time without first checking in with the school 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 school 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 only. 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. After 3:20 p.m., parents may bypass the office and enter the campus through the gate in the black fence between Carter Hall and the school office.

Parents and 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 7:55 a.m. Please do not accompany students to their classroom door.

C. Parent Participation Program

The programs at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School thrive through involvement of our families. Rooted in the Gospel teachings of generosity, St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School's parent participation program is intended to promote family stewardship and strong parent involvement in the education of our children.

The following guidelines are provided to ensure the safety of all children as well as to encourage parental involvement both in their child(ren)'s education and in overall school and parish life. Prior to contributing time to any school sponsored event or project (either on or off campus), parents are required to complete *Safe Haven – It's Up to You* training Seminar. Parent volunteers must present the seminar certificate to the school office, submit a 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.

Current Areas of Need

- Annual Gingerbread Day
- School Volunteer (school lunchroom, classroom, library assistant, or on the playground)
- Field Trip Chaperone
- Volunteer Sports Coach
- Parent Prayer Group
- Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Officers
- Attend PTO Meetings
- School Advisory Council Members
- School Campus Clean Up Days
- After School Club Moderators

Other opportunities for service will be made available throughout the school year.

D. Parent Prayer Group

Prior to each school Mass, parents of school children meet 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!)

E. School Advisory Council

The School Advisory Council is an advisory board that assists the pastor and principal in promoting the mission of the school. Council members exhibit a clear understanding of and communicate the mutual educational responsibility of parents, teachers and administration recognizing parents as the primary educators of their children. The board assists the school in achieving its goals to provide quality Catholic education by transmitting and integrating Gospel teaching in an educational process which, within an excellent program of academics, directs students toward a conscious choice of living a responsible Catholic life. St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School Advisory Council has a written constitution defining membership, function, and authority.

The task of St. Mary Help of Christians School Advisory Council is to advise the pastor and principal on the educational programs and needs for St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic 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. Council members are appointed by the pastor; they may be members of St. Mary Help of Christians Church and/or parents of students. The faculty is represented at Council meetings also.

The School Advisory Council meets monthly in closed "Executive Session." Parents of students at St. Mary Help of Christians School may send to the Council, through the principal or pastor, a written request to

address the Council. If deemed appropriate for the Advisory Council (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 Council meeting. The School Advisory Council members are not apprised of personnel or student issues.

F. 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 quarterly 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 collected at the beginning of the year. Volunteers for the various PTO activities will also be solicited at the beginning of each school year.

G. Fundraising Events & Activities

Fundraising engages the students/school community in positive, creative, and active events that promote socialization and a sense of community. Fundraising activities are initiated from within the school community. Funds raised will primarily go to support the school. Student involvement in fundraising is voluntary but strongly encouraged.

All fundraising activities that take place on campus and or benefit St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School must receive pre-approval from the principal. Several school sponsored organizations hold additional fundraisers throughout the year to help supplement their budgets. In an effort to avoid overlap of events and requests for donations, any school class, organization or club must obtain prior approval to holding a fundraiser, on or off campus that benefits St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School in any way. A fundraiser, held on the St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School campus, to benefit an outside cause must also receive pre-approval. A form must be filled out and submitted to the administration for the activity or event before it is calendared or publicity created. Forms are available in the school office.

H. Safe Environment Training

Parents wishing to serve as volunteers must do the following:

- Participate in the Diocesan mandated Safe Environment Training called *Safe Haven – It's Up to You*. Failure to attend will preclude parents from volunteering at any event or activity in which they would have direct contact with students.
- Report to the school office upon entering and exiting the campus to sign in and out. Volunteers must pick up and wear a volunteer identification badge.
- Parents who volunteer on campus should never discuss student information (i.e. academic performance, behavior) with anyone besides the school staff. A confidentiality agreement is signed as part of the screening protocol.

As school volunteers, parents are acting as agents of the school. Behavior while performing volunteer duties should comply with school rules and policies and should uphold the dignity of the person.

I. School Security & Safety

The faculty and staff at St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School make every effort to provide for a safe environment. St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic 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.

The perimeter of the campus is secured by fences, gates, and locked doors, and monitored by security cameras. 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.

If the gate code is "compromised" and a non-driving age child uses or says he/she knows the code, the responsible family will pay a \$50.00 fine and all parents/care givers will be required to sign for a new gate code. Students in grades 4-8 will be issued a detention 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 successfully complete *Safe Haven—It's Up to You*. Go to <https://charleston.CMGconnect.org> to complete the new online safe environment course. Create a new account by completing all the boxes. Allocate about an hour and a half to complete the course. Upon completion, click the "Dashboard" tab to download and print your certificate or e-mail your certificate to office@stmaryschoolaiken.com. Several additional forms are also required in order to volunteer, coach, or chaperone. Contact Ms. Chelchowski at office@stmaryschoolaiken.com to request forms or to confirm that all required forms are already 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.

J. Emergency Preparedness

Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom. Fire drills are held 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.

K. Unexpected Closing of School

In case of inclement weather, hurricane or tornado warnings, St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School will notify all families of a school closure by email and/or text message. While our closing schedule will sometimes coincide with that of Aiken County Schools, we do not have the problem of running school buses in hazardous weather conditions, therefore St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School may be able to stay open longer or reopen sooner than the public schools. Please check your email regularly.

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School utilizes FACTS SIS 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 change. 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.

L. Asbestos

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School has an inspection and management plan regarding asbestos in the buildings. Our plan meets the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Periodic

required inspections are conducted and reports indicate that the friable asbestos has been removed or encapsulated. The management plan and inspection reports are available at the school office.

M. About this Handbook

This handbook contains the bulk of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School's policies and procedures. Students and parent(s)/ guardian(s) need to read and understand all that is contained herein. Following the letter and spirit of what is presented in this handbook is an integral part of the school's smooth and successful operation. The school understands that parents/guardians and students may question certain specifics of the handbook. Therefore, parents/guardians and students are encouraged to contact the principal if they have any questions about school policies or procedures. The principal will attempt either to explain the school policy or right the wrong the parent/guardian or student has challenged. However, continued major complaints, continued failure to abide by school policies or rules by either parents/guardians or students, or continued lack of cooperation with the principal and faculty may indicate serious philosophical disagreement between the school and the parent/guardian or student. In such a case, withdrawal of the student from the school may be necessary.

N. Right to Amend

St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic School retains the right to amend this handbook at any time.