

St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School



Parent & Student Handbook 2024-2025

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Dear Parents and Students,

Thank you for entrusting the education of your students to St. Mary of Carmel. It is a true honor and privilege to work together to build the Kingdom of Heaven by forming Saints and Scholars. As we aim for College and Heaven, we will hold your students to high academic and conduct standards. Together, we can ensure the highest possible learning for our students and I appreciate your help and support.

In order to best serve your students, we have outlined the following policies and procedures. These policies are to be accepted by parents and students as essential parts of the covenant between families and St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School. Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of policies. Violation of the spirit, intent or letter of philosophy and rules will be just cause for administrative action.

The enrollment of a student at St. Mary of Carmel is considered to be an agreement on the part of the student and his/her parents/guardians that they will comply with all the school procedures, rules and regulations as set forth in this handbook. The Principal retains the right to amend the handbook for just cause. The Principal reserves the right to waive and or deviate from any and all disciplinary regulations for just cause at his or her discretion. Parents will be given prompt notification if any changes are made.

The faculty and staff at St. Mary of Carmel look forward to working with you to build the Kingdom of Heaven through each one of your students. Together let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

God Bless,

Mr. Victor Argueta

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St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School

History

The Catholic Community of St. Mary of Carmel dates back to 1937 when a young missionary priest from Spain, Father Sebastian Valles, O.C.D., began working with West Dallas Catholics from a small building on Chihuahua Street that served as both church and classroom. When the congregation outgrew its cramped facilities, it acquired a “real” church building from Christ the King Parish.

Father Sebastian’s dream of opening a Catholic school was realized in 1944 when the current middle school and convent were built. The Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate graciously agreed to staff the new St. Mary of Carmel School and continued in the ministry of serving the community until Sister Margaret retired in 2015.

Several generations of children and their families, along with many dedicated priests, Sisters and lay teachers have passed through St. Mary of Carmel’s doors since 1944. Each person has added unique color and depth to the tapestry that is St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School, and each passing year adds a page to its rich history. The tradition of quality Catholic Education continues here, and passed from generation to generation.

St. Mary of Carmel’s Vision

Believing that the Catholic school is at the Heart of the Church and continuing in the traditions established in 1944 by Father Sebastian, the Carmelites and the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, St. Mary of Carmel instills spiritual development through Catholic doctrine, Catholic traditions and by proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. We provide intellectual growth through rigorous classroom activities that stimulate the mind, physical development through purposeful wellness and athletic programs, and social awareness through community service projects which advance our neighborhood, parish and diocesan communities. The primary goal of our school community is to build the Kingdom of Heaven by forming saints and scholars who are prepared for college preparatory high schools.

Mission Statement

St. Mary of Carmel’s mission is to serve our children by providing a quality Catholic education in a safe and nurturing environment.

Philosophy

At St. Mary of Carmel, our students mature as Catholic citizens of the world because we nurture the whole student and their family in a faith-filled environment, promoting their spiritual, emotional, intellectual, social, and physical growth.

Root Beliefs

At St. Mary of Carmel we believe that:

1. God is our all in all
2. We are many parts, but all one body
3. Christ is in everyone
4. We are always learning
5. We do small things with great love

Shared Purpose

At St. Mary of Carmel, we strive to build the Kingdom of Heaven by forming saints and scholars.

Core Values

1. Love
2. Learn
3. Forgive
4. Serve
5. Strive

Goals

- To integrate Catholic values into the daily lives of students.
- To provide a high-quality education by providing a variety of learning experience, maintaining high expectations, recognizing individual differences, and celebrating achievements.
- To create an environment that is safe, orderly, respectful and conducive to learning.
- To form a community of students, teachers, and parents who work together to provide a support network for students.
- To develop in each student the principles of moral consciousness and good citizenship
- To be good financial stewards and maximize resources

Accreditation

St. Mary of Carmel is accredited through the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishop's Education Department (TCCBED) with the approval of the Texas Education Agency.

Admissions

Admission Process

New families to St. Mary of Carmel School must submit an online application for admission through FACTS Family Portal. Prospective students who are applying for 3rd-8th grades will be required to take a placement test to determine academic skill levels and students in 5th-8th grade will be required to answer 3 application questions. A family interview is required with the parents, student and principal to consider previous school records such as test scores, report card grades, health records, conduct grades, etc. as well as to set expectations for the upcoming year. During this meeting, prospective 5th-8th grade students will be asked to answer specific interview questions for themselves. A final decision on admission and placement is made by the principal based upon parent/student interview, placement test results, space limitations, and the availability of an appropriate educational program. Once a student is accepted, they are sent through the enrollment process to formally register for the next school year.

New students to St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School will be accepted on a probationary basis. At the end of the first progress report, a meeting with the parents and teacher will be scheduled if needed to evaluate the child's progress. If, in the principal/teacher opinion, a student is academically deficient, disruptive or if the family has not met their financial responsibility to the school, the school reserves the right to take one of the following actions:

1. Place student on a grade level where he/she can progress successfully
2. Require any tutoring necessary to aid the student
3. Dismiss the student

Requirements

St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School admits first the children of the existing school families. If spaces are available the school accepts qualified children who meet the following admission requirements and who have completed the Admissions Process.

1. Age
 - a. For admission to PreKindergarten (3) the child must be three (3) by September 1st
 - b. Three year olds entering the program must be potty trained in order to attend
 - c. For admission to PreKindergarten (4) the child must be four (4) by September 1st
 - d. For Kindergarten, the child must be five (5) by September 1st
 - e. For First Grade, the child must be six (6) by September 1st
2. Records
 - a. Immunization Record and Certified Birth Certificate (not Hospital copy) are required for admission.
 - b. Records of Baptism, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation (if applicable) are required for admission.
 - c. All new students will be required to submit a basic medical history during the enrollment packet.
 - d. Parishioners from any Catholic Church in the Diocese must provide the office a letter from their parish stating they are a registered parishioner. The definition of registered is determined by the individual pastors.

Conditions of Admissions

A student is admitted to a school with the understanding that he/she will be retained in the school until he/she finishes the course, subject to school policies and procedures, unless the student is withdrawn or dismissed. No student shall be admitted to any Catholic school unless there is a reasonable hope that the student will complete that school's program. In doubtful cases students may be admitted on a probationary basis with dates and criteria of evaluation clearly established in writing.

In order for a student to be re-enrolled or enrolled in any Catholic school in the Diocese of Dallas, the student must be in financial good standing, that is, all tuition, fees, and any other outstanding financial obligations must be satisfied.

Referral Program

Any current family who refers a new family to SMC will be eligible to receive a \$500 tuition discount. The discount is applied in FACTS after the new family has been enrolled for one full semester.

Termination of Enrollment

A student's enrollment may be terminated in accordance with the policies set forth in this Handbook. If a school decides to terminate enrollment in light of parent behavior, a disciplinary situation or as a way to help a student avoid unnecessary hardship, the school has an obligation to inform other Diocesan schools.

Termination of enrollment as a result of financial issues, legal issues, moral turpitude, or other serious reasons can and will be shared with other diocesan schools, and may also be shared with non-diocesan schools if permitted by law.

Withdrawal Procedure

If a student is withdrawn from the school, the parent/guardian must come to the school office, notify school personnel, and fill out the necessary paperwork as soon as possible. A withdrawal form must be filled out and signed by the parent to initiate the withdrawal procedure. Student records will be mailed directly to the new school. The school office will release the student's official records only with a parent's written permission and upon the written request of the new school, and after the student returns all books and school property and makes any outstanding payments.

Non-Discrimination Statement

At St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School, no person is discriminated against because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability. All Catholic Schools within the Diocese admit students of any race to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities of the school and provide equal opportunity and access to persons without regard to race in administration of educational policies, admission policies, and any other school administered programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Attendance

Arrival

School hours are from 7:50 - 3:10pm each day. Carline drop-off maps and directions will be shared by administration at the beginning of each term. From 7:15-7:45, students will arrive and enter the cafeteria, where breakfast will be served until 7:40am. Students arriving between 7:45 and 7:50 are on time and will go directly to their classrooms upon arrival. Students arriving after 7:50 will be marked tardy. A parent/guardian must park and leave their vehicles to sign in student(s) with a staff member, using the iPad outside of the convent. .

Dismissal

PreK Students are dismissed at 3:00 each day, with their carline starting at 3:00 pm. Parents with ONLY PreK students may enter the first carline, to pick up their PreK students prior to the rest of the school. Kindergarten through 8th grade students and PreK students with older siblings will be dismissed at 3:10 with carline running from 3:10-3:40.

Cars must have a Carline Hang Tag in the car window when picking up students. One identification card will be provided to each family for the car, and one identification tag will be provided for each student's backpack. For safety issues, this identification card will be required all year. Replacement Carline Hang Tags are \$5.00 and Backpack Tags are \$2.00 and can be purchased in the office. **Students are not allowed to leave with another family/friend unless the office has been given approval from parent/guardian.** You may add Authorized Pickup persons through the FACTS Portal or you may call the front office so that they can add an Authorized Pickup person to your FACTS profile. In the event of an emergency, a legal guardian will need to provide verbal and written communication to the office and classroom teacher in order for the student to be released to a non-authorized individual.

No early dismissals will be permitted later than 2:50pm. All students must be picked up promptly at dismissal time, unless they are staying in After School Care. Students are not permitted to remain inside nor reenter the school buildings unless required and supervised by a teacher. Children who are not picked up by 3:45 will be signed into After School Care and charged.

No cars may be left unattended in pick-up lanes during dismissal time. For safety purposes, parents must stay in their vehicles during pick up time. If you wish to park and walk to get your child, we will not release your child to you until all cars have come through. Cell phones are strictly prohibited while parents are driving in carline. It is important for the safety of all of our students that parents are alert and attentive.

Faculty Members serve as safety patrols during dismissal time. They are responsible for the safety of all children and vehicles in carline and therefore cannot stop to have conferences. Parents and teachers cannot have extended meetings or conferences in the car line.

Children may not be picked up outside school property on the street at any time, nor are they permitted to wait in front of the church.

Absence

The student's parent or legal guardian must notify the school office by telephone by 9:00am every day the student is absent. You may notify the office by calling the school office at 214-748-2934 ext 100 or emailing the office manager at rita.deleon@smcschool.org . When calling, parents should make

arrangements to obtain the student's homework assignments. If requested, homework assignments will be available for pick-up after school (3:40pm). If the parent or legal guardian does not call the school office, the school office will contact the parents at the phone numbers provided on the student's emergency form. Upon a student's return to school, a note sent to the office by the parent should state the cause of the absence and/or tardiness. If a student is absent for more than three consecutive days, a doctor's note must be provided in order for the absence to be excused. See below for the excused absence policy.

Texas Attendance Law

The State of Texas provides by law for compulsory school attendance by all children from the age of six until their eighteenth birthday unless subject to a stated exemption. Each school will be in session according to the number of days required by Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department Standards. The responsibility for compliance with this law belongs to the parents, but the school is obliged to keep and maintain an accurate record of daily attendance for each student.

A student may not receive credit for a class or for the school year if **he/she is in attendance less than 90% of the number of school days in a semester**. The principal may promote a student due to extenuating circumstances for the absences. Written notification shall be sent to the parents/guardians of a student whose continued absence approaches the stated limit at the end of each quarter.

Excessive Absences

Throughout the year, attendance will be monitored to ensure that no student is missing excessively. Parents of any student missing more than 10% of school sessions (18 days) must meet with the Principal and may be required to request a waiver of the attendance requirements from the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. Students missing more than 18 days of school will be required to attend summer school or to repeat their grade level. Patterns of habitual absence will be investigated for violation of the Compulsory School Attendance Law.

Excused Absences

Student absences may be excused without penalty for the following reasons: medical appointments, personal illness, illness or death in the immediate family, or any other unusual case which requires written approval from the Principal.

Extended Absence

For extended absences due to illness, parents should notify the teacher or principal to make arrangements regarding assignments. A student absent for an extended period of time is responsible for all assignments and work missed during this absence. Failure to make up work, tests, assignments or projects will affect their academic grade. Students will be given one to two weeks to make up all work after an extended absence. Extreme cases involving chronic illness will be handled at the Principal's discretion. Student work may not be available to be given out early for family vacations or other trips. Students must make up the work when they return, following late work procedures. If students are able to get work early, it is expected back when they return. Family vacations are considered unexcused absences. If possible, accommodations will be made for family emergencies.

Unexcused Absence

An unexcused (preventable) absence is defined as absence from school without approval of the Principal. A student with more than eighteen unexcused absences will be required to attend an approved summer program in order to be promoted to the following grade.

Absence for Other Reasons

When parents wish to take their child out of school for several days for personal reasons, the principal should discuss the student's progress with the parents and advise them of the effect such an absence would have on the student's schoolwork. The final decision, however, is the responsibility of the parents. The school is not under obligation to provide tutoring, make-up work, or special testing schedules for this period of absence.

Tardies

A student is marked tardy if they are dropped off in carline after 7:50. For students who arrive at or after 7:51, a parent/guardian must sign in their student to the tardy iPad. The student will be given a tardy slip and then can report to their classroom. Students arriving after 10am will be marked as absent ½ a day. Students with more than 60 tardies in the year may be required to attend summer school.

Students who accumulate excessive tardies in a quarter will be asked to meet with the chief administrator and may be subject to a fine for their tardies. 10 tardies in a quarter will be charged a \$20 fine. Every additional 5 tardies within the same quarter will cost an additional \$20 fine per family. Tardies will be calculated and billed at the end of each quarter. Tardies will be billed in FACTS as an incidental charge and you will have the option to pay the office directly or to pay in FACTS.

Number of tardies	Total Fees Paid in Quarter
10-14	\$20/family
15-19	\$40/family
20-24	\$60/family
25-29	\$80/family
30+	\$100/family

Tardy for Classes

Students are responsible for being on time for each class. 6th-8th Grade students will have their attendance taken at the beginning of each class throughout the day. Unexcused tardies will be recorded on student Check Cards. Students with excessive unexcused tardies to class must meet with the teacher, Counselor or Principal to develop an action plan to remediate the issue.

Truancy

If a student is absent without an excuse or if the school has reason to suspect the validity of the excuse, the principal will investigate the situation and apply appropriate remedies. Any student who is absent from school without a valid excuse on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period is considered truant. A student considered truant may be subject to disciplinary action in accord with applicable provisions of this Handbook.

Pick Up During School Day

Once a student arrives on the school grounds for the school day, the student may leave for scheduled appointments only upon request of a parent. Parents must send a written note or email to the office stating the date and time of the appointment. No student may be released during the day to anyone other than the parent or guardian or another adult who has been authorized by the parent or guardian in writing. Students should attend classes before and after appointments. When picking up a student during the school day, parents come to the front office, request office personnel to call for the student, and sign the student out. Every effort should be made to arrange appointments to avoid loss of instruction time. The student will not be called from the classroom until a parent reports to the office. Upon return, the student and parent must report to the office to sign in and for the student to receive an admission slip. In an effort to keep carline running smoothly, students will not be released after 2:50 pm, unless it is an emergency. Emergency dismissals may be made at any time when a sickness, accident or emergency home conditions warrant it. When warranted, the student shall leave school under conditions requested by the parent or specified on an emergency card.

Perfect Attendance:

Students who are in attendance every day of the school year with no more than 10 tardies within the entire academic school year are eligible for the perfect attendance award at the end of the school year.

Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum

The core curriculum guides provided by the Diocese of Dallas serve as a basic guideline for proper sequence and scope of learning. The curriculum is available on the CSO website. <https://csodallas.org/guides/> Teachers are encouraged to be sensitive to individual differences and to design educational experiences to address such differences. The school may group students by ability level to facilitate the appropriate level of instruction. In addition, Blended Learning software will be used throughout the school to accelerate student learning by meeting individual student needs.

The daily schedule includes instruction in religion, language arts (reading, literature, writing, spelling, vocabulary, and handwriting), science, mathematics, and social studies / history. Physical education, art, instructional technology, and Spanish are included in the weekly schedule. Counseling lessons are offered once a week by the counselor using the *Kindness in the Classroom*

The development of a child is multifaceted: the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, physical and social dimensions all require care and nurturing for the formation of a healthy child. We recognize this process by utilizing developmentally appropriate teaching practices designed to address the age group served. In an attempt to provide for all the needs of our students, we use a variety of additional resources to supplement our curriculum.

Religion and Sacramental Program

The student body comes together to worship through the Eucharistic celebration each Wednesday morning with the parish community. Mass is celebrated together as a community at 8:30 am each Wednesday, and on most Holy Days of Obligation. Students are involved through various roles of ministry: lector, reader, choir, altar servers and gift bearers. Students participate in other liturgical and para-liturgical celebrations within their classroom and as a part of the student body. These include, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Advent and Lenten services, Stations of the Cross, and the Rosary devotion to Mary and the Saints. St. Mary of Carmel students prepare for the sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Confirmation.

Guidance Program/School Counselor

Each grade level participates in a weekly instructional guidance program. Pre-K through 8th grade use the *Kindness in the Classroom* program. A school counselor is available to oversee the guidance program and to provide personal, social, and educational guidance to students. The school counselor provides individual guidance, group guidance, parent education instruction, and a professional referral list.

Kindness in the Classroom is based on the Kindness Framework developed by Random Acts of Kindness Foundation.

Kindness in the Classroom lessons teach kindness skills through a step-by step framework of Share, Inspire, Empower, Act, and Reflect. Each lesson starts with the 'share' step to reinforce learning from previous lessons. The 'act' piece is woven into the lessons but really takes place in the projects.

STEP 1: SHARE

Each of the lessons starts with a 'share' where the class can share what they've learned and experienced with others since the previous lesson. This reinforces what they've learned and experienced, helps others to experience it and makes it far more likely that they'll express kindness again!

STEP 2: INSPIRE

Through various modalities, each kindness lesson is designed to inspire students and allow counselors to feel inspired as well!

STEP 3: EMPOWER

Inspiration is good—but transformation begins to happen when students are given the tools that will let them act on that inspiration. The 'empower' step is for counselors to lead the class through discussions designed to empower students to find ways to be kind in their daily lives.

STEP 4: ACT

The opportunity to act exists throughout the lessons, but it really comes into play in the projects. Once students have the ideas and the tools, they put it all into action. The unit projects will have students bringing real, tangible kindness into the world.

STEP 5: REFLECT

At the end of each lesson and project, students will have experienced how great it feels to perform acts of kindness. And what does everyone want to do after doing something that feels great (besides 'do it again')? Talk about it, of course! At the end of each lesson, counselors guide students to reflect on what they've just experienced and learned & identify how doing kindness affects their own lives and the lives of those around them

Textbooks

All textbooks are the property of St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School unless otherwise purchased. Hardcover books must be covered and remain covered all year for third through eighth grade students. **A student is responsible for the replacement cost of any textbook that is damaged, destroyed or lost.** Similarly, any damage of electronic equipment will be the financial responsibility of the student and parents.

Learning Disabilities and Neurodivergent Students

Early identification together with positive support by parents and the educational system are necessary for the academic success and healthy self-image of a child displaying learning disabilities and/or neurodivergence. St. Mary of Carmel strives to initiate early recognition of students displaying learning disabilities and/or neurodivergence. To this end, evaluation for academic, social, and emotional development is ongoing.

Preliminary screening for learning disabilities or neurodivergence may be provided by the school. The school will call a meeting to inform you of observations made and will recommend next steps for your student. Recommendations may include an evaluation by a student's pediatrician or an evaluation by a qualified diagnostician. All assessments must be made and documented by a professional diagnostician in order to provide students with appropriate academic accommodations. Documentation must be

submitted to the school counselor. Re-evaluation should be administered every three to five years. The cost of assessment, counseling, and outside support is the responsibility of parents.

St. Mary of Carmel is able to serve students who have mild to moderate learning disabilities and/or are neurodivergent. The decision as to whether St. Mary of Carmel is the most suitable educational environment for a child will be made on an individual basis. If it has been determined that St. Mary of Carmel cannot meet the educational needs of the student, parents will be assisted to find a more appropriate educational setting.

Physical Education

Physical education is an integral part of the education process. All students participate in the physical education program. Students who are unable to participate in physical activities must bring a note from a physician or a parent stating the reason and duration of the student's inability to participate.

Field Trips

Field trips are a privilege meant to complement the instructional program by utilizing educational resources of the community. The homeroom teacher will plan the field trips, with the principal's approval. The homeroom teacher will communicate details of the field trip, including date and time to obtain parental permission. St. Mary of Carmel contracts with local high schools to use their buses and drivers for all field trips. Any field trip fees are the responsibility of the parent and will be communicated by the teacher up front. Students who fail to submit the required permission slip will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. All field trips are chaperoned and reasonable safety measures are taken.

For safety reasons, all chaperones must be screened and be in compliance with the Safe Environment Policy as required by the Catholic Diocese of Dallas Catholic Schools Office. Only parents who have been approved to attend field trips by the office and the teacher are allowed to supervise a group of students. Parents should be Safe Environment cleared at least two weeks prior to the field trip they are attending. Parents are NOT allowed to meet up with the class separately. If a parent does show up at the field trip's location, the child is still under the teacher's supervision and that parent is not allowed to assume any supervision roles. A ratio of 8:1 is ideal for supervision but may vary with the circumstances.

Students in the fifth grade typically visit The Pines Catholic Camp for four days of environmental study. Students in the eighth grade typically visit The Pines for a three-day spiritual retreat called Awakening. As these trips are essentially extended field trips, the provisions regarding field trips apply. Fifth and Eighth grade homerooms are expected to fundraise the entire cost of these Pines Trips and will be charged prior to the trip for any remaining balance that has not been fundraised.

Students and chaperones on field trips represent St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School. Behavior must meet or exceed the conduct expectations on campus and the same consequences for infractions will apply. Chaperones must acquaint themselves with the parent volunteer expectations and are expected to act accordingly. Field trips are a privilege, not a right. Students may be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements. School employees may not transport students to functions in their personal vehicles.

Christian Service Program

In order to more fully form our students in the tenants of our Church, each student in 5th-8th grade will be required to complete community service hours throughout the school year. Each student will be responsible for logging their own service hours and turning the log of hours into their homeroom teacher by March 20th. Students who have not completed their hours by March 20th will be required to complete them during the school day (during specials and recess) during the remainder of the year. Parents are

allowed to sign off for the hours of service completed by their student for activities completed in the home such as writing cards or putting together care packages.

The number of required hours are:

5th Grade: 5 hours

6th Grade: 10 hours

7th Grade: 15 hours

8th Grade: 20 hours

Library

The St. Mary of Carmel Library is open each school day from 8 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Teachers will plan regular visits to the library with their classes or students may request to go on an individual visit to the library to check out books. Parent and outside volunteers will be on campus to support librarian duties.

Most books may be checked out for a period of one week. First grade and second grade may have two books checked out. Students in 3rd grade-8th grade may have three items checked out (including periodicals) at a time. Renewal and check out of items can be done by teachers and staff members at the circulation desk in the Library. Overdue books cannot be renewed. Special items such as reference books may be checked out for one day only.

Students are responsible for the care and proper return of items to the school library. Students will be responsible for the replacement cost of lost or damaged books. If a book is lost or damaged, the library must be notified immediately. A search will be conducted for the lost book. If the book is not found by the end of the school year, students will be notified of the cost for the book. In the case of damage, the cost for repairs will be assessed. If damage is too severe, the book will be removed and the student will have to pay for the replacement.

Academic Evaluation and Assessment

Homework

Homework assignments extend and reinforce classroom instruction and provide the opportunity for independent study. The amount of homework depends on the grade level and subject. It is the parent's responsibility to provide an environment conducive to study and adequate time in their child's after school schedule to complete assignments.

Beginning in third grade, students enter all assignments in an assignment book. Student assignment books are an important communication between home and school and are a teaching tool for student planning. Students record their homework assignments, missing homework assignments, important dates, and long-term assignments into their planners.

All assignments are to be completed neatly and on time. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will communicate the grade specific homework policies to students, and parents at Curriculum Night.

When a student is absent, the homeroom teacher may collect his or her assignments for the day. The office may retrieve materials from all middle school teachers to make a packet. Parents may request homework to be picked up after school by calling the school office, however this is not guaranteed. Students must be responsible for obtaining their missed work in the event of an absence. Students who must leave during the school day for a doctor/dentist appointment are responsible for getting the assignments from the classes missed. Teachers may not be interrupted during school hours to give out assignments. Students will have one week from the day that they return to make up all missing work. It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed assignments when he or she is absent. Missing work will be recorded as a zero. Homework turned in late may only receive partial credit.

Unexpected situations, family emergencies, or student illness can interfere with after school studies. In this case, the parent must send a note or email explaining the circumstances. Teachers, at their discretion, may allow a reasonable time frame in which to complete this work. Extracurricular and planned activities do not excuse assigned work without prior consent of the teacher.

The amount of time which different students in the same grade spend doing homework will vary. The following table provides guidelines for the amount of time the typical elementary student may spend daily on homework.

Grades 1-2: 30 minutes
Grades 3-4: 30-45 minutes
Grades 5- 6: 45-60 minutes
Grades 7- 8: 60-90 minute

End of Semester Tests – Grades 6-8

At the end of both the fall and spring semesters, students in grades 6-8 are required to take end of semester tests in core content areas. These are administered to help students recall curriculum and skills taught as well as to prepare students for taking exams on the high school level.

Grading Scale

The Grading Scale used at St. Mary of Carmel is:

Grades 1-8:	Conduct
A: 94-100	E- excellent
B: 85-93	G- good
C: 76-84	S- satisfactory
D: 70-75	N- needs improvement
F: 69 and below	U- unsatisfactory

St. Mary of Carmel uses a weighted grading rubric to determine final grades. Each category of work is a different weight of the total grade. No single assignment will ever be more than 15% of a child's total grade.

Tests/Projects: 40%

Quizzes: 20%

Classwork/Participation: 30%

Homework: 10%

Report Cards/ Progress Reports

Report cards are sent home four times a year (approximately every nine weeks) with the exception of Prekindergarten students who receive Report cards twice a year. PreK teachers will still provide assessment data at the end of the first quarter. Parents are required to pick up the first quarter report card directly from the teacher during mandatory Parent-Teacher conferences in October. The rest of the report cards and progress reports are sent home with students. Progress reports will be sent home in the middle of the nine week period. All report cards and progress reports should be signed by parents and returned to the homeroom teacher. Report cards are signed on the envelope. Progress reports and tests may be signed by the parents directly on the document. To ensure the success of all of our students, parents are encouraged to openly and frequently communicate with teachers so that they are constantly aware of their child's performance. St. Mary of Carmel communicates student grades through RenWeb, and parents may check their child's grades at any time for 1st-8th grade.

Parent Teacher Students Conferences and Parent Teacher Communication

General parent-teacher student conferences are held twice a year in October and in March. Only the conferences in October are required for all parents/students. The March conference can be scheduled by the teacher or parent on a as needed basis. If you need to see a teacher at other times, please make an appointment with a minimum of 24 hour notice through the office or directly with the teacher. Teachers will strive to return emails or notes within 48 hours (business days). Please remember that teachers are not free to stop and have a conference during class time, prior to class in the morning or during car line.

Honor Roll

The following criteria will be used to determine Honor Roll, Grades 5-8:

“A” Honor Roll

All “A’s”

“B” Honor Roll

All “A’s” and “B’s”

Standardized Testing

Students in grades 1-8 take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) annually, in October. These test results are shared with parents and analyzed by faculty and administration to inform academic growth plans for classes and trends in student learning and ability. Students in grades K-8 complete Star Enterprise Reading and Math screenings to inform teachers of instructional goals and to measure student growth. Students take these assessments quarterly throughout the year. STAR Parent Reports, which outline student achievement, are also sent home quarterly.

Tutoring

Tutoring may be available after school from 3:10-3:40 for grades 1-8. Students will be invited to attend tutoring by their teacher with at least 24 hours notice. Students may not decide on their own just to drop into tutoring. **If pre arrangements with your child’s teacher have not been made, students will not be attending tutoring.** If you would like your child to stay for tutoring, please schedule an appointment with his or her teacher. Students attending tutoring will stay with their teacher for the entire tutoring period, and then will report to the cafeteria if their ride is not at school to pick them up. Students who are not picked up by 3:45 will be signed in to After School Care and will be charged the daily rate of \$5/day.

Students who are removed from tutoring due to behavior issues will be sent to After School Care. Parents will be responsible for the fee that day. Students will not be allowed to return to tutoring until a meeting is held with the student, parents, and teacher.

Title One Services

This program, financially supported by the federal government, gives added assistance to students in grade K-7 who need additional support in the areas of reading and math. Students must qualify for the program based on individual test scores and the child’s zip code.

Academic Probation

At the end of each quarter, administration evaluates the academic progress of each student. If at this time a student in grades 5-8 is failing or in danger of failing a class or classes, the parents are notified by email and the teacher(s), student and parents meet to determine an action plan to assist that student with his or her progress in the class. The student has the next four weeks to demonstrate progress. If by the next administrative review the student has not progressed in this subject, he or she may then be placed on academic probation.

Academic probation is a specific time period designated by the administration during which a student, who is failing or in danger of failing, has an opportunity to work with parents, teachers, and other professionals to correct the problem(s) causing probation. At the end of the probation period the student’s grades will be reviewed. If there is no improvement, further action may be taken; academic probation may

be extended and/or the family may be asked to seek professional help. Repeated or prolonged academic probation places the student's continued enrollment and/or re-enrollment in jeopardy.

Promotion/Retention

In the case of students performing below grade level or making failing grades, special conferences with parents will be held to determine the cause of poor performance. A plan will be formulated and monitored to help the student. St. Mary of Carmel does not modify instruction or student expectations so as to alter promotion or graduation requirements. A student who earns a failing grade for the year is required to attend an approved summer school program or documented private tutoring to remediate the failing grade.

A failing average in two or more major subjects is cause for retention. Continued poor class performance in math and reading and below grade level performance on standardized tests are reasons for retention. Parents will be notified in advance if there is a possibility of retention. The student's progress and ability to succeed within such an environment will be monitored and evaluated.

Parental Access to Student Records

Parents will be allowed to inspect and review their student's education records, at a date and time convenient to the school, unless a court has ordered otherwise. Records will always be reviewed in the presence of school personnel appointed by the chief administrator. The school may provide copies of the records and, if it does so, may charge a fee.

In the event a court order is in place which limits a parent's access to a student's educational records, or which otherwise limits the contact a parent may have with the school regarding the student, the family must provide a complete, final, signed copy of the order to the school when the student is enrolled. If such a court order is issued after a student has enrolled, the family must provide a complete, final, signed copy of the order to the school as soon as it is signed by the judge.

The school will, when and to the extent reasonably possible, honor restrictions on access to educational records imposed by such an order. However, school personnel are not family lawyers and it is not the school's responsibility to enforce court orders. (See #4 in Appendix 1 titled: "Reimbursement for School Costs and Attorney's Fees" for additional information regarding school involvement in family custody disputes.)

Schools will generally not release a student's records to third parties without the written consent of a student's parent or legally responsible adult. As an exception to this rule, a school may disclose student records to or for:

- a) School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- b) Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- c) Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- d) Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- e) Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- f) Accrediting organizations;
- g) To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- h) Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- i) State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

If a specific reason exists to further limit access to a student's educational records, the student's parent or legally responsible adult must provide a specific, written request that explains the basis for the additional restriction to the school's chief administrator. The chief administrator, in his or her sole

discretion, will determine whether implementing special procedures for a student's records is appropriate and reasonably feasible on a case-by-case basis.

Learning Environment

Each student's conduct contributes to creating an environment conducive for moral, spiritual, social, and intellectual growth. Students are encouraged and expected to show respect, friendliness and courtesy at all times. They respect personal and public property and cooperate with faculty, staff and legitimate authority. They develop good study habits by consistent effort and daily completion of work. Our goal at St. Mary of Carmel is to use restorative justice to incorporate healing and relationship building into our daily behavior. We infuse our beliefs into daily behavior discussions.

St. Mary of Carmel has adopted Virtue Based Restorative Discipline in order to clearly outline our expectations for students. Faculty and staff members model and reinforce appropriate, Christian behavior within the classroom, on the campus, and at school related activities. Behavioral procedures are posted in each classroom and are discussed with the students as the year begins and throughout the school year. Faculty members present the classroom behavior plan to parents at Curriculum Night during the first weeks of school. St. Mary of Carmel reserves the right to discipline a student for actions committed off-campus if they have an adverse effect on a member of the St. Mary of Carmel community or adversely affect the safety and well-being of a member of the St. Mary of Carmel Community.

VBRD

The Virtue-Based Restorative Discipline (VBRD) program is a holy habit program that we have adopted, not only as our anti-bullying program, but as a new way to approach each day here at St. Mary of Carmel School.

VBRD is a discipline belief which follows four guiding principles:

1. We will commit to living virtue.
2. We will support others in living virtue.
3. We will commit to constructive thoughts, words, and deeds.
4. When we face conflict, we will further cultivate virtue as part of the solution.

The two primary outcomes of VBRD are:

1. Increased faith practices
 - a. Virtue education
 - b. Prayer
 - c. Activities at home and at school
2. Decreased antisocial behaviors
 - a. Quality relationships are highest priority
 - b. High accountability and high responsibility for repairing harm

Virtues are defined as holy habits that imitate God.

Parents are a critical part of the restoration of peace and unity at a school by what they model at home. Children first learn about conflict before they come to school by watching adults around them. Our school determines which virtues to emphasize, while continuing to build our vocabulary and understanding of all virtues taught. Jesus teaches us to love one another. Out of love, we work to make things as right as possible when there is harmful or bullying behavior.

Restorative discipline makes our discipline policy stronger so children have a way to return to goodness when they fail. The goal is to restore the God-given dignity to all who have been affected by the hurtful behavior so children learn from their mistakes rather than from their punishment. Teachers will be using a variety of techniques learned at a VBRD training to guide students in their process of becoming more virtuous individuals.

Checklist for Repairing Harm:

1. Pray together for God's help in fixing the problem.
2. What virtue do we want to use in this situation?
3. Can we commit to being positive in fixing this?
4. Who was harmed?
5. What needs to happen to make things right?
6. All agree to a solution.
7. Prayer to close
8. Follow up with students later

Rules of Conduct

Respect: Students will have respect for law, authority, rights of others, and public and private property. Students will speak and act with respect to all around them. Disrespect to teachers and staff will not be tolerated. Such behavior is subject to suspension.

Behavior: Great stress is placed on good classroom behavior. Students are at St. Mary of Carmel to learn and should thus be attentive, active participants in their classes. No student has the right to interfere in the learning process of another student.

Bodily Contact: There is a "hands-off" policy between students; hence no frontal hugging or horseplay are acceptable at school. Public Displays of Affection are not acceptable between students.

Fighting: Students involved in fighting may incur a suspension or expulsion. After repeated violations, the student will be permanently removed from the school.

Dangerous Objects/Controlled Substances: Students are never allowed to have dangerous objects in their possession, including weapons or knives. Controlled substances are also prohibited. Students may not possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, or any controlled substance while on school premises or at any parish/school sponsored activity. A controlled substance is defined as (1) any drug listed in the current Federal Controlled Substance Act; (2) alcohol or any alcoholic beverage; (3) unauthorized glue, aerosol paint, or other chemical substance for inhalation; (4) any other intoxicant or mood-altering or behavior altering drug; (5) drug paraphernalia. Possession of such objects may result in expulsion. Diocesan policy entitles administrators to search school lockers and personal possessions. If drug use is suspected, parents will be notified and students will be required to submit to a drug test.

School Property: Students who intentionally or accidentally destroy or damage school property shall be required to compensate the school for such damage and perform community service as decided by the principal and/or be subject to suspension.

Classroom Rules

Teachers will explain individual classroom disciplinary procedures and post classroom rules and expectations. Rules are explained to all students at the beginning of the school year..

Gum Chewing and Candy

Gum chewing is **prohibited** in school and on the school grounds. This includes in the cafeteria and gym. Students with chewing gum will receive a mark on their Check Card. Food, candy, and non-water beverages are not allowed during class unless otherwise directed by the teacher.

Lockers and Cubbies

Lockers and cubbies are school property and will be maintained by school authorities to protect the safety of all. A student assigned a locker has exclusive use but not proprietary rights versus the school. School personnel have the right to inspect student lockers, and reserve the right to search any locker on suspicion of a threat to the health, welfare and safety of the school. It is necessary that a search be reasonable and related to the school official's duties.

Electronics Policy

Students are not allowed to have their cell phones, tablets or smart watches on their person during school hours, from 7:15am- 3:40 pm, Monday through Friday. Cell Phones, smart watches and headphones are allowed to be kept in a backpack in the classroom if a family determines it is necessary, but the school is not liable for any loss or damages to phones. Similarly, if a phone, tablet or smart watch makes noise in a backpack, teachers will confiscate the device. If anytime during the day a student has their device or headphones on them (out in their hands, on their desk, in a pocket, or making noise) the device will be confiscated **whether or not it is being used at the time**. The recovery fee is \$25 per offense and will be charged whether or not the student wishes to recover the device. In addition to this fee and appropriate disciplinary measures, a parent or legal guardian will be required to accompany their student to retrieve the device from the office

During After School Care or any other extracurricular activity (clubs, sports, etc.) students may only use their phone, with the permission of the adult in charge, to check on the status of their ride, but not for any other purpose. Students in After School Care can, with the permission of the adult in charge, use their tablet or laptop to complete assignments. If students are using their technology for any other purpose their device will be confiscated following the above guidelines.

Bullying/ Harassment Policy

St. Mary of Carmel, along with the Diocese of Dallas believe that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment free of all forms of intimidation or harassment. As a matter of both diocesan school policy and religious obligation, bullying, harassment, and/or other threatening behavior by a student will not be accepted or tolerated in a Catholic school. Students engaging in such behavior, seriously or in jest, in person or online, may be liable to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

The principal and/or other designated administrator(s) will investigate all complaints of bullying, harassment or any other types of threatening behavior, whether verbal, written, or online according to the

guidelines listed in this policy. All allegations of bullying, harassment, and/or other threatening behavior shall be taken seriously and investigated in a timely manner.

Bullying

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written, verbal expression, or physical conduct that:

- a) Will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or damage to the student's property, or
- b) Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Examples: Bullying of a student may include, but is not limited to, hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, ostracism, and cyber bullying.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to, offensive derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation, threatening or intimidating conduct, offensive jokes, name calling, slurs or rumors, physical aggression or assault, display of graffiti, printed material, or computer generated online material promoting racial, ethnic or other negative stereotypes, or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property

Sexual harassment of a student may include, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can be directed toward a student under a variety of conditions.

- a) Verbal Harassment: Sexually demeaning comments, sexual statements, questions, slurs, jokes, anecdotes, or epithets.
- b) Written/Electronic Harassment: Suggestive or obscene letters, emails, blogs, posts, text messages, tweets, notes, or invitations. Includes computer-generated posts online.
- c) Physical Harassment: Unkind, immoral and/or unlawful physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimating interference with normal study or movement.
- d) Visual/Electronic Harassment: Leering, gesture, display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, posting pictures, cartoons, posters, or any other type of electronic messaging.

Any student who believes he or she has been the subject of harassment or bullying, or any parent of such a student, shall report the alleged incident to a teacher, Principal, Vice Principal, and/or Counselor. The administration and appropriate faculty will investigate the incident/s and determine an action plan, which will be communicated with the students and parents of those students involved. Verbal and written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (seriously, or in jest, in person or online) are subject to consequences which may include, but are not limited to, suspension or expulsion.

Consequences and Restoration

In line with the Virtue Based Restorative Discipline model, SMC student behavior that results in harm to oneself, one's classmates, or one's teacher(s) warrants consequences served and reparations made. Assigned consequences will be related to the infraction that occurred and will aim to help students to grow in virtue.

Infractions are categorized into three levels, which are outlined briefly below. Consequences for lower level behaviors may include lunch or recess detention, adjustments to classroom routines or seating, suspension from specials classes, etc. Higher level infractions may result in after school detentions, suspension, or expulsion (see more information below). The goal of each of these consequences, regardless of the severity of the situation, is to encourage the student to reflect on his or her choices, make a plan for the future, and grow in virtue and in relationship with others.

- *Level 1 Infractions* are those that have caused low-level harm to a student's relationship(s) with his or her self, peers, faculty, or staff, by way of not upholding our St. Mary of Carmel Mission and Core Beliefs.
- *Level 2 infractions* are those that have caused mid-level harm to a student's relationship(s) with his or her self, peers, faculty, or staff, by way of not upholding our St. Mary of Carmel Mission and Core Beliefs. Repeated Level 1 behaviors will be escalated to Level 2.
- *Level 3 infractions* are those that have caused serious harm to a student's relationship(s) with his or her self, peers, faculty, or staff, by way of not upholding our St. Mary of Carmel Mission and Core Beliefs. Repeated Level 2 behaviors may be escalated to Level 3.

Detention

Lunch detentions are served during lunch/recess in a location determined by the teacher. After school detentions are served from 3:40-4:40 on Tuesday afternoon on the assigned date in the 8th grade classroom. A \$10 fee will be assessed for all students receiving an after school detention. In the event of a higher level behavioral infraction, parents will be notified via a written document that must be signed and returned.

Behavior intervention and Probation

At the discretion of the school administration, a student may be placed on a Behavior intervention plan and possible probation for conduct that merits additional disciplinary support. Such conduct may take place on campus or off campus and may include, but is not limited to, relatively serious violations of school rules and continued misconduct after a warning. A student has absolutely no right to probation before more serious disciplinary action is taken, up to and including separation from the school. When a student is placed on probation, the following procedure will be implemented:

1. A formal probation must be approved by the chief administrator or designee.
2. A conference with parents, the student, and school administrators shall be held to discuss behavioral interventions and supports.
3. When a student has been placed on probation, the parents or guardians shall be informed in writing of the reason for the probation, the length of the probationary period, and the conditions under which the probation will be lifted.
4. A written record of student probation shall be kept for reference should more serious action become necessary at a later time. Effort should be made to assist the student through constructive counseling in order to forestall further sanctions

Suspension

At the sole discretion of the chief administrator, a student may be placed on suspension for conduct

that, in the chief administrator's judgment, merits suspension. Such conduct may take place on campus or off campus and may include, but is not limited to, serious violations of school rules, continued serious misconduct, or as a result of a Level 3 infraction. A student has absolutely no right to suspension before more severe disciplinary action is taken, up to and including separation from the school.

Official suspension may include any of the below-listed sanction examples. However, this list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

- a) The student may attend class but lose the right to participate in any school activity on or off campus.
- b) The student may be suspended from a particular class and required to report to a specific place on campus during that time.
- c) The student may be sent home for the entire period of suspension provided that the student is assigned academic work to make up the loss of class time.

Procedures for Suspension

Except when the school's chief administrator determines that immediate suspension is necessary, the steps listed below should be followed and, when practical, to minimize the opportunity for misunderstanding, the school should document each step below in written communication to the student's parents. Use of the procedure below, however, is within the sole discretion of the chief administrator, and no student has any right to the use of any or all of the procedures below in a particular case.

- a) After a complete account of the incident has been completed, and a fair opportunity to present all sides of the story have been given, the student will be given a notice of their assigned consequence.
- b) In line with VBRD, a student will first complete a reflection form to help the student reflect on his or her choices, the harm they've caused, and steps they will take to repair the harm, in addition to the consequence of suspension.
- c) A parent/guardian will generally be advised of a suspension by telephone and by a written notice from an administrator.
- d) A written form of suspension should be signed by a parent/guardian and the student. On this form, the exact length of the suspension period should be specified and the reason for the suspension clearly noted, as well as the plan the student has to repair the harm they caused.

Expulsion

Orderly school administration is essential to fulfilling the core mission of Catholic schools. Even a single failure by a member of the school community to uphold the standards of behavior to which all community members agree when a student is enrolled can cause irreparable harm. Thus, while in many cases expulsion is reserved for very serious or persistent misconduct, a school may properly determine that a single instance of on- or off-campus misconduct requires separation of a student from the school community. Misconduct committed by a member of the school community other than a student (including parents or other family members) can also significantly hinder a school's ability to perform its essential task of educating students. As a result, misconduct committed by a person connected to the school through a student (including parents or other family members) may result in the expulsion of the student from the school when, in his or her sole discretion, the chief administrator determines that such action is appropriate.

Provided that any applicable school and diocesan policies have been substantially followed, the decision to expel a student rests in the sole discretion of the chief administrator of a school and will be reviewed only as set forth in section 5177.5.

Procedure for Expulsion

Circumstances giving rise to expulsion can arise and unfold quickly. The chief administrator's primary duty in such situations is to protect the school community. No student or family has any right to the application of a particular procedure before or in connection with the expulsion of a student.

Nevertheless, the following process can serve as a general guideline when, in the chief administrator's discretion, circumstances warrant:

- a) When practical, the pastor of a parochial elementary school and the chief administrator of a diocesan school should be apprised of the circumstances of a potential expulsion before the decision to expel is implemented;
- b) When circumstances permit, before the decision to expel is implemented, the student's parents should be advised of the potential for expulsion and a summary of the grounds for expulsion.
- c) The student and his or her parents should be invited to a conference with the school's chief administrator. In parish schools, the local pastor should be advised of the scheduled conference. In diocesan schools, the chief administrator should be advised of the scheduled conference. At the chief administrator's discretion, this conference may be held before or after the decision to expel is implemented.
- d) The final decision to expel a student rests with the school's chief administrator and will not be reviewed except to ensure compliance with any applicable pre-expulsion procedures. In parochial elementary schools, the pastor should be consulted. In diocesan schools, the chief administrator should be consulted.

General Grounds for Expulsion

Any instance or course of misconduct may, at the sole discretion of the school's chief administrator, be sufficient grounds for expulsion. In many cases, it is appropriate to attempt to correct the problem behavior through a behavior intervention plan. In other cases, however, the school's chief administrator may determine that expulsion is the appropriate sanction for misconduct that has not previously resulted in a behavior intervention plan, probation, suspension, or other discipline.

Examples of such severe misconduct include but are not limited to:

- a) Actions gravely detrimental to the moral and spiritual welfare of other students;
- b) Incurable or disruptive behavior which impedes the progress of the rest of the class;
- c) Assault, battery, or any threat of force or violence—whether intended in jest or not—directed toward any school personnel, students, member of the school community, or other person on school property or during school-related activities;
- d) Habitual or persistent violation of school regulations;
- e) Possessing, selling, giving away, using, or being under the influence of alcohol and drugs and/or hazardous substances on campus, at school functions, or at a time and place that directly involves the school or the welfare of members of the school community;
- f) The on-campus use, sale, distribution, or possession of a substance intended or commonly used to mimic a narcotic, controlled substance, or alcoholic beverage;
- g) Use or possession of firearms or other potentially harmful objects or weapons;
- h) Gang-related conduct or activity including but not limited to, symbols, graffiti, apparel, colors, hazing/initiations, and hand signals commonly associated with gangs;
- i) Theft, extortion, arson;
- j) Habitual truancy; (See Policy 5123)
- k) Malicious damage or destruction of real or personal property at school;
- l) Hazing;
- m) Serious bullying and/or harassment;
- n) Conduct which may damage the reputation of the school or parish;
- o) Transmission of nude or otherwise inappropriate images of any student or person who appears to be a minor child; and

- p) Use of social media in such a manner as constitutes bullying or online harassment or which causes another student or member of the school community to fear for the safety of any member of the school community.

Additionally, off-campus misconduct may result in expulsion, especially when it is related in some way to the school community because it is directed towards a member of the school community, directly or indirectly involves multiple members of the school community, or may negatively impact the school's reputation in the community.

Grounds for Expulsion Related to Alcohol and Drug Abuse

The promotion and the safeguarding of student health (physically, mentally, and emotionally) are a concern to our schools. The use, misuse, and/or abuse of alcohol, drugs, and hazardous substances cause grave problems in the areas of student health and student stability. Many incidents of scholastic failure, school dropout, violence, tension, and suicide can be traced to alcohol and drug abuse.

Therefore, the following general school policy is set forth:

- a) Possessing, selling, giving away, using, or being under the influence of alcohol and drugs and/or hazardous substances on campus, at school functions, or at a time and place that directly involves the school or the welfare of members of the school community constitute grounds for expulsion.
- b) Notwithstanding section 5177.3(a) above, when the school's chief administrator, in consultation with appropriate school or other personnel, believes it is appropriate, students who are involved in the use or abuse of alcohol or controlled substances should be provided with information regarding available substance abuse counseling and treatment resources. Additionally, the chief administrator or appropriate school personnel should, when practical, notify a student's parents or other guardian or conservator when use or abuse of alcohol and/or other controlled substances is reasonably suspected. The school should, when possible, refer the student and his/her parents, guardian, or conservator to resources known to the school for medical and/or psychiatric care, mental health and substance abuse counseling, and/or substance abuse recovery programs.

Procedure for Appeal and Review of Expulsion

Parish school expulsions may only be appealed to the Pastor, whose decision on the matter shall be final and unappealable. The Pastor may define the appeals process as he wishes, and he does not have an affirmative responsibility to meet with the family or student in said process. Diocesan school and private school expulsions are governed by the school's respective policies and procedures. In general, the chief administrator's decision shall be final and binding without the right of further appeal.

Tuition and Fees

Prepaid tuition and fees are not refunded if a student is expelled. If a student is expelled before tuition or fees would ordinarily come due, the family of an expelled student shall be excused from further payment.

Weapons

St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School forbids students from bringing to school or school-related activity any weapon or ammunition, any other object used in a way which threatens physical harm to another person, or any object perceived as a weapon. The possession or use of articles not generally considered weapons may be prohibited when a reasonable degree of danger exists to students, staff or school property. Any violation of this policy by a student will result in an automatic suspension with the possibility of expulsion. The police may be called.

Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Inappropriate Substances

St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School forbids the possession, consumption or dissemination of alcohol, tobacco and other inappropriate substances on the school campus or at any school-related or school sponsored function by any individual. Any violation of this policy by a student will result in an automatic suspension with the possibility of expulsion. The police may be called.

For the purpose of this policy, alcohol shall mean any beverage containing alcohol that is restricted for consumption by minors in the State of Texas. Tobacco shall mean any tobacco product including cigars, cigarettes, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, etc. Inappropriate substances shall mean any illegal drugs, controlled substances, or “over the counter” drugs which affect physiology and are used for non-medical purposes.

Parent Grievance Policy

The Diocese generally supports a collaborative approach to resolving parental concerns or complaints regarding school employees. Accordingly, such concerns or complaints should generally be addressed to the affected employee first to allow an opportunity for open communication and direct problem-solving. If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved directly with the affected employee, it should be presented to the employee’s supervisor (or the chief administrator), preferably in writing. If the complaint or concern is escalated to the supervisor or chief administrator, the affected employee will be notified of the concern or complaint and provided an opportunity to provide explanation and additional information. In parochial schools, the decision of the chief administrator as to resolution of the concern or complaint—acting in concert with the pastor when necessary—shall be final. In diocesan governed schools and private schools, the decision of the chief administrator as to resolution of the concern or complaint shall be final.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment including, but not limited to: spanking, shaking, slapping, pinching, hair pulling shall not be permitted in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Dallas

Health and Safety

On issues of health not addressed in this handbook, St. Mary of Carmel follows the directives of the Diocese of Dallas Catholic Schools Office and the Texas Catholic Conference Education Departments School Health Manual.

Immunizations

Every student enrolled in a Catholic school in the Diocese of Dallas shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunization schedule (see below) adopted by the Texas Department of State Health (commonly known as the “minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Texas School/Entrance/Attendance”). Each year every student must present evidence of the required immunizations from a physician or health care provider authorized to administer immunizations to the school before the first day of school. The immunizations must be current. A student who fails to present the required evidence shall not be accepted for enrollment.

1) Polio

Kindergarten entry. Students are required to have four doses of polio vaccine--one of which must have been received on or after the fourth birthday. Or, if the third dose was administered on or after the fourth birthday, only three doses are required. Four doses of oral polio vaccine (OPV) or inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) in any combination by age four to six years old is considered a complete series, regardless of age at the time of the third dose.

2) Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis

Kindergarten entry. Students are required to have five doses of a diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis-containing vaccine--one of which must have been received on or after the fourth birthday. Or, if the fourth dose was administered on or after the fourth birthday, only four doses are required.

3) Tdap

Seventh grade entry. Students will be required to have one booster dose of a tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis-containing vaccine for entry into the 7th grade, if at least five years have passed since the last dose of a tetanus-containing vaccine. If five years have not elapsed since the last dose of a tetanus-containing vaccine at entry into the 7th grade, then this dose will become due as soon as the five-year interval has passed. Td vaccine is an acceptable substitute, if Tdap vaccine is medically contraindicated.

4) MMR

Students are required to have two doses of MMR vaccine with the first dose received on or after the first birthday and second dose before entering **Kindergarten**.

5) Hepatitis A

Students are required to have two doses of hepatitis A vaccine with the first dose received on or after the first birthday and before entering **Kindergarten**.

6) Hepatitis B

Students are required to have three doses of hepatitis B vaccine before entering **Kindergarten**.

7) Meningococcal

Students are required to have one dose of meningococcal vaccine before entering **Seventh grade**.

8) Varicella

Students are required to have two doses of varicella vaccine received on or after the first birthday and before entering **Kindergarten** unless the school office receives a written statement from a physician or the student's parent containing wording such as: *This is to certify that (name of student) had varicella disease (chickenpox) on or about (date) and does not need varicella vaccine.*

Children enrolled in **pre-kindergarten** or early childhood programs must be immunized against the following: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, hepatitis A, invasive pneumococcal, and varicella diseases in accordance with the state-mandated Immunization Schedule

Immunization requirements must be documented by a licensed medical doctor and on file in the clinic office on the first day of school. **A student whose immunization records are incomplete by the first day of school (08/13/2024) will be given a grace period of 2 weeks. During that time a parent/guardian must provide immunizations requirement proof, otherwise students will not be allowed on campus until necessary documents are received.**

Medications

Parents are encouraged to keep the school office and the student's teachers informed regarding any medication their student is taking at home. Medication that may cause any degree of impairment to the student must be reported to the school office by the parent.

Any medication to be taken during school hours must be stored and administered through the clinic and will be given only under the following conditions:

- Taking the medication during school hours must be medically necessary to permit the student to remain in school.
- Medication must be prescribed by a licensed physician or dentist and dispensed by a registered pharmacist.
- "Over-the-counter" medication (acetaminophen, ointments, cold tablets, cough syrups, etc.) may only be given if parents have written consent using the Diocesan Over the Counter Medicine Form. The medicine must stay in its original container.
- Each student's medication must be in a properly labeled container with the following information: student's name, physician/dentist's name, date, name of medication, dosage, and directions for administration.
- Each student's medication must be brought to the school office by the parent and not the child. When the parent brings in the medication, he/she signs a form giving permission to administer the medication. The form is kept in the school clinic.

Emergency Form

During enrollment, parents are required to submit all emergency information to the school. In case of an emergency, only necessary emergency first aid and treatment to protect the child will be administered. Parents and/or the student's physician will be notified immediately. An emergency card file is kept for ready reference in case of an emergency. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the school office updated of any changes. This file contains important data such as a parent's phone number, family doctor, etc.

Permission for Testing

During enrollment, parents give permission authorizing the school to conduct scoliosis, vision, and hearing screening for students in grades K-8 and screening for Acanthosis Nigricans in grades 1, 3, 5, 7 and new students. If permission is not granted by the parent, the parent is responsible for providing the school with proof of examinations.

First Aid

Basic first aid will be administered in case of a minor accident. In case of head injury or other more serious accident, the school office will notify the student's parents.

Clinic

The clinic is available for those students who are in need of first aid attention and sick students who are waiting to be picked up by parents. A log is maintained to track student visits to the clinic. Repeated trips in a short period of time will be communicated to parents.

Communicable Diseases

The school makes every effort to control the spread of communicable diseases. Any student showing suspicious symptoms may be sent home as a matter of precaution. A student is considered ill and must go home if any of the following should occur: vomiting, diarrhea, pink eye, head lice or a fever. The student must be fever free and not contagious for 24 hours before returning to school after any illness. In the event that a child has a communicable disease (measles, chicken pox, etc.) the school must be notified immediately. A doctor's release will be necessary for readmission.

On issues of health not addressed in this handbook, St. Mary of Carmel follows the directives of the Diocese of Dallas Catholic Schools Office and the Texas Catholic Conference Education Departments School Health Manual.

Head Lice

Quarterly head checks will occur throughout the year. If live lice or nits are found, then the parent will be contacted and the student must be picked up. Students who are sent home because of head lice must be cleared by the nurse before returning to school and school events. If any nits are still found when the child is checked, they will have to go home.

Food Allergies

Parents must notify the school of any allergies students might have. All medical information will be kept in the clinic, but classroom doors will be marked for students with any severe allergies (i.e. peanuts, bees etc.).

Emergency Procedures

St. Mary of Carmel conducts fire, weather emergency, and lock down drills on a regular basis during the school year for the safety of the students. Exit procedures are posted throughout the school and students are taught the bell signals used to indicate different emergencies. Students must conduct themselves during these drills in a manner that reflects responsibility for their safety and others. St. Mary of Carmel has a Crisis Management Plan in place to respond to emergency situations. Parents may review the Crisis Management Plan in the school office.

As of May 2022, the Diocese of Dallas has completed a new Crisis Management Plan that all schools must follow that serves as a complement to the “Standard Response Protocol” program adopted in 2018. A full Crisis Management Plan is on file in the school office.

Fire Drills

At the sound of the fire alarm, everyone must immediately exit the building as quickly as possible. Fire drills are held regularly throughout the school year. Fire exits are clearly marked. Evacuation plans are posted in all classrooms in the building.

Tornado Drills

Tornado Shelters are called on the intercom/ walkie talkies. Students proceed immediately to the assigned areas and students assume the duck and cover position on the floor. Tornado drills are held with the students in case of an emergency situation. Evacuation plans are posted in all classrooms in the building.

Lock Down Drill

The school will periodically conduct lock-down drills to establish safe procedures that are used whenever a situation occurs on campus that might put students’ life in serious risk. No one is permitted to enter or exit buildings or classrooms while a lockdown is in progress.

Secure Drill

The school will periodically conduct lock-out drills to establish safe procedures that are used whenever a situation occurs off campus that might put students at risk. A lock out allows St. Mary of Carmel to secure the perimeter should a dangerous situation exist nearby. Business will be conducted as normal inside the buildings, but no one is allowed in or out of the building until the Lock Out is completed.

Hold Drill

The school will periodically conduct hold drills to establish safe procedures that are used whenever a situation occurs that requires extra privacy or requires students and staff to remain in the classrooms. A hold clears the hallways and has all teachers/students remain in the classrooms until any disturbance is cleared.

Reunification Protocol

In the event of a crisis/emergency evacuation of our campus. St. Mary of Carmel will utilize the Standard Reunification Protocol to reunite students with their families. In the event of an emergency, an off campus reunification location will be communicated to parents. All parents picking up their children

will be required to fill out a form and have their identification verified, so please make sure to bring ID. School faculty and staff are trained in the reunification process.

Crisis Management Plan

Teachers receive full details of crisis management in their red Crisis Management Folders. All expectations and procedures are reviewed and practiced with students periodically throughout the year.

When the school is on Secure or Lockdown or is in a real inclement weather situation, no person can enter or leave the building. No student can leave the building until the Principal has cleared the building. Please do not come to the school and try to pick up your student. During an actual emergency, parents will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so through RenWeb Alert by email and text of the contingency plan regarding the safety, dismissal, and release of students. The school will use the email and phone number on file. Please make sure email addresses are updated through the school office as necessary.

Social Emotional Health

If a student has expressed an intent to harm themselves or others while on school property, school personnel will first conduct a threat assessment to determine the level of risk the student poses to themselves. After a threat assessment is completed, school personnel will contact the students' family. Depending on the threat level assessed (low, moderate, high), a parent/guardian may be asked to retrieve their student from school to receive further threat assessment. If it is determined that an outside threat assessment is necessary, a parent must take their student to a licensed professional counselor, or other licensed mental health professional immediately following the report or within 3 days from report. The school counselor will provide recommendations for counseling centers but it is ultimately up to the parent or guardian to decide where to seek counsel, as well as the financial responsibility for any fees and charges associated with the visit(s). Furthermore, a parent/guardian will be provided paperwork notifying them of their student's threat to harm themselves or others, which will require their signature. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide the school with a copy of the licensed professional paperwork permitting the student to return to school as a non-threat to self or others.

If a student has social emotional needs beyond what St. Mary of Carmel is able to provide services for, the school may require parents to seek outside counseling or support services for the student. In these situations, the school will work with the family to determine a timeline for receiving services and will request parental permission/release to be able to communicate with the outside provider.

Communication

Communication between students, teachers, and parents is an integral part of quality education. Parents are encouraged to use email to communicate with teachers with the understanding that email is checked at regular intervals, but not during class time throughout the day. It is the goal of the faculty to respond within 24 hours of receiving the email.

Both parents and teachers are encouraged to allow a “cooling off” time in cases of emotional issues so that both parties will treat each other respectfully and deal with each situation prudently and in a Christ-like manner.

Parent-School Contract

This handbook represents a contract between parents and the school. It is required of all St. Mary of Carmel School families and stipulates the scope of required parent participation and cooperation. St. Mary of Carmel School is a proactive learning environment and emphasizes parent participation for student success.

Parental Cooperation and Behavior

All members of the school community, including parents and family members, are expected to comply with all school rules and policies while on campus and in communications with the school, be respectful, cooperate with the school with respect to all decisions affecting the student, and avoid behavior which disrupts the orderly administration of the school. A community member’s failure to meet these expectations jeopardizes school administration, requires the school to expend limited resources to address inappropriate and unnecessary behavior, and detracts from the school’s core mission and, as a result, may jeopardize a student’s continued participation in the school community. At the school’s sole discretion, the failure of a student’s parents or other family members to comply with these expectations, separate and apart from the student’s conduct, may result in suspension or expulsion of the student.

Office Communication

The office will send all printed communication home with each family’s oldest child, via a weekly envelope on Fridays. Envelopes should be signed and returned to your child’s homeroom teacher the next day to ensure that you will continue to receive weekly communications. If an envelope is lost, parent/guardian will be responsible for purchasing a replacement envelope.

In addition, a weekly newsletter will be emailed out every Wednesday evening. **Please notify the school office if you do not receive email and would like a hard copy of the newsletter included in your weekly envelope on Thursdays.**

If you wish to schedule a meeting with the school principal, please contact the office or schedule with the principal directly through email. Please be sure that *questions and concerns with your child’s teacher have been addressed with them first before involving the principal.*

Means of Communication

FACTS SIS is the primary means of communication to parents about grades, missing assignments and important school notices. Parents set up a username and password information to access FACTS SIS information pertaining to each student enrolled at St. Mary of Carmel. Every family in grades PreK through 8 must activate their parentFACTS SIS account, provide an email address and keep that email address current with the school office. Through this email address, parents will receive school wide notices, including inclement weather and emergency closing notices, and classroom announcements. School faculty update grades weekly and assignment information regularly. The District Code for our School FACTS SIS Account is SMCCS

Parents are expected to access email and FACTS SIS on a regular basis. In addition to checking FACTS regularly, parents are expected to review all graded and returned schoolwork to keep informed of their child's progress. Every Friday, weekly folders are sent home as an additional means of communicating.

Parents are responsible for communicating any change of address, phone number, and email address to the office manager.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

At mandatory conferences in October, parents and teachers share important information regarding each student's progress and establish goals and objectives for success in the school year.

A student's parents or teacher may request a conference at any mutually agreeable time as necessary to support the student. Parents may request a conference by email or written note through the student. The student may attend the conference when appropriate.

To maintain proper focus on the students, teachers will not conference with parents during the following times:

1. Fifteen minutes prior to the start of school
2. During instruction time
3. At dismissal.

Teachers should not be contacted by phone call to their home or cell phone, except as requested by the teacher.

Conflict Resolution

In all human involvements, misunderstandings and conflicts will arise. Clear, respectful, honest communication within a community can sometimes be challenging, but it is vital for the success and growth of the members of the community. The administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents are expected to have rational conversations without the fear of reprisal within the classroom, the community or social media.

When these situations occur at St. Mary of Carmel or at school-related activities, the following procedures must be observed:

1. The teacher (including other authorized adults) and the student(s) must first address the conflict by speaking respectfully and honestly about the issue to be resolved.
2. If sincere attempts by the teacher and student(s) fail to resolve the conflict, a parent/teacher conference must be held.
3. If sincere attempts by the teacher and parent(s) fail to resolve the conflict, the parent or teacher may explain the conflict to the principal in writing or request a conference.
4. If the sincere attempts by all involved fail to resolve the conflict, the parent may explain the conflict, in writing, to the superintendent/ Catholic Schools Office.

The principal's involvement must be limited to resolving conflicts that arise during school-sponsored activities.

The Diocese generally supports a collaborative approach to resolving parental concerns or complaints regarding school employees. Accordingly, such concerns or complaints should generally be addressed to the affected employee first to allow an opportunity for open communication and direct problem-solving. If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved directly with the affected employee, it should be presented to the employee's supervisor (or the chief administrator), preferably in writing. If the complaint or concern is escalated to the supervisor or chief administrator, the affected employee will be notified of the concern or complaint and provided an opportunity to provide explanation and additional information. In parochial schools, the decision of the chief administrator as to resolution of the concern or complaint—acting in concert with the pastor when necessary—shall be final. In diocesan governed schools and private schools, the decision of the chief administrator as to resolution of the concern or complaint shall be final.

Information for Legal Matters

In the event any student, parent or any representative thereof attempts to secure any information and/or documentation from St. Mary of Carmel through a subpoena or other legal process, that party will be subject to all legal fees that St. Mary of Carmel incurs.

Custody and Family Law Issues

The Diocese and its schools understand that many families within the school community are affected by custody and other related legal disputes. The Diocese and its schools work to balance sensitivity to difficult family situations and the interests of safety and orderly school administration. Involving school personnel in family and custody diverts finite school resources from the school's primary function. As a result, it is important that families within the school community who are affected by custody and other related legal disputes read and understand the following policies and procedures.

Generally, a child's biological or adoptive parents have equal rights to custody of and visitation with the child unless and until a court orders otherwise. When this arrangement has been changed by court order, it is the responsibility of the affected student's family to provide the school with a complete, final, signed copy of the relevant order and to point out to the school any relevant portions of the order. Unless and until a student's family does so, the school may assume that both of a child's biological or adoptive parents have equal rights to custody of and visitation with the student.

It is the responsibility of the parents, not the school, to ensure that the school is promptly provided with any relevant original or amended custody orders. Schools will take reasonably practical steps to facilitate compliance with relevant family court orders. However, it is the responsibility of the family, and not the school, to enforce family court orders regarding a student. School personnel are not family law attorneys and are not responsible for interpreting or enforcing custody or other family court orders.

Attorneys representing parents in custody disputes should not contact school personnel directly, including to request the production of documents and execution of supporting affidavits for use in litigation. Parents may obtain contact information for diocesan legal counsel from the school and should provide this information to the parents' attorneys if school involvement in a custody dispute is requested. If the school is required to engage counsel to interpret or otherwise advise the school regarding a custody or other family court order or dispute, the parents of the affected student are jointly and severally liable to the school for all costs and attorneys' fees associated therewith. As an exception to this general rule, upon request by either parent, the school will generally, at the chief administrator's

sole discretion, provide one copy of a student's central file (e.g., attendance records, report cards, enrollment documents, etc...) with a supporting business records affidavit to both parents or their attorneys free of charge.

Diocesan schools are private property and are not open to the public. Additionally, it is detrimental to the well-being of the affected students and to the school community as a whole when family disputes are brought onto school property. Parents are expected to do everything possible to avoid parental confrontations or arguments on school grounds. The chief administrator of the school or his or her designee has full discretion to exclude any person from the school when, in his or her sole discretion, doing so is necessary or appropriate. School personnel may contact law enforcement for assistance when doing so is necessary to enforce this discretion. If a parent who is prohibited by court order from coming to or near the school attempts to enter the school, the school may call the police and/or seek other appropriate recourse.

If school personnel believe that the behavior of a parent or other legally responsible adult presents an imminent threat of harm to a student, the school may refuse to release the student to the parent or other legally responsible adult or take such other steps, including but not limited to contacting law enforcement or the student's emergency contact, as the school deems necessary.

Reimbursement for School Costs and Attorney's Fees

The Diocese of Dallas and its schools recognize the financial sacrifice many of its families make to participate in the school community. Out of respect for this sacrifice and in recognition of the school's responsibility to wisely steward financial resources for the benefit of all members of the school community, the Diocese and its schools have implemented the following policy:

From time to time, a school is required to retain outside legal counsel to respond to parent requests or demands, requests or subpoenas for testimony or documents in legal proceedings to which the school is not a party, or to address other issues affecting or involving only one or a few students or families. In such situations, the school is typically required to expend finite financial resources to address an issue which otherwise affects only a very small portion of the school community. To ensure that the school community at large is not adversely impacted in such situations, the school will, when the chief administrator in his or her sole discretion deems it appropriate, require the family or families involved to reimburse the school for attorney's fees, costs of court, and other expenses incurred (including, without limitation, the cost to secure substitute staff when school personnel are subpoenaed to testify in court proceedings).

Accordingly, each person who acknowledges his or her agreement to the contents of this Handbook, either by written or electronic signature or by enrolling a student in a school within the Diocese of Dallas, agrees that, in the School's absolute and sole discretion, he or she shall indemnify and reimburse the School, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and their respective officers, employees, agents, and representatives ("Indemnitees") on demand from and for any and all attorney's fees and related costs including without limitation the cost of responding to requests for documents or other records or information arising from, in connection with, or related to 1) a violation of any provision of this Handbook, 2) any request or demand made upon the School which pertains to a legal proceeding to which the School is not a party, 3) threatening or harassing communications directed to any Indemnitee, or 4) threatened or actual litigation against any Indemnitee which does not result in a final and appealable judgment adverse to the Indemnitee.

General Policies

Dismissal

Afternoon Dismissal will begin at 3:00. At this time, parents of only PreK students will line up their cars outside of the PreK classroom and PreK students will be walked out to their cars. At 3:10 the whole school carline begins. Students in 5th-8th grade will be escorted to the cafeteria to be dismissed. The rest of the school will remain in their classrooms. We will load students into their cars 5 cars at a time, along the awning in front of the cafeteria/PreK/3rd and 4th grade classrooms. Parents will enter through the carline gate and line up in front of the community center. Cars will leave through the main gate. Additional maps and directions will be sent at the start of the school year.

After-School Care

This program will be available to students who are enrolled at St. Mary of Carmel School from 3:45 pm - 6:00 pm on school days. After school care is not available on half days. Students who have not been picked up by 3:45 pm will be signed into ASC. The program will provide supervision for students and include time for snack, homework, outdoor recreation and indoor play.

Between 3:45 and 4:30	\$5 for the first child \$4 for each additional child
Between 4:31-6:00	\$7 for the first child \$6 for each additional child
Monthly Option: \$120	\$120 for 1st child \$100 for each additional

Students attending tutoring, will be escorted outside at 3:40 by their teacher to be picked up. If they are not picked up by 3:45, they will be signed in and will be charged the daily rate after 5 minutes. Students participating in extracurricular activities will not be signed in to After School Care until after five minutes of the conclusion of their extracurricular. Parents are responsible for picking up their student(s) promptly at the conclusion of the extracurricular activity,

Students who are not picked up by 6:00 pm will be charged late fees. There is a \$10 fee charged for students who are picked up after 6:00 pm. Payment for after school care is not included in regular tuition payments and will be billed weekly. Payments are due 15 days after they are billed. Unpaid balances will result in a delinquent account and your child will not be able to attend After School Care until it is paid off.

Cafeteria

Breakfast and lunch is served daily from the school cafeteria through Twelve Oaks Catering Company. Breakfast will be served from 7:15- 7:45 am. Students will eat their lunches in the cafeteria during their assigned lunch time. Lunch menus are sent home monthly. Parents are asked to pre-order lunches on a weekly basis using our weekly communication folder. Please indicate on your family's weekly communication folder which lunches your family wishes to order (and quantity) by Thursday of the preceding week. A hot lunch is provided to every student free of charge.

Students may also bring their lunches from home. For your child's safety, do not send any glass containers or carbonated sodas. Soft drinks may not be brought to school during school hours. Please note that we **are unable to warm, cook, or refrigerate lunch items brought from home.** No microwaves may be used by students and no staff member is allowed to warm food for students in the microwave.

While we are allowing visitors on campus this year, parents will still not be allowed to come eat lunch with students as an added precaution during a high spread time. Our federal lunch program dictates that fast food is not permitted other than on Family Day during Catholic Schools week. We ask that lunches brought in are from home, from a sandwich shop such as Subway, or offer healthy balanced options. Parents must check in with the front office to drop off lunches.

All students must contribute to making the cafeteria a proper environment for mealtime by observing the following rules:

- Not talk for the first 15 minutes of lunch
- Speak in a low tone.
- Use proper manners.
- Remain seated until dismissed from the cafeteria.
- Dispose of waste properly and leave tables clean.

Birthdays

St. Mary of Carmel does not sponsor parties outside of school hours. All classroom parties are arranged with the homeroom teacher and are generally limited to the lower grades. Invitations to any private parties are not to be distributed on school grounds unless the entire class is invited. Parents are allowed to bring in cupcakes for a child's birthday. However, this **must take place in the last 20 minutes of the day** in the classroom; half birthday celebrations are allowed for students who have a summer birthday. **Birthdays cannot take place during lunchtime due to Federal Lunch Program regulations.** Teachers must approve the plan to bring in cupcakes ahead of time. Parents must check in at the Office before entering classrooms. Please keep celebrations simple and provide the necessary paper items. To minimize distractions, do not deliver flowers and /or gifts to the school. There is limited office space and we cannot accommodate these items.

Personal Items

1. All personal belongings, including school supplies and clothing items, **must be well marked with the student's name.**
2. Check at the office for lost and found articles. All marked items will be returned. Unmarked items will be given away after one month.
3. Toys, electronics and any other items unrelated to school activities are not to be brought to school without permission from the teacher. All prohibited items will be confiscated.

To minimize classroom interruptions and instill a sense of personal responsibility, any forgotten items, which are subsequently brought to school, must be left in the office. The student may collect them on their break or at lunch.

Telephone

Students may use the office telephone before school, during lunch and after school with permission from the Office staff. Cell phones are subject to the electronics policy in the Resources & Technology section of the handbook. Students must log their phone calls made on the school phone in the Phone Log in the office. Arrangements for after-school activities and routine transportation questions should be made prior to arriving at school each day. Parents wishing to communicate to their students during the school day must do so through the school office. Please limit requests for messages to be delivered to students in emergency situations.

Damages

Students are responsible for payment of all damages to school property.

Lockers/ Cubbies

Students are responsible for the contents and order of their assigned lockers/cubbies. Lockers, cubbies, and/or backpacks may be inspected by the faculty and administration at any time without notice.

Severe Weather/School Closing

St. Mary of Carmel follows Dallas Independent School District decisions for inclement weather unless extenuating circumstances apply. All closure decisions are reported on Channel 8 and will be communicated directly to the school community via Facebook and FACTS. All decisions are made with student and family safety in mind.

Use of School Grounds

The school building during the school day is for the sole use of the children and faculty/staff. The school building acts as a community center after 5:00 pm each day for various church organizations and community groups. Permission for the use of the school building after hours must be obtained in advance from the Principal or Pastor and placed on the official community calendar.

Visitors

For the 2024-2025 school year, visitors will be allowed on campus and in classrooms. All visitors are asked to ensure they are not sick/ feeling unhealthy before arriving on campus. All visitors must check in at the administration office before proceeding to any other area of the school. All visitors are expected to wear a visitor's badge while on campus.

Eighth Grade Expectations

As the leaders of the school, 8th graders are expected to be role models for the rest of the school at all times. In order to participate in graduation, 8th grade students must complete and pass all finals and courses for the year. Major discipline problems can impact a student participating in graduation. In addition, all past due payments must be paid in full by Friday, May 12th before a student is able to take their final exams and participate in Passing of the Light and Graduation.

Image Release

To celebrate the community spirit of St. Mary of Carmel and share it with potential school families, school representatives may photograph, film or otherwise record events that may include individual students, family members and guests. By attending school events, including Dallas Parochial League events, participants acknowledge that their picture may be posted or published without notice or remuneration. Concerns must be addressed with the principal, in writing. To document that understanding, each school family is asked to indicate their agreement by signing the release form at the end of this handbook.

Technology

Technology is integral to the school's instructional program. With this educational opportunity also comes responsibility. The use of the school's computers and Internet access is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use of computers and/or Internet will result in a cancellation of those privileges at school. The administration will make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated this privilege. The administration may deny, revoke, or suspend access to technology and the internet at any time. See the Technology Policy provided as an addendum to this handbook.

Use of School Name

No individual may use the name, logo, or image of St. Mary of Carmel including any member of the community or in any way represent the school publicly, in print or on-line, without the express written permission of the principal. This restriction includes parent and student social media pages.

Handbook Revisions

The handbook shall be governed by the guidelines established by the Diocese of Dallas. Diocesan procedure will take precedence in matters where a conflict might exist with this handbook. The Principal reserves the right to modify the contents of this handbook at any time without prior notice, as deemed necessary. School administration will promptly communicate handbook amendments and these amendments will be highlighted in the electronic version of the handbook.

Parent/Volunteer Involvement

Parent Volunteer/Service Hours

The goal of keeping Catholic education affordable requires us to find creative ways to cut costs. One way St. Mary of Carmel does that is by creating parent volunteer opportunities to supplement the staff and/or help in school events. Each FAMILY is required to complete 20 hours of volunteer service at various events during the school year. Five of those hours can come from participating in the PTO meetings. Failure to complete the volunteer hours by May 17th will result in a \$25 fine per hour not served.

Each family will be provided with a parent service log and are responsible for logging their hours and turning them in to Mrs. Ibarra. Parents are responsible for monitoring their own hours and checking with the volunteer supervisor, Mrs. Ibarra, to make sure the hours have been signed off. Volunteers must be 18 years or older or accompanied by an adult and be cleared through the Safe Environment program. All volunteers must check in with the office prior to starting any work on campus during the school day.

As volunteers, parents are representatives of the Catholic Church and of St. Mary of Carmel. Volunteers are expected to support the directions given by faculty and administrators. As volunteers, parents serve in a Catholic school and are role models for the students.

Safe Environment

All adults who volunteer in any capacity at the school are required to pass a background check every year and meet all training requirements set forth by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas. Applications can be submitted online or to the Safe Environment Coordinator. This clearance needs to be renewed on a yearly basis. Once a parent has been cleared with a background check, they are able to actively volunteer on campus (this includes field trips).

Fees and Tuition

Tuition

Tuition payments are made through FACTS Tuition Management in monthly installments from June through March or May. Tuition is due based on the agreement that you have set up with FACTS. Parents are responsible for all late fees and penalties due in regards to delinquent tuition.

Tuition Refund

If a family decides to withdraw their registered student from St. Mary of Carmel, tuition payments for the remainder of the year will be stopped. Upon written request to the Principal before August 1st, the school will refund all tuition paid and cancel the remaining balance of a FACTS agreement attributed to the student who will not be attending St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School. Parents will remain responsible for interest accrued and/or fees already charged by FACTS. After the first day of school, paid tuition is no longer refundable but payments for the remainder of the year will be stopped. The Principal may grant written requests for refunds in exigent circumstances. Registration and other fees are non-refundable.

Returned Payments

If FACTS or the school receives a returned check, parents must pay the subsequent bank service charge. If there is a recurrence of returned checks, then further payment by check will not be accepted. Payments must then be made by cash, money order, or cashier's check. Tuition payments that are returned by the bank in FACTS incur a 3% late fee immediately.

Registration Fees

Registration fees are due at the time of registration. The registration fee is non-refundable. All fees must be paid in full by the due date or the student(s) will not be enrolled in the school. All outstanding balances must be paid in full before registration can take place for the following year.

Incidental Fees

Any incidental fees, which include lunches, After School Care and fundraising, will be billed through the FACTS system on Wednesdays. All incidentals are due 15 days from when they are billed in FACTS. If you wish to pay in the office, you must do so 3 days before the due date in order for the payment to be applied.

Office Payments

If you wish to pay for something that is on automatic withdrawal from your bank account, **you must pay 3 days in advance of the due date** in order for the payment to be processed and the withdrawal to be stopped. FACTS begins taking the money out a day before the payment is due and we cannot stop it once that happens. Please call the office immediately if you get a notification from FACTS for a balance you are not able to have withdrawn from your account.

Past Due Balances

Any family whose tuition is 30 days past due will receive a collections letter and must make a payment on the past due balance in order for their students to be admitted to class.

Students in 8th grade must have all outstanding balances paid in full by May 12th in order to take their final exams and participate in the Passing of the Light Ceremony and Graduation. Anyone with an outstanding balance will not be allowed to re-register for the next school year.

Fundraising

No school can operate on tuition alone. The actual cost of educating each of our students is over \$11,000. In order to close the gap between tuition and costs, St. Mary of Carmel has several required fundraising projects throughout the year. There are three events where parents are required to sell tickets or items. **This is a requirement for all families and cannot be waived.** These fees will be billed in FACTS with the due date being the last school day before the event. If you wish to pay in the office so as not to be billed in FACTS, please do so **at least 3 days beforehand** so that we can credit your account in time.

Tuition Assistance

Through the generous donations from the school and parish community and the Diocesan Education Endowment Trust Fund, limited tuition assistance is available. Those parents requesting assistance must apply to FACTS Grant and Aid, a third party tuition management service, by the published deadline. Families may also complete a Parish Partners application and turn it into the school office for Local Tuition Assistance. Information regarding tuition assistance applications is published in November of each year.

Collection of Funds

At no time is a parent/guardian or teacher allowed to collect funds from school families unless express written permission to do so has been granted by the principal.

Extracurricular Activities and Organizations

Extracurricular Activities

The offering of extracurricular activities depends upon the availability of adult volunteers. All offered extra-curricular activities must have an adult moderator and a staff liaison. After school clubs/activities must have the principal's written consent to meet and will establish a time/place for meeting with the Principal. Any outside organizations (i.e. Boy Scouts) will sign a shared space agreement to use the facilities at St. Mary of Carmel. Parents are strongly encouraged to coach or assist with sports or other activities to enrich the students' education experience.

If a student is not present at school during the day, or if they leave early due to illness, they are not able to participate in extracurricular activities that day.

Athletics

St. Mary of Carmel participates in the Dallas Parochial League (DPL) and YMCA. Athletics for boys and girls in Grades 5-8 may include basketball, soccer, and volleyball, as student interest and coaching resources permit. An Athletic Director (AD) appointed by the principal, represents St. Mary of Carmel in the DPL. The AD directs the athletic program as outlined in the Athletics Policy provided as an appendix to the school handbook.

As with all other extracurricular activities, participation in the school's athletic program is a privilege to be earned and maintained, not a right arising from the payment of tuition. Athletic programs are extracurricular in nature and are secondary to the school's academic objectives. Students must achieve and maintain academic and conduct eligibility. A student missing school (illness, suspension etc.) is not eligible to play in any sports that day. If a child misses school on a Friday, they are ineligible to participate for the duration of the weekend. In addition, before a student is allowed to begin practice or games, the student must pay any required fees and must submit the following forms:

- Clearance and Physical Examination Form completed by a licensed physician
- Team Registration forms

Students are expected to commit to cooperate with the sponsor or coach and to participate consistently over the entire term of the activity to the best of their ability. Failure to satisfactorily complete these commitments will subject future requests to participate in athletics to review by the principal.

No Pass, No Play

Students must maintain a grade of 70 or higher in all academic subjects in grades 5-8 and maintain satisfactory conduct in order to be eligible for extra-curricular activities. Any grade of 69 or below and/or less than satisfactory conduct on a report card or progress report will result in a student's ineligibility to participate in school related extracurricular activities.

Students will regain eligibility when a progress report is run and they have raised their failing grade(s) to a 70 or above. Grades will be checked every two weeks once a student is deemed ineligible.

Parent-Teacher Organization

The PTO is an organization that provides an avenue of dialogue between school families, the administration and teachers. It acts as a support system for the school by encouraging parent participation

and fundraising. The PTO meeting schedule is published at the beginning of the year and all parents are invited to attend.

School Uniform

St. Mary of Carmel School Uniform

St. Mary of Carmel enforces a school uniform policy for students in Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade. Each student is expected to adhere to this policy and wear clothes and shoes that meet uniform guidelines. Clothing must be clean, unwrinkled, the appropriate size and the appropriate length. Uniforms are to be kept in good repair. Shirts must be tucked in at all times with the waist band or belt showing. Skirts may not be rolled up.

Santa Maria del Carmen hace cumplir una política de uniforme escolar para los estudiantes de Kinder a Octavo Grado. Se espera que cada estudiante se adhiera a esta política y use ropa y zapatos que cumplan con las pautas del uniforme. La ropa debe estar limpia, sin arrugas, del tamaño apropiado y longitud apropiada. Los uniformes deben mantenerse en buen estado. Las camisas deben estar metidas en todo momento con la banda de cintura o el cinturón a la vista. Las faldas no se pueden enrollar.

Reminder: At the grade levels below, there is a Uniform Change / Recordatorio de Cambio de Uniforme para los siguientes grados:

- PK Students going **into** Kindergarten // Estudiantes de PK a Kinder
 - Change from yellow to white shirts
 - Change to required Saddle Shoes for Girls
- 4th Grade Students **into** 5th Grade // Estudiantes del 4º grado al 5º grado
 - Change from polos to button down oxford shirts
 - Change in to required boat/dress shoes for boys
 - Ties now required for boys and girls
- 7th Grade Students **into** 8th Grade // Estudiantes del 7º grado al 8º grado
 - 8th grade students may wear colored Oxford button down shirts (pink, yellow, blue)

Link for Purchasing from Levines/ Enlace:

<https://levinesstores.com/collections/st-mary-of-carmel-catholic-school>

- This link is for the plaid uniform parts.

www.frenchtoast.com

- This website does not have our Plaid uniform parts, but is another resource for everything else.

Uniform pieces also available from: Walmart, Target, Old Navy, Children's Place, Costco, Sam's, Academy Sports + Outdoors, Polos

GIRLS / NINAS:

PreK3 & PreK4 girls

- Long and short sleeved Yellow blouse (Peter Pan round collar) or Yellow Polo
- Navy shorts (flat or pleated front) (only in 1st and 4th Quarter)
- Navy pants (flat or pleated front)
- Plaid Jumper (purchased from LEVINES)
- Navy or White knee-high socks or Navy or White tights
- Pullover Navy Sweater or Navy Acrylic Pullover Vest
 - Must be worn every Wednesday for Mass
- Saddle Shoes (Keds or Oxford brand) in Black and White or Navy and White or all White Velcro sneakers

Kinder – 4th grade girls

- Long or short sleeved White blouse (Peter Pan round collar) or White Polo
- Navy shorts (flat or pleated front) (only in 1st and 4th Quarter)
- Navy pants (flat or pleated front) (ex. French Toast, Dickies, etc)
- A Black or Brown belt must be worn with pants/shorts
- Plaid Jumper (from LEVINES)
- Navy or White knee-high socks or Navy or White tights
- Pullover Navy Sweater or Navy Acrylic Pullover Vest
 - Must be worn every Wednesday for Mass
- Saddle Shoes (Keds or Oxford brand) in Black and White or Navy and White

5th – 7th grade girls

- Long or short sleeved White Oxford Shirt (button-down) only
- Plaid Crosstie (from LEVINES)
- Navy shorts (flat or pleated front) (only in 1st and 4th Quarter)
- Navy pants (flat or pleated front)
- A Black or Brown belt must be worn with pants/shorts
- Plaid knee length skirt, pleated with tab (from LEVINES)
- Navy or White knee-high socks or White or Navy tights
- Pullover Navy Sweater or Navy Acrylic Pullover Vest
 - Must be worn every Wednesday for Mass
- Saddle Shoes (Keds or Oxford brand) in Black and White or Navy and White

8th grade girls:

- Same as 5th through 7th grade level, with additional Oxford Shirt color options:
- *In addition to White shirts*, 8th graders may wear Blue, Yellow, or Pink Oxford shirts

BOYS / NINOS

PreK3 & PreK4

- Long or short sleeved Yellow Oxford Shirt (button down) or Yellow Polo
- Navy shorts (flat or pleated front) (only in 1st and 4th Quarter)
- Navy pants (flat or pleated front) (ex. French Toast, Dickies, etc)
- White or Navy Crew Socks only (no ankle socks)
- Pullover Navy Sweater or Navy Acrylic Pullover Vest
 - Must be worn every Wednesday for Mass
- A Black or Brown belt must be worn with pants/shorts
- All black tennis shoes or black/brown Boat shoes
- Plaid Clip On Tie is option for Mass on Wednesdays (available at Levines)

Kinder-4th grade boys

- Long or short sleeved White Oxford Shirt (button down) or White Polo
- Navy shorts (flat or pleated front) (only in 1st and 4th Quarter)
- Navy pants (flat or pleated front) (ex. French Toast, Dickies, etc)
- White or Navy Crew Socks only (no ankle socks)
- Pullover Navy Sweater or Navy Acrylic Pullover Vest
 - Must be worn every Wednesday for Mass
- All Black tennis shoes (ex.new balance) or black/brown Boat shoes
- A Black or Brown belt must be worn with pants/shorts
- Plaid Clip On Tie is optional for Mass on Wednesdays (available at Levines)

5th – 7th grade boys

- Long or short sleeved white Oxford Shirt (button-down) only
- Plaid Long Tie or Clip on Tie (available at Levines)
- Navy shorts (flat or pleated front) (only in 1st and 4th Quarter)
- Navy pants (flat or pleated front) (ex. French Toast, Dickies, etc)
- White or Navy Crew Socks only (no ankle socks)
- Pullover Navy Sweater or Navy Acrylic Pullover Vest
 - Must be worn every Wednesday for Mass
- Brown or black boys topsiders (loafer-style with laces)
- A Black or Brown belt must be worn with pants/shorts

8th grade boys

- Long or short sleeved White Oxford Shirt (button-down) only
- *In addition to white shirts*, 8th graders may wear Blue, Yellow, or Pink Oxford Shirts

*****Tenga en cuenta que se permite usar sudaderas con capucha de SMC en clase, pero NO se consideran parte del uniforme los miércoles para la misa. Los estudiantes aún deben usar un suéter azul marino o un chaleco acrílico azul marino para la misa cada miércoles. En el aula, los estudiantes pueden usar el suéter azul marino tipo pulóver, el chaleco***

pulóver azul marino acrílico o un cardigan azul marino en el aula. No se permiten otras sudaderas y chaquetas de azul marino.

*****Please note that SMC hoodies are allowed to be worn in class, but are NOT considered part of the Wednesday Uniform for Mass. Students must wear a Pullover Navy Sweater or Navy Acrylic Pullover Vest to Mass each Wednesday. In the classroom, students may wear the Pullover Navy Sweater, Navy Acrylic Pullover Vest or a Navy cardigan in the classroom. Other Navy hoodies, sweatshirts and jackets are not allowed.***

Accessories

Personal adornments should be kept to a minimum so as not to distract from the intended simplicity of the school uniform. Make-up, nail polish, big earrings, acrylic nails, and excessive jewelry are not permitted. Girls may wear one pair of small earrings; no dangling or hoop earrings that are a safety hazard during active play. Boys and girls may wear no more than two bracelets. Jewelry must be in good taste and not distract from the intended simplicity of the uniform. Boys may not wear earrings. Students seen with nail polish and/or acrylic nails will be asked to remove them when they go home. After a two day waiting period, students will be required to take them off in the Nurses' Clinic.

Dress Code

The school uniform is to be worn each day by students in Pre-K through 8th grade except on designated non-uniform days. Uniforms should be clean and neat. Blouses and shirts must be solid white with no logos. Hemlines for girls' skirts and jumpers should be no shorter than one inch above the knee, front and back. All school uniforms (skirts, jumpers, sweaters, jackets, blouses, pants, shorts, etc.) should be labeled with the student's name.

Hair Code

Hair should be neat. Boys' hair must be cut above the ear and the collar. No unconventional haircuts or hair colors. The school administration will be the judge of what is and is not conventional. Examples of unconventional haircuts include mohawks, tails, splits, and hair below the collar for boys, or **designs shaved into the hair**. Once a student begins shaving their facial hair, it is their responsibility to remain clean shaven without any facial hair. Students may be removed from school for inappropriate hair and will not be allowed to return until their haircut is compliant.

Physical Education Uniform

Students in 5th-8th grades will change for PE. A gray shirt and navy gym shorts are required. Shorts should be loose fitting and to the knee.

Legal Compliance

Buckley Amendment

St. Mary of Carmel adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) in regard to student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information determined through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the Principal's office. St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School will enforce all court issued documents concerning custody and/or visitation. ***In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full, legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress.***

Child Abuse Laws

St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Texas. State law requires that allegations of child abuse be reported immediately to the Texas Department of Human Services or Child Protective Services. For reporting abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, call 1-800-252-5400 or go to <https://www.txabusehotline.org>.

Allegations by parents, guardians, or children themselves of abuse or neglect must be treated most seriously and must never be dismissed. In the state of Texas, teachers are considered to be mandatory reporters and all statements of concern must be reported. Teachers and school staff are reporters, not investigators and are required to report any concerns.

Title IX

St. Mary of Carmel adheres to the tenets of Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Grievance Procedure

1. **Informal attempt at resolution**

Before allowing differences to become formalized into grievances, every effort should be made to resolve local level disputes by way of free and open discussion between the parent and the teacher. If either party requests, the disputants can request the Principal to sit in on their discussion.

2. **Formal grievance procedure**

All questions and concerns must be addressed in writing to the teacher/staff member in question. If the situation is not resolved during the informal attempt, the parents have five (5) working days to present their concerns to the Principal. If dissatisfaction occurs at that level, parents may ask to meet with the Superintendent and the Principal will arrange this meeting. After such meeting, the Superintendent will present a written response within ten (10) working days. The decision of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools is final.

Reports to and Cooperation with Law Enforcement

Reports to Law Enforcement

Texas law requires the principal of a private school, or his or her designee, to notify law enforcement if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe certain crimes listed in section 37.015 of the Texas Education Code. The notice provided to the police must include the name and address of each student the person believes may have participated in the activity, and must also be provided to each employee of the school who has regular contact with a student whose conduct is the subject of the notice. It is the policy of the Diocese of Dallas and its schools to comply with this statutory requirement.

Cooperation with Law Enforcement and Child Abuse Investigations

Texas law requires schools to make students available for interviews by child protective workers in connection with an investigation into suspected child abuse. The child protective worker may or may not allow a school representative to witness the interview. Diocese of Dallas schools will cooperate with such interview requests.

From time to time, law enforcement officers also seek to interview students while at school in connection with an allegation or suspicion that the student has committed a crime. When faced with such a request, school personnel will refer the requesting officer to the school's chief administrator or his or her designee. The chief administrator or designee will request additional information regarding the nature of the interview requested and the allegations or suspicions relating to the student. The chief administrator or designee will, if the crime is not serious and contemporaneous or imminent, also request that the interview be delayed until the student's parent or other legally responsible adult is present. School personnel will then notify the student's parent, other legally responsible adult, or emergency contact as soon as possible.

If the officer refuses to delay the interview until the student's parent or other legally responsible adult arrives, the chief administrator or designee will request to be present during the interview. **However, if the officer refuses to allow the chief administrator to be present and refuses to delay the interview, school personnel will not physically prevent the officer from conducting the interview, and the parent or other legally responsible adult signing below agrees that the school is under no duty to do so.**

Technology Policy: Computer Use and Intranet/Internet Access

One goal of St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School is to include technology in the School's instructional program in order to promote academic excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Adherence to this Technology Policy is a basic expectation of all administrators, teachers, parents and students. The failure of any user to follow the terms of the technology policy or the technology policy of the Diocese of Dallas will result in the loss of privileges, possible disciplinary action, and may in some circumstances subject the user to legal action.

Privileges

Use of school technology is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of those privileges. The administration will make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated the technology policy and may restrict, revoke, or suspend computer use or Internet access at any time. The administration's decision is final. Using technology from home to complete school work necessitates adherence to our school policies for appropriate usage and behavior. During e-learning, all Zoom calls are recorded.

Availability of Access

Administrators, teachers and students will be granted authorization for access to the school's system by the principal or a system administrator designated by the principal, as it is deemed appropriate. System users may not gain authorized access to the Internet or other resources without permission from their teacher or the designated system administrator.

Safety and Security

The internet contains a wide range of information and data. This does not mean that students should be accessing all information. To protect their own safety and security, as well as that of the school, students will access sites permitted by the teacher only. Students will immediately notify a teacher, the principal or the designated system administrator if a potential security problem exists. A failure to report can result in consequences, even if a student did not visit inappropriate sites themselves.

Network security is a high priority. Keep your password confidential. If you identify a security problem on the Internet, you must notify a teacher, the system administrator or the principal. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Attempts to log on to the Internet as a system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk may be denied access to the network.

Acceptable Use

Computer use and access to the school's network and the Internet must be for the purpose of education or research, and shall always be consistent with the objectives of the School. **No other uses are permitted.**

The school expects system users to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Be polite and use appropriate language. (Cyberbullying of peers will not be tolerated)
- Do not reveal personal addresses or telephone numbers of yourself or others.
- Consider all communications and information accessible via the network to be private property.
- Students may not access private social media accounts on the school's internet and devices.
- Students may not listen to YouTube (or other sites) music videos while working on the school's internet and devices
- Students may not share pictures and videos from school on the internet due to privacy concerns for all students.

Student Email

Student emails may be used to email other @smcschool.org email addresses. System users should only use school electronic mail addresses for internal school purposes. System users should be mindful that use of school-related electronic mail addresses might cause some recipients or other readers of that mail to assume they represent the school, whether or not that was the user's intention. You may not represent the school without the principal's permission.

Vandalism

Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges and will result in other disciplinary actions. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to alter, harm, or destroy hardware, data of another user, the Internet, or any other network.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Deleting/altering the work of peers without permission
- Leaving negative/harmful comments online
- Altering photos of peers
- Creation of inappropriate content

Ownership of Intellectual Property

Copyrighted software or data may not be placed on the school's systems without prior permission from the holder of the copyright and the principal or system administrator. Only the owner(s) or individual(s) the owner specifically authorizes may upload copyrighted material to the system. System users may not redistribute copyrighted programs or data except with the prior written permission of the copyright holder or designee unless permitted by the doctrine of fair use. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the copyright holder or designee in accordance with applicable copyright laws and school policy.

Confidentiality of Information

Information transmitted via the school's systems is considered confidential information and may not be disclosed to persons other than the intended recipient without prior authorization. Users must closely monitor their system passwords. In order to maintain the integrity of the school's systems, users should not disclose their passwords to any other person. No user should attempt to gain access to another user's electronic mailbox, telephone voicemail box, computer files, or Internet account unless expressly authorized to do so by the user whose systems are being accessed, or by an authorized representative of the school.

No Warranties / Disclaimers

The school makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The school will not be responsible for any loss of data. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at your own risk. The school specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet.

Opinions, advice, services, and all other information expressed by system users, information providers, service providers, or other third party individuals in the system are those of the providers and not the school. The school will cooperate fully with local state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the school's technology systems.

Parents and guardians must be aware that while at school direct supervision is not always possible. The school will make reasonable attempts to limit access, but cannot guarantee that system users will not be able to access or create inappropriate material that is prohibited by the Technology Policy. Students are expected to use the resources in a manner consistent with administrative regulations, guidelines, and user agreements and will be

held responsible for their use. Additionally, parents should discuss with their children their own expectations for their child's use of the school's technology.

Family Name: _____

(Please Print)

St. Mary of Carmel Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Due upon enrollment. A student will not be considered enrolled without signatures on this acknowledgement form,

Authorization of Consent to Treat Minor

I/We, the Parents listed below, are the ____ parent(s) / ____ guardians of the Student listed below, and as such do hereby authorize the School named below and its employees, contractors, and adult volunteers as our agent(s) (collectively, "School") to consent to any x-ray examination, anesthetic, medical, dental, or surgical diagnosis or treatment or hospital care which is deemed advisable by, and is to be rendered under the general or specific supervision of, any physician or surgeon licensed under the laws of the jurisdiction where such diagnosis or treatment may be given, whether such diagnosis or treatment is rendered at the office of said physician, at a hospital, or at any other location.

I/we understand that this authorization is given in advance of any specific treatment or diagnosis, but is given to provide authority and power of treatment or hospital care which the aforementioned physician in the exercise of best judgment may deem advisable. This authorization is given pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 32 of the Texas Family Code. This authorization shall remain effective for up to one year from the date of completion of this form, unless sooner revoked in writing delivered to said agent(s).

In consideration of acceptance of this authorization, but without any time limitation and without any future right of revocation, I/we hereby release and agree to fully and unconditionally protect, indemnify, and defend Saint Mary of Carmel School, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and their respective officers, agents, and employees, (collectively, "Indemnitees") and hold each Indemnatee harmless from and against any and all costs, expenses, attorney's fees, claims damages, demands, suits, judgments, losses, or liability for injuries to property, injuries to persons (including Student) and from any other costs, expenses, attorney fees, claims, suits judgments, losses, or liabilities of any and every nature whatsoever arising in any manner, directly or indirectly, out of, in connection with, in the course of, or incidental to such treatment, treatment decisions, diagnosis, or hospital care relating to Student, REGARDLESS OF CAUSE OR OF THE JOINT, COMPARATIVE OR CONCURRENT NEGLIGENCE OF THE INDEMNITEES.

Enrollment

I/We is/are the natural parent(s) or managing conservator(s) of the Student listed below and have the legal authority to enroll Student in the School. Having considered all the facts, I/we believe that enrolling Student in the School for the coming school year is in Student's best interest. I/we understand that School is a Roman Catholic School and that Student's education and the expectations for Student's behavior and the conduct of Student's family in relation to the School community will be consistent with and governed by Christian morals, values, and principles.

I/we have been provided with and have read, understood, and had the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the School's student/family handbook. I/we understand that the handbook is incorporated into this agreement and forms a part of this legally-binding contract. As a result, I/we understand that Student's continued enrollment at School during the coming school year is contingent upon compliance with the policies set out in the handbook by Student and by Student's family in their dealings with the School community. I/we understand and agree that failure to comply with the expectations for conduct

set out in the handbook may result in discipline, up to and including separation of Student from the School at School's sole discretion and without any right to appeal.

I/we understand that I am/we are responsible for providing School with a current and complete copy of any court order affecting Student's enrollment in School or the right of a parent or conservator of Student to make educational decisions for Student, communicate with School, or access Student's educational records. I/we understand that it is not School's responsibility to mediate or resolve disputes regarding custody of Student and related matters, and that involving School in custody and similar disputes requires School to expend unbudgeted time and other resources. I/we have read and agree to the provisions of the School handbook regarding School's right to recover attorneys' fees incurred as a result of Student or family misconduct and custody and related legal matters.

I/we have informed School of all relevant information regarding any special educational or medical needs of Student and agree to advise School if Student's educational or medical needs change during the school year. I/we agree that School may contact any person who signs this agreement or whose name is provided to School as an emergency contact regarding any emergency involving Student and may disclose to those individuals information regarding Student's education, behavior, and/or medical conditions as needed.

I/we have been provided with and understand all necessary information regarding tuition, fees, and costs associated with Student's enrollment at School for the coming school year and am/are satisfied that I/we will be able to pay all such tuition, fees, and costs subject to any applicable financial aid awarded. I/we understand that School's budget for the school year anticipates full payment of all amounts due on behalf of all enrolled students. Accordingly, I/we understand that failure to pay all tuition, fees, and costs in full and on time may, in School's sole discretion, result in Student's separation from School without any refund of amounts already paid.

Parent Consent and Release Form

The School offers students the opportunity to participate in a wide range of education, extracurricular, and athletic activities, both on and off campus. The School believes that parents, students, and the School community are best-served when parents and students together determine the range of activities that are appropriate for a particular student's participation. Parents should review the opportunities listed below, determine which activities are appropriate for their student's participation, and students and parents should sign where indicated below for each activity.

Student Name ("Student"):	
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Athletics: Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms below, by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's participation in School-sponsored athletic activities, including without limitation athletics-related training and exercise programs, practices, School-sponsored pre- and post-game activities, games, competitions, and tournaments. I/we have read, discussed with Student, and understand the Student conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued participation in athletics is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct when engaged in any School-related activity, whether academic, athletic, or otherwise.

Parent(s) initials:	Yes:	No:
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Transportation to/from Athletics: Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms below, by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's use of School-sponsored transportation to and from any and all School-sponsored athletics activities described above. I/we have read and discussed with Student the conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued use of School transportation is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct.

Parent(s) initials:	Yes:	No:
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Extra-curricular Activities: Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms below, by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's participation in School-sponsored extracurricular activities, including on-campus and off-campus extracurricular activities. I/we have read and discussed with Student the conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued participation in extracurricular activities is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct when engaged in any School-sponsored activity, whether academic, extracurricular, or otherwise.

Parent(s) initials:	Yes:	No:
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Transportation to/from Extracurricular Activities: Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms below, by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's use of School-sponsored transportation to and from any and all School-sponsored extracurricular activities described above. I/we have read and discussed with Student the conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued use of School transportation is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct.

Parent(s) initials:	Yes:	No:
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Video/Image Release: I/we understand that, from time to time, photographs and video images are taken of students, individually and as a class, for use in school yearbooks, promotional and marketing materials, the school website, and similar publications. Subject to the Release and Consideration and Indemnification terms below, by my/our initials below, and for good and valuable consideration, I hereby grant to the School the irrevocable and unrestricted right to make, use and/or publish any and all photographs, videos, and other images of Student, or images in which Student may be included, now existing or hereafter made, in any case, with or without identifying Student, for the following purposes: individual student and class pictures; school or Diocesan promotional, marketing, or organizational publications (e.g., yearbook, school, or Diocesan publications); and for use on the school website. I authorize the School to publish such photographs, images, and video in any manner and medium, to alter the same without restriction, and to copyright the same.		
Parent(s) initials:	Yes:	No:
Student: <i>If age 18 or over, initial appropriate box to the right:</i>	Yes:	No:

Release and Indemnification:

For and in consideration of admitting Student to School, allowing Student to participate in any of the activities described above, and for other good and valuable consideration, on behalf of myself, Student, and our respective heirs, assigns, survivors, estates, beneficiaries, I hereby release and agree to fully and unconditionally protect, indemnify, and defend School, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and their respective officers, agents, and employees, (collectively, “Indemnitees”) and hold each Indemnitee harmless from and against any and all costs, expenses, attorney’s fees, claims damages, demands, suits, judgments, losses, or liability for injuries to property, injuries to persons (including Student) and from any other costs, expenses, attorney fees, claims, suits judgments, losses, or liabilities of any and every nature whatsoever arising in any manner, directly or indirectly, out of, in connection with, in the course of, or incidental to any activity described above in this Section 10.

Acknowledgement and agreement

By my signature below, I agree that I will comply and will require the student listed below to comply with the school's policies, procedures, and instructions, and understand that such compliance by me, the student, and persons connected to the school by reason of the student is a condition of the student's continued enrollment in the school. I also understand and agree that the timely payment of all tuition, fees, and costs imposed by the school is also a condition of the student's continued enrollment in the school. Furthermore, by signing below, I represent, warrant, and agree that I am authorized to sign this agreement, undertake the duties, and grant the releases set forth herein on behalf of Student.

Student Name (print):	
School Name (print):	
Parent Name (print):	
Parent Signature:	
School year:	
Date:	

St. Mary of Carmel School
Acceptable Use Policy for Computers and the Internet
School Year 2023 – 2024

1. I will use the school computers and the Internet for educationally relevant purposes.
2. I will use the school computers under the permission and supervision of school personnel.
3. I will respect the rights of copyright owners and will not plagiarize work that I find on the Internet.
4. I will only use appropriate language and will not send, forward, access or post any material that is likely to be offensive, personal, or threatening to recipients or viewers.
5. I will not access games or social media websites while working on school computers.
6. I will not download any files or execute attachments from unknown sources that I did not request or expect to receive.
7. I will not use e-mail, enter any chat rooms or use instant messaging for personal reasons.
8. I will respect all school hardware and take caution so as not to damage any equipment. I understand that I am responsible financially for any damage I may cause.
9. I will not make any changes to the computer setup (including but not limited to changes to the Windows' Desktop such as changing the background picture).
10. I will never send any personal information without first checking with my teacher. Personal information includes pictures, names, addresses, e-mail addresses, home phone numbers or location of my school.
11. I will not trespass, delete or tamper with anyone else's files, folders, or work.
12. I will promptly inform a teacher if any messages I receive are inappropriate.
13. I understand computer files are not private. Teachers may view the contents at any time in order to maintain system integrity.
14. I understand that all Class Zoom calls are recorded for tracking purposes.
15. I understand that the Internet, although a valuable resource for education, has some sites that contain inappropriate images and text. I will do my best to avoid going to those sites, and, if I access one accidentally, I will turn the monitor off and inform my teacher immediately. The school will not be held responsible for the content of the Internet.

I understand that should I violate this contract, the consequences could be the revocation of all computer use and Internet access.

I, _____, pledge to follow these rules while using any instructional technologies at school. I have read the above and understand the consequences.

Student's signature: _____ Date: _____

I, _____, have read the above and discussed it with my daughter/son. He/she has my permission to use the school computers, iPads, have access the Internet, and use technology at school.

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

COPPA Agreement

Our school uses certain web-based tools and other applications that assist your child in learning. In order for your child under age 13 to use those tools and applications, federal law requires that you provide your consent. A list of the applications and web-based services our school uses, or may choose to use, has been enclosed with this parental consent form. In order for your child to use these programs and services, your child must provide certain personally identifying information. Generally, this information is limited to first and last name, a user name, and email address.

Privacy policies for the programs can be found on the websites of the developers of these applications. If you have questions about a particular policy or would like further information about these privacy policies, please review the applicable website or contact your child's teacher.

Under the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, the operators of these educational applications and services must notify you, as your child's parent, and obtain your consent before collecting limited personal information from children under the age of 13.

The law permits schools to consent to the collection of personal information on behalf of all of its students. This form, when completed below and on file with us, will authorize our school to provide consent for your child to provide personal identifying information, consisting of first and last name, a username, and an email address, to the operators of applications identified on the enclosed list.

If you consent to your child providing personal identifying information to use the applications and web services, check the OPT-IN box below. By checking the OPT-IN box, you expressly authorize St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School to provide your child's first name, last name, username, and email address to the operators of one or more of the applications identified on the enclosed list. You also agree to release and indemnify our school from and against any claims arising out of our providing such information to the operators of the applications and services listed on the enclosed list.

If you do not want our school to provide this information, select the OPT-OUT box below. Note that checking the OPT-OUT box will prevent your child from participating in certain educational activities, including the use of the applications on the enclosed list. While our school will generally make reasonable attempts to provide alternative assignments to your child, we reserve the right to determine that a student's consistent inability to participate in the assigned curriculum may impair the student's academic progress at our school and require that you and we explore other options.

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (PRINT): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

OPT IN ____OR OPT OUT ____

Nuestra escuela utiliza ciertas herramientas y aplicaciones a través del internet que estimulan el aprendizaje de su hijo. Para que su hijo menor de 13 años utilice estas herramientas y aplicaciones, la ley federal requiere que usted dé su consentimiento. Una lista de las aplicaciones y servicios a través del internet que utiliza nuestra escuela, o que puede decidir utilizar, ha sido incluida con este formulario de consentimiento de los padres de familia. Para poder utilizar estos programas y servicios, su hijo debe proporcionar cierta información de identificación personal. Generalmente, esta información se limita a su nombre y apellido, un nombre de usuario y dirección de correo electrónico.

Los reglamentos de privacidad de los programas pueden encontrarse en los sitios web de los diseñadores de estas aplicaciones. Si usted tiene preguntas acerca de un reglamento en particular o desea información adicional acerca de estos reglamentos de privacidad, le pedimos que revise el sitio web correspondiente o se ponga en contacto con el maestro de su hijo. Bajo la Ley Federal de Protección de la Privacidad Infantil en Internet, los operadores de estas aplicaciones y servicios educativos deben notificarle a usted, como padre de su hijo, y obtener su consentimiento antes de recopilar información personal limitada de niños menores de 13 años.

La ley permite que las escuelas den su consentimiento a la recopilación de información personal en nombre de todos sus estudiantes. Esta forma, al ser llenada y conservada en nuestros archivos, autorizará a nuestra escuela a dar el consentimiento para que su hijo proporcione información de identificación personal, la cual consta de nombre y apellido, un nombre de usuario y una dirección de correo electrónico, a los operadores de las aplicaciones identificadas en la lista adjunta.

Si usted da su consentimiento para que su hijo proporcione información de identificación personal para utilizar las aplicaciones y servicios a través del internet, marque la casilla AUTORIZO en la parte de abajo. Al marcar la casilla AUTORIZO, usted autoriza expresamente que la Escuela Católica de Santa María proporcione nombre, apellido, nombre de usuario y dirección de correo electrónico de su hijo a los operadores de una o más de las aplicaciones identificadas en la lista adjunta. Asimismo, usted acuerda liberar e indemnizar a nuestra escuela de y contra cualquier reclamación que surja al proporcionar dicha información a los operadores de las aplicaciones y servicios que se encuentran en la lista adjunta.

Si usted no desea que nuestra escuela proporcione dicha información, seleccione la casilla NO AUTORIZO en la parte de abajo. Tenga en cuenta que la casilla NO AUTORIZO evitará que su hijo participe en ciertas actividades educativas, incluyendo el uso de las aplicaciones incluidas en la lista adjunta. Si bien nuestra escuela generalmente hará los intentos razonables para proporcionar tareas alternativas para su hijo, nos reservamos el derecho de determinar si el impedimento constante de que un estudiante participe en el plan de estudios asignado perjudique el progreso académico del estudiante en la escuela y requiere que tanto usted como nosotros exploremos otras opciones.

Nombre del Estudiante: _____

Nombre del Padre/Tutor (IMPRESO): _____

Firma del Padre/Tutor: _____

AUTORIZO _____ O NO AUTORIZO _____ Fecha: _____

Right to Amend

St. Mary of Carmel reserves the right to amend this handbook. Parents will be notified of any changes made to the handbook.

School Directory Information Release

I, _____, give St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School permission to release the information provided below in the school directory both in print and on-line. The School directory will never be shared for promotional purposes.

Parent Names _____

Children Names & Grades	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

Parent Signature

Date