

ST. MARY'S INSTITUTE

2019/2020 PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. DEDICATION

All glory and honor to Our Blessed Lady, patroness of our school, without whose inspiration and blessing this handbook would not have been possible.

To the numerous people who serve and preserve the vision and integrity of our school from its conception, we are grateful. Through their tireless efforts, sacrifices, and forethought we are able to maintain the tradition of Catholic education at St. Mary's Institute. We are indebted to their steadfastness, their prayers, and their unending support throughout the years.

1.2. MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint you with the philosophy, policies, and procedures of St. Mary's Institute. It is our hope that the information contained in this handbook will strengthen our school community.

We believe that parents and guardians hold the primary right and serious obligation to educate their children. We recognize parents and guardians delegate this sacred trust to their chosen school. The whole-hearted efforts and goals of St. Mary's Institute's administration, faculty, and staff are directed to the interests and the well-being of the students entrusted to our care. We, at St. Mary's Institute, are concerned with the instruction and development of the minds, the formation of strong wills, and the fostering of good Christian habits in our students, as well as their social attitude toward others.

1.3. RIGHT TO AMEND

St. Mary's Institute reserves the right to amend this handbook. Notice of amendments will be communicated accordingly. The pastor and the principal are the final recourse in situations and reserve the right to waive any and all regulations for just cause in his or her discretion.

2. SCHOOL HISTORY, MISSION, PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

2.1. HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S INSTITUTE

St. Mary's Institute was founded in 1880 by Fr. John McIncrow, then pastor of St. Mary's Church. It was located next to the church on Main St. In 1881, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet took over the direction of the school at the request of Fr. McIncrow. It began with Grades K-12 and grew rapidly. In 1909, St. Mary's Institute moved to Forbes St. to accommodate the increasing enrollment. In 1966, St. Mary's Institute High School became a Diocesan Regional High School and was named Bishop Scully High School. The elementary school remained on Forbes St. until 1975 and then returned to East Main St. and occupied the former school.

After the closing of Bishop Scully High School in 1990, St. Mary's Institute moved to its present location off Upper Church St. on January 2, 1991.

The strong commitment to Catholic education and the foresight to provide an academically sound program, morally solid and contemporary enough to meet the changing needs of its students and their families, remains the common goal of all St. Mary's Institute's leaders, past and present. Under this leadership and in conjunction with the financial support of the parish, St. Mary's Institute prospers and continues to grow. To accommodate enrollment, a new addition was built in 1995 and opened in September 1996.

2.2. MISSION STATEMENTS

2.2.1. Schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany Mission Statement

The schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, guided by the mission of Jesus, are places where students witness, share, and grow in the faith community. While offering excellent academic programs, the schools provide for the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of each individual within the framework of Catholic Christian values to witness God's unconditional love and bring Christ's healing presence to the world.

2.2.2. St. Mary's Parish Mission Statement

St. Mary's Church is a community of faith, nourished by Word and Sacrament, who trusting in the merits of Jesus Christ and justified by grace through faith, seek to love the Gospel in the world today.

2.2.3. St. Mary's Institute Mission Statement

St. Mary's Institute is a private Catholic school that engages the whole student in **SERVICE** through Christ, inspired by our Catholic faith, with the **MISSION** of pursuing academic excellence with **INTEGRITY**.

2.3. ACCREDITATION

St. Mary's Institute is accredited by the AdvancED North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI).

2.4. PHILOSOPHY

At St. Mary's Institute, our Catholic Faith is woven into everything we do. This engagement of the **whole student** is designed and directed toward the well-being of our students: to guide them spiritually, intellectually, socially and physically.

2.5. VISION

- **Service.** SMI students live their Faith through personal, Christian service.
- **Mission.** SMI students are driven to achieve academic excellence.
- **Integrity.** SMI students are honest and are led by a strong moral compass.

3. SCHOOL POLICIES

3.1. ADMISSION POLICY

St. Mary's Institute does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, or national origin in its employment practices or

admission policy. A child entering Early Childhood, Pre-Kindergarten, and Kindergarten must be three, four, and five-years old respectively, on or before December 1 of the registration year. Parents or guardians must bring a copy of the child's birth certificate, a medical record of immunizations, and a baptismal certificate, if applicable.

3.2. TRANSFER STUDENTS

Transfer students will be placed on an 8-10 week probation period. All new students are expected to uphold the rules and regulations of St. Mary's Institute. If the transfer student has not demonstrated an acceptable behavior and attitude, parents or guardians will be notified and a conference will be held to discuss the matter.

3.3. STUDENT RECORDS

St. Mary's Institute adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the U.S. Mail or school district courier. No records will be given to individuals to transport to the new school.

Any tuition and fees owed (including late withdrawal fee) must be paid in full before records may be transferred to another school.

Students requesting records, transcripts, or recommendations must make a request to the school office. All forms should be submitted to the St. Mary's Institute for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail.

3.4. BEHAVIOR POLICY

The faculty, staff, parents, and students at St. Mary's Institute will work together to reinforce positive behavior and attitudes.

We believe all students can behave appropriately during the school day. We do not tolerate students stopping the teaching and learning process. In order to guarantee all students the excellent learning climate they deserve, St. Mary's Institute employs the following behavior policy:

- Follow directions;
- Respect other's space, belongings, and feelings;
- Follow the teacher's directives regarding classroom seating;
- Do your own work;
- Use school equipment properly;
- Be prompt for class;
- Show appropriate behavior in Liturgy, on the playground, in the cafeteria, and hallways;
- Smoking or possession of materials for smoking, alcohol and drugs are forbidden;
- Fighting, name calling, disturbing, aggravating, and harassing others are forbidden;
- iPods and electronic games are not allowed in school;
- Gum chewing or eating candy is not allowed on school premises;
- Excessive or extreme jewelry, make-up, hairstyles/extreme hair colors and fads are not permitted. *Please see Principal for clarification on what is considered "excessive or extreme".*

3.4.1. General

- Be kind and considerate of one another;
- Use language that is becoming to a Christian boy or girl.

3.4.2. Playground and Outdoors

- Share playground equipment and playground space;

- Fighting, pushing, shoving, tripping, poking, and wrestling are unacceptable actions;
- The throwing of snowballs is forbidden;
- Games that require physical contact are unsafe and are not allowed;
- No food or drink is to be taken out to the playground area.

3.4.3. Cafeteria

- Walk quietly to and from the cafeteria;
- Say thank you as you receive your food, milk, or snacks;
- Sit at assigned tables, and stay seated while eating;
- Speak in a conversational tone of voice;
- Keep table and floor neat;
- Wait for the teacher on duty to dismiss each table;
- Finish lunch in the cafeteria;
- Students are expected to throw away their garbage at one time to avoid going back and forth to the trash can;
- No throwing of food is allowed;
- Students must ask permission from teacher on duty to use the bathroom.

3.4.4. Hallways and Stairs

- Keep hands off other people;
- Walk in the halls and on stairways;
- Quiet should be maintained at all times;
- No running in hallways at anytime.

3.5. DISCIPLINE POLICY

St. Mary's Institute is a Christian community that thrives on respect and love. A firm commitment toward individual responsibility is necessary for all students. It is expected that students will obey rules and regulations of St. Mary's Institute, as well as the ordinary rules of courtesy and good behavior. It is important that students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the values reflected in the school philosophy.

3.5.1. Student Responsibilities

- To show respect for administration, teachers, staff and students;
- To obey rules and procedures established by school and administration;
- To obey rules and procedures established by each teacher;
- To be present and punctual daily;
- To complete projects and homework assignments daily;
- To participate appropriately at liturgies and school assemblies;
- To practice courtesy and good manners at all times;
- To cooperate with the teachers to maintain a pleasant and supportive learning atmosphere.

3.5.2. Disciplinary Consequences

The teacher is responsible for the discipline of the classroom. Teachers will contact parents or guardians if the student exhibits continual misbehavior or lack of cooperation. Discipline consequences are to be age appropriate, reasonable, and done in a timely manner. Consequences can involve lunch detention, after school detention, or in-school suspension.

Disciplinary consequences will be assigned for the following:

- Tardiness to class after class exchange;
- Excessive loud talking in the hallways;
- Going to lockers during times other than those designated;
- Being disruptive during class;
- Failure to return parent signature (note, test, progress reports);
- Three or more missing assignments;
- Unexcused tardiness to school;

- Gum chewing or eating candy during school time.
- Use of non-approved electronic devices or phones.

The teacher assigning detention will determine the day of after school detention. No exceptions for after school detention will be made unless a note written and signed by a parent is returned to the teacher, or the teacher cannot stay due to an unexpected situation. In such a case, arrangements will be made for a different day.

3.5.3. In-School Suspension

In-school suspension removes a student from all class activities for one day. The student is assigned class work to be done during the school day in a room designated by the principal. Parents will be notified if in-school suspension is to occur. The following non-compliance of these rules will result in in-school suspension:

- Blatant disrespect to administration, faculty, staff or students;
- Using obscene, profane, or abusive language;
- Fighting and acts of violent behavior;
- Stealing, cheating, and lying;
- Serious offense of school rules will be at the discretion of the principal;

3.5.4. Suspension

Suspension of a student by the principal is the temporary removal of a student from school for a limited time. A student will be suspended from school for continual occurrences of the above actions or serious actions which may affect the safety of others. Parents or guardians will be notified if this is to occur.

3.5.5. Expulsion

If the student has shown absolutely no improvement in behavior or attitude after he or she has served in-school suspension or suspension, the student may be asked to leave St. Mary's Institute. Threats or acts of violence may result in expulsion. The Superintendent of the Catholic Schools will be notified of any proposed expulsion.

3.6. ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

In order to obtain the maximum benefit from school, students must be in regular attendance. We ask parents or guardians to take this responsibility very seriously as excessive absences will hinder your child's academic progress.

New York State law requires that a student be present at school unless prevented by illness. Written excuses for absence and tardiness are necessary when the student returns to school. The excuse must be signed by the parent or guardian and presented to the teacher. Excuses should note both the date(s) of absence or tardiness and a legal reason. Students should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. **Text messages/emails are not accepted. All excuses must be handwritten.**

If a student is absent from school, a parent or guardian must call the school office before 8:30 a.m. each day of the absence. This is to ensure that the student is at home. If the office does not receive a call, a parent will be contacted. A student is marked late if he or she arrives at 8:00 a.m. or later.

If a student is leaving school during school hours, he or she must report to the office and sign out and then sign in when returning. The parent or guardian must also sign their child out when leaving school grounds for any reason.

Excessive absenteeism can be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for another year. It is recommended that parents arrange their vacation time to coincide with the school calendar.

3.7. TUITION AND STUDENT FEES

As we strive to make our program affordable and accessible, St. Mary's Institute offers tuition payment options. Tuition is paid directly to St. Mary's Institute or by using the FACTS Tuition Management Program. Your tuition payments will be deducted automatically from your bank account. When you sign the tuition agreement form, you authorize your bank to deduct your tuition payment from your account.

Tuition may be paid in the following ways:

- pay in full directly to St. Mary's Institute on or before July 31;
- pay tuition in monthly installments via FACTS Tuition Management;
- pay in full or in monthly installments to St. Mary's Institute through MasterCard or Visa.

Materials and Technology fees are added to the total tuition bill. These fees are clearly stated on the school website and tuition letters sent home each year. *A late withdrawal fee is due for families withdrawing a student after February 28.*

3.7.1 Financial Aid Program

St. Mary's Institute offers grants and scholarships to eligible students. If you wish to request support from the financial aid program and be considered for any award, a FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment application must be completed.

FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment will conduct the financial need analysis for St. Mary's Institute. Families applying for financial aid will need to complete an online application and submit the necessary supporting documentation to FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment by April 15. All supporting documentation can be uploaded in PDF format online. Documentation can also be faxed to 1-866-315-9264 or mailed FACTS. Please be sure to include the applicant ID on all faxed or mailed correspondence.

Be advised supporting documentation must accompany your application. Your application will remain at a "submitted" status until these documents are received. Once all supporting information is received, your application status will be changed to "verified". Please note only verified applications will be considered for an award.

All participants of the financial aid program are required to provide the school with five (5) hours of volunteer service before the school year end and participation in the two (2) student-driven fundraisers is mandatory.

3.8. STUDENT DRESS CODE

Uniforms are a time-honored Catholic tradition which symbolizes our belief in equality. They readily identify our students. Adherence to dress code regulations exemplifies school spirit and the discipline necessary to follow rules. Students must follow the uniform regulations. Parents or guardians will be notified by the homeroom teacher if the student's attire does not conform to the uniform regulations.

We are proud to partner with Lands' End and B. Lodge & Co., our exclusive school uniform providers. Visit the Student Life section of the school website for information. Please label all uniform items with

your child's first and last name. *When placing Lands' End online orders, use our preferred school number 900159427.*

3.8.1. Grades K-5 Winter Uniform

Students in Grades K-5 must wear the winter October 1 through April 30.

Girls' Winter Uniform:

- Blue plaid jumper or navy blue slacks;
- White or light blue blouse;
- Navy blue sweater with school name embroidered;
- White or navy blue socks, tights, or knee highs;
- Black or brown dress shoes.

Boys' Winter Uniform:

- Gray dress pants;
- White or light blue dress shirt;
- Navy blue tie;
- Navy blue sweater with school name embroidered;
- Gray, black, blue or white socks;
- Black or brown dress shoes;
- Belt (Grades K-1, optional).

3.8.2. Grades 6-8 Winter Uniform

Students in Grades 6-8 must wear the winter October 1 through April 30.

Girls' Winter Uniform:

- Blue plaid pleated skirt or navy blue dress slacks;
- White or light blue blouse, or navy blue polo shirt with collar;
- Navy blue sweater with school name embroidered;
- White or navy blue socks, tights, or knee highs;
- Black or brown dress shoes.

Boys' Winter Uniform:

- Gray dress pants;
- White or light blue dress shirt;
- Navy blue tie;
- Navy blue sweater with school name embroidered;
- Gray, black, blue or white socks;
- Black or brown dress shoes;
- Belt.

3.8.3. Optional Fall and Spring Uniform

Students may wear the optional fall and spring uniform September through September 30, and May 1 through the end of the school year in June.

Girls' Fall and Spring Uniform:

- Khaki shorts or skort;
- Navy blue polo shirt with collar;
- White crew or cuff socks;
- Black or brown dress shoes.

Boys' Fall and Spring Uniform:

- Khaki shorts or khaki dress pants
- Navy blue polo shirt with collar;
- White crew or cuff socks;
- Black or brown dress shoes;

3.8.4. Gym Uniform

Students in Grades K-5 must wear the gym uniform to school on gym days. Students in Grades 6-8 may change in and out of the gym uniform or wear it throughout the day.

Girls' and Boys' Gym Uniform:

- White or navy blue t-shirt with school name;
- Navy blue crewneck sweatshirt with school name;
- Navy blue sweatpants with school name;
- Navy blue gym shorts with school name (May and June);
- Sneakers.

3.8.5. Early Childhood & Pre-K Uniform

Students in Early Childhood and Pre-K must wear the designated uniform shirt options each day to school. Students may wear the bottoms and footwear of their choice. Sneakers should be worn on gym days.

Girls' and Boys' Uniform:

- White, gray or navy blue t-shirt with school name;
- Navy blue crewneck sweatshirt with school name;
- White, gray or navy blue sweater or long sleeve t-shirt with school name.

3.8.6. Uniform Closet

The uniform closet is located across from the school library. Parents and guardians may visit the uniform closet for gently used and, in some cases, new uniforms. In an effort to maintain the closet, we encourage you to donate or swap items that no longer fit your child.

3.8.7. Non-Uniform Days

Students may wear clothing that is appropriate for wear in a Catholic school. Comfortable, but appropriate clothing, including shorts that are mid-thigh or longer, and tops that are not tube, halter, or with midriff showing may be worn. It is advised that sandals and flip-flops are not worn, as students are not as safe when running and playing. There should be no writing on clothing that is in any way violent or offensive in any manner. We rely on our parents or guardians to see that the children are dressed appropriately and cannot list every possibility that might be deemed inappropriate. Children who are not dressed properly will be asked to call home for a change of clothes.

3.9. USE OF THE TELEPHONE

The students may not use the office phone to call home for forgotten material. Students should be made responsible for having all of their materials and assignments with them. Use of the school phone for making social arrangements is forbidden.

3.10. CELL PHONES & DEVICES

Although we strongly advise against it, cell phones or related devices may ONLY be brought to school under the following conditions:

- Cell phones/devices must be kept in the OFF position from the time students arrive in the building until departure.
- Students are to turn in their cell phones/devices to their homeroom teacher upon entering their homeroom;
- Cell phones/devices will be returned to the students by the homeroom teacher at dismissal;
- Students attending the after-school program or after school activities must turn in their cell phones/devices to after school personnel or supervising adult;
- Text messaging, video chatting, and the like are not permitted;

- No harassment or threatening of persons via the cell phone/device is permitted;
- Cell phones/devices may not be used to take pictures, record video or sound, play games, access the Internet or e-mail, or to make purchases of any kind;
- Students may not use the cell phone/device while riding the school bus to and from school;

Any student who violates any of the rules regarding cell phones/devices may forfeit their privileges of bringing them to school. Should a student need to contact their parent or guardian, the office phone remains available during the school day and after school hours.

4.5. COMMUNICATION

Open lines of communication are an important means of strengthening the cooperative efforts among parents, teachers, and students. Should the occasion arise when a parent or guardian has a question or concern regarding a school matter, they should contact the proper school authority as soon as possible. If it is a classroom matter, the teacher should be contacted first. If more attention is necessary, please contact the principal.

Upcoming events and all other matters that affect the well-being of the students can be viewed in weekly e-Newsletters, in handouts from the teacher and principal, the monthly calendar and letter, teacher websites/Google classroom (where applicable), on the school website and at the lobby message center. Parents are encouraged to attend two important school addresses annually: Back to School Night (September) and the State of the School (February). You can also follow our school on Facebook for regular announcements and updates.

If you should find it necessary to call the office with a message for a teacher or for your child, please do so before 10:00 a.m. so that the message can be given during lunch periods.

4.5.1. Monthly Communication Envelope

The monthly communication envelope will be distributed the first week of each month to the youngest student or only child. Please carefully read the principal's letter and other contents for pertinent information. Kindly sign and return the envelope and any correspondence to school each month.

4.5.2. Weather-Related Closings, Delays, and Emergency Alerts

When it is necessary for the Greater Amsterdam School District to close or delay school due to inclement weather, St. Mary's Institute is also closed or delayed. Please listen to local radio and television stations to receive this information. If school is delayed one hour or more, part-time Early Childhood or Pre-Kindergarten programs are not in session. In addition, St. Mary's Institute uses SchoolReach to send emergency alerts and notifications via text and phone.

4.6. CRISIS PLAN

St. Mary's Institute maintains a crisis plan in case of an emergency. All staff is aware of the procedure to follow to keep children safe. In the event of such an emergency, the building may be evacuated, and students will be moved to a secure designated location, circumstances permitting.

4.7. SCHOOL VISITS

If parents or guardians wish to speak with a teacher, he or she must report to the school office when entering the school. Visits to classrooms are not permitted during school hours unless previous arrangements have been made through the school office. All visitors are required to wear a visitor badge at all times while within the school.

All school doors are locked during the school day. The main entrance and the door nearest the crosswalk will be unlocked in the morning from 7-8 a.m. The door nearest the crosswalk will be unlocked for dismissal, 1:40-2:15 p.m. Anyone entering the building at other times during the day must ring the bell at the main entrance sign in and receive a visitors' pass from the main office.

4.8. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation request forms are available at the time of registration and must be submitted by April 1. Please inquire as to whether bussing is available for your location.

4.9. HEALTH SERVICES

A full-time licensed practical nurse is provided by the Greater Amsterdam School District. The licensed practical nurse is responsible for conducting health programs throughout the school year.

If a child becomes ill during the school day, the licensed practical nurse will notify the parent or guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to arrange to have the child picked up.

4.9.1. Medications

Parents or guardians must write a permission slip stating that the licensed practical nurse may administer the medication. The medication must be brought to school by a parent or guardian in the original container and given to the licensed practical nurse. This information will be recorded in the student's health file. Medications may be given during the school day with written permission from a doctor.

The procedure for administering prescription medications is as follows:

- Parents or guardians must submit a written request to the licensed practical nurse for medication to be administered to the student.
- The request must include the following information: a written order from the child's physician that states type of medication, dosage, observable symptoms that might indicate an emergency, duration of the order, diagnosis or reason for medication, etc.

Under no circumstances should a child bring medication to school. It must be delivered to the licensed practical nurse or the principal by the parent or guardian. Any non-prescription medication must also be given to the licensed practical nurse by the parent or guardian authorizing the licensed practical nurse to administer the medication.

All medication will be kept in a locked cabinet and in the original container. A log of the actual time of dispensing the medication is to be kept by the licensed practical nurse. If the medication is not dispensed, the log is to show the reason why and the steps taken to notify the parents or guardians.

Please notify the licensed practical nurse aware of any illness, disease, surgery, hospitalization, immunization or any other pertinent health information regarding your child.

4.9.2. Legislation Regarding the Use of Inhalers

Inhalers should be kept in the health office. If a student needs to use the inhaler at a specific time during the day, he or she is to report to the health office.

If the student has permission from the doctor, parent, or guardian to carry their inhaler because the student is subject to sudden asthmatic attacks severe enough to debilitate the student, then the student will have written permission from the doctor, parent, and guardian to carry the inhaler.

4.9.3. Food Allergies

St. Mary's Institute recognizes that life threatening food allergies are an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with food allergies. In order to minimize the incidence of life threatening allergic reactions, St. Mary's Institute will maintain a system-wide procedure for addressing life threatening allergic reactions and maintain an emergency action plan for any student whose parent or guardian, and physicians have informed the school in writing that the student has a potentially life threatening allergy.

4.9.4 Immunizations

New York State law requires all students to schedule/receive certain immunizations or submit a medical exemption by September 19 to attend school. Please refer to NYS law for specific requirements.

4.10. SCHOOL LUNCHES

Hot lunches are served each day in the school cafeteria. A carton of milk is included with the price of lunch. Milk may also be purchased separately by students who bring their lunch. Soup, fruit, healthy snacks, and other beverages are also available for purchase during lunch. Families should utilize 'My School Bucks' for adding funds to lunch accounts.

Lunch menus are distributed monthly to the parents or guardians and menus are also posted in each classroom and on the school website.

4.11. BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Student birthday treats may be brought to school with prior approval from the teacher. They should be simple and easy to distribute. If invitations to a party are given at school, these are to be given to either all the boys or all the girls, or to the entire class. Selective inviting to parties should be done through the mail or by phone, so that there are no hurt feelings. Please be sensitive to this matter.

4.12. LOCKERS

Each student is assigned a locker or cubby in which to store clothing and textbooks. In order to maintain a quiet atmosphere, students are allowed to go to their lockers only at specified times. The school reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time without probable or reasonable cause. Lockers may not be decorated inside or out.

4.13. LOST AND FOUND

Articles found on school premises are brought to the office first and then to the clothing rack nearest the playground entrance (near locker rooms). Lost articles may be identified and claimed at any time. Items must be marked with the child's first and last name, thereby facilitating the identification process. **Uniform items that are**

not claimed at the end of each quarter will be considered a donation to the Uniform Closet. Other unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

4.14. UPDATING CONTACT INFORMATION

Parents and guardians are requested to notify the school office in writing of any change of address, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, or phone numbers of emergency contacts.

5. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

5.1. CURRICULUM

St. Mary's Institute develops curricula based on the established standards of the New York State Department of Education and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany Catholic Schools Curriculum Guide. SMI integrates **next-generation learning** into every school day. The school offers student-centered, interdisciplinary connections between **STREAM** (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts and Math) and standard curriculum. Comprehensive 21st Century learning opportunities are abundant at SMI, preparing students for high school and beyond.

St. Mary's Institute follows the Catholic teaching and doctrine. Religion classes are taught from Early Childhood through Grade 8, and special religious programming is offered at age-appropriate levels.

5.2. EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

St. Mary's Institute offers an Early Childhood and Pre-Kindergarten Program for three and four-year-old children. Children entering the Early Childhood Program or the Pre-Kindergarten Program must be three or four-years old by December 1 of the registered year.

The Early Childhood Program and Pre-Kindergarten curriculum are correlated with the Learning Standards of New York State for Kindergarten. Our aim is to fulfill the needs of the **whole student** through the development of proper spiritual, social, and emotional attitudes. The full academic program provides for a balance of active time, quiet time, and indoor and outdoor motor activities, and specials (Art, Physical Education, Music, Library).

5.3. GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system consists of performance levels, percentages, and corresponding standard indicators at the different grade levels and in different courses. In grade 3-8, numerical averages will be used with 70% and above considered passing.

5.3.1. Grading System

Prekindergarten Grading System

M - Meets expectations

P - Show progress in meeting expectations

NY - Does not yet meet expectation

NA - Not assessed at this time

Kindergarten – Grade 2 Rubric Performance Levels

4 - Student work demonstrates a thorough and consistent understanding of grade level standards and objectives.

3 - Student work demonstrates an understanding of grade level standards and objectives.

2 - Student work demonstrates a partial understanding of grade level standards and objectives.

1 - Student work demonstrates minimal understanding of grade level standards and objectives

Standard, Effort, Conduct, Personal Growth Codes

E - Excellent

S - Satisfactory

N - Needs Improvement

NA - Not Assessed at this time

5.3.3. Awards Criteria

Quarterly certificates of achievement are presented to students who meet the criteria as outlined below:

High Honors (Gr. 6-8): 94% or above overall average

Honors (Gr. 6-8): 87% or above overall average

Honorable Mention (Gr. 6-8): 80% or above overall average

Perfect Attendance (All grades): 0 days absent, 0 days tardy

5.4. ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Student progress is evaluated on an on-going basis through class work, subject area testing, and report cards throughout the school year. Communication with parents and guardians is maintained throughout the school year by means of progress reports, phone calls, e-mail, and conferences. Parents and guardians are encouraged to use PowerSchool Parent Access to monitor students' progress from home. A letter containing your username and password is provided to you at the beginning of the school year.

5.5. PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are distributed each quarter to the parents and guardians of students in Grades 3-8 about four weeks prior to the end of the marking period. Progress reports are to be signed and returned to the school as soon as possible.

5.6. REPORT CARDS

Report cards for students in Grades PK-8 are distributed at the end of each quarter. Report cards may be given to parents and guardians at the first and third quarter Parent and Teacher conferences. Report cards are distributed to students the second and fourth quarters. All report cards envelopes must be signed and returned to the teacher.

5.7. PARENT AND TEACHER CONFERENCES

We believe that a conference between the teacher and the parent and guardian of each child at least twice a year is the most satisfactory means of maintaining a positive partnership between home and school. These two conferences coincide with the first and third marking periods. Conferences are scheduled and limited to approximately fifteen minutes per student. If your scheduled time is not convenient, please contact the school office to reschedule.

The children have half day sessions of school on conference days to make it possible for the teacher to speak to parents and guardians.

5.8. PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Academic progress, maturity level, and attendance are the criteria used for promotion and retention. Any inquiries from parents, guardians, or students challenging a grade or retention will be referred to the teacher involved. The teacher will then notify the principal concerning the matter. A conference will be held, if necessary.

Any student in Grades 6-8 who fails three or more major subjects will be retained in the same grade for the following school year. The major subjects are Reading and English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. This policy may be altered depending on individual circumstances after consultation with the parent, guardian, teacher, and principal.

5.9. RETENTION PROCEDURES

Parents and guardians of students in Grades K-8 will be notified if there is a possibility that a student may not be promoted to the next grade level. A meeting to discuss this situation will be scheduled with the parent, guardian, teachers and principal at a time convenient for all parties.

5.10. HONORS PROGRAM

Honors English and Math classes are offered to students in Grades 7 and 8 who meet several of the following requirements:

- outstanding work habits and aptitude;
- class average of 90 or above;
- score in the 90 percentile on standardized tests as designated and administered in school;
- score within the above average range on placement test
- teacher recommendation.

Algebra is a Grade 9 Math Regents course offered to Grade 8 students who complete Grade 8 math requirements while enrolled in Grade 7 and meet the aforementioned criteria.

5.11. PUPIL SERVICES

Academic Intervention Services in Reading and Mathematics are provided to eligible students at St. Mary's Institute. Evaluations pertaining to individual learning disabilities and speech impairment are available through the Greater Amsterdam School District. The administration, faculty, and staff of St. Mary's Institute partner with the GASD to fulfill Individualized Education Plans.

5.12. INTERNET SAFETY/TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The Schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany (Our Schools) provide technology resources to students, faculty, and staff to promote educational excellence through an integrated academic, spiritual, and extra-curricular program. We expect that our schools' technology resources be used in a reasonable, efficient, ethical, moral, and legal manner in accordance with the mission, values, understandings, and beliefs of The Schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.

The Schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany Acceptable Use Policy applies to all technology and Internet resources including, but not limited to: device computers, desktop computers, mobile devices (i.e. Smartphone, tablets, etc.), video and audio equipment, information storage devices, and cloud based applications. The use of these resources is a privilege and carries with it certain responsibilities. All technology resources are to be used for educational purposes per this policy. Any user who violates this policy or any applicable local, state, or federal law, faces the loss of technology privileges, risks school disciplinary action, and may face legal prosecution.

With access to the Internet comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Families must be aware that some material obtained via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. For this reason, and as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub.L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)], technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter Internet content, or other forms of electronic communications at school. Filters also limit access to any social networking or personal website, email, blog, or chat room

through which minors may easily access or be presented with obscene or indecent material; may easily be subject to unlawful advances, or inappropriate communication with adults; or may easily access other material that is harmful to minors. Our Schools have taken precautions to control access to controversial materials and have instructed students in the proper use of the Internet, electronic mail, and software. Our Schools are not responsible for materials acquired by the student online, for violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes, or negligence of any kind incurred by users.

All technology systems, information stored on them, and work performed are governed by this Technology Acceptable Use Policy and are subject to school supervision and inspection whether they reside on school owned computers or devices brought on campus by students. Our Schools reserve the right to monitor, access, retrieve, read, and disclose all messages, information, and files created, sent, posted from, stored on devices brought onto campus, or stored on its systems (including connections made from sites visited) to law enforcement officials or others, without prior notice. As the primary educators of their children, parents are expected to discuss acceptable use of technology with their children and monitor the use of the computer accordingly.

To gain access to the Internet, all students under the age of 18 must obtain parental permission. The signatures at the end of this Policy are legally binding and indicate the party (Parties) who signed has (have) read the Terms and Conditions carefully and understand(s) their significance.

5.12.1. General Terms and Conditions- Acceptable Internet Use

The use of the Internet and school accounts must be consistent with the educational objectives of The Schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany. Students are to report any misuse of the network to a faculty member. Misuse consists of intentional access of any Internet site deemed inappropriate by the faculty at the school. Misuse also includes any conduct in and out of school that reflects negatively upon the reputation of the school. Misuse includes any message(s) sent, posted, or received that indicates or suggests harassment, racism, sexism, and inappropriate language or symbols. Transmission of any material in violation of Our Schools' policies or any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited.

The use of the technology is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges and other disciplinary action. In the classroom environment, the faculty member in charge will deem what is inappropriate use, and his or her decision is final.

5.12.2. Netiquette

Students are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. Be polite. Do not use inappropriate language. Students are representatives of our school community. A student may be ¹alone at a computer, but what is written or posted can be viewed globally. Students will not send or post information which disparages the reputation of any school in The Roman Catholic Diocese of ¹Albany, any of its faculty, staff, or students. Students will not email, IM, post to websites or blogs, or text message any inappropriate graphics, images, or pictures.

5.12.3. Use of Social Media

The Schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany respect the right of students, faculty, staff, and alumni to use a variety of social media to learn, communicate, and connect. As a community committed to Catholic values, academic excellence, the safety of our students, we

expect that all members of our community will meet the standards written below in their use of social media. The schools expect that students, faculty, and staff will use social media in an ethical, moral, and legal manner in accordance with the mission, values, understandings, and policies and procedures of The Schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.

Social Media is defined as any web-based or mobile technologies that turns communication into a dialogue. Social media takes on many different forms, and uses a variety of technologies including but not limited to: blogs, Internet forums, wall postings, wikis, podcasts, picture-sharing, email, instant messaging, music-sharing, Internet telephony, etc. To promote respectful discussion within this forum, students, faculty and staff are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. You must be polite, courteous, and avoid comments that are profane, obscene, offensive, sexually explicit, inappropriate, inflammatory or otherwise objectionable. Blogs and discussion boards often foster debate of an issue, and users are expected to engage in such exchanges with mutual respect for others' opinions.

For the privacy of users and their families, assume that social media participation will be publicly available on the Internet and therefore publicly accessible without limitation or protection of any kind. Consider how much personal information to share, with the understanding that anyone can link this information to your name and publish it on the Internet. Students are urged to always exercise extreme caution when participating in any form of social media or online communications, both within the school community and beyond.

Students who participate in online interactions must remember that their posts reflect on the entire school community and, as such, are subject to the same behavioral standards set forth in the Student/Family/Faculty Handbook (Handbook).

In addition to the regulations found in the Handbook, students are reminded that their behavioral expectations must align with the Mission and Philosophy of the school, and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, which affirm the teachings, moral values, and ethical standards of the Catholic Church. Students are expected to abide by the following:

To protect the privacy of the school, students and faculty, students may not create digital video recordings or pictures of the school community members either on campus or at off-campus school events for online publication or distribution that convey inappropriate or illegal behavior.

Students may not use social media sites to publish information or remarks deemed to be disparaging or harassing toward school community members or that convey illegal or inappropriate activity. Students who choose to post editorial content to websites or other forms of online media must ensure that their submission does not reflect poorly upon members of our community.

Failure to abide by this Policy, as with other policies at our school, may result in disciplinary action as described in the Handbook or as determined by the administration of the school.

5.12.4. Online Courses

All policies governing this Acceptable Use Policy extend to students who take online courses through our schools' partnerships with local colleges. Acceptable use covers the range of behaviors appropriate

for all online courses and any additional components facilitated by our schools but not hosted on our school servers. Misuse includes, but is not limited to: deleting, copying, modifying, or forging others' emails or homework; accessing others' email without their permission; using profane, abusive, or impolite language; disguising one's identity, impersonating other users, or sending anonymous email messages; threatening, harassing, or making false statements about others. The improper use of an email account, messenger client, and/or the threaded discussion area of Blackboard may result in removal from the course without refund. Inappropriate use will lead to disciplinary and/or legal action.

5.12.5. Copyright

Students are expected to abide by copyright laws and to properly cite the use of intellectual property created by others. Plagiarism is illegal, against the mission of The Schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, and will result in disciplinary action.

5.12.6. Security

If a student identifies a security problem on the Internet, he or she must notify a faculty member (teacher or administrator) immediately. Students will not demonstrate the problem to other students. Students may not use another individual's account at any time. Attempts to log onto the Internet as anyone else will result in cancellation of his or her Internet privileges. Any student identified as a security risk will be denied access to the Internet.

5.12.7. Privacy

Students should not reveal or post his/her home address or personal phone number or that of any member of the school to anyone on the Internet at any time. Electronic mail is not guaranteed to be private. Students should not send anything that he/she does not want others to read.

5.12.8. Vandalism/Hacking

Vandalism or hacking will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism includes, but is not limited to, destruction of hardware, software and peripherals, the creation or uploading of any computer viruses, and the downloading of unauthorized games. This includes, but is not limited to, attempts at gaining unauthorized access, willful damage to computers and peripherals, or changing on-line materials without permission.

5.12.9. Digital & Mobile Devices

Digital and mobile devices that can take and/or transmit electronic images cannot be used to take or transmit images that violate the mission of The Schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany. Taking pictures, videos, or recordings of faculty members or students without their knowledge is a violation of this policy. The transmission and display/sharing of inappropriate images is subject to disciplinary and legal action.

5.12.10. Cyber-bullying and Cyber-harassment

Cyber-bullying and cyber-harassment are not tolerated. Cyber-bullying is defined as willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of any electronic device. Cyber-harassment involves threatening or harassing messages or posts which torment an individual. Students found to be engaged in cyber-bullying and/or cyber-harassment are in violation of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Swift and appropriate will be taken, including but not limited to notifying local law enforcement.

5.12.11. Gaming

Gaming on campus is prohibited, unless under the specific direction of an instructor for educational purposes. Students found gaming without faculty approval and supervision will face appropriate disciplinary action.

5.12.12. Confidentiality

The school reserves the right to inspect and examine communications system used by our students at any time. When sources outside the school request an inspection of any communication system or files, the school will treat information as confidential unless any one or more of the following conditions exist: when approved by the appropriate school official(s) to which the request is directed; when authorized by the owner(s) of the media; when required by federal, state or local law; when required by a valid subpoena or court order. When notice is required by law, court order or subpoena, students will receive prior notice of such disclosures. Viewing information in the course of normal system maintenance does not constitute disclosure.

5.12.13. Sanctions

Violations of the terms and conditions of this Agreement shall subject users to loss of computer access, as well as other disciplinary action. Illegal acts involving school computing resources may also subject violators to prosecution by local, state, and/or federal authorities.

5.12.14. Blogs and Social Networking Agreement

Posting on online blogs or social networking sites such as, but not limited to, MySpace, Twitter, Facebook, etc. may result in disciplinary actions should the contents of the blog include defamatory comments about our school, our faculty, or our students.

5.12.15. Cyberbullying

St. Mary's Institute attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats online, seriously or in jest, may face suspension or expulsion.

5.13. LIBRARY

Each student is responsible for returning borrowed material on time. Students are responsible for any books that are damaged or lost.

5.14. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Homework is assigned in all grade levels to reinforce the concepts taught in class. Homework is to be done neatly and to be the best of one's ability. It is to be completed on time. Assignments are to be written daily in the student agenda. Agenda use is required of all students in Grades K-8 and are distributed on the first day of school.

5.15. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

After school care is provided each day until 5:30 p.m. The program allows time for homework, playtime, and a snack that the child should bring from home. Beverages are available for purchase during the after-school program. The cost of the program is \$6.00 per hour per child. Parents or guardians must pick up their children by 5:30 p.m. A late fee of \$5.00 will be charged if the responsible party is late in picking up the child. When it is necessary to cancel the after-school program, parents and guardians will be notified. After school payments will be billed bi weekly.

5.16. FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are occasionally scheduled as an integral part of a school's curriculum. They can be a rewarding and meaningful way to enrich a student's experience. Field trips are planned for educational purposes

to meet classroom objectives. These objectives might include specific curricular activities or celebrations of accomplishments.

Field trips are a privilege. Therefore, it is our policy to prohibit students from attending a field trip because of repeated inappropriate behavior, disrespect, lack of cooperation, or other reasons deemed inappropriate by the principal. In deciding to attend a field trip, the student must accept full responsibility for his or her actions while on the trip. A permission slip signed by the parent or guardian must be returned to the school before any student is allowed to leave school grounds. The homeroom teacher determines the number of chaperones needed to supervise. Siblings are not allowed to attend field trips.

5.17. FIRE & LOCK DOWN DRILLS

Safety and evacuation drills are conducted throughout the school year in accordance with New York State Law. Students are expected to follow directions and when instructed, to leave the building in a quiet and orderly manner.

5.18. CLASSROOM & HOMEROOM ASSIGNMENT

St. Mary's Institute is not able to honor all requests for a particular classroom or specific teacher. Consideration of many factors, including but not limited to academic and social circumstances, total class size, male/female ratio, and the like are used when determining a child's placement. Your child will receive a postcard from their teacher during the summer welcoming them to their classroom.

6. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

6.1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

All students attending St. Mary's Institute are required to take religion classes as an integral part of our school program. Students will be formed in faith and moral habits in formal religion classes. Liturgy is celebrated on scheduled Fridays, Holy Days of Obligation, and during the Lenten season.

6.2. SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

The sacramental life of the children of the Catholic tradition is an important component of the religion program at St. Mary's Institute. Preparations for two sacraments, Reconciliation and Eucharist, form the core of instruction in Grade 2. In accordance with the diocesan guidelines, candidates for First Eucharist will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist. Parents and guardians are required to be active partners in the preparation of their children for these sacraments. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are only conferred to students baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition.

6.3. DAILY PRAYER

Our school day begins with daily prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance as a school community in the gymnasium. Prayer also takes place before eating and as a class at the end of the school day.

6.4. CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROJECTS

St. Mary's Institute's 'SMI Cares' school-wide Service Project Initiative has scheduled service activities each month. Projects consist of a prayer component, a charitable fundraising component and a hands-on service component. All students are asked to participate.

7. CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

7.1. DEFINITION

Co-curricular activities are those programs and efforts that seek to reinforce the school curriculum. This is done in a variety of forums. Knowledge is utilized and expanded in creative, stimulating, and enjoyable activities. Appropriate behaviors and appropriate dress are expected for all students at all school functions and activities.

7.2. ART

The Art program is designed to foster an appreciation of the arts. Students attend art classes weekly. Projects correspond with the concepts and skills taught by the art teacher.

7.3. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Physical Education program provides opportunities for students to learn activities and skills that are invigorating, developmental, and educational. It is a required subject and should be taken each week unless a student has a note from a physician excusing him or her from class.

7.4. MUSIC

In addition to general classes, students in Grades 3-8 are welcome to join the chorus, which is directed by the music teacher. Piano and instrumental lessons are offered after school to students in Grades 3-8. A monthly fee is charged for these classes.

7.5 TECHNOLOGY

The Technology program provides 21st Century learning opportunities via access to a host of equipment such as 3D printer, Chromebooks, iPads and other educational devices. Projects include coding, graphic design and more. A technology fee is added to the annual tuition to fund upgrades and direct costs for this program.

7.6. CHRISTMAS CONCERT

All students participate in the concert which is produced by the music teacher. Participation in the concerts is an academic requirement.

7.7. STUDENT COUNCIL

The student council is comprised of students in Grades 4-8 who are elected by their peers and faculty. Members of the student council learn to solve real problems, make important decisions, and learn about life, democracy, responsibility and themselves. Student Council members are designated ambassadors of the school.

7.8. STREAM FAIR

A STREAM Fair is held annually. Students prepare projects which are displayed in each classroom and match the classroom collective STREAM theme.

7.9. CONTEST PARTICIPATION

Students are very involved in the many opportunities to participate in a variety of contests. Each year, students compete in the Greater Amsterdam School District Spelling Bee, Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest and Lenten Photo Contest to name a few.

7.10. SPORTS

St. Mary's Institute Athletic Department provides a variety of sports offerings including Soccer, Basketball, Judo, Cheer, Baseball and other sports clinics, either through CYO or Amsterdam Recreation Department. A minimum number of interested students is required to have a program run.

7.11. YEARBOOK

