

St. Mary Elementary and Jr. High School

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

Upon arrival at school, children remain on the play area unless the supervising teacher directs otherwise. Loitering around the school building, in the halls, or in the gym, is not permitted. Students should not arrive more than 15 minutes before the first morning bell.

Only preschool students may enter the school building through the main door. Grades K through 5 will enter from the side door on the lower playground and Junior High students will use the side door on the upper playground.

ATTENDANCE

Since even occasional absence constitutes a disruption to the pupil's progress, we expect cooperation in keeping absence at a minimum. A written excuse from the parent or guardian shall be presented to the teacher upon return of the absentee. Parents are requested to report absentees by calling the school office (284-6986) within one half hour of the start of school. If absentees are not called in, the parents will be contacted. According to State regulations a student in grades K through 1 must attend school for four hours in a day in order to be marked present for a full day. Five hours are required for grades 2 through 8.

When students are absent from school, they are responsible to make up the school work and homework missed. Arrangements should be made to keep up with assignments while out of school. Work should be requested when an absentee is called in and can be picked up at the end of the school day.

No child is excused before the regular time, unless a written note from the parent is presented to the principal. The parent should then personally sign the child out at the office. Any child who leaves the school grounds without permission automatically suspends him/herself from school.

Dental and doctor appointments should not usually be made at a time that would take the child from his class work. Please make every effort to schedule those appointments after school or on a day that school is not in session.

TRAVEL

The school recognizes the value of travel but also realizes there are some children who cannot afford to miss classes. The school discourages trips and vacations during instruction time during the school year. Parents should consult the teacher before withdrawing a child from school for a trip or vacation during the school year. Children are responsible for completing all assignments and making up work when they return, and will not be given work prior to leaving.

ATHLETICS

Students in grades 5 through 8 have an opportunity to join the Dixon Catholic athletic program. Basketball, volleyball, track and cross country practices and games are held outside of school hours and are supervised and sponsored by the Athletic Association.

Eligibility Rules

- 1 Students are eligible to participate in the Dixon Catholic athletic program until they turn thirteen on or before August 15th, preceding the season in the 5th-6th grade. Students who turn 15 years of age on or before August 15th preceding the season, cannot compete in any conference game.
- 2 Participants must submit a completed physical examination prior to participating in the year's program.

3 Students are required to provide their own transportation to athletic events. The school assumes no such responsibilities unless otherwise notified.

4 Boys and girls wishing to participate in sports and/or extracurricular activities must maintain an acceptable grade average in their class work and conduct. This acceptability is based upon ability, effort, attitude, and completion of assignments.

If a student is receiving, in any one subject, a grade less than C, the student is ineligible to participate until the grade is raised. If the student does not accomplish this within the next two weeks, it may become necessary for the activity to be dropped so more time is available for study. If however, a student experiences difficulty in meeting this requirement, the teacher(s) and principal will determine whether the student is working to the best of his/her ability.

Each participant's eligibility will be handed into the office on Friday of each week. Notification regarding ineligible students will be given to the person coaching or supervising the activity.

If school is canceled due to inclement weather, athletic activities are also canceled for that day.

BICYCLES

Bicycles are permitted as a mode of transportation to and from school. Children may not ride bicycles on the playground. Children bringing bicycles are asked to park and lock them in the bicycle rack.

BUS REGULATIONS

Each child is assigned a route by the bus company and will ride on that bus route unless other arrangements are made by the parents.

The school reserves the right to deny the use of the bus to students whose conduct places the other riders in jeopardy. The following rules must be followed:

1. Students must be on time at the designated place for their bus pickups.
2. Upon entering the bus, students must be seated and remain seated until their destination is reached. Changing seats is not permitted.
3. Students must avoid loud or boisterous conduct, teasing, scuffling, eating and chewing gum.
4. Bus drivers are requested to maintain discipline on the bus. They will write up a "bus referral" which is given to the principal if misbehavior occurs.

1st referral - student and principal meet to work out situation.

2nd referral - student, parent and principal meet.

3rd referral - student may not ride bus for a designated time.

BROWN ENVELOPE On Wednesday, the parent newsletter and other bulletins are sent home with the oldest child (only one child in each family). These items are sent to you in a large brown envelope making it easier for your child to take home. These envelopes are to be signed, dated and returned to school by Friday. Families who do not return their envelopes will not be up-to-date on the happenings at school. It is very important that the students realize their responsibilities in this matter. If you would like a copy of the weekly news bulletins mailed to a non-custodial parent, please notify the school office for information regarding this service.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify the school office in writing immediately concerning any change of address, emergency contacts or phone numbers, including business phone numbers. The school having all your contact information is imperative for the well being of the child.

CLOSINGS

If winter weather threatens the opening of school, families will be notified by the all call system used by our school. School is automatically not in session when the Dixon Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather conditions. If school is canceled due to inclement weather, athletic activities are also canceled for that day.

CONCERNS

Many times parents have questions or concerns about their children's academic progress or activities. The following procedures should be followed in succession:

1. Discuss your questions with the teacher involved.
2. If there are still concerns, make an appointment to discuss your concerns with the principal.
3. If still more discussion is needed a three-way conference involving the parent, principal and the teacher will be scheduled.

CONDUCT

It is our desire that our school community live, learn and grow in the atmosphere of Christian love with behavior that is fitting for a community of God's people. This requires that students and faculty have mutual respect for each other and each other's property. While each person is to be treated as an individual, behavior which is discourteous and lacking in respect for another person will not be tolerated.

1. Students are expected to move throughout the building in a quiet manner.
2. Cell phones, Ipods or any type of mp3 player are not permitted in school during school hours.
3. Gum chewing is not permitted in the school building.
4. Hard balls are not permitted on the playground.
5. Snow throwing on playground and school property will not be allowed.
6. Appropriate language should be used at all times.

Courtesy and respect are due to all officials, teachers, employees, volunteers, parents and fellow students of the school. The same high standards of respectful behavior are expected on or off school grounds, particularly while traveling to and from school and on school buses.

Serious offenses can result in a detention or a suspension from school. The following policy has been adopted by all school in the Diocese of Rockford:

BULLYING

Any action, word or behavior which harasses, intimidates or causes physical, emotional or psychological harm to another student or students is strictly prohibited. This prohibited conduct also extends to the use of technology (cyber bullying) as a tool to harass or cause harm.

Bullying is prohibited during any school-sponsored education program or activity; while in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, waiting for the school bus or school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities; or through the transmission of information from a computer, a computer network, or other similar electronic equipment. However, this policy is not limited to conduct that occurs on the premises of a Diocese school

“Bullying” means any severe pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically (“Cyber Bullying”), directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. Examples of "cyber bullying" include but are not limited to the use of e-mail, web sites, text messaging, electronic photos or videos and social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc...) to harass or intimidate. These lists are meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Students who violate this policy will be subject to the discipline policy of the student's school.

ST. MARY SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING

St. Mary School reserves the right to establish and enforce reasonable standards of behavior for all students involved in educational and recreational activities. Immediate attention should be given to stop the "bullying" behavior when it is observed; and to have communication with the affected students involved, parents, teachers, and administrators to make sure that the situation is effectively dealt with. Since such behavior may be expected to continue outside of school, continued observation should be made to ensure that it does not happen again. Serious consequences will be given for the behavior including suspension and possible dismissal if the behaviors continue. Both of the student parties may require counseling, or therapy, in serious cases of "bullying" and this should be evaluated.

These rules are important for the general welfare and safety of the children and for carrying out an effectively organized school program. St. Mary's School uses Discipline With Purpose program. The program teaches the skills needed for self-discipline. At the beginning of the new school year each classroom teacher forms her own classroom rules and consequences, making them known to the children and parents alike.

CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences are held at the end of the first nine week period.

Additional conferences may be requested by the parent(s) or teacher(s) at any time. Any parent who wants a conference is asked to call the teacher at school to arrange an appointment before or after school. Teachers are generally not available during the school day to meet with parents. All appointments should be made through the school office. We request that teacher's personal lives are respected and that parents do not contact teachers at their homes.

CURRICULUM

St. Mary's School offers a varied curriculum consisting of religion, core academics and "special" subjects such as computer, art, music and P.E. Students are also given an opportunity to go to the school library. Provisions are made for any student needing special tutoring or drill. A teacher and volunteers are available to accommodate these students, where it is possible.

Grades K-5 are self-contained classrooms. Students within the junior high (grades 6-7-8) work in a departmental system.

DISCIPLINE

“OUR GOAL IS NOT TO PUNISH; RATHER IT IS TO DISCIPLINE. DISCIPLINE INVOLVES AWARENESS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND OPTIONS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM, ALL THE WHILE LEAVING A STUDENT’S DIGNITY INTACT.”

The prime responsibility for discipline rests with the classroom teacher or the adult presiding at the time. Cases when disciplinary action will be used are:

- Disrespectful, disobedient or inappropriate behavior in school, on the playground, in church or at school related activities.
- Defacing or destroying school property.
- Chewing gum, consuming food or drink outside.
- Kicking, pushing, hitting, throwing objects or serious fighting.
- Use of abusive language or obscene gestures or materials.
- Stealing or cheating.
- Being in an unauthorized area.
- Repeated neglect of homework.
- Repeated warnings or detentions.

Discipline With Purpose

Opportunities to teach children the 15 self-discipline skills abound within any school day. Teachers welcome opportunities to help children help themselves. All disruptive behavior is routinely handled on the spot by the adults in the school.

1. Show respect to others and your school.
2. Contribute to the learning environment.
3. Follow classroom procedures.

Each classroom teacher has adopted some version of these three rules.

The teachers work with the children to make sure the rules are understood and the reasons for the rules are taught. Children learn that each adult may have different procedures to helping them follow the rules. In addition, each classroom teacher has an established Discipline Cycle that lists consequences for not following the rules. Be sure to ask your child’s teacher about the discipline cycle being used this year. The system used should help your child grow in the self-discipline skill of Understanding Rules and the Reasons for Rules.

For any severe disruption, possession or use of weapons, possession and or use of alcohol or drugs, students will be removed completely to the principal’s office and parents will be called (in cases where the law has been broken, an officer of the law will be notified). If the desired changes do not occur after the parent conference, a decision will be made regarding the student’s continued enrollment in this school.

DISMISSAL

When the dismissal bell rings, students leave their rooms in a quiet and orderly manner. Bus students leave and go directly to their buses. Students who walk or ride in cars leave the building in an orderly manner. All children are to leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal.

DRESS CODE

The purpose of the dress code is to provide an atmosphere for learning that is free from distraction and characterized by modesty and decorum. The dress code also helps to enhance the students’ self image and eliminate unnecessary competition among students. The cooperation of parents in enforcing the dress code is expected.

1. TOPS White, red, or navy. Long or short sleeved plain shirt or blouse with a collar.

- (a) Turtlenecks may be worn, but T-shirts or other tops without collars are not acceptable.
- (b) If a T-shirt is worn underneath it must be solid white without any design or writing.
- (c) All tops, shirts, or blouses are to be tucked into the skirt/slacks or shorts at all times.

2. **SLACKS:** Students are to wear navy blue (not royal) slacks. Students in Junior High (grades 6,7,8) have the option to wear Khaki colored slacks. Corduroy may be worn. If slacks are designed for a belt, a belt must be worn. No cargo style with deep pockets, or jean type pants with rivets are permitted.

3. **JUMPER:** Girls in grades K-3 wear the plaid uniform jumper.

4. **UNIFORM SKIRT:** Girls in grades 4-8 wear the plaid uniform skirt. As 4th grade is a transition year, the uniform jumper may also be worn.

5. **UNIFORM SHORTS:** Navy blue shorts may be worn by both girls and boys during the months of August, September, May and June. If weather permits this schedule will be altered. Junior High students have the option of wearing khaki colored shorts. No cargo style with side pockets are permitted.

6. **SWEATERS/SWEATSHIRTS:** Only plain navy blue or red sweaters (cardigan, vest style or pullovers) may be worn. Navy sweatshirts with the school logo can be ordered through the school in September and January.

7. **SHOES:** Dress shoes or tennis shoes may be worn; high heels are not acceptable. Tennis shoes must be clean, laced to the top and tied, and should be different shoes from the ones worn in gym.

8. **SOCKS:** Students must wear either navy or white socks at all times. Socks may be knee-highs, ankle socks or tights. No half socks, footies or socks with designs are permitted.

Ordering

Uniforms for grades K-8 may be ordered from the following company:

Lands' End
www.landsend.com

The girls' jumper and skirt must be ordered through this company, as well as any red colored items, i.e. red sweater, red polo shirts, school sweatshirts, gym uniforms and any logo wear. All other items can be purchased at any of the local department stores.

DRILLS

Fire and storm drills are conducted during each school year. All students must leave quickly, quietly, and in an orderly fashion. After the children have evacuated the school (for fire) and have assembled at their assigned places, each teacher calls roll to account for each pupil of his/her classroom. Silence is observed during these drills.

In the case of storm warning, the principal will give the signal for the children to take shelter. Shelter areas have been assigned to each class. Disasters would include severe windstorms, tornadoes, etc.

School Violence Contingency Plans are in effect with the police department and a Safe Zone has been designated.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP OF STUDENTS

Cars are to wait along Hennepin Avenue when picking students up at dismissal time. No parking is allowed in front of the school on west 7th Street due to safety reasons. We do have a drop off area in the parking lot of the

school. There is no parking on 8th Street, which is a one-way street. Buses will drop off on 8th Street in the a.m. and pick up in the parking lot in the p.m.

EDUCATION COMMISSION

The purpose of the Education Commission is to advise, formulate, define and be responsible for implementing the policies that concern the parish in matters of education. This includes policies for St. Mary's School, the school of Religious Education, adult education and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation. Education Commission meetings are scheduled every other month and are usually held in the Holloway Center. Any interested parish member or school parent may attend these meetings.

HEALTH/ILLNESS

It is recommended that for the best performance in school a child should have adequate rest and healthful food habits.

Physicals and Immunization - The State of Illinois requires that anyone entering school for the first time must have a physical examination and dated record of required immunizations. All entering preschoolers, kindergartners, sixth graders and students transferring from out of state or country, are also required to have physicals one year prior to entering school. Kindergarten, 2nd and 6th grade students are required to have a Dental exam. Kindergarten students are also required to have a Vision exam. Students failing to have these requirements by a special time will be dismissed from school until the completed forms are returned. It is important for the school to know the physical condition and limitations of all students. Therefore, health records must be updated each year so that each child might be cared for properly.

Vision and hearing screenings are conducted yearly at the appropriate grade level. Parents of students who fail this screening will be contacted and urged to have a complete check by a doctor who will make any recommendations necessary for school activities. Screening services may be withheld upon written request.

General Provisions

- 1 Clothing must always be clean and in good repair.
- 2 Personal cleanliness/hygiene and good grooming is expected of all students.
- 3 Jewelry appropriate for school includes simple earrings, watches and bracelets. Dangling earrings are not allowed. Boys may not wear earrings.
- 4 Hair styles should be neat, attractive and hygienic. Boys' hair should not be longer than the shirt collar. Bizarre hair styles, artificial color, stripes or designs in hair are not allowed.
- 5 Tattoos or body piercing is not allowed.

Contagious Diseases

Children are to be kept home whenever they have a contagious disease, a fever, or a rash of unknown origin. Since the school is obliged to report the following diseases to the Health Department, your cooperation is appreciated in letting us know if your child has: Chicken Pox; Mumps; Strep Throat; Scarlet Fever

A student will be readmitted upon obtaining a certificate of good health from a physician.

Medications

Prescription medication will be dispensed during school hours by the school office only with the written directions from the physician and the written permission from the parent. All prescription medication must be sent to school in the original prescription container.

Non-prescription medication will not be dispensed by school personnel.

Illness

No injured child will be allowed to go home or be taken home unless a parent or other responsible adult is at home.

If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency numbers designated by the parent will be called. Simple first aid is provided at school but the parent is always notified if the injury appears to be serious! All accidents occurring on the playground or on the way to or from school should be reported immediately to a teacher or to the school office.

PLEASE NOTE: Emergency numbers where designated persons who can fill in for parents when unavailable are mandatory for each student.

HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Home & School Association is open to all teachers, teacher aides, parents and guardians of children attending St. Mary's School. Open meetings are held four times a year. The purpose of this organization is to work with the principal and pastor to:

1. Support quality Christian education.
2. To channel parent involvement
3. To assist with volunteer services for the school.
4. To have fiscal responsibility for programs and events sponsored by the organization
5. To help with third source income for the school's operating budget.
6. All fundraisers must be channeled through the Home & School Association.

Any parent or guardian of a student at St. Mary's School, living a lifestyle in accordance to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, as determined by the Ordinary of the Diocese or his designee, is eligible to run for an office of the Home & School Association.

HOMEWORK

One of the chief means of communication between parents and the school is homework. Homework assignments give the parents the chance to learn the general theme of the child's courses and also enables them to see the type of work their child is producing.

Written work is not the only type of homework; study or oral assignments are also given. Whatever type is assigned the child must realize early that homework is his personal responsibility and must be done consistently and with emphasis on completeness, accuracy and neatness.

HOT LUNCH PROGRAM

Sharing a meal together is a sign of friendship and acceptance. As members of St. Mary's School family, the students eat their lunch together in the school cafeteria.

A satisfying and healthy hot lunch program is provided for each child. A government policy concerning free and reduced lunches is explained in a letter to the parents each Fall.

Lunch money may be brought to the school office. Any amount may be put on a child's account. This can be tracked by the parent/guardian through SchoolSpeak.

Students who do not purchase a hot lunch may bring their lunch from home and eat in the lunchroom facilities. The purchase of milk is available to those not eating hot lunch. Money may be put on the SchoolSpeak account for milk through the school office. All lunch bags or boxes are to be marked with the child's name. If a student forgets their bag lunch, they will be required to order a hot lunch for that day. No lunches will be accepted to the office after classes begin to avoid disturbing the lesson.

Students are not permitted to eat in restaurants in the area unless they are accompanied by an adult and have

permission from the principal.

Students are to go to the assigned playground after they have completed their lunch, unless weather does not permit.

Students are not to bring pop to drink with their lunch. Parents are asked not to bring fast food lunches for their children, i.e., McDonalds, Hardees, etc.

LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

Grades 1-8 are given the opportunity for planning the all school weekly mass on a rotation basis. Active participation is encouraged. Students attend mass three times a week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Family and friends are invited to join in these celebrations.

Students have an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation twice throughout the school year. Education in the reception of this Sacrament should not only be school oriented, but is also a parental obligation outside school times.

Before the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation, parents of the students involved will be contacted and be involved in the Sacramental preparation.

St. Mary's School teaches the theology, history, tradition, ceremonies and prayers associated with the sacraments. The Religious Education Department of St. Patrick's Parish will help parents to do their part in preparing their children.

LOST AND FOUND

The best assurance against loss and confusion is to mark clothing and books with the student's name. The loss of an article of value should be reported to the teacher and the school office. Students are also encouraged to check the lost and found for any lost items.

At the end of each semester after notification to parents, the contents of the lost and found box will be removed. Parents are encouraged to check on a regular basis for lost items.

PARTIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

If the classroom is to be used as a means for distributing invitations to parties, every boy or girl, as the preference may be, is to receive an invitation. If not, distribution other than here at school, is a must.

PHONE MESSAGES

It is impossible for a teacher to leave a class to answer the telephone or to confer with parents during school time. Messages for students and teachers may be left at the office and will be delivered when it will not interrupt classes in progress. Messages will be relayed to students at the end of each day, 15 minutes before dismissal. **NO MESSAGES WILL BE RELAYED TO STUDENTS AFTER THAT TIME.**

Students are not to use the office telephone. In the case of an emergency students should inform the office staff. A pay telephone is provided in the front hall that students may use with permission from the classroom teacher or office.

PLAYGROUND

The playground is a place for children to socialize with one another. Games played may not exclude other students. All students must be allowed to participate in the games. Students are accountable to the

playground supervisor. Children are not allowed to bring toys to school for playground use.

PRESCHOOL

The preschool is a part of the education program of St. Mary's School. As such, it will set aside time to teach the values of Jesus through simple methods, such as Bible stories, videos and other appropriate methods conducive to that age. A preschool handbook is available for more information on the total curriculum.

PROGRESS REPORTS/REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued four times a year to inform parents of student progress during that quarter. Progress reports are given half way through each of the four nine week grading periods. All fees must be up-to-date in order for a student to receive a report card.

RECORDS

Cumulative records of grades and testing are retained in the school office. According to State law, records are open for parent inspection. A release form must be signed by the parents and principal. These records must be kept in the school office while being reviewed.

SCHOOL PICTURES

School pictures are taken annually, usually each Fall. Graduation pictures are taken in the Spring.

TARDINESS

Students arriving after the second bell has rung are marked tardy, with the exception of bus riders who are late due to a late bus arrival. A tardy student must obtain an admit from the office. Students in grades K and 1 arriving after 10:15 a.m. will be marked 1/2 day absent. Students in grades 2 through 8 arriving after 9:15 a.m. will be marked 1/2 day absent.

TESTING PROGRAM

Tests have a place in the educational progress of the student. The Iowa Tests and the Cognitive Ability Tests are now used in the testing program of the Rockford Diocese. In late September, grades 3, 5, and 7 will be administered the Iowa tests as well as the Cognitive /Abilities Tests.

Parents are given the results of these tests at the parent/teacher conferences held at the end of the first nine weeks.

TEXTBOOKS

Each student is responsible for the care of his/her textbooks. All student textbooks must be covered and should be carried to and from school in either book bags or backpacks. Students must report and pay for any books which are seriously damaged or lost.

TUITION AND FEES/OVERDUE ACCOUNTS

Fee days are held in mid August each year. One month's tuition and all fees are due at that time. Tuition payments are then due on the 10th of each month with the last payment due on May 10th.

All tuition payments will be made by automatic withdrawal. Special arrangements can be made in the case of difficulty situations.

St. Mary School receives a large budget subsidy from St. Patrick Parish which covers a substantial portion of our per pupil cost. St. Patrick parishioners are reminded of their responsibility to use their Sunday offering envelopes, and to give their fair share in the weekly collection. You are asked to contribute generously to help support both our school and parish financial needs.

OVERDUE

It is our school policy to make Catholic education available for all at an affordable price. It is the responsibility of each family to meet its' financial obligations. In the case of extenuating circumstances the family shall meet with the school business manager to determine the need to make other payment arrangements.

The family is responsible to make all tuition and fee payments agreed upon, in a timely fashion.

VISITORS TO SCHOOL

Parents and friends are welcome and are encouraged to visit the school. However, we ask that if you wish to visit, you call and check with the office beforehand. All visitors must report to the office before going to a classroom.

WITHDRAWALS

Parents should notify the school as soon as they know that they are leaving the community. It is also necessary that parents come to the office to sign their child's transcript release, and clear any outstanding accounts so that records may be sent to the new school upon request.