

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School Parent Student Handbook 2023-2024

Mission Statement

The mission of St. Margaret Mary Catholic School is to proclaim the Gospel through word, worship and service, to value each child as a unique creation of God, to promote academic excellence in a caring community, and to provide the spiritual foundation for a life-long commitment to our Catholic faith.



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St. Margaret Mary Catholic School
Important Dates for 2023-2024 School Year

August 8	Orientation Day
August 9	First Day of School: Noon Dismissal for Professional Development
August 16	First Day of Pre-K
September 1	Professional Development Day / Data Day: No School for Students
September 4	Labor Day: No School
October 13	Fall Festival
October 20	Professional Development Day: No School
November 3	Close of First Trimester: Noon Dismissal
November 17	Turkey Trot
November 20-24	No School: Thanksgiving Break
December 18—January 1	Christmas Break: No School
January 2	Classes Resume
January 15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day: No School
January 28	Catholic Schools Week Begins
February 1	Open House for Prospective Families
February 2	Grandparents' Day: 2:00 p.m. Dismissal
February 14	Ash Wednesday: Lent Begins
February 16	Close of Second Trimester / Professional Development / No School
February 20 -March 8	Standardized Testing Grades 2-8
March 15	No School: Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival
March 18-22	No School: Spring Break
March 28, 29	No School: Holy Thursday, Good Friday
April 1	Professional Development Day: No School
May 3	May Procession and Mass
May 23	Last Day of School for Pre-K Students
May 24	Graduation Mass 7:00 p.m.
May 27	Memorial Day: No School
May 30	Last Day of School for Students

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School

Philosophy

The philosophy of St. Margaret Mary Catholic School is to provide a Catholic education to the children of St. Margaret Mary Parish, while being committed to the formation of each individual child in a faith community. Operating on the assumption that the parent is the primary educator of the child in the way of the faith, St. Margaret Mary Catholic School is mindful of the fact that everyone's best interests are served when parents, students, and faculty work closely together.

The Gospel message is foundational to the operation of the school. The daily effort to live out the four-fold purpose of Catholic education – doctrine, community, service, and worship – gives more concrete direction to the Gospel mandate and helps to integrate religion into the overall curriculum. This shared direction leads to the creation of a loving, caring environment which facilitates learning and promotes a deeper commitment to justice, peace, and human dignity.

Belief Statements

- ✠ Each student is a unique child of God.
- ✠ Catholic Education is an integral part of the Church's mission to proclaim the gospel message of Jesus, to build faith communities, to celebrate through worship, and to serve others without distinction.
- ✠ The opportunity for success is an important component of student learning.
- ✠ A Catholic school reflects the integration of Catholic faith and values with learning and life.
- ✠ Student learning is a priority in this school.
- ✠ A safe learning environment promotes learning and success.
- ✠ A healthy learning environment is everyone's responsibility.
- ✠ Christian faith formation is at the heart of Catholic education.
- ✠ Students experience faith-based traditions as part of their educational formation in Catholic schools.

Catholic Virtues and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School strives to foster the following virtues and Fruits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the members of the school community, for we are called to holiness:

Prudence: Prudence guides us to always try to do what is right and good.

Justice: Justice calls us to respect God and to respect the rights of others.

Fortitude: Fortitude strengthens us to resist temptation and to face difficulties in life.

Temperance: Temperance helps us to live healthy lives.

Faith: Faith is the virtue by which we believe in God and in all that he has said and revealed to us.

Hope: Hope is the virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life.

Charity: Charity is the virtue by which we love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves.

Fruits of the Holy Spirit:

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are observable behaviors of people who have allowed the grace of the Holy Spirit to be effective in them. The Church lists twelve of them: **Joy, Kindness, Faithfulness, Peace, Self-control, Love, Gentleness, Patience, Goodness, Generosity, Modesty, and Chastity.** Each month during the school year, St. Margaret Mary Catholic School recognizes students as "Honorable Knights" for demonstrating the Fruits of the Spirit.

Accreditation and Teacher Qualifications

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School is accredited by The Florida Catholic Conference and is a member of the National Catholic Education Association, the National Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and a variety of other professional educational associations. St. Margaret Mary Catholic School teachers are certified in the subject area in which they teach, and approximately one half of the teachers possess advanced degrees.



St. Margaret Mary

Catholic School

Honor Code

The St. Margaret Mary Catholic School Honor Code was implemented in order to ensure that students practice moral leadership, accept personal responsibility, and develop strong Catholic Christian character.

At the heart of the Honor Code is the Catholic Social Teaching that recognizes the sacredness and dignity of each human person. We are all members of God's family, and maintaining trust among all of us is vital to forming a school community founded on Jesus Christ and his teachings.

The students of St. Margaret Mary Catholic School agree to follow the Honor Code stated below, whether they are attending school in person or through virtual learning.

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School students demonstrate respect for others and their property. They follow the Golden Rule by treating others as they would like to be treated. They speak to and about others with kindness and ask permission before taking something that is not theirs. They take care of school property and the property of others.

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School students tell the truth. They are honest and cooperative with administration, faculty, and fellow students, even when questioned about wrong doing.

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School students demonstrate academic responsibility and integrity. All homework, reports, tests, exams, or other graded or ungraded material is the sole work of the student whose name appears on the work. All work is properly cited, and no unauthorized help is given or accepted.

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School students uphold the Honor Code and work together with their parents, school staff, and others to live its principles each day.

Diocese of Orlando School Policies

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School follows all policies and procedures of the Diocese of Orlando, as noted in the *Diocesan School Policy and Administrative Manual*, found on the Diocese of Orlando website, www.orlandodiocese.org. Schools in the Diocese of Orlando admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the schools. Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national nor ethnic origin in administration or educational policies, admission policies, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Attendance

I. Policy

- A. Attendance in school is a major predictor of student academic success. Students must attend school punctually and regularly, and conform to the attendance policies of the school, the Diocese of Orlando, and the laws of the State of Florida.
- B. It is the shared responsibility of the school and the home to assist students in developing desirable habits of punctuality and attendance.
- C. Schools shall maintain accurate attendance records for all students and follow the Diocesan Record Retention Policy for archival purposes. No paper attendance registers are required if electronic attendance is taken.
- D. The Diocese of Orlando requires all schools to develop a calendar which represents 181 instructional days per school year and meets or exceeds Florida Statute A-1, 09512. See Links and Supporting Documents.

II. Procedures/Guidelines

- A. All absences must be recorded through an automated student attendance recordkeeping system approved by the Diocese of Orlando. For students in grades K–8, attendance must be taken at the start of the day. For students in grades 9-12, attendance should be taken by instructional period. Students in K-12 are considered absent when more than 50% of the school day is missed.
- B. A student is considered absent when he/she is either not in the school building or fully present in a virtual setting. Whether or not the absence is excused or unexcused is determined by administration.
- C. Attendance expectations are for all students and must be clearly delineated in the school's handbook. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to contact the school if their child will be absent and to state the reason for the absence. The principal is authorized to require satisfactory explanation from the legal/custodial parent or guardian for the absence of a pupil for all or any part of the school day. The explanation must be obtained in writing and retained as documentation. Failure to provide this will result in an automatic, unexcused absence. A physician's note is needed when the student:
 - a. Has been absent for three or more consecutive days;
 - b. Has had surgery;
 - c. Is returning to school after a hospitalization;
 - d. Has been under a doctor's care for a significant illness; or
 - e. Is returning to school after being excluded because of a communicable disease.

Policy and procedures for defining and tracking excused or unexcused absences must be stated in the school's handbook.

Excused absences include the following:

- Illness or injury to the student;
- Serious illness or death in the student's family
- Scheduled medical appointment
- Required court appearance or supervised visitation
- Having or being suspected of having a communicable disease or infestation including but not limited to head lice, ringworm, impetigo, and scabies
- Approved school-sponsored events, school athletic events, retreats
- College site visit
- Special event, excused at the principal's discretion with permission from the principal in writing five days prior to the scheduled event, including pre-arranged event of educational value

Unexcused absences include but are not limited to the following:

- Vacations or pleasure trips
- Suspension from school
- Truancy
- Other avoidable absences not included on the "Excused Absence" list above.

- D. For long-term or extensive absences due to medical conditions, parents should enroll student in the applicable county public school district for home instruction or make arrangements with the school administrator for continued academic progress.
- E. Students whose absences exceed 5 unexcused absences within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences within a 90-calendar day period shall be referred to the principal for a conference to be held with the student, his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and the school administration. ***Principals must document this meeting to include date, time, attendees, and the corrective action plan decided upon to improve the student's attendance and academic performance. It must be clearly communicated that continued excessive absences may result in retention, the loss of scholarship and/or withdrawal from the school. Attendance is reported quarterly to the School Choice Office.***
- F. The teacher must verify attendance records at the end of the year. These records must be retained as dictated by the Records Retention Policy.
- G. Students who do not comply with the school's published attendance policy may be retained, lose class credit, be suspended, be asked to withdraw, or be expelled. Students enrolled in the Florida School Choice Scholarship Program who are out of compliance with Diocesan attendance requirements risk the loss of the scholarship.
- H. In case of emergency, teachers must have access to classroom rosters in either electronic or paper format. This roster should contain each period attendance list as well as list of student medications and must be made available as part of plans/directions for substitute teachers.

Child Abuse Reporting

Any clergy, religious or lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Orlando who knows or has cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to any form of abuse or neglect by any person, including another Diocesan employee or volunteer, religious or clergy, immediately will observe the following procedures:

- Contact the Florida Department of Children and Families toll free abuse registry hotline within the same calendar day.
- Respond to local DCF, and call back with any additional information.
- Cooperate with any and all authorities in the investigation of any child abuse report.

Concussion Policy

All students participating in school sports programs--CYS (both grade school and middle school), must have a signed Concussion Consent and Release form completed annually with the signature of both the parent and the student.

Custody

In the case of divorce or separation, it is required that the custodial parent provide the principal with an official, updated copy of the custody order. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known. A list of adults (with their phone numbers) authorized to pick up students involved in custody settlements must accompany the court-certified decree and will be strictly adhered to. The school respects the rights of the non-custodial parent. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, St. Margaret Mary Catholic School will, upon request, provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records and to other school related information regarding the child. Stepparents do not have access to parent-teacher conferences or information that only parents receive unless both parents agree to allow access.

Fingerprinting Policy

The Diocese of Orlando requires all persons employed by the Diocese, or persons who volunteer in any capacity with children or the elderly to be fingerprinted and complete Safe Environment Training. A background check must also be completed. Fingerprinting must be completed through the Diocese of Orlando program. Parents desiring to be fingerprinted may refer to the school website for information or may contact the school office for detailed information.

This policy relates to any and all parents who volunteer at St. Margaret Mary School in any capacity, including field trip chaperones. **Fingerprint and background clearance is required for all field trip drivers, chaperones, and all volunteers.**

Hazardous Materials Policy

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School is re-inspected periodically for asbestos, arsenic and radon as required by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Diocese of Orlando.

Inappropriate Behavior or Language Policy

The Diocese of Orlando believes that all inappropriate behavior or language, (harassment and/or sexual harassment), by students is unacceptable whether it be verbal, written, or digitally transmitted.

As soon as a teacher, coach or administrator is aware of behaviors or language that could be considered harassment or knows that students use sexually explicit language to other students, those knowledgeable, responsible adults will take immediate action to correct the behaviors, and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Image Release Form

The Diocese of Orlando requires that students must have a signed *Image Release Form* in their permanent record before their image or likeness may be published in the school, Diocesan, or local newspaper, on the Internet, or in any other media approved by St. Margaret Mary School or the Diocese of Orlando. This release form is located at the end of the Parent / Student Handbook.

Release of Audio and Visual Recordings for Purpose of Digital Learning Recordings

The Diocese of Orlando requires that students must have a signed *Release of Audio and Visual Recordings for Purposes of Digital Learning Recordings* in order for the student's image or likeness in videotape recordings, photographs, or audio recordings to be used by St. Margaret Mary Catholic School and the Diocese of Orlando. This release form is located at the end of the Parent / Student Handbook.

Review of Records

The school voluntarily complies with the Buckley Amendment and allows parents to see their student's cumulative record file. A written request to the Administration must be submitted by the parent, and will be complied with by the school within 24 hours.

Safe Environment Training

The Diocese of Orlando is required by the United States Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to follow specific guidelines with regard to safe environment training. Therefore, the Diocese of Orlando requires that all employees and volunteers working with children and vulnerable populations must receive the Diocesan mandated Safe Environment Training. Detailed information has been provided to all employees and school families and is also found on the school website. **The Diocesan requirements must be met in order for individuals to volunteer in any capacity within the school.**

Student Technology Responsible Use Policy

Technology is a valuable learning resource for 21st Century students, and acceptable use of technology is essential. The Diocese of Orlando requires that all parents and students read and agree to abide by the Student Technology Responsible Use Policy. This policy contains details related to acceptable, safe use of technology. **The policy is located in the Resource Documents found on Family Portal, as well as on the school website: www.smmknight.org. All parents and students are required to acknowledge by their signature that they will abide by the policy. Due to the current extensive use of technology, it is essential that all parents and students carefully review this policy.**



August 2023

Dear Parents,

Over the years, the Diocese of Orlando and the Office of Schools have taken steps to ensure the safety of your children. We continually review the measures we have in place to protect your children, and we oftentimes ask for your support in implementing new measures and procedures designed to make our schools a safe haven for your children.

To this end, we hope you will share the following with your children to help us ensure that wrongful conduct does not occur in our schools. The intent of this letter is not to alarm you, but rather to help all of us understand the limits of proper conduct we expect in our schools. While we hope never to have these problems in our schools, we want it clearly understood that the Diocese does not condone or authorize its employees, volunteers, coaches, or students to engage in any of the following activities:

- ❖ Threatening or causing personal harm or injury
- ❖ Threatening or causing damage to school or Diocesan property
- ❖ Providing medical advice
- ❖ Conducting physical examinations of or providing shots to students (other than school-sponsored or sanctioned exams for scoliosis, vision, hearing, athletic fitness, diabetic treatments, or other medical treatments, all of which require permission from a parent or guardian)
- ❖ Administering drugs, including any over the counter medication, in the absence of express written permission from a parent or guardian per Diocesan policy
- ❖ Providing massages or other physical therapy
- ❖ Taking blood samples or performing any other medical procedure
- ❖ Examining the genitalia of any student, for any reason
- ❖ Touching an individual inappropriately
- ❖ Smoking, or encouraging smoking, on school property
- ❖ Asking a student to undress or observing a student while he or she is changing clothes at school or a sporting event, other than necessary supervision in a locker room or approved changing area.
- ❖ Denigrating or abusing any child, volunteer, or employee

We also ask you, as parents, to help us identify these and any other inappropriate activities that may take place in our schools. Please report them immediately to the Principal or the Office of Schools. Similarly, if your child observes or experiences these or similar activities, he or she should feel comfortable telling you, the Principal, or the Office of Schools. Our experience and that of experts, particularly in the area of school violence, is that tell-tale signs (e.g., severe mood changes, emotional outbursts or irrational conduct, fascination with guns or incidents of violence, indirect and direct threats) usually exist before the actual violent act occurs. Early intervention, therefore, is the key to avoiding a tragic situation. We cannot possibly identify all of the improper conduct that might occur, but we ask you as parents to use your common sense and report anything that you believe is inappropriate. Your cooperation in enforcing these guidelines is greatly appreciated.

Working together, we can continue to provide your children a caring, loving environment, and the best Catholic education. Please call me if you have any questions or concerns about this letter.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen M. Walsh".

Kathleen M. Walsh

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School Uniforms

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School students should be in perfect uniform on all school days. It is the shared responsibility of students and parents to ensure that all students come to school in proper uniform. Uniforms must be clean, neat, pressed, and in good repair at all times. Administration has the right to judge the acceptability of a student's appearance. The uniform guidelines listed below are the only acceptable options for school uniforms. **St. Margaret Mary Catholic School uniforms should be purchased from Risse Brothers School Uniforms, 100 Candace DR, Suite 120, Maitland; <https://www.rissebrothers.com>** . School shoes may be purchased from other stores. **Students' names should be included on all clothing items so that they may be returned if misplaced.**

School Uniforms All Students

Shoes: All students will wear all white or all black athletic shoes, low or mid top. Girls in grades K-2 may also wear rubber sole Mary Jane-style shoes. High-tops or shoes with wheels are not allowed. Shoe should have laces or Velcro, and laces must be kept tied. (If students cannot tie shoes, we recommend Velcro shoes.) Slip-on shoes may not be worn.

Socks: All students will wear plain white cuff-able crew socks. Girls may also wear knee length socks. **No tennis/golf ankle socks, or socks with logos, stripes, or designs may be worn.**

Sweatshirts and Performance Full-Zip Jacket: All students will wear an official SMM navy blue sweatshirt, navy performance full-zip jacket from Risse Brothers, or plain navy-blue sweatshirt or sweater, (no writing), on cool days.

Jackets: The sweatshirt, sweater, or uniform navy performance full-zip jacket is the first line of defense on cold weather days. Other jackets may be worn **over the uniform sweatshirt or sweater** on very cold days. The jacket may be worn outside, over the sweatshirt, and must be removed in the classroom. The following jackets **are not allowed:** jean jackets, trench coats, or army jackets.

Sweaters, sweatshirts and jackets are NEVER worn tied around the waist.

Hats and scarves may not be worn or carried during school hours. Appropriate hats and scarves may be worn on extremely cold days.

Hair: Hair should be neat and combed. Fairy hair, feathers, hair wraps, or other objects may not be worn. Boys' hair should be short and layered and may not touch the shirt collar. It should be above the eyebrow and no longer than mid-ear. **Hair color may not be altered in any way.** Extreme or fad styles, i.e. Mohawk or mullet haircuts are not acceptable for students. If appearance is judged unacceptable, the parent will be called, and the student has until the next school day to correct the problem. Hair accessories must be worn in hair, not on the wrist. Headbands should be one-and-one-half inches or less in width.

Make-up: Make-up, colored nail polish, or artificial nails may not be worn. Clear nail polish may be worn.

Facial Hair: Facial hair is not allowed.

Jewelry: Girls may wear stud-style, non-dangling earrings only in the lower ear lobe - **one pair only** (only one earring per ear). Boys may not wear earrings of any type. Students may wear one religious medal on a thin chain and a watch. Bracelets will not be worn. **Double ear piercings, or any other body piercing or tattoos, are not acceptable. Rules pertaining to piercings apply to all school events.**

P.E. Uniforms (Grades 3-8 only): PE clothes should be worn to school on days when students, grades 3-8, will have Physical Education. Students will not change out of PE clothing at school.

PE Shirts: Dark green or gray SMM Physical Education shirt should be worn.

PE Shorts: Effective 2023, PE shorts (Grades 3-8) must be purchased from Risse Brothers

School Uniforms. Girls' shorts should be no shorter than THREE INCHES above the knee.

Sweatpants: Navy blue joggers may be worn for PE on cold weather days.

Uniforms for Pre-K students are optional. The girls' Pre-K uniform includes a navy-blue polo dress, with shorts worn underneath the dress. The Pre-K boys' uniform includes navy blue shorts and a green Pre-K t-shirt. Pre-K students should wear closed-toe athletic shoes.

Boys' Uniforms

Shirts: White monogrammed polo shirt (gr. K-6) must be worn tucked in. Dark green monogrammed polo shirt (gr. 7-8) must be worn tucked in. If a short-sleeved T-shirt is worn underneath the polo, it must be solid white. On extremely cold days, a plain white long-sleeved shirt or green turtleneck may be worn under the uniform shirt. No other shirt of any kind may be worn underneath the uniform shirt.

Shorts/Slacks: Navy blue shorts or slacks should be worn at the waist, not the hips.

Belt: Solid brown or black belt is required for grades 4-8.

Girls' Uniforms

Shirts: White monogrammed polo shirt (gr. K-6) must be worn tucked in. Effective 2023, Kindergarten through grade 2 may wear Peter Pan blouse with jumper. (Also, for 2023, K-2 girls may wear white midi-blouse with tie; this is a previous uniform item that is no longer available for purchase.)

Dark green monogrammed polo shirt (gr. 7-8) must be worn tucked in; however, it is not necessary for the shorter, girls' cut shirt to be tucked. On extremely cold days, a plain white long-sleeved shirt or green turtleneck may be worn under the uniform shirt.

Shorts: Plaid walk shorts (gr. K-8) - worn no shorter than THREE INCHES above the knee. Navy blue walk shorts (gr. 7-8) - worn no shorter than THREE INCHES above the knee. Shorts should fit students properly; they may not be tight. Shorts may not be rolled.

Skirt/Jumper/Skort: Plaid pleated skirt or skort (gr. K-8), plaid jumper (gr. K-2), or navy skort (gr. 7 & 8), worn no shorter than THREE INCHES above the knee. Skorts may not be rolled. Kindergarten girls may wear Pre-K navy blue polo dress for the first portion of the year, (until Thanksgiving).

Tights: White, black or navy tights may be worn on very cold days under the uniform shorts, jumper, or skirt.

Slacks: Navy blue slacks (not sweatpants) may be worn **only on extremely cold days**. These slacks are available through Risse Brothers School Uniforms or local department stores.

Uniform Violations

Grades K – 5: Parents will receive a written reminder of proper uniform guidelines.

Grades 6 – 8: Students will receive a lunch detention.

All uniform regulations and guidelines are subject to the discretion of the Principal and Assistant Principal.

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School

Bullying Policy

As members of the Body of Christ and part of the community of St. Margaret Mary Catholic School, each person has the right to be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of his / her unique, individual differences. No student has the right to treat another in any way that will cause physical or emotional pain. Bullying is repeated abuse that may take four forms: physical, verbal, psychological, or cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is the spreading of hurtful rumors or directing harmful words or images toward another person using electronic devices.

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School provides instruction that promotes positive relationships among students. Instruction occurs both in the classroom and through guidance lessons. St. Margaret Mary Catholic School focuses on the Fruits of the Spirit in addressing the need for respect for one another. Jr. High students will participate in *The Upstanders* program provided by the Holocaust Memorial Resource Center.

Bullying often continues because the victim is afraid of retribution if it is reported. In order to end a cycle of bullying, it is essential that the school staff be informed of bullying incidents / behaviors. **If a student feels that he/she is being bullied, he/she should follow these three steps:**

First: Tell the person doing the bullying to stop. Clearly state, "I don't like what you are doing (saying), please stop." Then give the person the opportunity to stop.

Second: If the behavior is repeated on another occasion, again tell the person doing the bullying to stop. Clearly state, "I don't like what you are doing (saying) to me. Please stop." Then tell the teacher what has happened and that this is the second time this has happened.

Third: The next time the same student bullies you, tell him/her to stop, again report the incident to the teacher and ask the teacher to investigate the incident. Clearly state, "I don't like what you are doing (saying) to me. Please stop."

Teachers and assistants will follow these steps:

1. Each verified incident of bullying will be documented in writing.
2. At the time of a second verified incident, the offending child will be instructed to call his/her parent in the presence of the teacher and explain his/her behavior.
3. If the parent is not at home, a call will be made to the cell phone or workplace rather than leaving a message on the answering machine. The teacher will ask that the parent discuss the incident at home and come up with a plan for dealing with peers in a more appropriate way.
4. If there is a third verified incident, the student will be referred to the office, and a conference will be scheduled. Appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken.

Please note: depending upon the severity of the incident, students may be referred directly to the Administration without following the steps outlined above.

Examples of Bullying Behaviors

Bullying is when someone repeatedly hurts, scares, or harasses another person intentionally. The following examples of bullying behaviors are not acceptable for St. Margaret Mary Catholic School students. Such behaviors, occurring whether on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities or field trips, or through the use of technology, will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken for off-campus harassment that substantially interferes or limits the victim's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by our school, or substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of our school.

- Cyberbullying
- Starting or spreading rumors
- Invading personal space
- Hitting, pushing, biting
- Writing unkind notes/pictures
- Taking and/or hiding another student's possessions
- Name calling/teasing
- Poking, belittling, put downs
- Writing and/or passing unkind notes / e-mail / texts
- Lying about another student
- Negative gestures and facial expression
- Retaliating
- Demanding another's possessions, food, or money
- Purposely ignoring or isolating another person
- Physical threats
- Intimidation
- Using insults of any kind
- Expressing sarcasm with intent to hurt another

Code of Student Conduct

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School believes that all students are created in the image and likeness of God. All of our students are created in this divine image and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and discipline should be pastoral in nature. Students are expected to adhere to the *Code of Student Conduct* listed below as well as the guidelines each teacher has set forth in the classroom.

General Rules

- All students (Grades Pre-K-8) will adhere to the following rules:
- Act with respect toward teachers, staff, all adults, and fellow students.
- Remain engaged during instruction, show effort in class and in homework.
- Demonstrate respectful behavior in church and participate in liturgies.
- Behave honestly in all situations.
- Respect school property and the property of others.
- Wear proper uniform at all times, (grades K-8).

Bullying

Bullying is not tolerated at St. Margaret Mary Catholic School. **Bullying happens when someone repeatedly hurts, harasses, or scares another person on purpose; this includes cyberbullying.** Please refer to the St. Margaret Mary Catholic School Bullying Policy on pages 13 and 14 of this handbook.

Behavioral Detentions

Students in grades 6-8 will receive a one-hour detention for failing to follow the guidelines set forth by teachers in the individual classrooms. Students will serve the detention at a time set by the teacher or administrator. **Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, ballgames, etc.** Students who have four behavioral detentions in one trimester will receive an in-school suspension.

Serious Conduct Violations

The following offenses are considered very serious and will be handled accordingly:

1. Disrespect shown to any faculty member, adults working in the school, school related personnel or fellow students
2. Use of profanity—verbally, written, or through the use of online technologies
3. Leaving school grounds during school hours or during after school activities without permission
4. Repeated, verified patterns of bullying
5. Possession of questionable written or printed materials, books or pictures, etc.
6. Fighting, aggressive, threatening, or intimidating behavior or communication, either written or spoken
7. Persistent disobedience and discourtesy
8. Damage of school property or personal property; such as books, computers, clothing, etc.
9. Harassment: Verbal, physical or sexual
10. Disruption of class procedures
11. Misuse of Internet privileges, (including websites, texting, e-mail, social media)
12. Cheating, lying or plagiarism in any form
13. Skipping class; failure to show up for class
14. Any others that are deemed serious by the Principal and faculty

The consequences for these behaviors include:

1. Student sent to office
2. Notification to parents
3. Possible In-school or home suspension, to be determined by the Administration
4. Possible loss of participation in the next scheduled sports or extracurricular event
5. Possible expulsion

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School reserves the right to discipline students for off-campus conduct that is not consistent with behavior expectations of students during the school day. Conduct, whether inside or outside of school, which may be detrimental to the school, may be grounds for dismissal from St Margaret May Catholic School. Possession of questionable or dangerous materials such as alcohol, drugs, vaping paraphernalia, cigarettes, guns, knives, or other sharp-edged instruments, etc. will result in immediate suspension and possible expulsion.

Academic Evaluation Grading System

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School utilizes the Diocese of Orlando report card to inform parents and students of student progress on a trimester basis.

Pre-K A developmental report is utilized in Pre-K to assess student progress.

Grades K- 2 A standards-based report card is utilized to assess individual student progress in mastering standards.

Grades 3-5 A report card that includes number grades, as well as standards-based reporting is utilized.

Grades 3-8 The following grading scale is utilized:

A - 90 – 100

B - 80 - 89

C - 70-79

D - 60-69

F - Below 60 (failing)

Honor Roll – Grades 5 - 8

Principal's Honors

A grade of 94 or above in the core subject areas.

High Honors

A grade of 90 or above in the core subject areas.

Honors

A grade of 85 or above in the core subject areas.

Promotion

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 must pass all major academic subjects: math, science, religion, social studies and language arts in order to be promoted. A passing grade is determined by the average of all grading periods. A student who fails one subject may only be promoted if he/she receives intensive summer instruction and passes an exam showing mastery of the subject. A student who fails more than one subject will not be promoted to the next grade.

Graduation requirements are the same as the promotion requirements. An 8th grader who fails one subject will receive a blank diploma at graduation and will have the bona fide diploma mailed to him/her upon successful completion of the conditions described above. An 8th grader who fails two (2) or more subjects will not graduate. Students in grades K - 5 must pass language arts and mathematics in order to be promoted.

Quality Work

Quality work in all subject areas is promoted and valued at St. Margaret Mary Catholic School. School-wide expectations for quality work include the use of the school heading, neatness in completion of work, and an emphasis on handwriting. St. Margaret Mary Catholic School strives to promote quality work and effort in all areas.

Academic Organization

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School works to help students acquire and apply learning strategies to create quality work for the purpose of improvement while striving for excellence. Organization is essential for success in school. Academic materials are color-coded to encourage organization. The color-coding system is utilized with the materials purchased by the school.

Parents and students are encouraged to use it when purchasing school supplies. The color system is:

Orange

Religion

Red

Math

Blue

Language Arts (Reading and English)

Black

Social Studies

Green

Science

Yellow

Spanish

Admission Policy

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School primarily serves parishioners of St. Margaret Mary Church. It is a Catholic school, not a private school. Admission is based on several criteria that have been developed to make the selection as objective and as fair as possible.

First preference for admission is given to St. Margaret Mary parishioners. Parish involvement is evidenced through weekly attendance at mass, use of weekly envelope system, involvement in parish ministry, and length of parish membership. St. Margaret Mary Catholic School also welcomes Catholics from other parishes, as well as non-Catholic families. Regular attendance at Mass and use of the weekly envelope system is required of all parishioners.

Families not able to be admitted during initial enrollment will be put on a waiting list. This list is maintained for the current school year. Families must reapply for the following year.

Admission to Pre-K

Students entering Pre-K at St. Margaret Mary Catholic School must be four-years-old by September 1st.

Admission to Kindergarten

Students entering Kindergarten in the Orange County Schools for the first time must comply with Florida Statute 232.04 regarding entry age. A student must be five-years-old by September 1st in order to meet the Florida age requirements for Kindergarten.

Admission to Grades 1-8

Registration is often limited for grades 1-8 due to maximum class sizes in those grades. The most recent standardized testing, report card and letter of reference from the teacher or principal of the current school is required for all transfer students, and assessments are given to assess academic performance. Upon review of these data points, a decision is made regarding acceptance.

Evidence of Date of Birth and Baptism

A legal Birth Certificate or other authentic proof of a student's age must be submitted prior to a student's initial entry into Pre-K or Kindergarten. A Baptismal Certificate will also be placed in the student record file.

Physical Examination and Immunizations

Students entering St. Margaret Mary Catholic School for the first time should have a complete physical before entry. The State of Florida Department of Health requires that all students entering a Florida school for the first time be immunized for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, rubella and rubeola (measles), mumps, varicella (or varicella disease), HIB, and have received the hepatitis series.

State of Florida Department of Health

Immunization and Physical Requirements for School Entry

Pre-K	K- 6th Grades	7th & 8th Grades
Dtap Series	Dtap Series	Dtap Series
Polio Series	Polio Series	Polio Series
Hepatitis B Series	Hepatitis B Series	Hepatitis B Series
H. Influenza Type B (HIB) Series	H. Influenza Type B (HIB) Series	H. Influenza Type B (HIB) Series through 5 years old
1 dose of Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	2 dose of Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	2 dose of Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
1 dose of Varicella (Chickenpox)	2 dose of Varicella (Chickenpox)	2 doses of Varicella (Chickenpox)
		1 dose of Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap)

Before students may enter Pre-K, Kindergarten, or 7th grade, they must present an updated *Certificate of Immunization* (DH form 680), signed by a physician. Students not meeting the proper immunization requirements and medical exam requirements will be excluded from school effective the first day of school. St. Margaret Mary Catholic School, as part of the Diocese of Orlando and Catholic Province of Florida, does not accept Religious Exemptions for Immunization.

Tuition / Fees

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School utilizes the services of FACTS Tuition Management for the collection of tuition and fees. Families may elect to pay tuition and fees in full prior to the school year or may select a payment plan, including monthly debits. St. Margaret Mary Catholic School does participate in, and accepts, the Florida Empowerment Scholarships, administered through *Step up For Students*. Families are responsible for paying any portion of tuition and / or fees not covered by scholarships.

Report cards and all official records and transcripts will be withheld (not sent) if a family's tuition account is in arrears.

Arrival-Dismissal

School Hours (Grades K-8)

First Bell 7:55 a.m.

Second Bell 8:00 a.m.

Teachers take attendance at 8:00 a.m.

Grades K-8 will be dismissed at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday

The school office is open each day from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday Early Dismissal

Grades K-8 will be dismissed at 2:00 p.m. every Wednesday. Early dismissal allows for professional development time for teachers.

School Hours (Pre-K)

8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (Before and after school care is available.)

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Areas for families to drop-off and pick-up students are designated. Detailed information regarding procedures will be disseminated to school families. Following arrival dismissal procedures helps to promote safety for all.

Please do not park in the Chapel lot as these spaces need to be reserved for those attending 8:00 a.m. Mass each morning. For the safety of the students, students may not be dropped off in the chapel parking lot. For the safety of the students, we ask that students NOT be dropped off in the morning on Canton, Park Avenue, and other surrounding streets. Rather, please follow the approved procedures.

Other Important Dismissal Information

- If it is necessary to pick up a student before dismissal, parents are asked to e-mail the teacher in the morning. **Students picked up prior to dismissal time must be checked out at the school office prior to 1:45 p.m. (12:45 on Wednesday).**
- Changes in dismissal arrangements should be made **prior to 1:00 pm** so that the teacher is notified.
- **Parents/guardians picking up students are asked to refrain from using their cell phones during dismissal.** Drivers are asked to follow directions given by school staff members.
- Walkers and bike riders must have written parental permission, and should leave the school premises immediately after dismissal.
- **Students may not remain on school property or return after dismissal unless supervised by an adult.**
- Students who ride bicycles to school must use a bike lock and wear a WPPD approved bicycle helmet..
- Students will not be released to drivers appearing to be driving while under the influence of alcohol or otherwise impaired. An alternate driver will be contacted to drive the student home.

General Policies & Procedures

Academic Support / Enrichment

This Academic Support Program provides supplemental literacy and math assistance as well as enrichment for small groups of students. The goal is to reinforce / enhance the skills that are being taught in the classroom. The Academic Support Program is available for students in grades K through 8, providing them with additional practice and opportunities to enable them to grow as successful learners. Additionally, the RISE, (Rigorous Instruction in Student Enrichment), program serves high academic ability students in the intermediate grades who meet specific assessment criteria.

After School

Unless engaged in an organized school sponsored activity, no student should be on the grounds after 3:15 pm. Students remaining on the grounds after 3:15 pm will be taken to the school office, and parents will be notified.

Students may not leave campus after school and return without adult supervision.

Assignment Books / Planners

Students in grades 2 - 8 will receive a faith-based homework assignment book. This assignment book will be an integral part of their homework responsibility, as well as part of their classroom curriculum. Students will be required to have it with them every day. Replacement assignment books will be available, at a cost of \$4.00.

Attendance

Please refer to the Diocese of Orlando Attendance Policy as noted on pages 7-8. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to the student's academic progress and to the development of good habits in his/her school work. Students who do not comply with the school's published attendance policy may be retained, lose class credit, be suspended, be asked to withdraw, or be expelled. Students enrolled in the Florida School Choice Scholarship Program who are out of compliance with Diocesan attendance requirements risk the loss of the scholarship.

Students should stay home from school if they are not feeling well. All students, on returning to school after an absence, must present a written explanation from a parent to the homeroom teacher. **To safely return to school after an illness, students should be fever-free for 24 hours without any fever-reducing medication and free of stomach / intestinal virus symptoms for 24 hours prior to returning to school, without symptoms, or with a doctor's written excuse.**

Birthday Celebrations

Birthday party invitations may not be distributed in school unless the entire class is invited. Similarly, birthday presents may not be brought to school for parties after school. Flower or balloon bouquets for students may not be delivered or brought to the school. Small birthday treats, not containing nuts, may be brought from home.

Board of Education

The St. Margaret Mary School Board of Education is an advisory board that assists the Principal and Pastor in establishing policies that promote Catholic education, and reports to the Pastor and the Parish Council. It follows the guidelines set by the Board of Education of the Diocese of Orlando. Monthly meetings are posted on the school calendar and in the Monday Memo.

Change of Address, Name, or Contact Information

Change of address, name, and contact information, including e-mail addresses, telephone numbers for home, work, or cell phones should be reported immediately to the school office. This is needed in the event that a student should become ill or injured.

Class Presentations

Class plays, reports, and other group or individual presentations can be a very exciting part of the classroom calendar. Often, parents are invited to attend these events. Because it can be very disruptive to the teaching and class work going on in the siblings' classrooms, siblings may not be excused from other classes to attend these presentations during the school day.

Clinic

The school clinic is located in the school office. A school nurse is employed by St. Margaret Mary Catholic School. If a student becomes ill or injured at school, parents are notified as soon as possible, and may be asked to come to the office and sign out the student. Students will not be released to anyone except parents or their designated representative. St. Margaret Mary School follows the regulations set forth by the State Department of Health regarding rashes and communicable diseases.

All health emergencies are reported to the school office immediately. In case of minor injuries, ice and bandages are provided; the clinic is unable to provide over-the-counter medications without parental consent. For more serious injuries, the office will call 911 if required, and parents will be contacted. The staff will follow procedures set forth by the Blood Borne Pathogen protocol guidelines if blood is involved.

Students needing to take medications during the school day must keep their medication in the original prescription bottle in the office. Medicine is kept in the clinic and dispensed by the office personnel. Parents must fill out a Medical Authorization Form giving permission to dispense medication. Students who suffer from asthma, allergies, diabetes, or other conditions requiring immediate use of medication shall be permitted to carry such medication and to self-administer such medication only if the school has a completed Medication Authorization Form, permitting self-administration on file.

Collection of Funds

All collections of funds (for sports, extra-curricular activities, etc.) must receive prior approval from the administration before requests to parents are made. All approved funds will be collected through the school office.

Communication

St. Margaret Mary School strives to provide effective communication with students and parents. The Principal communicates to all parents through a weekly Monday Memo that is sent via e-mail and is posted on-line each Monday. The Monday Memo and other important information may be found on FACTS Family Portal. Parents wishing to contact teachers are encouraged to use e-mail or voicemail. **Teachers may not receive phone calls during the school day due to the disruption of instruction.**

Computer / Technology Usage Guidelines

Computers and other forms of technology are essential learning resources at St. Margaret Mary Catholic School. They must be treated with the same respect given to all school property. All students and parents agree to adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Wearable technology such as an Apple-Watch or Fitbit may only be used as a watch or step-counter. Texting or e-mailing are not allowed at school. Students using the device inappropriately will be told to remove it; it will be sent to the office, and the student will not be allowed to use it at school for the remainder of the school year.**
- Students may not bring in software from home and load it on the hard drive of any computer, either in the lab or in a classroom.
- Students may not make changes to the operating system of any computer / digital device.
- Students may not send or receive e-mail while or texts at school unless directed to do so as part of the lesson.
- Any student who willfully deletes or changes system settings of any computer or digital device will be referred to the office for disciplinary action.

- St. Margaret Mary School faculty, staff and students will follow copyright laws with regard to all software used in the school.
- Students and parents must sign the Student Technology Responsible Use Policy in order to use devices.
- Internet usage will be carefully monitored by the classroom teachers, computer teacher, and Technology team for appropriate content. Any student using the technology / Internet in an inappropriate manner (including web sites, texting, or e-mail) will be referred to the office for disciplinary action.
- Because St. Margaret Mary Catholic School provides each student with a device, students may use personal devices as assistive technology, and with the permission of the teacher or administrator. Kindle-type devices, with teacher permission, may be used for reading only.
- Damage to school devices / technology, if intentional, will result in disciplinary action. Parents will be notified and payment for the device will be required.

Duplicate Sets of Textbooks

Most student textbooks are available on-line. Parents who wish to obtain a duplicate set of textbooks for their students may request textbook publishers and textbook ISBN numbers from the school office.

Emergency Operations Procedures

As required by the Diocese of Orlando, St. Margaret Mary Catholic School will conduct an annual evaluation of the school campus to identify potential hazards and to develop plans to mitigate risk. St. Margaret Mary Catholic School will implement an Emergency Operations Plan to respond to emergencies in a manner that maximizes safety and minimizes disruptions. This Plan will be updated annually, in consultation with local law enforcement, in preparing for potential emergencies. The principal of St. Margaret Mary Catholic School will provide training for all staff and students and require all to participate in routine emergency preparedness drills and exercises. St. Margaret Mary Catholic School requires all visitors, volunteers, and parents to check in and out through the main office and provide a valid government issued photo ID. All IDs for visitors, volunteers, and parents are processed through Raptor to check against the National Predator/Offender database each time they request access to campus.

Evaluation Procedures: Assessment

Assessment, both formative and summative, is an integral part of gathering information regarding student academic progress. Formative assessment, part of the instructional process, provides data about a student for the purpose of adjusting teaching and learning. Summative assessment is utilized to measure student learning relative to standards and benchmarks. Parents receive reports regarding their child's progress throughout the school year, including three report cards (Pre-K – 8) and on-line progress reports, (1-8). These reports allow teachers, parents and students to work together to promote student success in learning. Students in grades 3-8, receiving a grade lower than a “C” on a progress report will receive a copy of the progress report in the mail. Report cards should be signed and returned to the homeroom teacher.

Primary, Intermediate and Junior High departments utilize assessment and evaluation methods appropriate for the developmental levels of the students. Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers so that they may work together to provide the students with the best educational experience possible. Parent conferences are scheduled at least once a year and at other times, as needed. Parents requesting a conference with a teacher should e-mail or call the teacher with this request. Parent / teacher meetings may be conducted virtually, in person, or by phone.

From time to time, student evaluations are requested (or required) by various schools or clinicians. In order to process these forms in an expedient and professional manner, please follow the steps listed below:

- Submit all requests and/or forms to the school office at least one (1) week before they are due. Please do not give the forms directly to the teachers. The school office staff / school counselor will distribute all forms to the appropriate teachers.
- Please include an addressed, stamped envelope for each evaluation form. The envelope should be addressed to the intended school or physician. When completed, all student evaluations will be mailed by the school office to the intended school or physician. Completed evaluations will not be returned to parents.

Extra-Curricular Sports

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School participates in the Diocese of Orlando CYS (Catholic Youth Sports) League, both grade school and middle school divisions. The vision of CYS is to develop players in mind, body, and soul to help them grow as individuals, both physically and spiritually. The middle school sports program is open to boys and girls in grades 6-8, (5th grade for some sports.) Both girls and boys may participate in Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Flag Football, and Track, and girls may participate in Cheerleading.

Academics are expected to be the primary concern of students and parents. A student must maintain an overall "C" average or above to participate. Students who receive a failing grade in any core subject on the report card or progress report will be ineligible to participate until improvement is shown, and participation is approved by the Principal. The school Administration reserves the right to deny students the right to participate in extra-curricular activities in the event of poor academic performance or inappropriate conduct or behavior.

Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of the curriculum in all grades throughout the school year. Parents (or guardians) are required to sign Diocesan approved permission slips for all field trips. Parents, guardians, and other family members may not "show up" at the field trip venue without going through the approval process. **All chaperones must be fingerprinted and complete the Safe Environment Training.** Students and chaperones may not remain at the field trip venue when the class departs without the permission of the school administration. Due to the supervisory responsibilities of all chaperones, younger and older siblings may not be brought on class field trips. Following field trips, parent chaperones are asked not to check out other siblings due to disruption of classes.

Guidance

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School has a school counselor on staff. Classroom guidance lessons are offered to all students to promote social/emotional learning, including strategies to improve peer relations, attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance. Additionally, the school counselor provides advisement, consultation, and collaborative care services to teachers, students, and families.

Gum Chewing

Gum chewing by students is not allowed while on campus during school hours or at after school activities.

Home and School Association

The Home and School Association plays a vital role in the volunteer and fundraising activities of St. Margaret Mary School. The Association provides myriad services in the school. All parents are members of the Home and School Association and are encouraged to become active volunteers in the school.

Homework

Homework is an important part of student learning. Homework provides students an opportunity to deepen their understanding of material taught and to practice and reinforce skills. Homework is a learning activity which should increase in complexity according to maturity and the capability of the student, and it should reinforce instruction. Homework assignments are the responsibility of the students, and parents are asked to provide time for the completion of homework as well as a suitable atmosphere for study. Parent interest and support of student homework efforts promote success in learning. Homework for students in grades 2-8 is posted on FACTS LMS, in addition to the student planner.

In-Service Days: Professional Development

The quality of education depends largely upon the effectiveness of the teacher. Teachers at St. Margaret Mary Catholic School are certified by the State of Florida in the subject area in which they teach. In order to remain current with best educational practices, teachers of St. Margaret Mary Catholic School attend professional development opportunities throughout the school year. School will not be in session on these days. Early dismissal on Wednesdays allows teachers to attend weekly professional development meetings. Also, a select number of early dismissal days will be utilized for professional development.

Lice

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School follows the No Lice / No Nits policy. Students identified to have lice will be sent home for treatment, and they will return to school after the school ensures that no lice or nits are present.

LMS

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School utilizes FACTS LMS as a system for the delivery and organization of instructional material. This system will be used by all grade levels and all students. Parents and students will receive directions in the correct use of LMS.

Lost and Found

Everything that is brought or worn to school **MUST** be clearly labeled with the student's first and last name. Anything that is turned into Lost and Found is promptly returned if clearly marked. All unmarked items will be sold during Used Uniform Sales.

Lunch / Lunch Accounts

For the 2023-2024 school year, a pre-order lunch program will be utilized. Hot lunches are served at least four days a week. Students bring their own lunches on days when lunch is not served, including each Wednesday. Caffeinated drinks, "energy" drinks of any kind, carbonated drinks, or fast food may not be brought to school. Milk and water are available daily, except for on Wednesdays. Menus for each "food day" are published on the monthly calendar. **Orders for the next school week should be submitted by Friday at 3:00 p.m. of the week before.**

Missing Work

The completion and turning in of work on time is essential for academic success. The objective of assigning homework is for students to receive practice and reinforcement of skills taught in the classroom. Grade levels establish policies regarding missing work. In the case of absences, students have the same number of days to complete class work and homework as the number of days they were absent. Tests missed due to absence must be taken within one week of the original test date. **Students who will be absent for trips during the school year are encouraged to refer to the school website for assignments. Upon returning from such absences, students are responsible for completing all missed work. Teachers are not responsible for re-teaching concepts taught during a student's absence due to a vacation, trip, or sports event.**

Money - Valuables - Books

Students are responsible for any money and/or valuables, including electronics, they bring to school. Children are not allowed to borrow, lend, or give money or other valuables to any other student. Money for activities/fees should be enclosed in a marked envelope. **Students are not allowed to bring toys or electronic game equipment to school.**

Other Extra-Curricular Activities

A variety of extra-curricular activities are offered at St. Margaret Mary Catholic School. Students in grades four through eight may participate in the school band. Practices are held in the morning before school. Students may participate in the school's choral groups, beginning in grade two. Extra-curricular opportunities include choir, art, drama, sports, and other vendor-sponsored activities. Students must be present at least half of the school day in order to participate in after school activities, with 11:30 a.m. marking the half-way point. Students must maintain an overall "C" average or above to participate in extra-curricular activities. Students receiving a failing grade in any core subject on a report card or progress report will be ineligible to participate until improvement is shown.

FACTS Family Portal

Family Portal is a web-based program that provides a vital link between the classroom and home. Parents and students will find class information, homework, calendars and grades posted. All school families will receive Family Portal directions and information at the beginning of the school year. Families who need additional accounts or who have log-in questions should contact the school office.

Playground Regulations

Recess time is supervised by school staff and volunteers. We appreciate volunteers assisting at recess. To ensure safety, students must stay in the areas assigned. All other areas are off-limits. Playground / recess rules to be observed include:

1. Football and other games of physical contact are not permitted.
2. Rough touching or tackling are not allowed.
3. Only balls provided by the school are permitted.
4. Students are expected to respect and obey the staff and volunteers on duty.
5. Inappropriate language is not permitted.
6. If play equipment goes out of the playground, an adult on duty should be asked for permission to retrieve it.
7. Electronic equipment is not allowed at recess.

Religion

Religion is taught in all grade levels. All students of St. Margaret Mary Catholic School are required to receive religion instruction. The school day begins and ends in prayer in all grade levels, and prayer is included throughout the day. Students in grades K-8 attend Mass on all Holy Days of Obligation and on Fridays. Pre-K students participate in prayer services in the chapel regularly and join the school community for numerous Masses during the school year. Classes help prepare the liturgies and prayer services. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend school Masses, Penance Services, and Adoration / Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

SMM+ (Aftercare)

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School offers aftercare for children in Pre-K through eighth grade. It is intended for those children whose working parents cannot pick them up at dismissal time. Students must be registered in advance.

School Visitors

For safety and security reasons, St. Margaret Mary Catholic School requires all visitors, volunteers, and parents to check in and out through the main office and provide a valid government issued photo ID. All IDs for visitors, volunteers, and parents are processed through Raptor to check against the National Predator/Offender database each time they request access to campus.

Special Learning Needs

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School recognizes that each student has unique learning needs. Classroom teachers provide varied accommodations to meet the learning needs of each student, and they work closely with parents to ensure student success. Additional support is provided as needed through the school Academic Support Program. Specific learning needs are addressed on an individual basis. Concerns should be communicated with the classroom teacher. Documentation of special learning needs and services provided for the student should be shared with the school administration and school counselor.

Standardized Testing in the Diocese of Orlando

All schools in the Diocese of Orlando are required to administer standardized testing as an integral part of the total instructional program. This testing, however, is not “high-stakes” – results are not used to determine teacher efficacy, nor are they used solely to determine a child’s promotion or retention. Test results/scores are one measure of the total composite of a child’s individual academic progress; the information is used to assist teachers in meeting the specific and targeted learning expectations for a child’s appropriate developmental level. This information is critical in helping teachers provide the best educational opportunities for students.

Given the benefits derived from the standardized testing, the Diocese of Orlando does not allow a parent or a student the choice of “opt-out” of testing. Students who are absent for any reason, including medical absences, during the school’s designated testing window will be rescheduled for testing upon his/her return to school at the discretion of the school’s administration. Students will not be exempted from taking standardized tests.

Accommodations or modifications will be offered as required to meet the qualified child’s learning needs. This means accommodations or modifications are allowed *only* when specifically indicated through testing via a professional evaluation completed as part of the IDEA Child Find process by the public-school district, or through a private psychological-educational evaluation approved by the Office of Catholic Schools. In addition, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Orlando do not write 504 Student Disability plans. Accommodations or modifications are offered at the sole discretion of the school staff and must be based on an evaluation of the documentation provided and other factors deemed relevant by the school staff.

Student Safety

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School staff works diligently to safeguard the students at all times. The school maintains a strong relationship with the Winter Park Police Department and Fire Department and coordinates with them regarding safety protocols. Students are not permitted to leave school premises during school hours and during extracurricular activities without an authorized adult. Doctor appointments, with the exception of emergencies, should be scheduled for after school hours, when possible. If it is necessary to pick up a student before dismissal, an e-mail from the parent notifying the teacher is requested in the morning. **Students being picked up early (prior to dismissal time) must be checked out in the school office prior to 1:45 p.m., (12:45 on Wednesday).** When picking up students early for appointments, parents should pick them up from the school office.

Student Withdrawal

Parents wishing to withdraw a student should inform the Principal in writing. Parents are asked to contact the bookkeeper to ensure that tuition and fees are paid as of the date of withdrawal. School records will be sent when financial responsibilities have been met and school resources have been returned. The student’s permanent record will be sent after a request from the new school has been received. Health records may be taken by the parent at the time of withdrawal if all of the above is in order.

Tardy

Excessive tardiness impedes student learning. A student will be marked tardy if he/she arrives after 8:00 a.m. Parents should come to the office with their students who are tardy in order to sign-in the students.

Testing

The TerraNova Test is administered to students in Grades 2-8 in the spring. This standardized test measures student achievement in the core subject areas. Test results are shared with parents in a timely manner. Teachers and Administrators are able to assist with the interpretation of test results. The Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) is given to Grades 5 and 8 in the spring. AIMS Web assessment is conducted throughout the year in the primary grades to track student progress and growth in learning.

Tropical Storms

If such an emergency arises during school hours, parents are encouraged to pick up their children in their classrooms. Students not picked up will be dismissed at the regular dismissal hours. St. Margaret Mary Catholic School will observe the same regulations as Orange County Schools regarding the closing of school; however, if possible, the school will utilize technology / school work packets for at-home learning. Parents will be notified by the school regarding any closures or at-home learning plans. St. Margaret Mary School will reopen as soon as conditions permit.

Use of Telephone

Students may not use the classroom telephones, unless authorized to do so by the teacher. **Students may not use cell phones during the school day, unless directed to do so by a teacher as a digital resource for a lesson. Students' cell phones should be stored in backpacks and turned off. Cell phones used during school hours will be confiscated and turned into the school office. They may not be used at dismissal time without teacher's permission. Cell phone cameras may not be used at any time on school property unless authorized by the teacher for school assignments. St. Margaret Mary Catholic School is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones.**

Videotaping

Classroom instruction may not be videotaped by students for any purpose, including posting to social media. Students may not record classes, students, or teachers. Students choosing to do so may lose technology privileges.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an important part of the St. Margaret Mary Catholic School community, and all parents are encouraged to volunteer. Each family is asked to volunteer a minimum of 10 hours per year. In accordance with Diocesan policy and for the safety of the students, fingerprinting, successful completion of Safe Environment Training, and background checks are required.

Right to Amend

St. Margaret Mary Catholic School reserves the right to amend the school handbook and change policies with proper notification of those affected. This is a living document, and it will reflect the date of the most recent updates.

Code of Conduct for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Orlando

It is the expectation of the school that all parents/guardians/caregivers/volunteers and visitors always model acceptable behavior within the school setting, at school sponsored activities or in any social or professional media involving the school and/or Diocese. "It is incumbent upon parents to cooperate closely with the school teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated; and in fulfilling their duty, teachers are to collaborate closely with parents who are to be willingly heard and for whom associations or meetings are to be inaugurated and held in great esteem" (*The Code of Canon Law*, Canon 796, Para. 2).

This Code is designed to guide all stakeholders in their dealings with staff, other parents, students, and the wider school community. The Code stands beside but does not exclude or replace the rights and obligations of individuals under common law while recognizing the rights of the Diocese of Orlando as a Catholic religious entity and the religious nature of Catholic schools.

Mission Statement:

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Orlando proclaim the Gospel message within an academic environment of excellence that challenges students to be creative and critical thinkers who integrate faith, moral leadership and compassionate service in order to create a more just and humane world.

Rights of a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:

- To be treated with respect and courtesy by staff, students and other parents
- To be listened to, and clearly communicated with by the school in a timely manner, regarding your child/ren's education and development
- To have confidentiality over sensitive issues respected by faculty/staff

Responsibilities of a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:

- Value and advocate for your school and its reputation. Be mindful of the hurt and damage social media may cause to faculty/staff members, other parents, and students.
- Respect the rights of faculty/staff members and other individuals
- Respect the reputation of teachers and be mindful of communications especially social media; e.g. tone of emails
- Follow the correct procedures to resolve a grievance or conflict, as outlined in the school's handbook
- Parents must follow the instructions and directions of the teacher. A parent may remind students of the rules but at no time issue consequences and should refer the student to the teacher if the behavior continues
- As valued members of the school community attend and participate appropriately in school liturgies, extra-curricular or special events including athletics, concerts, academic and cultural events

As a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and/or Visitor, we ask that you:

- Cooperate with school/campus security protocols when on school grounds in order to support the overall safety and security of all children in our care
 - *Please note that each school in the Diocese of Orlando has a "Raptor" comprehensive visitor check-in/check-out system located at the front reception desk to prevent school access to unauthorized persons. Using a valid driver's license, "Raptor" runs all visitors against the National and State Sex Offender Registry each time he/she visits the campus. ALL visitors and volunteers must wear their name badges/lanyards in plain sight at all times while on school grounds or at school-related events*
- Support in words and actions the philosophy of Catholic Education
- Under no circumstances approach/contact another student to address, discuss or reprimand them because of actions towards your own child/ren. These issues should be addressed by school administration. This includes the use of digital/social media to address or air grievances.
- Respect teachers' preparation and assigned supervisory time before, during, and after school Make an appointment for long discussions at a mutually convenient time. If you wish to speak to a teacher, please do not expect a meeting unless pre-arranged.

- Protect our children and do not discuss any grievances or perceived failings in front of any student regarding the school
- Respect the decisions made by the administration and faculty, even if you disagree with them
- Listen to your child/ren, but remember that a different version of the event may be interpreted by others
- Understand the importance of a healthy parent/teacher/child relationship and communicate any concerns to your school in a constructive and appropriate manner
- Observe the school's policies, as outlined on the school webpage and/or the school's handbook and endeavor to support them in the home
- Cooperate where your child's behavior has overstepped accepted school standards, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, and follow specified protocol for communication with faculty/staff members
- Value the school community and its reputation especially when engaging with social media
- Do not smoke or use offensive language on school premises
- During livestreaming instruction, parents/guardians must not record or take screenshots of the instruction or share the livestream link with others. A quiet space needs to be provided to the student only, to avoid disruptions or distractions to the teacher and other students. If parents/guardians have any concerns with the livestream instruction, they need to schedule time with the teacher outside of class time.

Addressing concerns regarding situations involving your student(s):

Our Catholic schools want to work in partnership with our families. If anyone has a **current complaint, criticism, or concern**, it is expected the following steps be followed in the first instance:

1. Speak to the appropriate school person involved (e.g. class teacher) first and try to resolve the concern with mutual respect and clear communication. Where/if possible make an appointment with the relevant person. Follow the chain of command.
2. If for some reason this is not possible, then make an appointment to see an administrator, or other designated leadership personnel.
3. The Administrator (or designee) should attempt to mediate and find resolution in the presence of both parties.
4. If, having followed Steps 1-3 with no satisfaction, the parents must contact the pastor. Only after steps 1-4 have occurred with no resolution, then you may contact the Office of Catholic Schools using information on the website of the Diocese of Orlando - Office of Catholic for further facilitation (<https://www.orlandodiocese.org/ministries-offices/schools/>).
5. Understand that parents, caregivers, guardians, etc. will not receive disciplinary or conflict resolution details that involve children other than their own. This is in accordance to Florida Statute.

It is important to note that criticism regarding a faculty/staff member will only be heard if it is related to their professional conduct.

Breaches and/or the inability to respect the Diocese of Orlando – Office of Catholic Schools Code of Conduct for Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Volunteers, and Visitors, or exasperating complaints, may result in exclusion of a parent, guardian, caregiver, volunteer, and/or visitor from a school, and/or possible termination of enrollment of their child/ren.

If your complaint relates to Sexual Abuse by a faculty/staff member towards a child in both an historical or current matter, you should, contact the statewide toll free abuse and neglect registry at 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873) and/or law enforcement. The Diocese of Orlando also offers the service of a Victim Assistance Coordinator. The number is 407-246-7179.

Parents, Guardians, and/or Caregivers, when signing off on accepting the school's policies in the Enrollment Application Form, and by the act of accepting enrollment at a Diocese of Orlando Catholic School, are accepting of this Code of Conduct in its entirety.

Parent – Student Acknowledgement Form 2023-2024

In addition to carefully reviewing the Parent – Student Handbook with their children, parents are asked to read and review the Student Technology Responsible Use Policy, sited below that is found at the St. Margaret Mary Catholic School website: www.smmknight.org/handbook-diocesan-forms and on Family Portal.

Diocese of Orlando / Office of Catholic Schools Student Technology Responsible Use Policy

- I (the student) understand that inappropriate and irresponsible use and conduct while using the device and/or other technology resources and/or school network shall result in appropriate disciplinary action. I agree to be a responsible digital citizen and user and will conduct myself appropriately while online. I have read and understood this Responsible Use Policy and agree to abide by it.
- As a parent/guardian, I have discussed the Student Technology Responsible Use Policy and will support the school in guiding my child in using technology as an educational tool. I understand that I am responsible for monitoring and guiding my child’s activity while he/she is not at school.

Parent – Student Signatures

My signature below is to acknowledge receipt of the **St. Margaret Mary Catholic School Parent Student Handbook for 2023-2024**. I have read and reviewed the handbook, the school Honor Code, and the **Code of Conduct for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Orlando** with my children to ensure that my family follows Diocesan and school guidelines, policies, and procedures. We agree to abide by the policies stated in the handbook. My students will abide by the **Diocese of Orlando / Office of Catholic Schools Student Technology Responsible Use Policy** noted above.

Family Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature(s): _____

This form should be returned to school by August 28, 2023.