



St. Mary's Academy

Middle School Family Handbook

Policies and Procedures

2020-2021

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Introduction

Welcome to St. Mary's Academy Middle School. As with any healthy community, SMA has a mission, set of beliefs, traditions, policies, and procedures that provide structure and guide interactions. This handbook is meant to inform and clarify the above. Thank you for taking the time to read and understand the contents of this handbook.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary's Academy fosters excellence in each child through academic achievement, spiritual development, and service. The Loretto School Values of faith, community, justice and respect provide the foundation for students to be powerful agents of change.

VISION STATEMENT

Inspiring leaders to act with integrity, seek justice, build community, and change the world.

*Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic some of our school's typical processes and procedures as outlined in this handbook have been adjusted to ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff. Please refer to the High School "Readiness to Reopen Plan", accessible on our website at stmarys.academy/sma-2020-21-reopening-plan. This web page remains updated with the most current information pertaining to the 2020-2021 school year. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to Middle School Principal, Tiffany Drees, at tdrees@smanet.org.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

As an independent school in the Catholic tradition, and committed to the Loretto School Values of faith, community, justice, and respect, St. Mary's Academy is committed to diversity in its many forms. Diversity includes the human facets of race, ethnicity, national origin, geography, religion, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, age, physical ability, learning style, and marital, parental or economic status.

St. Mary's Academy affirms the inherent dignity and value of each individual. Our school embraces the distinct identity of each person and helps students to appreciate their own identities and those of others. St. Mary's Academy actively seeks families, faculty, and staff who bring a range of experience to the school.

We believe diversity increases the ability to formulate and nurture ideas and relationships resulting in a school community where all opinions and views are respected.

St. Mary's Academy provides a scholarly learning environment for an educational experience that prepares students to participate in an increasingly complex global society.

We believe that in an inclusive society, developing competency, the will and ability to create authentic and effective relationships across differences, and embrace diversity is crucial to being a responsible and compassionate world citizens.

Beliefs and Assumptions

At St. Mary's Academy, we offer a values oriented education that emphasizes the dignity of the individual. In carrying out these values, we believe:

...that spirituality is an essential dimension of the human experience; therefore, we base our educative mission on religious values that are rooted in, but not limited to, those in the Judeo-Christian tradition;

...that each student should be guided to an appreciation of aesthetics, a growth in wisdom, and an understanding of the interconnectedness of all learning;

...that commitment to a diverse community is an essential support for learning;

...in empowering each student to make ethical decisions and to act for the good of the whole community;

...that personal attention given the student increases academic learning and development;

...we respect and encourage differences of learning and teaching styles;

... that each student needs substantive knowledge, the ability to think critically and broad-based skills for success in the present and the future;

...that the curriculum should allow for a smooth transition from one level to the next;

...that the effectiveness of our program demands constant professional re-evaluation.

History

More than 150 years ago, before the Colorado Territory was formed in 1861, a key necessity was missing in Denver: a stable educational experience for the children of families new to the frontier. In 1864, three courageous and selfless Sisters of Loretto traveled by mail coach from their home in Santa Fe, New Mexico to Denver to open St. Mary's Academy. In the introduction to St. Mary's Academy - 150 years, former Colorado State Historian William J. Convery described the founders as transplanting knowledge

from the East but also, “tolerance and respect for diversity, and a commitment to justice.” SMA conferred the first diploma in the Colorado Territory to Jessie Forshee.

Today the Sisters of Loretto continue a long and vital tradition of education by sponsoring St. Mary’s Academy and The Havern School in Denver, Loretto Academy in El Paso, and Nerinx Hall in St. Louis.

Guided by the Loretto School Values, the ethos of St. Mary’s Academy is deeply rooted in the spirituality and mission of Loretto. The intangible imprint of Loretto is interwoven into the very fabric of our school where the Loretto School Values of faith, community, justice and respect serve as a touchstone for all aspects of our community.

Every year St. Mary’s Academy provides experiences for students, teachers, and administrators to deepen the bond with Loretto and with the other schools. Since 1988 teachers have traveled each spring to the Motherhouse in Kentucky for an intensive weekend immersion in the community’s rich history and vibrant mission of today. For almost as many years, high school students from the Loretto schools spend a week of service at the Motherhouse, learn advocacy skills in El Paso and participate in a leadership conference in Denver culminating in a Loretto Leadership Statement to guide their year’s work.

As a school dedicated to educating young people to be powerful agents of change, we embrace the Constitutions of the Sisters of Loretto that encourage us to “educate others as well as ourselves to truth, beauty and the ways of peace, in the spirit of Jesus.”

Loretto School Values

Loretto encourages an approach to all life that promotes mutuality, collaboration, and compassion and rejects relationships based on dominance or submission. We embrace the following values:

Faith

Experiencing the enduring love of God, we build hope, foster community, and act in charity and service.

Community

We strive to build interdependent relationships, which are affirming, inclusive, empowering and compassionate.

Justice

We promote change in systems and in relationships that are oppressive.

We work to create systems in which people, especially women, are treated fairly and impartially.

Respect

We are open to differences and believe in the potential of each person.

We promote the dignity of each person and protect the sacredness of all creation.

Policies and Procedures

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to conduct themselves in the classroom in accordance with the values and ethics of the St. Mary's Academy Community by exhibiting academic honesty in all aspects of classroom life.

Examples of academic dishonesty:

Plagiarism - Using the work, either intentionally or not intentionally, of another individual, book, magazine, internet, or any other source without giving proper credit for the information used.

Cheating - Using another student's work and copying or using the contents, communicating information about a test or a quiz to another student, using a translator system, or using unauthorized resources.

Prevarication - Stating information that is untrue in coursework such as fabricating lab results, citing sources that were not used, taking credit for a group assignment you did not contribute to, just to name a few.

Resubmission of Work - Taking an assignment that has already been submitted for another class and submitting the information for a different class without consulting a teacher.

If a student does not adhere to the above guidelines, disciplinary action may be taken. In more severe cases, the Discipline Committee will convene to determine further action.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

These pre-and-early adolescent years are marked by significant developmental changes, which create unique academic challenges. The middle-school years are ideally when students begin to discover how to learn specific to their personal strengths and weaknesses. A key goal of the Middle School teachers and program is to help students learn how to apply their strengths to advantage and compensate for their weaknesses, and to realize that often our greatest strengths are also our greatest weakness. Another key goal is to guide students in the discovery of their passions for particular academic subjects, the arts, sports, and/or service. Passion sparks motivation, purpose, curiosity and fortitude.

Nearly every middle school student encounters some degree of academic difficulty and challenge. Most difficulties are resolved in context through the academic support provided by classroom teachers during regular class time or outside of class time before or after school or during office hours. Only occasionally would an outside, parent-contracted learning specialist be recommended and then only in cases of specific remedial needs and after analysis by the program liaison, teaching team, and principal. Additional resources and support are

made available to students with professionally diagnosed learning disabilities wherever compatibility exists between the prescribed accommodations and St. Mary's Academy's program.

When a student is unable to find academic success and demonstrate their knowledge over time, considerable communication will take place between school and home to discover and implement strategies and solutions.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities - Students with professionally identified learning disabilities have and do thrive in SMA's Middle School's academic program. Keys to success include the student's determination and commitment, the family's support of the student, and collaboration with the faculty. In the Middle School, the Assistant Principal coordinates the design and implementation of classroom accommodations in consultation with the family, family-contracted educational evaluator, and classroom teachers in support of students with learning disabilities. The Assistant Principal can also help the family find an appropriate learning specialist or tutor if needed.

Accommodation plans are individually developed and may include extra time on tests, specific seating, and use of assistive technology. When the educational evaluation recommends waiving or postponing the study of a second language, a tutorial is scheduled instead for the diagnosed student. During the tutorial, students sometimes meet with privately contracted learning specialists for remediation or they join others scheduled in tutorial under the guidance of the Assistant Principal. The tutorial under the guidance of the Assistant Principal provides general academic support relative to accommodation plans, including extended time for classroom tests.

Educational Evaluations and Testing – Families applying to SMA are encouraged to share during the application process any educational testing their student may have completed. If testing has been completed in between the time of application and the time the student starts in the Middle School, please forward the testing to the Assistant Principal. Occasionally, if no testing exists, the Middle School recommends educational testing when they note academic struggles that are ongoing or outside of the developmental norm. A recommendation for educational testing comes from the Principal of the Middle School or the Middle School Assistant Principal in conference with the student and parents.

Academic Accommodations for Special Circumstances – Academic accommodation plans are also developed for students with chronic medical conditions or other special circumstances such as for students for whom English is a second language.

ALCOHOL, DRUG, AND TOBACCO USE

The use, possession, and /or distribution of drugs including alcohol or tobacco is illegal according to Colorado state law and is strictly prohibited on the SMA campus, within 100 feet of the campus boundaries, and at the site of any SMA sponsored event, whether on or off campus. If a student does not adhere to these school guidelines, the Discipline Committee convenes to determine disciplinary action, which may include expulsion.

ATHLETICS

Interscholastic athletics are an extension of the classroom and an integral part of the educational process. Athletics provide not only an avenue for the development of athletic skills, but for the development of the total person. The goal is to promote values and teach life skills such as integrity, leadership, perseverance, and teamwork. Inherent in this experience are the Loretto School Values of faith, community, justice and respect.

St. Mary's Academy's athletic programs strive to develop positive self-image and encourage physical activity as a part of a healthy lifestyle. Educational athletics serve as a source of school pride and maintain positive relationships between schools and communities. While schools recognize pride in winning, it does not supersede the educational goals of middle school athletics.

Middle School students have the opportunity to engage in interscholastic athletics on school sports teams in place of physical education. The practice sessions take place during the regular school day and games/meets are scheduled after school. The seventh and eighth grade team rosters are filled using a lottery system; students are not selected on the basis of ability. Each trimester, students who are not placed on a team or those who do not elect to play a sport will participate in a coed physical education class.

The following sports are offered in **seventh and eighth grade**:

TRIMESTER I	TRIMESTER II	TRIMESTER III
Boys' Soccer Girls' Volleyball Girls' Field Hockey Coed Cross-Country Coed Golf Coed Tennis	Boys' Basketball Girls' Basketball Dance Team	Boys' Lacrosse Girls' Lacrosse Girls' Soccer Boys' Baseball

Students are placed on the sixth-grade athletic teams based on available space rather than on the basis of ability or experience. Most students receive their first choice and many could also receive their second or third choice. Each trimester, the sixth-grade students who are not placed on a team or those who do not elect to play a sport will participate in a coed physical education class.

The **sixth grade** students will submit their sport choices in order of preference from the following selections:

TRIMESTER I	TRIMESTER II	TRIMESTER III
Boys' Soccer Girls' Volleyball Girls' Field Hockey Coed Cross-Country	Boys' Basketball Girls' Basketball	Boys' Lacrosse Girls' Lacrosse

As a member of the Association of Colorado Independent Schools, St. Mary's Academy adheres to the philosophy regarding interscholastic sports developed by members of the ACIS:

ATTENDANCE

- The connection among timely arrival, regular and consistent attendance, academic achievement, and social competency is a strong one. We do not want students with a fever to attend school. Otherwise, we encourage every effort to be in attendance.
- Students are expected to attend school daily, be on time for all classes and remain on campus throughout the school day. Because attendance and participation in class are the most significant part of the learning experience, **excused absences** are limited and include illness, emergencies, and religious holidays. Students who are absent are strongly encouraged to meet individually with each of their teachers to determine a schedule for make-up work
- **Unexcused absences** include extended school holidays, pleasure trips or family vacations, and disciplinary suspension.
- .
- Parents/guardians are requested to telephone the Middle School Office (303-762-8300 Ext. 250) by 8:00 a.m. if their child will be absent or late for any portion of the school day. Prompt notification enables us to better serve the individual and community. Note: The parent/guardian contributes to the safety of the student by signing out the student in the Middle School office or calling from the parking lot if the student is leaving during the school day.
- Students who are absent more than 50% of the day are not allowed to participate in after-school events, social or sports related, on the day of absence. Exceptions are limited and granted by the principal in counsel with leading sponsors or coaches.
- If a student is absent on a given day from two core classes, he/she may not participate in after-school activities (sports games, arts performances, or school socials) on that school day without permission from the principal in conference with the athletic or fine arts director.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

Since absence and tardiness jeopardize academic success and are disruptive, chronic absences/lateness for any reason will result in a family meeting with the principal and teachers to collaboratively create a plan and set benchmarks for attendance. Holidays are sprinkled throughout the school year to accommodate family vacations and trips. Please consult the calendar before planning trips.

BEHAVIOR

BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS OFF CAMPUS

Students are held to the same St. Mary's Academy Middle School expectations, policies, and standards when representing SMA off-campus as when they are on-campus. Examples of off-campus activities include but are not limited to field trips, community service excursions, socials, *The Island*, overnight trips, arts performances, and sports events.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

Offending acts or an action committed outside of school hours, during breaks from school, during non-school-sponsored activities and/or off of school property that disrupt school life may result in loss of school privileges and other disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion. A disruption of school life may occur when acts committed by an SMA student or students outside of school and not associated with a school-sponsored activity threatens the safety of SMA students and/or interferes with the learning environment when school is in session. If such acts are deemed contrary to the mission of the school, impinge on the rights of other students, employees or members of the school community, or have a direct or immediate effect on the discipline or general welfare of the school by the principal in concert with the president of the school, the school reserves the right to take action.

BULLYING

St. Mary's Academy is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and positive learning environment for all of its community members. The School will not tolerate any action or behavior that restricts any person's right to physical and emotional safety. This policy shall include any action that takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, and on a school bus. It also includes actions that take place off of school property, if the result of those actions substantially interferes with a student's ability to attend school and/or be educated in a safe, non-hostile environment.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as unwanted, intentional, aggressive and intimidating behavior, repeated over a period of time that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

There are four different types of bullying:

Verbal bullying– involves using words (spoken or written) with the intent to hurt someone. Verbal bullying can include: name calling, threatening, mocking, teasing, taunting, racial or discriminatory words, and unwanted nicknames.

Relational bullying– involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Relational bullying can include: exclusion from a social group, gossiping, shunning, spreading rumors, or behavior that has the intent to make a person feel bad or embarrassed in front of others.

Physical bullying– involves hurting a person’s body or possessions. Physical bullying can include: pushing, hitting, kicking, spitting, throwing objects at someone, taking someone’s possessions, making mean gestures, and unwanted touch.

Cyberbullying– involves using technology as a means to bully. Cyberbullying can include: spreading hurtful and/or defamatory information and communication using the Internet, email, cell phones, chat, social media sites, text blogs, or any other form of technology.

Note: Bullying is different from the typical disagreements or conflict that occurs between friends or classmates. It can be difficult to tell the difference between teasing and bullying. Teasing may involve two or more friends who act together in a way that is intended to be fun for all involved, with some reciprocity, but it never involves physical or emotional abuse. It is possible for teasing to get out of hand, with feelings being hurt, and still not constitute bullying.

Policy in Action

The best disciplinary procedure is one that does not have to be enforced; it comes from a clear understanding of behavioral expectations, good leadership, and appropriate and fair supervision. Our hope is that we are able to address and correct issues early on, which benefits both the student(s) and the School. Acts of bullying may be subject to disciplinary action.

Report Tips and Safety Concerns

If you feel you have been bullied or have witnessed bullying, promptly tell a St. Mary’s Academy teacher, counselor or Principal. For anonymous reports, call the Colorado Safe2Tell at 1-877-542-7233 or make an anonymous report at www.safe2tell.org

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY

The entrance and exit to the Middle School building is through the front, east doors that face the Sanders House administrative building. The west and south doors remain locked throughout the day. All parents/guardians and visitors to the Middle School are asked to enter through the east doors and sign in at the desk in the Middle School office that is directly to the left of the entry doors.

ARRIVING OR LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY OR LATE

For safety, when students arrive at or depart from school between 7:55 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., parents/guardians sign students in and/or out in the Middle School office or call from the parking lot. If a student knows that they will be arriving late, it is helpful if the parent/guardian calls the Middle School office with this information.

SECURITY AND SUPERVISION

Because student safety is an issue that must be taken seriously at all times, please note the following policies. Your support is appreciated.

- Middle School students are to be in line-of-sight supervision of a faculty member during the school day and during school functions/programs.
- Musical or theatre performance participants or athletes staying for a rehearsal or game must be directly supervised by a teacher/coach.
- Students attending athletic contests at the end of the academic day must be at the games in the gym or stands at the playing field. They must remain in the gym or at the playing field until they meet their parents/guardians to leave campus.
- Student spectators waiting for the start of a game must be in ASA (the after-school program), in the gym, or at the game field. They may not walk among the buildings or in the buildings during these times without adult supervision.
- With prior arrangement, a student may remain in the building after the end of the academic day to work on a project or meet with a teacher as long as the teacher is directly supervising the student.

CARPOOL

(Please note that we can not offer any sort of after-school program for the 2020-2021 school year.)

For safety reasons, Middle School students who have not departed school by 3:40 p.m. will be automatically signed in to the after-school program (ASA) unless they are being tutored, an athlete with a scheduled game and under the supervision of a coach, or a performer under the supervision of a fine-arts teacher. ASA is for students in grades five through eight. Students may stay to watch sports games if a parent who is present takes responsibility for line-of-sight supervision.

The charge for drop-ins to ASA is \$5 per 15 minutes. At 3:40 p.m., faculty carpool monitors will bring students from the designated carpool pick-up points to ASA downstairs in the Middle School building. The parent/driver/guardian is required to sign out the student from ASA. After 4:00 p.m. please ring the doorbell at the front of the east doors of the Middle School to gain entrance to ASA until 5:30pm. After 5:30pm, ASA is in the Community Center EDC.

CARPOOL GUIDELINES

The safety of our SMA students is the #1 priority for every procedure listed below. Please make every effort to be courteous and kind.

- Middle and High School students are to be dropped off in the north parking lot. The south lot is for Lower School student drop-off only.
- Please form two lines and do not change lanes until you reach the merge in front of Bishop Evans Sports Center.
- There is no drop off or pick up at the High School west entrance as this slows the line for everyone.
- Please merge into one lane in front of Bishop Evans Sports Center and wait until you have reached the designated drop off/pick up area (in front of Bishop Evans) to drop off/pick up Middle School students.

- If you choose to park your car at pick up time, you must leave your car and walk to meet your child to walk them across the parking lot.
- High School parents should pull into a parking space to drop off or pick up High School students. **Please do not stop directly in front of the High School west entrance.**
- Middle and High School faculty and SMA staff will be helping every afternoon from 3:05 - 3:40 pm.
- If you arrive early, please turn off your engine rather than idling.

REQUESTS FOR A MORE PLEASANT CARPOOL EXPERIENCE

- Consider parking your car in the lot and waiting for your student(s) in front of Bishop Evans when the weather is nice.
- If you are picking up a Lower School student and also a Middle School athlete who practices during the last period of the day and is dismissed at 3:30 p.m., please contact the Middle School for special instructions and accommodations.
- If you are retrieving a Middle School athlete whose practice time is the last period of the day, please park your car or arrive close to 3:30 pm to avoid clogging the carpool line at dismissal time.
- Please turn your engine off while waiting in line.

We thank you for exercising patience and kindness at carpool time.

CELL PHONES AND WATCHES

Students may bring a cell phone to school, but they are not allowed to use them during the school day. All cell phones and smart watches must be stored in the student's backpack or placed appropriately in the classroom or locker until the end of the school day. If teachers request that students bring their cell phones in for a particular classroom purpose, parents will be notified. Teachers and administrators reserve the right to confiscate cell phones and smart watches that are used inappropriately or detract from the learning environment. If this occurs regularly, parents may be notified and asked to pick up the smart device in the front office at the end of the day. Students are encouraged to call parents/guardians from the Middle School Office in cases of emergency or changes in the daily schedule.

COMMUNICATION

Parents and students are encouraged to first contact the school adult most directly involved and capable of answering your question or addressing your concern. While your student's Community Action Team (CAT) teacher, principal, or other school adults are available and willing to listen and counsel, the most respectful, effective and efficient method of avoiding potential misunderstandings and to support an environment of trust is to first contact the primary adult involved. If your question or concern is not addressed to your satisfaction and you are in need of advice or counsel on how to proceed, please contact the principal. If your questions or concern, following your conversation with the principal, is not addressed to your satisfaction, please contact the academy president.

Please use the SchoolPass app to notify the school when you are retrieving your child during the school day at a time other than the usual retrieval time. You may also call the Middle School office to let us know. Please give us as much advance warning as possible so we can have your child ready to go when you arrive. Your child can then be waiting in the MS Office for your call from the parking lot. Thank you.

CONTACTING STUDENTS

As a courtesy and to minimize distraction and disruption in the learning environment, please call the Administrative Assistant in the Middle School Office or drop by the office to leave messages or belongings for your student rather than directly contacting your child through text or email or entering a classroom. The office delivers messages and belongings during passing periods to minimize interruption and lost focus. Teachers and students appreciate your respect of this request.

COMMUNITY ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

For the health of the community and student life, parents/guardians are asked to conduct their communications and activities with the four Loretto School Values as their guide. Exercising faith, community, respect and justice strengthens the necessary and valued dialogue between home and school and among parents. Parent interactions with each other, students, and teachers play a significant role in the day-to-day experience in the Middle School.

SOCIAL EVENT GUIDELINES

SMA parents are encouraged to follow these guidelines when hosting a non-school-sponsored social activity for SMA students.

- Whether the social event is large or small, line-of-sight adult presence and oversight is recommended during the middle school years.
- Whether inviting few or many guests, use of discretion when issuing invitations minimizes hurt feelings in the community. Remind your hosting student to invite their guests in private. Remind guests that posting photos of the event on social networks can be very hurtful to those not invited.
- Please avoid having a celebratory group picked up in the carpool line. The sense of exclusiveness is hurtful even to those who are only tenuously connected to the host.
- Establish a specific starting and ending time.
- Educate yourself about your legal responsibilities when hosting a social gathering.
- Attempt to speak with the parents of invited students before the event to convey starting and ending times as well as behavioral expectations. Ask for help with chaperoning.

When your child has been invited to a social event consider taking the following actions:

Call the hosting parents ahead of time to:

- Introduce yourself and learn more about the specifics of the event;
- Ascertain the starting and ending times of the event;
- Ensure that the parent and adequate chaperones will be present;

- Obtain and give contact information;
- Offer assistance if possible.
- Be clear with your child about your behavioral expectations of him/her;
- Discuss possible compromising situations and the protocol for handling them;
- Specify alternative contacts – a neighbor or friend – to call if needed

Please avoid bringing special treats or gifts for a small number of students in your child's class. Special treats and gifts may be shared in your child's Community Action Team.

COMPUTER ACCEPTABLE-USE POLICY

Students and parents are required to read, accept and sign the SMA Acceptable-use Agreement governing the use of computer devices at school before the student is allowed to use the devices and school Internet connection. The agreement can be found by [HERE](#). A similar procedure is required for the Chromebook User Agreement.

CONFERENCES

There are two formal conference days offered twice each year to provide students with the valuable opportunity to develop communication skills at a table with significant adults. Parents, students and CAT teachers share successes, challenges and plans. Never feel you must wait for these dates to request time with your child's teaching team or one or members of your child's teaching team. We are partners for the benefit of your child.

Formal conferences occur in **October** and **March**. Online signup is provided ahead of time. The Middle School conference schedule follows the Lower School schedule.

Formal conferences offer three touchpoints. We welcome and encourage parents and students to contact the teacher, CAT teacher, or principal otherwise throughout the school year to review their child's progress or to discuss situations that may be affecting their child's attitude, academic performance, or behavior in a particular context.

COUNSELOR

The St. Mary's Academy Lower and Middle School counselor is available to support students in need of help with personal or relational problems. Students and parents may arrange a time to see the counselor either by dropping by her office or by asking the school's administrative assistant to help make the connection. Teachers, advisors, or the principal may refer students to the counselor. As an active participant in teaching team meetings, the counselor in Lower and Middle School brings expertise and context in support of a student's personal and academic success.

CRISIS PLAN

St. Mary's Academy has a school-wide crisis plan for unexpected situations that disrupt the normal flow of events and call for extraordinary measures. A crisis could be, among other situations, a fire, tornado,

blizzard, injury, threat of injury, or death. For that reason, the school is prepared with procedures and drills that are reviewed and practiced throughout the year. Should immediate evacuation from the school be required, students will be evacuated to the LDS Church on 999 E. Tufts Avenue.

DISCIPLINE

St. Mary's Academy Middle School seeks to establish an environment where students are empowered to learn. Students at St. Mary's Academy exercise developmentally appropriate self-discipline, conducting themselves in ways that support the mission of St. Mary's Academy and the Loretto School Values. When they make a wrong choice, discipline is delivered respectfully, thoughtfully, and with the intention of supporting the disciplined student and community. St. Mary's Academy understands that Middle School is a time of intense physical, psychological, and emotional growth. Social-emotional development takes time and is accompanied by mistakes. Adults are charged with helping students reflect on behavioral choices, especially when they hurt another and the community.

Three primary behaviors are expected of St. Mary's Academy Middle School students:

- Courteous interactions with others in word and deed.
- Honesty in word and deed.
- Positive responsiveness to rules and requests.

Courtesy, honesty, and positive responsiveness are expressed, among other ways, when a student treats his/her peers with courtesy, responds promptly to adult direction, locates his/herself in designated areas only, handles property with care, honors the dress code, completes and hands in own work, and comes to class punctually with supplies in hand and prepared in mind.

DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES AND CONSEQUENCES

The determination and nature of disciplinary action will vary in accordance with the seriousness or frequency of disciplinary infractions. Disciplinary actions include but are not limited to lunch or recess detention, assigned school service, daily check-in at the Middle School office before and/or after school, in-school or out-of-school suspension, a loss of privileges, a behavioral contract, behavioral probation, or expulsion. An example of a privilege is participation in an excursion, trip, recess, social, council meeting or sports game.

The Discipline Committee of the Middle School may place chronic or serious offenders on disciplinary probation or a behavioral contract. During the probation or contract period, regular meetings may occur among the student, parents, teachers, and principal to note progress.

Note: In conference between the Middle School Disciplinary Committee and the President of the Academy, SMA reserves the right to discontinue the enrollment of a student who is unresponsive to correction or whose behavior inside or outside of school is disruptive to the learning and teaching process within school or interferes with the safety or welfare of students or other members of the school community.

Learning from our or other's mistakes: The school reserves the right to raise at any school meeting any issue of discipline regarding a student for the purpose of furthering the educational and learning experience of students and the school community overall.

Circumstances can differ greatly between cases, and the Middle School Disciplinary Committee and the President of the Academy may modify the procedures in a particular case in order to reach a timely and just decision.

What follows are examples of behaviors that may require intervention:

Minor infractions - Minor infractions may include, but not be limited to incomplete classwork or homework, not following directions in class, not having the appropriate materials, interrupting class, making disruptive noises, being out of dress code, cursing or making disrespectful comments, being dishonest, engaging in running/horseplay in the building, name calling, using or taking others' belongings, inappropriate language or gestures, throwing objects, not keeping hands/feet to self, inappropriate phone/technology use, etc.

Major infractions - Major infractions may include, but not be limited to repeated minor infractions, destruction of property, inappropriate language, leaving the classroom or building without permission, physically hurting oneself or others, stealing, possessing or using objects that may cause harm to others, inappropriate use of technology, plagiarism, frequent or serious disruption to the learning environment, and other behaviors that are considered "bullying."

DRESS CODE

Please note that for the 2020-2021 school year, the below dress code does not apply. This year students are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing that can be worn in the classroom as well as in any sort of PE or sports setting. This includes t-shirts, leggings, athletic shorts/pants, tennis shoes, etc. Students are simply asked not to wear clothing with inappropriate or offensive messages or clothing that advertises other schools.

In order for students and teachers to optimize their time together, SMA insists on modest attire. The dress code supports individuality while fostering a respectful and positive learning environment. The school reserves the right to require students to address infractions to the dress code in a timely manner. Thank you for supporting the dress code.

Tops

- Necklines and sleeves must cover chest and shoulders.
- Fabrics must be thick enough so that undergarments are not visible.
- Small logos of at most 1.5 inches squared are allowed.
- Official SMA shirts are allowed, but other schools' logos (including colleges and universities) are not allowed.
- Plain or patterned tops are allowed. Wording or inappropriate images are not allowed.

Bottoms

- A 5-inch inseam minimum is required for skirts and shorts.
- Leggings are allowed if worn with a hemline falling at knuckles when arms are at rest.
- Ripped, frayed, and unhemmed bottoms are not allowed.
- Traditional denim blue jeans are not allowed; however, denim material in other colors is acceptable.

Outer Layers

- Small logos of at most 1.5 inches squared are allowed.
- Official SMA layers are allowed, but other schools' logos (including colleges and universities) are not allowed.

Shoes

- Toes must be covered and heels be no more than 1.5 inches in height.
- Sandals and flip-flops are not allowed, even on dress-down days.

Please respect:

- Hats and hoods are not worn inside the building.
- Athletic wear (sweats, team uniforms, athletic shorts) is reserved for PE and Sports.

Dress-down-not-too-far-down Days:

- Traditional blue denim jeans are allowed.
- Athletic shorts with a 5 inch minimum inseam are allowed
- Sweatpants are allowed.
- Leggings are allowed if worn with a hemline falling at knuckles when arms are at rest.
- Pajamas are not allowed.
- Sandals and flip-flops are not allowed.

FOOD DELIVERY

Due to campus safety concerns as well as logistics issues, we do not allow outside food services (i.e. Uber Eats, GrubHub, etc.) to deliver food to students

GIFT POLICY

St. Mary's Academy employees (faculty and staff) may not accept cash gifts, gift cards, favors, services, or tickets from SMA students or parents. This policy is established to avoid impropriety and the implied or actual influence upon an employee's impartial judgment towards students and their families. **Group gifts from more than one family are not allowed**, as such gifts place parents in the difficult position of soliciting funds from other parents.

The SMA Annual Fund generously provides for employee appreciation throughout the year including a cash Christmas gift and an employee appreciation luncheon. The most effective way to support SMA employees is to make a gift to the Annual Fund. This ensures equitable treatment for all SMA employees and needed resources in the classroom.

While St. Mary's Academy families' appreciation for faculty and staff are greatly valued, the community's observance of this policy is essential to establishing equity and integrity within the school community. Please remember that handwritten notes, homemade treats, and/or a personal sharing of genuine appreciation is always welcome.

GRADING

Grades are reported approximately every six weeks during the year. Midway through each trimester, progress reports are completed by students in concert with their CAT teachers, and at the end of each trimester, a report card is issued. In addition, progress in six habits of learning is noted as defined below.

Habits of Learning: The acquisition of these six key habits of learning is an important goal for middle school students. Often, students are developmentally ready to learn one or more of these traits more quickly than others. It is not unusual for students to apply these habits more effectively in one subject area or setting as compared to others. Faculty assess student progress by observing behaviors, actions, and work quality within each of the six habits of learning. The Habits of Learning section of the reports indicates the consistency with which the student is demonstrating the habits.

Engagement - Student arrives open to learning, stays on task, and productively contributes to his or her learning with an attitude of curiosity.

Persistence - Student responds to challenges and setbacks with determination by asking appropriate critical questions and seeking alternative approaches.

Organization - Student manages materials, time, and attention effectively and regularly meets due dates.

Metacognition-Reflective Learning - Student questions and considers how he or she learns, and applies appropriate adaptive strategies.

Respect - Student is considerate of others, respects the learning environment, and is aware of his or her impact on the learning of others.

Collaboration - The student regularly contributes to class activities through active listening and responsible engagement.

HOMEWORK

Homework assignments help reinforce and extend the learning that takes place in the classroom by allowing students to process, practice and reflect. The length of time that it takes for one student to complete assignments in a given evening may be more or less than another student. Personal learning styles, developmental differences, and varying skills in time-management and organization will contribute to the differences. Please contact the school if homework is regularly taking more than two hours and becomes a stressful part of family life.

The target time for students to spend daily engaging in school assignments at home is on average 1.5 hours. Students usually receive homework in each core course that meets on a given day. Predicted homework and class assignments are emailed or posted for the next week before or by midday on Sunday on each teacher's Canvas site to support family planning and time management for the week ahead. A parent with their student may find it helpful to fill assignments into the student's planner and a family calendar for the week ahead, including athletic and social commitments.

Students are provided with and **encouraged to use a planner**. Posting to a planner before the school week begins allows students to anticipate the week ahead and is associated with reduced stress and greater academic success. Mark time in the planner for the completion of long-term assignments, dedicating a set amount of time daily saves a student from hours and late nights in the final days before a long-term assignment is due.

After or during an absence, refer to the teacher's Canvas site for details of missed assignments. Upon return, promptly meet with individual teachers to obtain more specific direction in regard to missed assignments as needed. Ask another student for missed notes and a summary of what took place in a given class.

Be bold and meet with teachers before and after school for clarification and help on specific homework assignments or with more general skill building. Teachers are often able to make alternative arrangements when contacted in advance to meet with a parent during a planning period.

Parental review of a student's planner and Canvas site at intervals is recommended.

A public or semi-public location for completing homework in the house promotes focus. Parents are encouraged to check in occasionally with their student during homework time. And more importantly, parents are highly encouraged to free their students from devices during this time. Social networking while completing homework is not recommended. Maintaining a text or video interaction focused on schoolwork is difficult. In most cases, social issues distract from the purpose of the assignment.

Establish regular short breaks from sustained homework focus. Students in the middle years are most productive for about 25 minutes at a time.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

SCHOOL CLOSING OR DELAYED START FOR WEATHER

Parents are encouraged to use their own judgment about the safety of roads on snowy days. Being tardy on severe weather days is fine. If you decide to forego the drive to school even if the school is not officially closed for weather, the absence will be excused.

In the event of inclement weather, St. Mary's Academy might call a "Delayed Arrival." On a delayed arrival day, classes begin at 9:00 a.m. in the Middle School. For students who might arrive earlier than the 9:00 a.m. start time, school personnel will be present in the school buildings beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Middle School students report to the Commons. Regular school hours should be assumed in the absence of cancellation announcements.

The decision to announce a Delayed Arrival day will be made according to the following factors: quantity of snow fallen or forecasted; ability of students and staff to travel to school; ability to clear and maintain parking lots and pathways; ability of school function (heating, water, etc.)

As soon as the decision is made to change the schedule, notification will be sent out via text, email and/or voicemail through *PCR*. We will also post announcements on the school website, www.stmarys.academy Usually this decision is made and posted by 6:00 a.m.

When school is in session and we have inclement weather, decisions related to activities/athletics will not be made until after 1:30 pm. Weather changes quickly in Colorado. If school is cancelled due to weather concerns, activities and athletics will be cancelled. Information about cancellation of events or school closing is available by calling the school at 303.762.8300 and watching the school's website and *PCR*.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

The library provides students and faculty with a place to ask questions, seek answers, reflect, work and learn. Use of the library and its services are encouraged. Most items may be borrowed. Replacement costs for lost items is determined by the cost of the book.

LOCKERS & BOOK BAGS

(Please note that for the 2020-2021 school year, students will not use lockers or cubbies. Everything will be stored in their backpacks or in the bins below their desks.)

Each student is assigned an individual locker with a combination lock. The use and care of lockers is each student's personal responsibility. The SMA Middle School administration reserves the right to open and search any student locker without notification to the student or parent.

Students may store their books and other materials in cubbies or other assigned spaces. The SMA Middle School administration reserves the right to search a student's book bag or other personal bag when safety is an issue. Should a student's book bag or other personal bag be searched, at least two adults will be present during the search. If unlawful conduct is suspected, a student's personal bag may be held until a parent/guardian is notified and present for a search of its contents.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found items are deposited in the area between the kitchen and storage room on the lower level. Unclaimed items are donated to community charities at regular intervals. Note: Please mark all belongings and items of clothing with the student's name.

LUNCH

Grateful Plate offers delicious and nutritious lunches daily. Lunch tables are available to students outside behind the Middle School or in the Community Center Duncan Commons. Students may also bring packed lunches from home. Microwaves are available in the Community Center.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

SMA requests that medical/dental appointments be made outside school hours whenever possible. We encourage you to check the SMA calendar on our website before making physician appointments. Please let the administrative assistant know by phone or email if you are bringing or retrieving your student early or late.

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

In the event of circumstances beyond the School's reasonable control including, but not limited to, any fire, act of God, war, government action, act of terrorism, epidemic, pandemic, natural disaster, or other major upheaval, the School may immediately suspended classes and instruction without notice until such time as the School, at its discretion, determines that it may safely and adequately resume performance. In addition, the School may alter its calendar or provide alternative means of instruction, including but not limited to on-line or long-distance instruction, in its sole discretion.

SCHOOL-SPONSORED SOCIALS

(Please note that for the 2020-2021 school year, there will be no school-sponsored socials.)

Three school-sponsored social evenings are scheduled throughout the year. These events are open to SMA Middle School students only. Outside guests are not allowed. The members of SMA faculty/staff provide supervision for two of the socials and the Academy Parents organize and chaperone the Island Social. The school-sponsored socials take place from 6-8 p.m. on Fridays during the school year.

SECURING BELONGINGS

Students are encouraged to use their lockers to safeguard personal property and money. They are discouraged from sharing combinations.

Note: Please do not bring valuable items to school such as expensive jewelry, large sums of money, or other objects. The SMA Middle School is not responsible for the loss or theft of a student's belongings. While theft is the exception at SMA, it has occurred. In addition, valuable items become symbols of social power and influence and are not conducive to the learning environment and sense of community that SMA promotes and supports.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

St. Mary's Academy will respond with disciplinary action in the case of sexual harassment of students, employees or other members of the school community by anyone, whether on school property or off. This includes work-related assignments or events and other school-related events such as social functions.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or related to a person's sex when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing, or opportunities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment, or academic standing or school-related decisions affecting that individual;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.

Some examples of sexual harassment include: sexual innuendo; verbal harassment, including derogatory comments or slurs, or inappropriate comments about a person's body or appearance; physical harassment such as unwanted touching, patting, or pinching, or physical interference with movement or work; or visual harassment such as derogatory cartoons, drawings, posters, or graffiti.

Any student who believes they have been harassed or witnessed harassment should report such actions to the principal, counselor, advisor, or trusted teacher. For anonymous reports, call the Colorado Safe2Tell at 1-877-542-7233 or make an anonymous report at www.safe2tell.org

Following a complaint of harassment, St. Mary's Academy will conduct such investigation as is necessary to appropriately respond to the complaint and ensure that no further harassment or retaliation occurs. Complaints will be maintained in confidence to the extent possible considering the school's obligation to take appropriate and responsive action.

Appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken against anyone found to have sexually harassed another. Some forms of sexual harassment are considered violations of criminal law or covered by mandatory reporting obligations, and may need to be reported to legal authorities.

Students are also protected from any retaliation for making a good faith harassment complaint or for participating in a harassment investigation. Any student with a concern that they are being retaliated against should immediately bring the retaliation to the attention of the principal, counselor, advisor, or trusted teacher.

OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT

Other non-sexual harassment may occur when someone tries to humiliate or intimidate another person, such as:

- Making racist comments;
- Making derogatory comments about a person's religion;
- Making cruel, personal jokes;
- Teasing a person about their sexual orientation.

Anyone who believes that he/she has been harassed or witnessed harassment as described above should report such action to the principal, counselor, or trusted teacher. The school will investigate thoughtfully and respectfully.

TUTORING ON CAMPUS

Prior to any tutoring by outside individuals taking place on campus, communication with the homeroom teacher/advisor, division head, learning specialist and tutor must occur. Outside tutors working with students on campus must have completed a background check by the school.

VISITORS

(Please note that for the 2020-2021 school year, students, school employees, and pre-determined learning specialists are the only people allowed in the Middle School building.)

Visitors are not allowed in the Middle School during the day unless approved by the Principal.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

(Please note that for the 2020-2021 school year, parents and guardians are not currently allowed on campus due to Covid protocols.)

Parents/Guardians are valued and warmly welcomed members of the Middle School community. Though there are fewer opportunities to be in school alongside students during these middle school years, there are numerous ways to contribute and make a positive difference. Please call the Middle School Parent Reps for more information and look for the volunteer sign up at the back-to-school night for parents.

Middle School Volunteer Opportunities

- Community Action Team (CAT) Parent
- Middle School Preview Presence
- Picnic Lunch Organization
- Grade 8 End-Year Events Committee
- The Island – An Academy Parent-Sponsored Social for MS Students
- Lunch-time Presence in the Duncan Commons

Community Action Teams vary in their reliance on the CAT parent. Developmentally, students in Middle School assume much of the organizational event planning once completed by their teachers and/or parents, and often they prefer to take the lead. CAT parents will want to be flexible in setting their roles and degree of involvement working closely with the CAT teacher. The main task of a CAT Parent is communication with parents in the CAT. Tasks of a CAT parent **may also** include:

- Assisting the community action teams in the planning and/or preparation of their once-a-trimester CAT luncheon or holiday celebrations;
- Driving students to community service (with few exceptions, teachers drive their CATs using the school activity bus).

- Helping the CAT prepare or collect food for the eighth-grade CAT members to serve to the homeless at St. Elizabeth's sandwich line.
- Drive and participate with eighth-grade CAT members serving the homeless at St. Elizabeth's sandwich line.

CAT parents do not:

- Pay for CAT lunches, special treats, community service items, or any other items. PLEASE, do not assume financial support for your child's CAT.

WEAPONS POLICY

Unless authorized in writing by the Academy Principal or otherwise required by applicable law, the school prohibits the possession of any weapon, including, without limitation, any firearm, imitation firearm, pellet gun, or any other type of gun or firearm, knife, Taser, crossbow, or other dangerous weapon, ammunition or fireworks on school grounds. Any such items may be confiscated and, if appropriate, turned over to law enforcement.

Consistent with best practices, SMA reviews and updates the Middle School Handbook on a periodic basis. This sometimes includes revised language and sometimes includes substantive changes.