



St. Mary School

St. Mary School Lake Leelanau A Handbook for Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Volunteers, and Visitors

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

St. Mary Catholic School educates preschool through 12th grade students in an environment based on Gospel values. St. Mary School guides students to recognize their God-given potential and develop their talents to become leaders who are committed to their faith, lifelong learning, and service to others

St. Mary School acknowledges that parent's play a formative role in the development of their child's sense of virtue, values and the dignity and worth of all members of our school community. As one of the most influential role models in a child's life, one of the best ways for a parent to teach is to lead by example. *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 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).

St. Mary School also recognizes that the education of each child is the shared responsibility of the whole school community. *The whole school community is responsible for implementing the school's Catholic educational project as an expression of its ecclesiality and its being a part of the community of the Church. "The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision, makes the school 'Catholic'; principles of the Gospel in this manner become the educational norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal"* The Identity of the Catholic School Vatican City, 25 January 2022, Feast of the Conversion of St Paul the Apostle.

It is the expectations of St. Mary School that all staff /parents/guardians/caregivers, volunteers and visitors always model good Christian behavior within the school setting, at school sponsored activities or in any social or professional media involving the school. By creating a positive, respectful culture, together we are supporting our children on their journey as lifelong learners in a safe, considerate environment.

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



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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 other parents, students, faculty /staff and other community members.
- Respect the rights of faculty/staff members, other parents and students.
- Respect the reputation of all personnel and be mindful of communications especially social media, e.g. tone of emails and text messages.
- Follow the correct procedures to resolve grievances or conflict as outlined in this handbook.
- As a valued member of the school community, attend and participate appropriately in school liturgies, extra-curricular or special events including athletics, concerts, academic and cultural events.
- Volunteer your time, by participating in one of our school committees, fundraisers or sharing of your talents.

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
Matthew 5:16*

In keeping with the mission we ask Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Volunteers, and/or Visitors to:

- Work cooperatively with school staff in the best interest of the student by treating one another in a respectful manner.
 - Exhibit a good, Christian example for students in your conduct, language and behavior while on campus or at school sponsored activities.
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- Be mindful of social media posts and comments, keeping in mind to lift up your child's school and staff.
 - Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to avoid misunderstanding and to bring about a successful resolution to any question.
 - Contact the school directly when you have a question or need clarification of a school matter rather than depending upon the interpretation of parents or other non-school sources.
 - 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.
 - Support in words and actions the philosophy of Catholic Education.
 - Do not approach/contact another student to address, discuss or reprimand them because of actions toward your own child/ren. These issues should be addressed between parents and/or school administration. This includes the use of digital/social media to address or air grievances.
 - Make an appointment at a mutually convenient time to discuss a topic that will require some preparation.
 - Avoid discussing grievances or perceived failings of the school in front of any students.
 - Be respectful the decisions made by the clergy, administration, and faculty.
 - Listen to your child/ren but remember that a different version of the same event may be held 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 school policies as outlined in the school handbooks: student and family handbook, athletic handbook, dress code.
 - Cooperate where your child's behavior has overstepped accepted school standards and follow specified protocol for communication with faculty and staff members.
 - Value the school community and its reputation especially when engaging with social media.
 - Abide by the law that St. Mary School/Campus is an Alcohol, Drug, and Weapon Free Zone.
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*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.
Ephesians 3:12*

Process for addressing grievances and concerns

St. Mary Catholic School strives to work in partnership with our families and school community. If anyone has a current complaint, criticism or concern, it is expected that the following steps be followed in the first instance:

1. Speak to the appropriate person involved (e.g. class teacher, coach) 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 communication flow chart.
2. If for some reason this is not possible, then make an appointment to see an administrator or other designate leadership personnel. (e.g. principal, athletic director).
3. The administrator (or other appropriate staff member) should attempt to mediate and find resolution in the presence of both parties.

If, having followed steps 1-3 with no satisfaction, you may contact the pastor who will work with the administrator and preside over a group conference.

To report allegations of sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults within the Diocese of Gaylord by Priests, Deacons or other employees or volunteers, regardless of when it occurred, individuals should:

1. Contact local law enforcement, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (855.444.3911), or the Michigan Department of Attorney General (844.324.3374).
2. Contact the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, Larry LaCross, at 989.705.9010.

Sources:

- The Code of Canon Law, Canon, 796, Para. 2
- The Identity of the Catholic School Vatican City, 25 January 2022, *Feast of the Conversion of St Paul the Apostle*
- Parent Code of Conduct for Catholic Schools Diocese of Orlando

Approved by Fr. Benjamin Martin, October 18, 2022
