

FACULTY & STAFF HANDBOOK



OFFICE HOURS
MON-FRI
7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.









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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Christian Witness Statement.....	1
Educational Mission of the Church.....	1
Educational Ministry.....	1
Catholic Schools.....	2
Non-Discriminatory.....	2
St. Mary's Catholic Church Mission Statement.....	2
St. Mary's Catholic School Mission Statement.....	2
St. Mary's Catholic School Vision Statement.....	2
St. Mary's Catholic School Belief Statement.....	2
Accreditation.....	2
Pastor.....	3
Principal.....	3

SECTION 2

PERSONNEL POLICIES & GUIDELINES

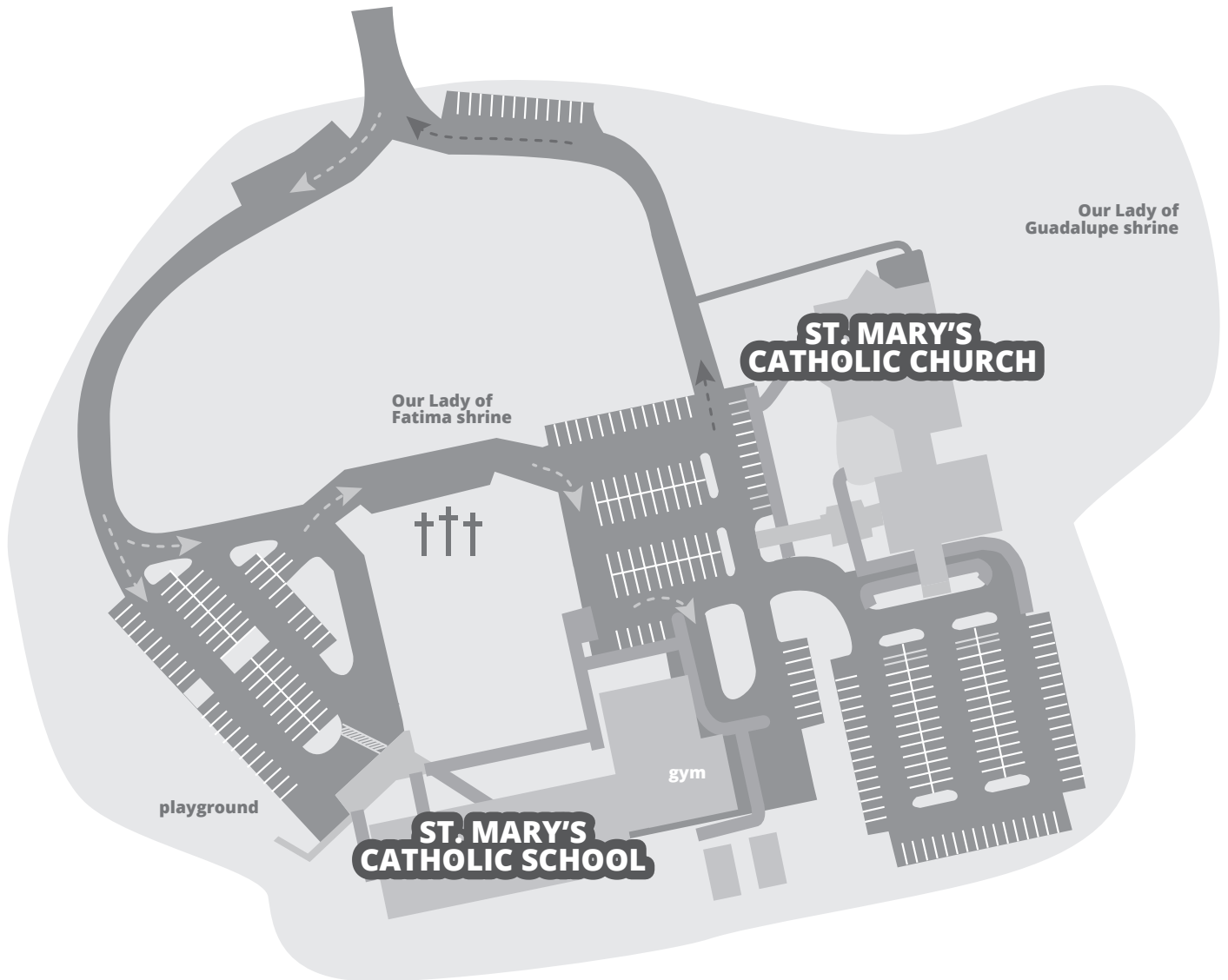
Professional Qualifications & Requirements.....	3
Recruitment & Selection of Personnel.....	3
References.....	3
Certification & Transcript.....	3
Absence.....	3
Unexpected Sickness/Emergency Absence.....	3
Personal Leave.....	4
Professional Leave.....	4
Late Arrival/Early Departure.....	4
Active Teacher File.....	4
Assignments.....	4
Calendar.....	4
Catechetical Formation Days.....	4
Compensation.....	5
Diocesan In-Service.....	5
Employment.....	5
Regular Full-Time Employee.....	5
Regular Part-Time Employee.....	5
Part-Time Employee.....	5
Temporary Employee.....	5
Grievance Procedure.....	5
Evaluation of Personnel.....	6
Professional Development.....	6
Religious Expectations.....	6
Replacement.....	7
Responsibilities & Duties.....	7
Workload.....	7
Tenure.....	7
Unemployment Compensation.....	7

SECTION 3

SCHOOL POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Assemblies.....	8
Back-To-School Letter.....	8
Parties Outside School.....	8
Birthdays.....	8
Lunch Schedule.....	8
Parent Conferences.....	8
Medication.....	8
Communication.....	8
Homework.....	8
Mass Schedule.....	8
Accelerated Reader.....	8
Classroom Volunteers.....	8
Homework Due to Absence.....	8
Snacks.....	8
Assignment Book.....	8
School Visitation.....	8
Absences.....	9
Specials.....	9
Bulletin Boards.....	9
Background Checks.....	9
Calendar of Events.....	9
Care of School.....	9
Cell Phone Policy.....	10
Chewing Gum / Food.....	10
Child Abuse.....	10
Children Sent Home.....	10
Class Schedules.....	11
Classroom Inventories.....	11
Classroom Routines.....	11
Classroom Supplies.....	11
Communication.....	11
Verbal and non-verbal communication.....	11
Personal Information.....	11
Written communication.....	11
Electronic Communication.....	12
Parent Communication Chain of Command.....	12
Conduct & Discipline.....	12
Confidentiality.....	13
Doors.....	14
Dress Code (<i>Faculty</i>).....	14
Dress Code (<i>Student</i>).....	14
Early Morning Duty.....	14
Educational Trips.....	14
Guest Speakers.....	15

Hall Pass.....	15	Professional Development	19
Home & School Association	15	Purchase Orders	19
Injured / Sick Student	16	Grading/Assessment.....	20
Inclement Weather	16	Grading Policies	20
Intercom	16	Assessment Policies.....	20
Lunch Count.....	16	Progress & End-of-Term Reports.....	21
Mailboxes.....	16	Retention.....	21
Maintenance Requests	16	School Board.....	21
Manners.....	16	Security.....	22
Mass Attendance.....	16	Smoking / Controlled Substances.....	22
Medication.....	17	Student Supplies	22
Negligence.....	17	Substitute Folder.....	22
Parent Volunteers.....	18	Supervision.....	22
Meetings	18	Teacher Supplies.....	23
Movies.....	18	Teachers' Lounge / Workroom.....	23
Phone Use by Students.....	18	Tutoring / Lessons	23
Permanent / Cumulative Records.....	18	Volunteers	23
Planning Books	18	Written Records / Documentation.....	23
Prayers.....	19		



DIOCESE OF KNOXVILLE

A Catholic, Parochial school accredited through the Tennessee State Department of Education, operated under the auspices of the Schools Office of the Catholic Diocese of Knoxville. Accredited by AdVancEd.



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Beginning over a century ago, St. Mary's Catholic Church had a humble start in downtown Johnson City. Deeply embedded in the history of Johnson City, St. Mary's Church has contributed to the formation of the community since 1888. In 1911, the Sisters of Mercy from Nashville arrived to open St. Mary's School in the old house at the top of a hill overlooking Johnson City. In 1954, a school building and convent were built on that site.

The School has continued to grow and change over the years. Progress can be seen in the addition of new grades and the construction of new facilities. In 1988 the seventh grade was added followed by the addition of the eighth grade in 1989. The most significant move was made in the Fall of 1990 when St. Mary's relocated to Lakeview Drive. A new school, worship center, and rectory were constructed.

It is the hope and prayer of the administration that our heritage will enable us to continue to convey the same message of hope and deep faith that has kept St. Mary's Parish alive and growing as a vibrant faith community.

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint the faculty and staff of St. Mary's School with our philosophy and goals and to provide helpful information to foster cooperation with efforts and objectives set by school personnel. Additional information regarding school operation and student rules and regulations is contained in the St. Mary's School Parent/ Student Handbook. The Principal retains the right to amend policies contained herein. If changes are made, faculty and staff will be notified immediately.

Christian Witness Statement

Educators in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Knoxville will witness by their public behavior, actions, and words a life-style consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Educational Mission of the Church

The Church is a sign of Jesus Christ in the world today. Therefore, the mission of Christ is the mission of the Church. Jesus was sent to reveal the Father to all people and teach them about the fullness of His love. He commissioned His Church to do likewise; to help men and women to know about God and themselves and to nourish their love of Him and for each other. In essence then, the mission of Christ and His Church is to bring about the Kingdom of God.

Education is one of the most important means by which this mission is fulfilled. Through Catholic education the church makes efforts to prepare its people to proclaim Christ, His message, values and attitudes, and to translate the Gospel into one's personal life-style. Christian education is intended to "make one's faith become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction". (*The Bishop's Office in the Church.14*)

It is important, therefore, that all persons engaged in the educational ministry in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Knoxville give assurance of Christ and His Church.

Educational Ministry

Catholic school education fulfills an authentic ministry. To work in this apostolate means rendering unique, challenging, and invaluable work for the Church. The mobility of the position to which those in Catholic education respond requires that they communicate the message of Christ not only in their teaching and their participation in the sacramental life of the Church, but also in every expression of their behavior. "By their witness and their behavior, teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools." (*The Catholic School.78*)

It follows then that the Catholic school educator "must be a person of prayer, one who frequently reflects on the scriptures, and whose Christlike living testifies to deep faith". (*National Catechetical Directory.207*)

Essentially, the Catholic school educator is that person:

CALLED to proclaim, to live, and to celebrate the Message of Christ in His Gospel.

CHOSEN to create, to enter into, and to build community which is at the heart of Christian education.

COMMITTED to the growth, development, and well-being of one's educational family in the form of service and love.

This individual truly witnesses to and fully shares in the mission of Christ and His Church in bringing about the Kingdom of God.

Catholic Schools

Christ is the foundation of the Church's whole educational endeavor. Catholic schools present to their membership the principles of the Gospel and the values of Christ as their educational norm, internal foundation, and final goal.

Catholic schools provide the fullest and best opportunity for the realization of this goal. The Catholic school is committed to the development of the whole person since, in Christ, the perfect person, all human values find their meaning. This development of the full person is realized through relational and inter-relational experiences. Such opportunities provided for and motivated the building and living of a faith community which are the prime, explicit goals of the Catholic school.

Because growth in faith is central to the purpose of the Catholic school, it is primarily in such a school that children and young people experience learning and living fully integrated in the light of faith. "This integration of religious truth and values with life distinguishes the Catholic school from other schools." (*To Teach as Jesus Did.105*)

This "wholeness" approach to learning and living, culture and faith is brought about not only by its unique program of studies but more importantly, by the presence of educators who express and exemplify this integrated means of learning and living in their private and professional lives.

Non-Discriminatory

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Knoxville exist primarily for Catholic students. Students of any race, gender, creed, color, religion, or national origin may apply for admission.

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Knoxville exist to assist the Church in accomplishing its mission of evangelization. The schools strive to prepare academically qualified citizens committed to the pursuit of learning and to the service of humankind. They strive to teach Christian standards to be followed in life, work, and leisure. Catholic Schools endeavor to instruct students in a religious way of thinking which will show the connection between the living out of Gospel values and the effect they will have on one's final end.

They offer experiences of service both within and outside the school environment which stretch beyond the boundaries of discrimination. Catholic Schools are called upon to make the Catholic faith a reality.

St. Mary's Catholic Church Mission Statement

St. Mary's Catholic School is a ministry of St. Mary's Catholic Church. "We, the people of St. Mary's Catholic Parish, following the call of Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit, gather as a Eucharistic community to accept, to grow and to share God's love through our ministries."

St. Mary's Catholic School Mission Statement

Anchored in love, St. Mary's Catholic School exists to promote Gospel values, academic excellence, and service to others.

St. Mary's Catholic School Vision Statement

St. Mary's Catholic School, as a Christian learning community, is led by the love, acceptance, and caring expressed in the life of Jesus Christ. We encourage our students to be life-long learners with compassionate hearts and a deep commitment to serving others.

St. Mary's Catholic School Belief Statement

The Christian community of St. Mary's Catholic School believes:

- Each child is a gift from God endowed with unique gifts, talents, and abilities
- The home, school, church and community support the total educational experience of the child, with parents having the primary role
- A superior academic curriculum based on the needs of diverse learners stimulates students intellectually, physically, socially, and spiritually
- Students recognize and respect diverse beliefs, abilities, and the cultures of others, becoming global citizens well prepared for our ever-changing world
- Daily prayer and weekly liturgy are essential to our school climate
- The school community models a safe, tolerant, and peaceful atmosphere where self-esteem can flourish
- We demonstrate our Christian values by offering our support and service to the community

Accreditation

St. Mary's Catholic School is approved by the State of Tennessee Department of Education and follows curriculum requirements for

Tennessee public schools. Accreditation is given in conjunction with the Diocese of Knoxville and is governed by the policies of the Diocese. St. Mary's Catholic School is accredited by COGNIA.

Pastor

The Pastor is the spiritual leader of the parish faith community and of the Christian Educational Community within the parish and St. Mary's Catholic School. While he is not involved as a staff member in the administrative details of the school, his communication with the school staff makes it possible for his ideals and ideas to be reflected in the school's structure, operation, and programs.

Principal

The instructional leader of St. Mary's School is the Principal. She is directly responsible for the administration, supervision, and structure of the school and is responsible for policy implementation. The Principal assumes leadership for creating an environment which fosters healthy relationships with teachers, staff, students, parents, parish staff, and the local community. She is responsible to the Pastor in the administration of the school.



SECTION 2

PERSONNEL POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Professional Qualifications & Requirements

St. Mary's Catholic School (SMCS) seeks to employ and retain the best qualified persons for each professional assignment.

Recruitment & Selection of Personnel

The Principal, Pastor, and their appointed committee, shall determine the professional personnel needs. The following will influence selection:

- Preparation
- Adherence to Catholic Philosophy of Education
- Professional Competency
- Personality
- Suitability for Assignment

Candidates shall be considered on the basis of merit without regard to race, sex, or national

origin. Opportunity for employment with SMCS is open to any person who, on the basis of merit, is qualified for the desired position. In accordance with Diocese of Knoxville policy, Catholic Schools have a responsibility to recruit and hire Catholic teachers, and when and if that is not possible, applications for non-Catholic Christians are welcomed. All teachers should emanate a Christian way of life in accordance with the Gospel.

References

A careful reference check shall be made into the background of a potential applicant by contacting previous employers, verifying credentials, personal references cited, etc. Three written references are required for the personnel file.

Certification & Transcripts

Transcripts from accredited colleges and universities and evidence of degree(s) are required.

All professional personnel shall submit a proper Tennessee Teaching Certificate valid in the area of assignment on or before the contract becomes available. In addition, all teachers assigned to teach religion must submit verification of the level of catechist certification.

Any teacher not certified in the State of Tennessee must apply for a waiver or probationary license and provide the School Office with a copy of the application. Teachers filing Form 2034-A (*see Appendix II*) with the Tennessee Department of Education should turn this form into the School Office where it will be verified and sent to the Superintendent for signature. This form is from the TN Department of Education Office of Teacher Licensing; it verifies your Teaching/Administration experience and is needed for Teaching Certificate renewal.

All teachers are expected to actively pursue Catechist certification offered by the Diocese and to maintain an active license.

ABSENCE

Unexpected Sickness/Emergency Absence

Call the Principal on her cell phone before 10:00 p.m. or in the morning after 5:30 a.m. if you are unable to come to work. If, for some reason, you are unable to reach the Principal at home, call the school secretary. However, if you have not personally spoken with someone in the school office that morning, please call again until you have successfully communicated that you will

not be able to work. Please submit the Request for Leave form upon returning to work. Planning Book, Emergency Sub Plan, Teacher's Manual, and keys should be made available to the Principal. (See Appendix II for substitute guidelines and checklist.) Sick leave is integrated with long-term disability, a benefit that is paid by the school. Employees earn sick leave at the rate of one working day per month for 10 months (*the annual equivalent of eight days*). Leave hours will accrue until the equivalent of 65 workdays has been earned. Upon reaching the maximum, sick leave will cease accruing until some is used. Long-term disability covers employees who qualify after 90 **calendar** days, or 65 workdays. The integration of sick leave with long-term disability ensures the employee will receive full pay until LTD takes over.

Personal Leave

A request for personal leave should be made at least two (2) weeks prior to the absence by completing the Request for Leave form and submitting it for approval by the Principal. A request for personal leave may be denied if not submitted two (2) weeks in advance. Full-time faculty and staff may take two (2) personal days per school year. Unused personal days will be converted to sick leave and applied to the maximum. After using two (2) personal days, time for personal leave will be deducted from pay. Please limit requests in the month of May to extreme need only.

Professional Leave

Professional leave may be taken only if approved by the Principal. A request for professional leave should be made by submitting it for approval by the Principal at the earliest possible date. Professional leave is separate from the allotted number of sick and personal leave days. Please see the Professional Development Guidelines for more information regarding professional leave.

Late Arrival / Early Departure

Faculty and staff are required to be in their classroom by 7:30 a.m. each school day and remain a minimum of 30 minutes after completion of school-wide dismissal. If you are late arriving to school, you must sign-in at the School Office with time of arrival. If leaving the building for any reason, you must sign-out and sign-in upon your return.

Active Teacher File

Each teacher shall have an up-to-date file in the office that includes the following:

- Completed Teacher Application to include:
 - 1 Documentation of no previous convictions of Child Abuse
 - 2 At least three (3) professional references
 - 3 Health information (*evidence of a physician administered Physical*)
- Signed contract
- Certification documentation
- Official transcript of College/University and Postgraduate credits
- Professional Development Update (*Diocesan form*)
- Evaluation Reports
- Record of Employment dates
- Record of Personal Leave and Cumulative Sick Leave Days
- Other information requested by the Pastor, Principal, Superintendent, or Bishop

Assignments

The Principal shall be responsible for the assignments of all professional personnel. Changes may be considered at the request of the teacher.

Calendar

The Catholic Schools Office shall issue an approved official calendar for all diocesan and parish schools. The calendar shall follow the regulations issued by the Department of Education of the State of Tennessee. The Principal of each diocesan/parish school shall be responsible for preparing a school calendar that incorporates the dates from the official diocesan calendar. Each school calendar must be submitted to the Superintendent for approval. Only the Superintendent shall authorize deviations from the official calendar including additional free days or early dismissal.

Catechetical Formation Days

The Diocese of Knoxville Catechetical Formation Program offers each catechist, school faculty and staff the opportunity to fulfill certification requirements, earn the title of Certified Catechist, and continue to deepen his/her formation in the faith. By making available faculty, research and knowledge prepared in the light of the Magisterium of the Church, the Diocese of Knoxville offers a systematic and organic formation program based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and other catechetical

documents of the Universal Church and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). All teaching and staff personnel of schools within the diocese are required to attend Catechetical Formation Days. After consultation with the Principal, permission to be absent from the function may be requested. Permission must be submitted in writing, to the Superintendent, prior to the scheduled In-Service date.

For each Catechetical Formation Day missed, the professional must complete an on-line course, approved by the Superintendent, at their own expense.

Compensation

A teacher's salary shall be based on the number of years teaching experience and degree(s) in an accredited educational institution. A year of teaching experience means 190 school days within a given year under a legal contract. Teaching on a part-time basis and summer school teaching are not considered toward teaching experience.

Diocesan In-Service

Diocesan In-Service opportunities shall be provided at least once a year. Five (5) In-Service days are required for state accreditation:

- One (1) is a Diocesan In-Service in Knoxville, Tennessee.*
- Four (4) others must be provided by the local school.*

All teaching and appropriate staff personnel of schools within the diocese are required to attend In-Service days. Permission to be absent at Diocesan In-Service functions must be requested in writing addressed to the Superintendent. Permission to be absent from attendance at School In-Service functions must be requested in writing addressed to the Principal.

For each In-Service day missed, the professional must complete an In-Service(s) approved by the Superintendent in the case of the Diocesan In-Service and by the Principal in the case of a local In-Service(s).

After consultations with the Principal, permission to be absent from the Diocesan In-Service function may be requested. Permission must be submitted in writing, to the Superintendent, prior to the scheduled In-Service date.

**Request for approval of a make-up In-Service must be submitted in writing prior to attendance.*

Employment

Categories of employment are as follows:

Regular Full-Time Employee

All regular full-time employees are hired on an annual contractual basis. All regular full-time employees are eligible for full fringe benefits (*refer to section on Insurance*).

Regular Part-Time Employee

All regular part-time employees are hired on an annual contractual basis. The definition of a regular part-time employee is one hired for a position that is expected to continue, and such a position requires a contract with a stated number of hours worked per week. An employee who works 800 hours per year is eligible for all payroll benefits.

Part-Time Employee

A part-time employee is an employee who is hired on an as-needed basis at an hourly rate and works less than 800 hours per year. Such an employee is eligible only for deductions made for Federal Income Tax, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Temporary Employee

A temporary employee is an employee who is hired for a specific job or a specific period of time neither of which is to exceed 180 days in duration. Such an employee is eligible only for deductions made for Federal Income Tax, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Grievance Procedure

A grievance is defined as a dispute between two aggrieved individuals concerning the interpretation of the written and/or expressed provisions of the Policies & Guidelines of SMCS. However, whenever a number of people work together, personal problems or differences will occasionally arise. Normally, these concerns can be resolved informally in an open discussion. All benefit when conflicts are resolved through dialogue in an attitude of mutual Christian respect.

In exceptional cases, an open discussion may not resolve the problem. In these cases, the grievance and its resolution may be referred to the Parish Grievance Committee (PGC) in the following manner:

STEP 1: A written grievance is submitted to your supervisor/ministry coordinator within seven (7) days of the incident. The written grievance must include the following information and be signed and dated by the grievant:

- Name, phone number, email address
- Date and nature of grievance
- Date and description of open discussion with offending individual

This open discussion MUST occur initially with the individual(s) against whom they have the grievance

STEP 2: Copies of the written grievance must be provided to the individual who caused the grievance and that individual's supervisor/ ministry coordinator. If the grievance involves the Pastor, you may file the grievance directly with a member of the PGC.

The Parish Grievance Committee (PGC) will include, but is not limited to, the following: the Associate Pastor, a knowledgeable representative appointed by the Associate Pastor, and a representative of the Parish Pastoral Council. In the event of a conflict of interest situation, an alternative member of the PGC may be appointed. PGC will meet on an as needed basis and be responsible to review and destroy documentation biannually.

STEP 3: The resolution recommended by the PGC will be provided in writing to the individuals involved within seven (7) days of the receipt of the grievance.

STEP 4: If the resolution of the grievance is not found to be satisfactory, the PGC will assist you in determining the appropriate method for you to pursue. This may include, but is not limited to, consultation with the Pastor or referral to the Diocese of Knoxville.

Failure to comply with this policy could lead to disciplinary action up to and including removal from your position.

Evaluation of Personnel

All employees are evaluated annually. Current laws regarding teacher performance evaluations for Non-Public Schools apply:

- A teacher with an Apprentice or Professional License must be evaluated annually.
- Apprentice Teachers, year 1, 2, & 3: minimum of 3 observations per year with feedback and accompanying documentation.
- Professional Level Teachers: Minimum of 2 observations per year.
- All faculty members receive a summative evaluation at the end of the year.

Professional Development

Professional development is highly encouraged. As such, Registration Fee(s) for any approved professional meeting may be paid by the school

when submitted in writing and approved by the Principal. Failure to attend professional meetings designated by the Principal without sufficient reason will result in loss of salary compensable with the time missed.

The Diocese of Knoxville requires each teacher to obtain six (6) clock hours of professional enrichment each year. These hours are in addition to the five (5) required In-Service days in the 200 day school calendar. The six (6) professional development clock hours may be attained in various ways. The following are provided as an example:

- Attendance at meetings, workshops, seminars, etc.
- Participation in ongoing religious education opportunities in local or area church communities
- Professional research, reading, class work
- Video/audio educational enrichment tapes
- Trips of an educational nature
- Conducting workshops, faculty meetings as well as participation in school-sponsored meetings, etc.

In addition and in accordance with AdvancEd accreditation requirements, teachers must have six (6) semester hours of credit or the equivalent for each five (5) years of employment.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to furnish the list of professional development activities each year. A completed Professional Development Update should be submitted to the Principal each year.

Religious Expectations

All employees of SMCS are looked upon as teachers of religion because of the expectations we have that they model a Christian way of life. The faculty tries to give the students a good example in following the teachings of the Church and the treatment of others. Teachers should exercise care in discussing controversial issues and in these matters, teach the Church's position and not their personal opinions.

Faculty and staff should be willing to participate in and prepare the children for participation in the various religious activities of the school and parish. These include:

- Morning Prayer in Gym (*all faculty and staff are expected to participate*)

- Weekly Masses
- Daily prayers at various times during the school day
- School-wide activities for various Feast Days and seasons of the Church year
- Catechetical Training by the Diocese twice a year.

During the course of the school day/year, there may arise occasions for prayer and reflection that may require the cooperation of everyone.

Replacement

The Principal may hire a temporary replacement if a teacher is absent for an extended period of sick leave.

Responsibilities & Duties

Professional personnel will carry out the objectives of the instructional program as established by the Principal.

In addition to the regular assignments, all personnel are subject to assignment by the Principal for a portion of the various services and activities of the school to promote a well-rounded educational program.

Workload

- All personnel shall be at his/her assigned place at a time designated by the Principal. Teachers are required to be in their classroom by 7:30 a.m. and remain at school 15 minutes after the dismissal of their students. The time before school is used for daily preparation and planning. Teachers and teaching assistants may sign-out during their 30-minute lunch period. Teachers and teaching assistants are expected to be working in the building during any scheduled planning times. Any deviation from this must be approved by the Principal.
- Faculty Meetings are held on Wednesday at 2:20 p.m. — 4:00 p.m. All faculty and staff are expected to attend. Please do not schedule appointments or extra-curricular activities during this time. In the case of a true emergency, please contact the Principal to be excused from the meeting. Committee Meetings are scheduled as needed. Faculty and staff attend the Annual In-Service/Retreat, Faculty & Staff In-Service days, conferences, workshops, and other professional meetings.
- All personnel shall attend meetings as assigned by the Principal. These may include, but are not limited to, Faculty In-Service, grade, committee,

team planning meetings, parent conferences, and Home & School Meetings.

- Responsibilities for extracurricular activities shall be assigned by the Principal and distributed among school personnel.
- Supervisory duties are shared with the whole faculty and staff. They include, but are not limited to:
 - Morning supervision of grades K thru 1st in the cafeteria
 - Supervision at Mass
 - Playground duty
 - Supervision at arrival and dismissal
 - Accompanying classes to Specials/other classrooms
 - Teacher Aides supervision during Specials
 - Supervision during bathroom breaks

Tenure

SMCS does not have a tenure policy. All personnel within the school are hired on an annual contractual basis. Contracts are signed for a one (1) year school term. Teachers are encouraged to notify the Principal of their intention to return the following school year by April 1st. Contracts shall be for no more than one (1) year and grant no expectations of continuing employment.

Signing the contract implies that the professional agrees to abide by the guidelines, rules, regulations, and procedures in the Faculty & Staff Handbook and the Christian Witness Statement.

Unemployment Compensation

Churches and religious institutions are not subject to the State Unemployment Insurance law and therefore, do not pay Unemployment Insurance premiums or taxes. Consequently, our employees cannot draw Unemployment Benefits if they leave our employ. The Tennessee legislature, during the 1991 session, changed the Tennessee Employee Security Law as follows:

Effective July 1, 1991, employers who are not subject to the Unemployment Insurance Law are required to notify each present employee and each prospective employee in writing that the employer is not covered by Unemployment Insurance and therefore the employer's employees cannot draw unemployment benefits based on wages earned from such employer. This legislation applies to churches and other religious institutions.



SECTION 3

SCHOOL POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Assemblies

Homeroom teachers will take their class to assemblies. If an assembly is scheduled during a Special and lasts for only part of the Special, the class can go to the Special after the assembly as long as there is at least fifteen (15) minutes left in the scheduled Special.

Back-To-School Letter

All correspondence must be approved by the Principal.

Parties Outside School

Invitations to parties may be brought to school to be passed out only if all classmates are invited. Otherwise, arrangements should be made outside school.

Birthdays

Tell them how you want them to deal with class treats if a parent brings them for the class. Emphasize that only healthy treats are permissible.

In keeping with Christ's teaching to love everyone, birthday parties are encouraged where all classmates are invited. However, parents having a party for their child to which the entire class is not invited should extend invitations by telephone or by mail and not distribute them at school. Parents bringing snacks to school should bring the snack to the office to be delivered. This method of delivery is not as disruptive to the classroom.

Lunch Schedule

Parents may eat lunch with their children. Please sign-in at the office and wear a visitor badge. Parents may not bring lunches from carry-out restaurants.

Parent Conferences

Date for Parent Conferences will be announced. Tell how they can reach you if they have questions or concerns.

Medication

Remind parents that a form is to be filled out by a physician if their child needs medication

administered at school. (*This includes over-the-counter medications, as well.*) The form and medication should be brought to the School Office and dispensed in the clinic.

Communication

List the ways in which they can expect you to communicate with them (*i.e., Take-Home folders, etc.*)

Homework

Let parents know how much homework to expect. If they notice their child chronically exceeding this amount they should contact the teacher according to the Parent/Student Handbook. All students must have the opportunity for a nutritious snack once per full day.

Mass Schedule

Invite parents to join us for Mass whenever possible.

Accelerated Reader

Where applicable, tell parents to have books readily available.

Classroom Volunteers

How they can do this in your room. Remind them to sign-in at the School Office and wear a Volunteer badge. Consider some may be able to do things for you at home.

Homework Due to Absence

Make-up Grading / Policy Procedure. How to pick up homework if absent.

Snacks

Only nutritious snacks and let the office know of any food allergies

Assignment Book

Explain how all assignment books are to be used.

School Visitation

Anytime you come to the school, enter through the main entrance and sign-in at the School Office. Volunteer and Visitor badges are available and should be worn at all times. Emphasize that there is no entrance allowed through any other school doors.

Absences

Parental verification of a student's absence must be made to the office by 9:00 a.m. or the absence is considered unexcused.

Specials

Send a letter out that explains your procedures, how students are disciplined, and any special requirements. It is recommended that you provide a tear-off sheet and have parents sign and return it to you. The information you send home to parents should include the information about curriculum and goals.

Some other tips for parents to make the school day easier for their child:

- Put your child's name on all clothes and other items he/she may bring to school.
- When you send money to school, put it in an envelope with the child's name on it.
- Write on the envelope what the money is for and the amount.
- Provide a backpack for carrying papers home. We encourage all students to use backpacks on wheels.
- Please keep your child at home if he/she has a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or severe cough. Remember a child should be free of fever for at least 24 hours before returning to school after an illness.
- On any day when your child must be dismissed other than the usual way, please send a note to the teacher to explain the change.

Bulletin Boards

To help enhance an environment conducive to learning and reinforce lessons, teachers should frequently change bulletin boards. This helps give new life to your room, yourself, and to your students. Classroom teachers are responsible for arranging one bulletin board in the hallway. The art teacher and other Specials will decorate the extra hallway bulletin boards.

Background Checks

In conformance with its Safe Environment Policy, the Diocese of Knoxville has instituted a policy of conducting background checks for all school employees, substitute teachers and volunteers. Depending on your position, there may be additional checks. For example, if you will handle money, you may be asked to consent to a credit check. A new background check is required even if you are already employed somewhere else within the diocese or are a volunteer and move into a position with such responsibilities. Background checks will be handled confidentially and sensitively, with results available only to the pastor or his designee. No offer of employment

will be considered valid until the background check is completed. A finding does not automatically eliminate you from consideration for employment. All relevant circumstances will be considered in relation to specific job requirements.

Calendar of Events

When planning events, field trips, etc. staff should submit the appropriate form to the principal for approval before making any plans or communicating with parents or students. These forms should be submitted no later than a month prior to the scheduled event. The event should then be added to the school calendar in the main office.

Care of School

There are several things which can be done to help keep the building and equipment in good condition. Teachers are asked to observe the following:

- Teachers are to be good housekeepers themselves and should help develop habits of good housekeeping on the part of the students. Students should be responsible for clearing the floor of books, papers, and debris before leaving in the afternoon.
- Teachers should have students check their shoes for mud and leaves prior to entering the building.
- Students are not to be in the classroom unless a teacher is present.
- Windows are to be closed at the end of each day and blinds straightened.
- Lights should be turned off when the class is leaving for Mass, lunch, at the end of the day and if out of the room for more than an hour.
- Broken or defective equipment should be reported immediately.
- Dry-Erase boards should be erased at the end of the day except for the assignments or information needed for the next day.
- Classroom doors should be locked at all times.
- Neither students nor parents are to be given classroom keys at any time. Keys should not be left lying around. Teachers should keep keys at all times for security and access to the building.
- Neither teachers nor students may sit on top of desks, tables, or heating/ cooling units.
- Sticky tacks or easy clips should be used to hang things in the classroom or in the hallways. Duct

tape, masking tape, double-sided sponge tape, glue, and rubber cement should not be used to hang things. Do not hang things from light fixtures.

- Items should be hung only on cinder block walls, bulletin boards, or wall strips. Do not attach things to wooden areas or painted metal doors.
- Students are expected to clean out desks and lockers periodically.
- At the end of the day, all chairs should be placed on top of desks and all paper picked up from the floor. All outside doors should be locked and lights turned off.
- AC/Heating units and fans must be turned off at the end of each day.
- Upon ending employment at SMS; you must return all keys and equipment that belongs to SMS.

Cell Phone Policy

Teachers should have cell phones with them during every emergency drill. (Policy #2405) As a general rule, personal cell phone numbers are not given to parents. If you need to communicate with a parent, use phone or email. Do not text parents about school business. Emails provide a record of official communication.

APPROPRIATE USE	INAPPROPRIATE USE
<p>Internal school-related communication</p> <p><i>Ex: Call or text — “Gym Teacher, two students are coming to the gym because they forgot a jacket. 11 School email work</i></p>	<p>Personal social media use</p> <p><i>Ex: What does a parent think when he/she sees a post from a teacher made during the school day? This does not include official use of school social media.</i></p>
<p>Emergency communication</p> <p><i>Ex: lock-down, power outage, etc.</i></p>	<p>During supervision use</p> <p><i>Ex: Phones should not be used (even for professional purposes; except in the case of an emergency) while in supervisory roles (common areas, recess, lunch, morning duty, hallway transport).</i></p>
<p>Educational purposes</p> <p><i>Ex: Play a song that fits the lesson; look up a synonym; use as a timer; educational app; calculator, etc.</i></p>	<p>Extended personal use</p> <p><i>Ex. Personal tasks that take up your entire planning period</i></p>
<p>Limited personal use</p> <p><i>Ex: family emergency; brief tasks during planning, lunch</i></p>	<p>Photo/video use</p> <p><i>Ex: No photos or videos of students can be stored on personal devices. Use school equipment to record special events. Never post pictures of students on personal social media.</i></p>

Chewing Gum / Food

Students may not chew gum anywhere on school grounds before, during, or after school. Teachers are asked not to chew gum during instructional or supervisory times. Except at break time, teachers are not to eat anything when children are present unless sharing a snack with students.

Child Abuse

Child abuse reports must be made in good faith. Abuse occurs in many forms – emotional, physical, sexual, or verbal. Staff suspecting that a child has been abused should report it to the principal and report it to the proper authorities. Numbers are located in the Principal’s office. The staff member should complete an incident report detailing any suspicion of child abuse and notify the Superintendent of Schools.

Please refer to additional information. Diocesan Policy #1100: Child Brutality, Abuse, Neglect or Child Sexual Abuse Reporting and Diocesan Policy #1101: Child Brutality, Abuse, Neglect or Child Sexual Abuse Guidelines for Reporting.

Corporal punishment is not used at St. Joseph School. A good rule of thumb – Never touch a child in a way that can be construed as punitive. Yelling at children is not in keeping with respecting the dignity of the human person and is not permitted at Saint Joseph School. Teachers and Staff who do not speak or act in a manner keeping with Catholic teaching on the dignity of the Person will receive a warning or further action as deemed necessary by the Principal, up to and including termination as the repetitiveness or seriousness of the behavior warrants.

Emotional abuse is not permitted and is forbidden by law. It is not appropriate to single out students or in any way degrade them in front of others. Difficult situations with students should be dealt with privately. It is important to listen to the student’s side of the story.

Children Sent Home

No child may be sent home for any reason (*illness, after trips, etc.*) during the day without checking out in the office. Likewise, each teacher will be notified if a pupil is sent home on account of illness. A parent or person designated by the parent must come to the office for the child.

Class Schedules

Each teacher should make out a class schedule after receiving schedules for lunch, recess, technology, music, art, religion, and physical

education. A copy of the schedule should be posted in the classroom and filed in the office.

Classroom Inventories

Teachers are asked to help keep inventories up-to-date by alerting the School Office when a new item has been added to their room inventory or needs to be deleted because the item is obsolete, destroyed, or dysfunctional. Once a year, copies of existing inventories will be sent to teachers for verification/updating.

Classroom Routines

Establish definite routines for students at the beginning of the year. Sharpening pencils, going to the restroom, using audio-visual materials, collecting and correcting papers and other daily activities should all have a procedure that is followed consistently. Verbally explain the routines to the students and reinforce them with written material and practice.

Classroom Supplies

Classroom supplies can be ordered by completing the Classroom Supplies Requisition Form and turning it into the School Office. Nothing is to be ordered without prior approval from the Principal.

COMMUNICATION*

Guidelines for Effective Communication in the Catholic School:

- Focus on supporting the mission of the Catholic school through your words and actions
 - Practice collaboration by seeking partnerships within the school community
 - Practice engaged, empathetic listening
 - Allow adequate “wait time” before responding to sensitive issues
 - Avoid discussing or diagnosing student illnesses or injuries in front of student
 - Speak truthfully, but with kindness
 - Always ask what is best for student learning
 - Be accountable by providing feedback and thorough follow-up
 - Invite questions and genuinely value the opinion of others
 - Keep parents, administrators, and students informed
 - Maintain an atmosphere of respect and trust supported by shared values
- The faculty lounge is not the appropriate place to discuss students and/or parents

Verbal and non-verbal communication

- Strive to develop a vocabulary that is both clear and concise
- Speak with confidence and enthusiasm
- Avoid the use of slang, off-color words, and trendy expressions
- Take note of pronunciation rules and practice correct grammatical usage
- Use appropriate volume and tonal quality, depending on whether you are speaking to an individual or a group
- Make eye-contact, extend a firm handshake, and smile warmly
- Recognize that your facial expression, posture, and gestures convey friendliness and a positive attitude in words and actions

Personal Information

- Use discretion when sharing personal information with students, co-workers, and parents
- Setting clear boundaries is essential and establishes professionalism and credibility
- Personal viewpoints that are openly shared with students, parents, and/or colleagues must be in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Sharing views contrary to Church teaching is subject to dismissal, even if it occurs outside of school.
- Exchanging or providing personal data such as cell phone numbers is done only for serious reason

Written communication

- Follow formal grammatical rules in written notes, newsletter, and messages. Punctuation, sentence structure, and neatness matter
- Be sure to use spell check or the dictionary to verify accuracy
- Before sending school-related documents, have an administrator or colleague proofread them
- Group messages must be sent to the principal before sending
- The principal should be copied on all parent e-mail communications
- Remain objective in tone and content. If a sensitive or controversial subject needs to

be addressed in written form, allow yourself adequate “wait time” before responding.

- Avoid ambiguity. Be clear, concise, and specific, while keeping the mission of the Catholic school in focus.

Electronic Communication

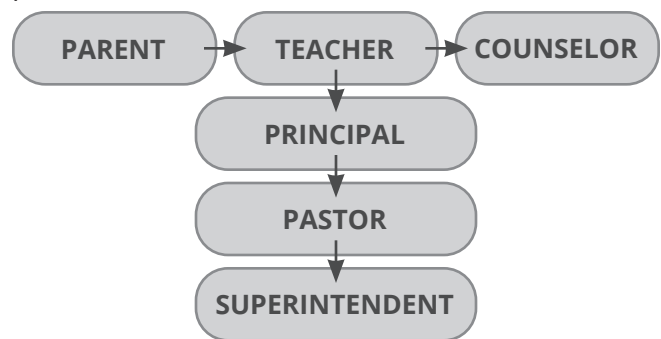
- Your emails are professional correspondence
- Always convey a polite and pleasant tone in e-mails and other electronic communications
- Follow standard writing guidelines as a professional courtesy
- Use the “reply” and reply all” function appropriately
- Electronic communication cannot replace personal contact, especially when dealing with sensitive or complex situations
- All Internet use at school must pertain to school-related issues, topics, and needs
- Be aware that the recipient of an e-mail does not have the benefit of voice or vocal expression when interpreting a message
- Address the recipient appropriately and put your full name on all e-mails. Remember that you are communication with a person, not another computer.
- Use bold or all capital letters sparingly
- Use spelling and grammar check to ensure that your text is error free
- Assume that all messages and information you send and retrieve are permanent and public
- Sharing personal email accounts and/or social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, etc.) with students is never appropriate. Only a school e-mail address should be shared
- Information put on personal social media sites should reflect conduct in keeping with the expectations of a Catholic school teacher.
- Texting, blogging, and instant messaging should be avoided in communicating with students or parents.
- Use your school assigned e-mail account and your school computer for professional purposes only

**The majority of the Communication section is taken from “Flip-Flops Are Not An Option! Essentials of Professional Conduct for Catholic Educators”, a 2009 NCEA publication written by Elizabeth Gross and Sal Guccione*

Parent Communication Chain of Command

- Communicate with teacher regarding your specific concern
- Contact the Principal regarding a student concern
- Contact the Pastor
- Contact the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Knoxville

Formal parent-teacher conferences are held in the Fall of every year. Appointments are given to each family to meet with the teacher. The parents may request conferences with teachers, as they deem necessary. The reverse of this is also true. Teachers who have students who are experiencing difficulties should request conferences with the parents of those students.



Ideally, parents should request an appointment with a teacher but many problems can be averted if teachers are willing to take a minute or two at the time a parent approaches them. Teachers should be available at least fifteen (15) minutes after dismissing the class. Do not talk to parents at dismissal or recess; you must supervise students. Whenever possible, telephone calls should be returned within one (1) day of the request.

Conduct & Discipline

Our discipline policy is demonstrated by our philosophy and goals. Our actions in the classrooms must produce the results explained in the Parent/Student Handbook. The primary responsibility for discipline is given to the classroom teacher. Corporal punishment is not permitted at SMCS. If a problem persists, an appointment will be made for the parents, Principal, and teacher. The Principal will designate the appropriate, agreed-upon action.

- Christian discipline is an important goal of Catholic schools.
- Each school shall establish a policy for positive and non-humiliating disciplinary action by its

administration. There shall be no corporal punishment of students.

- Each school shall establish guidelines for the development of Christian character. The guidelines should include, but not be limited to, the following: orderliness, self-control, good conduct, moral development, and respect for persons and things.
- Parents must accept the responsibility of helping their children develop self-control.

Maximum effort should be made to explain to the student why the behavior in question was not considered appropriate. The person handling the discipline should counsel the student as to possible appropriate alternative behavior. The Principal may consider the following disciplinary actions:

- Student Conference
- Detention
- Silent lunch
- Parent Conference
- Restitution (*in cases of theft, etc.*)
- Removal from extracurricular activities
- Suspension (*not to exceed six (6) days per semester*)
- Expulsion (*Last resort: Superintendent and Pastor must be notified prior to expulsion*)

SMCS has adopted a Code of Conduct which is outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook. There are three (3) levels of misbehavior and appropriate discipline. All misbehavior occurring anywhere on the SMCS and Church grounds is included in the Code.

To eliminate the need to use these disciplinary measures, a teacher can take some positive steps. The following paragraphs are taken from 'Positive Classroom Discipline'.

- Be prepared.
- Have clear, positive classroom rules and procedures that are also communicated to the parents.
- Take time to set limits and make sure that students understand them.
- Be consistent in implementing and carrying out rules and limits.
- Have a positive, individualized incentive system (*inexpensive, learning-related activities*).

Teachers will have trouble when:

- They are not prepared.
- They exhibit an inability to follow activity with their eyes.
- They are unaware of what is going on.

A well-structured class means that the students know exactly what is expected of them. During the first two (2) weeks of the school year, teachers are expected to establish teaching rules, routines, standards, and expectations.

Confidentiality

Student confidences should be revealed in the event that their life or safety is threatened. Teachers can be held liable for failing to act on confidential information. Either in the performance of your job or in other ways you may become aware of information that is and should remain confidential. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, financial aid, personal family information, student test scores, student medical conditions, employment issues, etc. This expectation of confidentiality applies even if you leave your position.

All confidential written and electronic communications also must be carefully protected. Under federal privacy laws, an employer may be liable for theft of an employee's identification if the personal information that was stolen or otherwise obtained was in the possession of the employer (*or its agents*). Disclosure to anyone of such information without proper authorization, or outside the normal context of your job, may be cause for disciplinary action, including discharge.

If you work with employee information on a laptop, flash drive or other electronic media and you remove it from the building, please ensure the information is password protected and the laptop is stored out of sight. Likewise, paper files must be carefully handled. In other words, treat the confidential information as you would want your own personal information to be handled.

If you have questions about the confidentiality of any information or requests for disclosure of information, ask the principal.

Doors

Doors should not be propped open or left unlocked.

Dress Code (Faculty)

Appropriate professional dress is expected of all school personnel. All school employees are

expected to set an example for our students and are requested to dress in keeping with dignity and modesty. Professional dress is expected and is also required for professional meetings and functions unless otherwise specified.

Specific situations relating to female teachers include the following:

- **Blouses/Shirts** — Neat and tailored but not tight and should not show any cleavage or have gaping armholes. No undergarments should be visible.
- **Pants/Shorts** — Neat and professional in appearance. Blue jeans should not be worn. Shorts are not considered appropriate professional attire.
- **Dresses/Skirts** — Ladies' dresses and skirts should be of modest and conservative cut and length and should be no shorter than the width of a dollar bill (2 3/4") above the knee.
- **Shoes** — No flip-flops or tennis shoes (*with the exception of PE teacher/coach*)
- **Jewelry** — No more than one pair of earrings may be worn.
- **Tattoos** — No tattoos shall be visible under any circumstances.

Specific situations relating to male teachers include the following:

- **Shirts** — Dress or sports shirts
- **Pants** — Neat and professional in appearance; no blue jeans
- **Shoes** — No flip-flops or tennis shoes (*with the exception of the PE teacher/ coach*)
- **Tattoos** — No tattoos shall be visible under any circumstances.
- Faculty may "dress down" on days when students have out of uniform privileges and on other designated days, but the above guidelines for modesty still apply.

Dress Code (Student)

Teachers are asked to be aware of the uniform code. Should a student come to school "out of uniform" he/she will be issued a Dress Code Violation Notice (*see example of form in Appendix II*). Teachers will check the appropriate violation and/or fill in an explanation as needed. Parents should sign it and return it to the teacher. If the notice is not returned, please inform the School Office. Parents of students who receive more than three

(3) notices will be called to pick-up their child or bring the appropriate uniform.

Early Morning Duty

Teachers are asked to be on time for their classrooms and assigned early morning duty position which begins at 7:30 a.m. If a teacher is not able to be at the assigned duty for any reason, after informing the office, it is important that he/she get someone to cover the position for him/her. Teachers should ensure duty position(s) and time(s) are included in their sub-plans and communicated to the substitute teacher.

Educational Trips

Educational trips need to be discussed, planned, and approved well in advance. All requests for trips need to be in writing and must be submitted to the Principal at least two (2) weeks in advance. Trips not submitted two (2) weeks in advance may not be approved.

School field trips are excursions into the community under school sponsorship and supervision. As such, teachers should give careful consideration to the following factors:

- Safety and welfare of the pupils
- Comparable learning for the time and effort expended to that resulting from the same amount expended in the classroom.
- Motivational and educational value
- Appropriateness to the maturity of the students
- Provision for supervision
- Pupil interest and readiness to profit from experience
- Parental attitudes
- Expense

The following procedures are to be used as guidelines when making arrangements for an educational trip:

- Secure approval from the Principal.
- Secure permission from the location to be visited (*Permission Slips can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant*).
- Secure written permission from parents. SMCS's insurance carrier, Catholic Mutual, requires that 'written consent of parents and/or legal guardians must be obtained for every student participating in a field trip. Permission slips must inform parents and/or legal guardian(s) of the following:

- Name, location, and date(s) of the event
- Mode of transportation to be used
- Name of Diocesan/School employee in charge of the field trip
- Parents' responsibility
- Request for checks must be made two (2) weeks before the date of the trip.
- Parents may not drive or go on trips who are not Safe Haven trained, completed the driver administrator curriculum on the CMG page, and have a background check completed.

No student may go on any field trip without a permission slip. Verbal or faxed permissions are not acceptable. Information and permission slips should be sent to parents at least two (2) weeks in advance.

- Catholic Mutual Insurance states that "bus transportation is the most desirable method to be utilized for any field trip and whenever possible, this mode of transportation should be provided". The use of private passenger vehicles is discouraged and should be avoided if at all possible. If a private passenger vehicle must be used then the following information must be supplied and certified by the driver.
 - The driver must be 21 years of age or older.
 - The driver must have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no physical disability that could in any way impair his/her ability to drive the vehicle safely.
 - The vehicle must have a valid and current registration as well as a valid and current license plate(s).
 - The vehicle must be insured for the following minimum limits: \$100,000 per person / \$300,000 per occurrence.
 - Virtus trained and completed Background check.

A signed Driver Information Sheet on each vehicle used must be submitted to the Administrative Assistant prior to the field trip. In addition, each driver and/or chaperone should be given a copy of the approved itinerary including the route(s) to be followed and a summary of his/her responsibilities. These can be obtained from the School Office.

- Arrange for chaperones. Catholic Mutual Insurance requires that for field trips "other than interscholastic athletic field trips, the

following supervision requirement should be maintained; for every ten (10) students, there should be one (1) adult".

- Use classroom discussions, assignments, and hand-outs to help prepare students for the trip.
- Always devote a reasonable amount of time for follow-up with the students. Encourage students to write thank-you notes.

Under no circumstances are teachers or employees of SMCS permitted to drive on an educational trip. SMCS Board has established a policy that buses must be used for trips that exceed two (2) hours travel time each way.

Transportation Policy (Diocesan Policy #1180B)

This policy outlines procedures for using leased vehicles and private passenger cars.

Volunteer Driver Information (Diocesan Policy #1180C) *A form is required for any adult transporting a student in his/her vehicle*

Liability Waiver (Diocesan Policy #1180D) *A form is to be filled out by any adults attending educational trips/outings as a chaperone.*

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers invited for the enrichment of the instructional program should be approved by the Principal. Guest speakers should report to the office upon arrival. Please know the content speakers plan to present.

Hall Pass

All students in the hallway should have a hall pass if not with a class or changing classes. It is the teacher's responsibility to know if a student is out of the classroom and to have a mechanism for knowing where each child is.

Home & School Association

Teachers' membership and support of the Home & School Association is important in closing the gap that can exist between parents and teachers. Home & School meets four (4) times during the school year and teachers are encouraged to attend the meetings. The primary functions of Home & School are as follows:

- To foster a spirit of cooperation and understanding between faculty and parents.
- To unite parents in a common effort to maintain a high spiritual and intellectual standard for school.

- To inform parents of all aspects of school and student activities.

Throughout the year the Home & School will be working with the Development Director to plan specific projects to help finance and support the school and provide enrichment for the students. The two main fundraisers for the school are St. Mary's Annual Auction and Walk-A-Thon. You will be notified as other activities are planned.

A current list of the Home & School officers can be found in St. Mary's School Directory.

Injured / Sick Student

In the event of illness or injury a student is sent to the School Office. If the injury or illness warrants further care, the parent is notified. This involves making simple observations of a sick or injured child and giving care in accordance with training. Office personnel may not make a diagnosis, prescribe treatment or medication, treat infection, give care to eyes or ears other than first aid, or perform any procedure requiring sterile technique. Due to injury, an Incident/Injury Report is filled out and given to the school secretary.

Inclement Weather

Or by watching the following television stations:

- WJHL-TV
- WCYB-TV
- WKPT-TV

It will also be posted on the school website at www.school.stmarysjc.org.

Intercom

All classrooms are equipped with a phone that acts as an intercom system. This provides two-way communication between the classroom and the School Office. All classes are asked to stop and listen when announcements are made over the intercom. All classrooms also have a walkie-talkie which is to be used for emergencies.

Lunch Count

Immediately after morning prayers/devotions, a lunch count and absentee/tardy count should be taken and sent to the office via email or paper copy. Students who forget their lunch should be reminded that they should purchase a hot lunch in the school cafeteria. This is especially important in the elementary grades as these students can be upset if they are not sure what to do.

Mailboxes

Teacher mailboxes are located in the office area. Please check your mailbox at least twice during the school day. Messages from vendors, parents, and other callers will be placed in your mailbox.

Maintenance Requests

A Work Order Request form should be completed for all maintenance or custodial issues. Any requests for the installation of equipment should be accompanied by a diagram.

Manners

Please remind the child of the importance of showing respect for all people. Several things to mention:

- Address adults when passing (*i.e.*, "hello", "good morning", *etc.*)
- Students should hold the door and let adults enter first.
- Remind them to say "thank you", "excuse me", "I'm sorry".
- Address adults as "ma'am" or "sir" when appropriate.
- Students should also respect others. Children should be aware of others as they move about the building by not bumping or running into each other.
- Students are not to run in the building at any time.

Mass Attendance

All staff are expected to participate in all-school Masses, and Masses when their grade level is present, unless previous arrangements have been made with the principal.

Staff should instruct students on the following: (*Please assist in reinforcing these behaviors by role modeling*):

- 1** There should be silence when entering and exiting the Chapel. Use the time when walking to Mass to go quietly and prepare for being with our Blessed Lord.
- 2** When entering one's place in the Chapel, face the altar and genuflect with reverence **ON THE RIGHT KNEE**. This act reverences Jesus in the Tabernacle truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Genuflection should be a distinct motion.
- 3** Remind the students that the Chapel is the house of our Lord and in His presence they

should have good behavior and participate in the songs and prayers of the Mass.

- 4 When receiving Holy Communion, present palms, flat, one over the other or present the tongue with hands folded. When the priest or extraordinary minister says, "The Body of Christ" bow your head and respond "Amen" in an audible tone to be heard by the priest or eucharistic minister and return slowly and with reverence to our place.
- 5 After Holy Communion, make a prayer of Thanksgiving and then join in the Communion song if one is being sung.
- 6 Students who are participating in Mass by a special ministry (*i.e. reading, singing, etc. should have uniforms worn neatly and correctly, refer to the dress code*).
- 7 Use participation aides when available (*reinforcing staff knowledge of the hymn with the printed text and giving example to the students*).
- 8 Never run in the Chapel.

Bowing – An ancient symbol in the Church for showing respect (*all heads should bow at the holy Name of Jesus*).

Genuflecting – A sign of our respect and our humility before the Tabernacle and the consecrated species at the Mass.

The Sign of the Cross – An affirmation of our faith.

Students should not be permitted to use bathrooms or get drinks during Mass unless it is an emergency. Children should be instructed to stop when entering the chapel during a reading or during the Eucharistic Prayer and they should not be moving in the chapel at these times.

Medication

Diocesan Policy #1390 states: Schools shall not dispense prescription medication to students except when prescribed by a doctor and provided by the parent. A designated staff member, either the student's teacher, office personnel or clinic personnel must always dispense this medicine.

If a child is on medication and the medication must be administered during school time, the parent must submit a Medication Authorization form, obtained from the School Office, which has been completed and signed by the parent and the physician. (*An example of this form is provided in Appendix I.*)

Medication must be brought to the office in the original prescription bottle. The pharmacist may be instructed to dispense the medication in two (2) bottles; one for home and one for school. The parent must provide a written request indicating the name of the student, date, name of the medication, dosage, and the time interval the medication is to be taken. The means of dispensing the medication (*i.e., spoon, cup, or other dispenser*) must also be provided by the parent/guardian. All medications will be kept in a secure location in the School Office. Students may not carry medicines on their person. The only exception to be made will be for asthmatic inhalers, but in most cases, these will also be kept in the School Office. Tylenol or any over-the-counter medications will not be given to children without a signed Medication Authorization.

Negligence

Acts of negligence are neither expected nor intended. Many times what first appears to be an accident can be traced to someone's negligence. However, instances of pure accident do occur in which someone is injured and no one is actually at fault.

For negligence to be present, someone must sustain an injury resulting from an "unreasonable risk" taken by another person. To determine unreasonableness the courts personify the test in terms of the "reasonable person." A reasonable person is one who is prudent, of ordinary sense using ordinary care and skill.

There are four elements of negligence:

- 1 Duty to protect others-the duty to protect may increase as the risk also increases.
- 2 Standard of care-as the risk involved increases, so does the standard of care. The younger the child, the greater the standard of care. The generally accepted standard of care is that of a reasonably prudent staff member, which is different from that of a reasonably prudent layperson.
- 3 Proximate or Legal Cause-the court will ask, "Was the injury a natural and probable consequence of the wrongful act and should it have been foreseen in light of the attendant circumstances?" The cause must be substantial enough to lead reasonable people to conclude the act was indeed the cause of injury.
- 4 Injury or actual loss

Taken from American Public School Law, third edition. Alexander and Alexander.

Physical supervision is not enough. Mental presence is also required. For example, students are to be actively supervised on the playground. Those on duty should be watching and listening to the activities of students. This is not a time for discussing issues with colleagues and/or parents, nor should attention be given only to a small group of students so that the other students are not being properly supervised. Students are not permitted into the gym or other area without the accompaniment of a staff member.

Parent Volunteers

Parents and other visitors must report to the school office and sign in before going to a classroom for any purpose. Badges are to be given to parents to wear while working or visiting in the school. No parent volunteer may grade any student papers. Diocesan policy requires all volunteers to be in compliance with the Safe Environment Policies.

Meetings (Faculty, In-Service, Team/Grade, Unit Leader, Curriculum)

All teachers, including part-time teachers and teaching assistants, are expected to attend the meetings set aside for each Wednesday. These generally require attendance until 4:00 p.m. Other appointments, conferences, practices, or activities should not be planned for Wednesday afternoons. Any deviations from this must be approved by the Principal. Teachers will be notified in the event that a meeting is not planned for a particular Wednesday. All full-time or part-time teachers are required to attend the annual Parent Conference in the Fall, Diocesan In-Service, team planning meetings, and any other special In-Service meetings which may be scheduled.

In the event an emergency arises and a teacher is not able to attend a required meeting, the Principal must be notified in person prior to the meeting.

Movies

Students in grades K thru 5th may only view G-rated movies. Students in grades 6th thru 8th may only view G and PG-rated movies. No PG+ or R-rated movies may be shown under any circumstances. Movies must be part of a lesson or instructional unit. You must check the Bishops' website (www.usccb.org) for rating and

information on any movie selections prior to showing it to your students.

Phone Use by Students

Students may use the telephone in the office with written permission from the teacher. Students are not permitted to use the telephone in any other area.

Permanent / Cumulative Records

Permanent/Cumulative records are official documents that are maintained in the School Office and should never leave the school. Comments reported on the Permanent Record Cards should be objective and non-judgmental. Each student at SMCS has a permanent record file which contains each course attempted and grade earned since enrolling at SMCS. All standardized test scores as well as attendance and Grade Point Averages (GPAs), are included. Additionally, the following records will also be included in each student file:

- Baptismal records (*entering Kindergarten, First and Second Grades*)
- Birth certificate (*entering Kindergarten and First Grades*)
- Immunization record(s)
- In cases of divorce, custodial records and court order

Where applicable, the School Office shall request Permanent/Cumulative records from previous school(s) for transferred students. Homeroom teachers are responsible for updating the permanent grade card at the end of each year. Both permanent and duplicate records must be completed before summer vacations. A copy of the final report card should also be filed.

Planning Books

State standards require pre-planning for classroom work. The plans are to be made out on a weekly basis. Clear and complete lesson plans enable a substitute teacher, in the event of the teacher's absence, to take over. The following information should be included for every subject area:

- Concept
- Activity (*the activity should not be the pages to be covered*)
- Teacher Manual (TM) pages
- Student Textbook (ST) pages
- Class assignment
- Homework

In addition, each teacher should do long-range and intermediate preparation. These should be written and communicated to the Principal, students and parents. As new units are assigned, expectations should be given to the students.

Teachers should have seating charts, group lists, and Lesson Plans up-to-date. Copies of Lesson Plans are submitted to the Principal every Monday. Planning Books should be written in a manner that is not only helpful to you but also understandable to the Principal. They should include the goal of the lesson, the materials needed in presenting the lesson, and the assignment that the student is expected to complete, whether in class or at home.

Teachers should be prepared for the daily classes. No class should ever be left unattended to run off worksheets or tests. The office staff will be happy to assist teachers with copying materials provided it is given to them the day before it is needed.

Weekly lesson plans must be turned into the Principal each Monday morning.

Prayers

Each school day begins with a Prayer Service. Students are to assemble in the gymnasium for Morning Prayer Service and then go to their appointed classroom. Teachers should lead students in the Catholic prayer of Grace prior to leaving the classroom for lunch. All faculty and staff members are expected to participate in Morning Prayer.

Professional Development

Professional development is highly encouraged.

- 1** Registration fees for any approved professional meeting may be paid by the school when submitted in writing and approved by the principal.
- 2** Failure to attend professional meetings designated by the principal without sufficient reason may result in loss of salary commensurate with time missed.
- 3** Diocesan Policy #2200 states: Teachers will participate in a minimum of six (6) clock hours of professional development activities each year. The six (6) professional development hours exceed the regularly scheduled school and/or Diocesan in-service opportunities. Some examples for attaining these hours are:
 - o Attendance at meetings/workshops/seminars

- o Participation in ongoing religious education opportunities in local or area Church communities
 - o Professional research/reading/class work
 - o Video/audio educational enrichment tapes
 - o Trips of an educational nature
 - o Conducting workshops, faculty meetings, participation in school sponsored meetings, etc...
- 4** A completed Professional Development Update should be submitted to the principal each year. This should be submitted prior to the last day of school.
 - 5** Diocesan Policy #2210 states: All professional staff shall earn six (6) semester hours of credit or the equivalent during each five years of employment (*SACS Standard 3.9*). This must be earned in addition to the professional development provided by the school, or within school hours. The six (6) professional development semester hours may be attained in various ways (*Diocesan Policy #2210A*)

Purchase Orders

Items other than those requested using the classroom supplies requisition form require the use of a purchase order. Forms are available in the office. All purchases are subject to approval by the principal. The following process should be followed:

- 1** Obtain a purchase order from the office.
- 2** Turn in all purchase orders to the office.
- 3** All purchases require the principal's authorization.
- 4** The office will check in items when delivered (*this includes all art, music, science, Title, etc*). Do not pick up items that have not been checked in.
- 5** Items will be directed to the personnel responsible for it being inventoried.
- 6** Items will be directed to the location in which it will be kept.

GRADING/ASSESSMENT

All teachers are required to keep current grades online in RenWeb®. Grades should be entered in RenWeb® at a minimum of every two weeks. Teachers may keep a hard copy grade book as well. Grades entered in hard copy grade books and computerized versions must be accurate and

recorded by teachers and/or paraprofessionals only. Grade books are legal documents and they should be carefully guarded. Yearly averages must be recorded on the permanent record cards at the end of the academic year.

Grading Policies

All grades must be based on objective measurements. The method for determining grades for a class (*weighted percentages, points*) must be clearly explained to students and communicated to parents.

“Participation” grades should be used sparingly. If they are necessary, they should be:

- Based on specific criteria that have been explained to the students and parents
- Documented in a grade-book in order to respond to parent questions or concerns about specific details (*the “Note” section for individual grades in RenWeb® can be used for this*)

Grades must be entered into RenWeb® at least every two weeks for grades 1-8 (*quarter end for PK and K*) in order to provide parents time to intervene with their child(ren) as needed.

There should be a sufficient number of grades entered to accurately represent a student’s progress in a class. In a nine-week period, it is not unreasonable to expect at least nine grades in addition to tests.

Information entered about an assignment in RenWeb® should be sufficient to distinguish it from other similar assignments. For example, entering “selection test” without a reference to a story or “spelling test” without reference to a chapter is not sufficient information. The description area under the assignment name can be used for this.

Teachers should be grading their own assignments. Only the teacher assigned to a class will enter grades into RenWeb®. Parents may contact teachers, via the school, at any time with concerns about student progress. Please note that e-mail is never used to communicate student performance and/or behavior. Grades are given in letters as follows for grades 3 – 8:

Grades 3-8		
A+ 99-100	B- 86-87	D 72-74
A 95-98	C+ 84-85	D- 70-71
A- 93-94	C 79-83	F below 70
B+ 91-92	D+ 75-76	

Grades are given as follows for grades 1 and 2:

Grades 1-2
E Excellent (93 – 100%)
G Good (86 – 92%)
S Satisfactory (76 – 85%)
N Needs Improvement (70 – 75%)
U Unsatisfactory (below 70%)

Assessment Policies:

Following any assessment, teachers will formally review and tabulate the questions missed by individual students for two purposes:

Test error – If more than 60% of the class has missed any given question, the teacher will not count the question toward the grade and will reteach/ clarify the material as needed.

Student skill deficits – Specific skill deficits identified for individual students will be re-taught by the teacher or by the Learning Lab within an appropriate period of time. A record of these areas and an additional assessment to demonstrate student progress will be maintained by the teacher until the end of the school year. Areas that remain problematic for individual students should be communicated to the next grade level teacher.

- If the student is expected to retain and use the skill on future assignments (*or in a later grade*), then it should be re-taught.
- If the test is on a content unit that stands alone (*sometimes religion or social studies, maybe science*), then formally re-teaching the content may not be necessary.

Cumulative or benchmark tests on core curriculum standards will be given in mathematics and language arts/reading at regular increments to ensure student progress and retention of material. A record of these assessments will be maintained by the teacher until the end of the school year. Areas that remain problematic for individual students should be communicated to the next grade level teacher. These records should be properly disposed of by the teacher at the end of the year. Either separate names from grades or shred the record.

Teachers must use a variety of assessments to determine student mastery of content. Alternate assessments of the same content that are intended to meet different learning styles or special needs will be graded on comparable criteria, not a reduced standard. The format, quantity of problems/answer choices, and timing

of the test may vary, but the underlying standards must be the same.

It is the responsibility of teachers to see that all assignments used for determining grades are corrected and returned to students within a reasonable amount of time.

Progress & End-of-Term Reports

All teachers are required to record sufficient graded work by the appropriate deadlines for progress reports to be generated in RenWeb® for all students.

Progress reports should be used as a means of communicating student progress to parents. Parents should not be surprised by low or unsatisfactory grades on report cards. Teachers are required to contact parents regarding failing grades prior to receipt of a report card. Contact should be made in enough time for parents to intervene and support their child. Dates of mid-term and end-of-term grading periods are listed on the sheet made available to each teacher at the beginning of the school year.

Teachers are to write comments on report cards that give the parents an idea of how their child is doing in class. In 1st – 5th grades, the homeroom teacher should write a minimum of one behavior/ conduct comment and minimally comment on progress in language arts, math and social studies. The science teacher should comment as well. In general, in 6th – 8th grades all content area (*language arts, math, religion, science, and social studies*) teachers should comment on academic progress for the subjects he/she teaches. Special area teachers should write comments on the first progress report and first report card and then as necessary or as desired. For all teachers, when giving a grade of C or lower (*S or lower*), a comment is required. For any grade of F (*or U*), teachers need to be able to show the principal that they have spoken directly with the parent in enough time for an intervention to have occurred, or the child should earn the grade of at least a D- (or N).

Report cards are reviewed by the principal prior to their being made available to parents.

Retention

Diocese of Knoxville Policies #1490, 1490A, and 1490B outline the procedure for retention. Policy 1490B is a sample of a letter used for notification of possible retention. Teachers should begin dialogue with parents as early as possible if it is probable that students will be recommended for

retention in current grade levels. Parents must be notified about the possibility of retention no later than the beginning of the second semester. Teachers are responsible for documenting this notification.

Follow-up conferences and notices, in consultation with the Follow-up conferences and notices, in consultation with the principal, should be ongoing throughout the rest of the year and should be documented by

teachers. Final decisions of parents at the end of the year must be kept on file in the office.

School Board

The purpose of the SMCS School Board is to formulate policy which will guide Catholic school education. The board is a representative to St. Mary's Parish and school community. It is accountable to the Diocese of Knoxville for its direction and guidelines in formulating policies to direct the administration of the school. The board works closely with the Principal in order to evaluate the effectiveness of policies in achieving the school goals. The Finance Committee, in collaboration with the Principal and Board Chairperson, will compile the yearly budget. This is subject to the approval of the other board members and the parish council at their yearly budget meeting. A Catholic School Board differs from a public school board of education in that it serves in an advisory capacity rather than an administrative capacity.

Meetings are held once each month from September to June. All regular meetings are open to the parish and school community except during the discussion of confidential subject matter.

The School Board is comprised of nine (9) members elected by the parent community. Each member serves a three (3) year term. All parents of SMCS students can seek a position on the board. Elections are held in the Spring through the Home & School Association. The Pastor may appoint three (3) additional members from the parish at large. A list of current School Board members and officers can be found in the St. Mary's School Directory.

Security

- The building opens at 7:30 a.m. and doors are locked at 4:00 p.m. It is not recommended that any teacher be in the building alone or late in the evening.

- At lunch or recess, any student needing to use the bathroom or get a drink should go to the School Office. Permission from the teacher should always be obtained first. The student should inform the teacher of his/her return. Parents are encouraged to use the office restrooms when needed.
- Lock classroom doors before you go home at the end of the day. Classroom doors should always be locked during school hours.
- Close windows when leaving at the end of the day.
- Money and/or valuables should not be left in the classroom.
- Teachers should carry their keys with them at all times. Do not leave them lying around. Do not give your keys to a parent or a student to use.
- SMCS is not responsible for personal items of value left on school property or in the building.

Smoking / Controlled Substances

SMCS is a Smoke Free environment. No teacher or parent may smoke cigarettes, cigars or other controlled substances at any time on the school property. No teacher, faculty member or parent may smoke on field trips where children are present.

Student Supplies

Each teacher should provide a Supply List for his/her students. This should be turned in to the office at the end of the school year so that it can be sent home with final report cards. If you require any additional materials during the year, send home a written note to parents stating the purpose of the additional item(s). All students' supplies should be labeled with the student's name.

Substitute Folder

Each teacher keeps a substitute folder in the office that contains all pertinent schedule information, teacher duties, forms to be completed, classwork, etc. Folders should be updated throughout the year.

The following should be provided by the teacher for his/her substitute:

- Copy of weekly schedule
- Seating charts current for each class taught in that room
- Planning Book with full plans for the day
- Directions for emergency drills posted

- Detailed information for lunch count and absentee/tardy students and
- Emergency Procedures
- Note about any special problems

Supervision

Supervision of all students at all times is the legal responsibility of the teacher. Do not leave students unattended. For help, radio or intercom the school office. Teachers should not be involved in social conversations during Recess and must be in their zones.

Teachers who provide services to students after school must make sure that students have been picked up before leaving the building. The office closes at 3:30 p.m., and office staff cannot be responsible for students whose scheduled activity ends at 3:30 p.m. or later. Students should never be left in the building after school without supervision.

Things to remember are:

- Teachers are to be in their classroom by 7:30 a.m. and remain at the school until fifteen (15) minutes after dismissal of their children. Kindergarten teachers are to follow the same attendance schedule as the Primary teachers.
- All teachers are technically on duty at all times in the presence of students and students are under the supervision of any and all teachers while at school or at school-related activities.
- Teachers should be in the hall when their classes change to encourage students to move quickly and quietly to classes.
- No child is to be placed in the hall for punishment at any time.
- All students must be picked up or taken to the After-School Care Program at the end of any extracurricular activity. No student should be left unattended. If the activity is scheduled to end after the After-School Care Program closes for the day, sponsors of the activity must wait with the child(ren) until they are picked up from the activity.

In the event of an emergency, teachers must notify the office if they need supervision for the students.

Teacher Supplies

Teachers are to turn in their personal supply lists to the office at the end of the school year. After your initial supplies have been picked up, any additional requests during the year should be made in writing on a Classroom Request form

and turned into the office. Teachers must have prior approval from the Principal before they can purchase any supplies on their own.

Teachers' Lounge / Workroom

It is each individual's responsibility to clean up after him/herself. All cafeteria dishes should be returned to the cafeteria. Please put your name on any food, drink, or condiment you put in the refrigerator.

Tutoring / Lessons

Any faculty/staff member receiving compensation for tutoring or teaching lessons at SMCS must receive prior approval from the Principal/Pastor.

If parents are interested in academic tutoring services, they must discuss their concerns/needs with the homeroom teacher before tutoring begins.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a vital part of SMCS. They serve in various capacities — as aides to teachers, room mothers, office, cafeteria, library, and art helpers; drivers on educational trips, sports coaches/coordinators, and fundraisers.

Each teacher/class should be assigned a Room Parent. These are usually parents of students in your class who volunteer for this position on the Volunteer Sheet. Under the direction of the teacher, they should coordinate drivers for field trips, schedule workers for extracurricular functions, make telephone calls to arrange class parties, etc. The School Office will let you know who your Room Parent is soon after school starts.

Parents and other visitors must report to the School Office and sign-in before going to a classroom for any purpose. Volunteer badges are given to parents to wear while working or visiting in the school. No parent volunteer may grade any student papers.

All "regular" volunteers must participate in required Diocesan training (*CMG Connect - online safe environment training and background check*).

Written Records / Documentation

The cardinal rule:

- Be specific
- Comments should be behaviorally oriented
- Keep verifiable records
- Comments should be objective
- Avoid judgment statements

knoxville.cmgconnect.org



