



**PARENT / STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**

**2017-2018**

*"Academic Excellence, Faith and Service"*

**St. Mark Catholic Elementary School**

500 Wigwam Lane

Stratford, CT 06614

Phone: 203-375-4291

[www.stmarkschool.org](http://www.stmarkschool.org)

*Accredited by New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.*

*(Revised 8/2016)*

***St. Mark School  
500 Wigwam Lane  
Stratford, CT 06614***

Dear Parents and Students,

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul  
and with all your mind and with all your strength...,"*

*Mark 12:30*

Welcome to St. Mark School! In choosing St. Mark's you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education. The faculty and staff of St. Mark School look forward to working with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual development in the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of St. Mark School for the 2017-2018 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreements. The agreements state that you intend to abide by the policies of St. Mark School during the 2017-2018 school year.

As partners in education, let us work together and support one another. May our school community continue to grow in love and service of our God and others.

In Christ,

*Scott Clough*

**Scott Clough  
Principal**



**ST. MARK SCHOOL IS A NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL  
OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE.**

In 2007 and 2008, St. Mark School received a nomination for United States Blue Ribbon School based on these scores. In 2009, St. Mark School was awarded the Blue Ribbon Award by the U.S. Department of Education.

*Schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport admit students  
of any religion, race, color, national and ethnic origin.*

**Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 4002**

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

St. Mark School is not a State of Connecticut approved special education school.

*The Principal reserves the right to revise this handbook at any time.*

**ST.MARK SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF**

<b>Principal</b>	Mr. Scott Clough
<b>Administrative Assistant</b>	Mrs. Carolyn Mannino
<b>School Nurse</b>	Mrs. Wendy Frate
<b>Parish DRE and School Support</b>	Mrs. Patty Nettleton
<b>Preschool Teacher</b>	Mrs. Julie Larracuente
<b>Preschool Assistant</b>	Mrs. Lisa Roselli
<b>Kindergarten Teachers</b>	Mrs. Karen Arena and Mrs. Kathleen Dudzinski
<b>Kindergarten Assistant</b>	Mrs. Karen Zayas
<b>Grade 1</b>	Mrs. Jill DeReinzi
<b>Grade 2</b>	Ms. Stacey Zenowich
<b>Grade 3</b>	Miss Jaimie Kurtz
<b>Grade 4</b>	Mrs. Janet Rodriguez
<b>Grade 5</b>	Mrs. Marian Rabel
<b>Grade 6</b>	Ms. Melissa Meraviglia
<b>Grade 7</b>	Mrs. Lynn Olins
<b>Grade 8</b>	Mrs. Agnes Miller
<b>Reading Enrichment &amp; Recovery</b>	Mrs. Leslie Orendorf
<b>Art</b>	Ms. Sarah Carrano
<b>Computer</b>	Ms. Emily Spoldi
<b>Library</b>	Mrs. Barbara Garry
<b>Music</b>	Mr. Christopher Siena
<b>Physical Education</b>	Ms. Therese Liptak
<b>Spanish</b>	Mrs. Therese Lefever (K-3) Mrs. Maria Arroyo
<b>After School Program</b>	Mrs. Julie Larracuente Mrs. Kathleen Dudzinski

**ST. MARK SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD (SAB)**

Rev. Birendra Soreng	Pastor, Ex Officio, Spiritual and Liturgical Life
Kevin Huben	Chairperson

Elizabeth Crosby  
Renee DiMatteo  
Joann Szczepanski  
Mark Szczepanski  
Mary Beth Grasso  
Ronald Nolting  
Carrie Morrissey  
Ruth Janega  
Jennifer Tayman  
Scott Clough

H.S. A. Liaison, Ex Officio  
Principal, Ex Officio

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

David Lacasse	Chairperson
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Kevin Huben	School Advisory Board representative
Guillermo Suniaga	
Robert Rosati	
Julia French	
Steven Kirn	

**HOME SCHOOL ASSOCIATION - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Jennifer Tayman	President
Alicia Formato	Co-secretary
Jeanine May	Co-secretary

## SCHOOL HOURS

Office Hours - School Year                    7:30 am. - 3 pm.  
Office Hours - Summer                        7:30 am. - 12:30 pm.

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Teacher supervision begins at 7:30 a.m. in the gym on full days and 9:30 a.m. on days when there is a delayed opening. Students should not be in the building before these designated times. Faculty and staff are not required to supervise children if they arrive early. Parents are responsible for their children if they arrive early. School doors (Parish Center) will open at 7:30 a.m. For the safety of our students, teachers, and staff and to encourage independence in our children, we ask that children who walk or come by car to say their "good byes" before entering the outside school security doors. The only children who may be walked to class by the parent are pre-school students. If parents would like to enter the school to drop off forms, materials, etc., they must enter using the door under the blue St. Mark School awning. The school doors are locked from 7:45 am - 2:10pm.

Full Day:    7:45 a.m. to 2:10 p.m.

### FULL DAY SCHEDULE

7:45 a.m.	School begins - Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, announcements
7:55 a.m.	Classes begin (approximately 40 minutes each)
9:50 a.m.	Snack and Recess/Break (varies in K-4)
10:00 a.m.	Classes resume
11:45 a.m.	Lunch: K-4
12:20 p.m.	Lunch: 5-8
12:20 p.m.	Instruction/Reading (K-4)
12:40 p.m.	Classes Resume
2:00 p.m.	Announcements and Closing Prayer
2:10 p.m.	Dismissal
2:25 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	After school enrichment activities (check school calendar)

SCHEDULED HALF DAY is from 7:45 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.

DELAYED OPENING/2 HOURS: School begins at 9:45 a.m. Doors open at 9:30 a.m.

EARLY DISMISSAL (weather or emergency) at 11:25 a.m. No lunch served on these days.

### AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (ASP)

(Begins Wednesday, September 6)

2:15 p.m. - 6 p.m.	schedule for full day
11:25 p.m. - 6 p.m.	schedule for early dismissal

Note: There will be no after school program on 8/31, 9/1, 11/22, 12/22 and the last day of school.

The ASP program does not run when school is not in session (i.e., snow days, emergency closings, vacations, and holidays) and will not be held when school dismisses early due to weather or an emergency.

## **HISTORY OF ST. MARK CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

St. Mark School opened on September 9, 1964. The opening of the school enabled the children of the parishioners of the newly founded St. Mark Church to receive a Catholic education. The school consisted of eight classrooms, a principal's office, secretary's sitting area, a faculty room and a small nurse's office. St. Mark School opened with 90 students in Grades 1, 2 and 3. Grades 4 and 5 were added in 1965 and Grades 6 and 7 in 1966. In 1967, all eight elementary grades were established.

The school was staffed primarily by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth from Monroe, Connecticut, with the addition of lay staff in 1967. The Sisters maintained their presence in the school until 1992. Since 1992, the teaching faculty has been totally comprised of lay persons. In 1992, the school hired its first lay principal.

Over the years, the physical plant expanded with the vision of a former pastor, Msgr. Lawrence McMahon, and the support of the parish. In 1984, the school's concrete patio was transformed into a school media center and library that housed the school's first eight computers. In 1989, a portable classroom was added to the school off the library in order to establish a full day Kindergarten which opened that September. To further meet the needs of the working St. Mark families, and an After School Program was established in 1991.

In 1993, St. Mark Church built a Parish Center which included a permanent Kindergarten classroom, a gymnasium and a stage. This addition allowed St. Mark School to be named as one of the handicap accessible schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport. The new addition allowed the "portable" classroom to become permanent. It became the school's new computer room. Within a year of the 1994 opening of Kindergarten, a new enclosed Kindergarten playground was built. In 2015, the school won a new playground through a Dannon yogurt contest. Thanks to the work and efforts of many, the playground was finished and opened at the end of August, 2015.

In January of 2001, the new science lab for Grades 5-8 was opened. Also at this time, the main office was moved to a new facility beyond the science lab. There was also space for a new principal's office, a bathroom and a conference room. In March of 2001, the nurse's office opened (former office of the principal) with a bathroom and a waiting area.

In September of 2008, St. Mark pre-school opened. Currently, classes are held for PK3 twice a week and PK4 three times a week.

St. Mark School continues to grow through the vision and efforts of the administration, faculty, parents, Advisory Board and Finance Committee. Over the past three years, St. Mark has increase their wifi capacity, purchased two Chromebook carts, containing 60 new Chromebooks, and purchased two Smart TV's to begin the next phase of technological improvements.

Security cameras, steel reinforced doors, panic buttons and film for windows were purchased to increase the safety at our school.

St. Mark School is proud of its history and growth. Over the years, it has become a well-known Catholic institution of learning in Stratford and the surrounding communities.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Mark School is a Christ-centered learning environment that teaches Gospel values and fosters academic excellence.

Aware of the dignity and uniqueness of all students, we are committed to the spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, and physical development of each child.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me." (Matthew 19:14). Following in the footsteps of Jesus, at St. Mark School...

We welcome the children in His name.

We bring the Good News to God's children.

We believe that each child is created in God's image.

We are the face, the hands and the heart of Christ to our children.

As a community of faith, we strive to love and serve God, each other and our brothers and sisters in the broader community. We acknowledge and support the role of parents as the primary educators of their children. We work collaboratively in a supportive and respectful manner to provide an enriching Catholic education for all children in our school.

We are committed to educational excellence. Our educational goals and objectives are intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person. Aligned with Diocesan curriculum standards and guidelines, St. Mark School prepares students to think creatively, critically, analytically and independently to identify and solve problems in academic, personal and social situations. We integrate Gospel values and learn the Church's mission and traditions as reflected in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

We strive to create a safe, nurturing atmosphere that encourages respect, tolerance, personal integrity and individual dignity. We instill a respect for people of all cultures as well as concern for the needs of the world.



## Parent's Role in Education

It is an honor and privilege to be partners with parents in the education of children. We believe parents are the first and primary educators of their children. Parents are the role models for their children. Your words, actions, choices and beliefs form and affect your children. As partners, let us work together so that the values and ideals that we teach at St. Mark will enhance and strengthen what you are teaching and modeling at home.

During these formative years at St. Mark (Pre-K to 8), it is important that parents and teachers work collaboratively to help each child reach his/her potential spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially and physically. Our *goal* is the same. We are partners in education---offering our children not only our knowledge and expertise but love, support, respect, guidance and the necessary discipline to grow and learn. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that we must model good communication and respect. The teacher is there to help and support your child. If there are questions, comments or concerns about your child, please call, write a note or send an email to your child's teacher. Please see "Teacher Conferences" under Academic Policies and Grading System for additional information on contacting the teacher.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of growth and maturation, students may lose focus. Students can often be redirected with understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. We believe that appropriate discipline is not restrictive. Correcting discipline by setting boundaries and limits provides children with both guidance and security. For parents and teachers, giving our children/students correction and discipline are truly acts of love and respect. We want our children/students to grow to be caring, responsible young adults.

It is essential that each child takes responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, short and long-term assignments, quizzes, tests and service projects. If there is a prolonged absence, the student and parent must meet with the teacher to discuss work that needs to be completed.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

## **Parents as Partners**

The following suggestions will help make this a successful school year for you and your child. As partners in the educational process at St. Mark School, we ask parents:

- To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
  - o Goes to bed at the appropriate time on school nights
  - o Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
  - o Is dressed according to the school dress code
  - o Completes assignments on time
  - o Has a nutritional lunch and snack every day
- To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences
- To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy
- To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers
- To meet all financial obligations to the school
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health
- To complete and return to school any requested information promptly
- To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education
- To support the religious and educational goals of the school
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school
- To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

The following policies and procedures are designed to add to the efficient operation of our school. Please take some time to familiarize yourself and your child with them.

### **ABSENCE AND TARDINESS**

#### **Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 4001 - Attendance**

*Student attendance in Catholic schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport shall be in accordance with the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut. Students who have **FOUR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES IN ONE MONTH, OR TEN UNEXCUSED ABSENCES IN A SCHOOL YEAR, ARE CONSIDERED TO BE TRUANT.***

*The Office for Education strongly believes that family vacations should not take place when school is in session. Should such a vacation occur during school time, such vacation will be deemed an unexcused absence on the part of the child.*

**Parents are asked to call the nurse's office (386-1955) by 8:30 a.m. to report that their child will be absent.** If the parent does not report the absence, the nurse will call the parent at home or at work. When the student returns to school, the student must bring a written explanation to the teacher that is signed by the parent. Students who miss more than three consecutive days of school are required to have a note from their doctor that states that they may return to school. Every effort should be made to make dental and doctor appointments after school hours.

A student is allotted the number of days to complete assignments according to the number of days they were absent from school. For example, if a student misses two days of school, he or she will have two days to make up their work. **It is the student's responsibility to ask the teacher for missed school work.** If the student fails to make up the assignments in the allotted time, a failing grade will be issued. In the case of a lengthy absence or extended recuperation, this rule may be amended by the teacher in consultation with the Principal and parents.

Parents are asked not to take students on vacations while school is in session. Work will not be given in advance when students leave for vacation; it will be made up as soon as possible upon returning to school. **Unexcused absences during school time (such as vacations) will count against a student's attendance record. Teachers are not required to give work in advance for the student to take on vacation. Parents should check the yearly calendar before scheduling such a vacation. An unexcused absence during mid-year or final exams may result in a zero grade for the exam. Excessive absences could result in retention.**

**Students who are late (after the 7:45 AM bell) must report to the main office with their parents for a late slip.** Please use the blue awning entrance when bringing a tardy student into the building. Regarding early withdrawal from school--a student must be in school until 11:30 a.m. to be considered present for school.

**If a student is absent from school, the student may not participate in any school-sponsored activity on that day. This includes school dances and shows. This is school policy. However, there may be times when extenuating circumstances need to be reviewed and taken into consideration by the Principal.**

## ACADEMIC POLICIES AND GRADING SYSTEM

### **TEACHER CONFERENCES: Dealing with Student/Teacher Concerns**

There are times when individual problems arise with a student. Please follow this procedure to deal with your concerns:

**First: contact the teacher(s) by email, phone or a written note regarding a problem or concern.** In non-emergency situations, a teacher will contact you within 24 hours. If it is an emergency, please state this in your message. The teacher will contact you as soon as possible. If a conference is necessary, request an appointment. It may be advisable with older students to have them present at the conference and meet with all of their teachers at the same time. Please do not approach the teacher in the classroom or hallway (especially before school or during dismissal) to have an impromptu talk about your child. Contacting the teacher by phone, email or a note models respect and a willingness to have a conversation. Making an appointment to have a private conversation will give you and the teacher the appropriate amount of time to discuss the matter or incident. Most problems can be resolved in this manner.

**Second:** If further discussion is needed that includes the Principal, please contact the office for an appointment for a conference. The Principal will see parents regarding classroom incidents **only if parents have had a full and complete discussion with the classroom teacher first.**

We will make every effort to handle situations in an appropriate and timely manner. Please communicate with your child's teacher when a problem or concern arises with your child. If incidents occur, please investigate fully. Check the source of information with the appropriate parties. Contact the teacher. We are partners in your child's education--supporting each other and respecting each other--through our words and actions.

## HOMEWORK POLICY

Rationale: Homework benefits a student by reinforcing skills and material learned in class, preparing students for upcoming class topics, teaching students to work independently and evaluating student progress.

Guidelines: All students must have a school assignment pad to write daily assignments. Homework is also posted on our school website. Students will do their homework independently to the best of their ability. Teachers assign grade-appropriate work and reading books. A student or parent may not change any daily or summer work that is assigned by a teacher. A failing grade of zero for the assignment will be given if this occurs. Only neatly done homework will be accepted. Assignments must be turned in on time. **Students are responsible for making up missed assignments due to absence.** All teachers request that tests below 70% will be sent home for parent signature and should be returned to the teacher. **It is the student's responsibility to return signed tests.**

**In accordance with Diocesan Policy, home work is considered an integral part of the learning process, and counts for 5 to 10 percent of the grade during a marking period.**

As a rule, homework is assigned daily in Grades 1-8. Long-term projects, make-up homework, supplementary reading and review work may be assigned on a holiday or a weekend. Teachers are advised not to schedule more than **two major tests, excluding spelling and vocabulary**, on a given day. Homework can vary from **10-60** minutes in the primary grades and up to 2 hours in grades 7 and 8. **Students who do not hand in assigned homework on time or who fail to make up assignments due to absence risk receiving lower grades or a failing grade of zero on that assignment.**

### REPORT CARDS

Reports Cards will be given four (4) times during the academic school year or approximately every nine (9) weeks. Progress Reports are sent at the mid-way point during a semester for students who have a below average or failing grade in a subject. Marking periods are approximately 8 weeks in length. The Diocese of Bridgeport requires four computerized report cards a year (November, January, April, and June) with the exception of Kindergarten. Kindergarten children receive their first report card in January; however, parent conferences are held prior to the first Kindergarten report card. Conferences for Grades 1-8 are held in November. Additionally, a parent may request a conference anytime throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher whenever there are concerns. Students who have academic difficulty receive progress notices in the middle of the marking period. Marking periods are eight weeks in length. Grades are based on daily class work, homework assignments, class participation; independent work, projects, tests, exams and quizzes. Students' work is sent home for parents to examine. The student report card envelope is to be signed and returned within one week of issue.

### DIOCESAN GRADING SYSTEM

A =	94-100	Outstanding
A- =	90-93	
B+ =	87-89	
B =	84-86	Above Average
B- =	80-83	
C+ =	77-79	
C =	74-76	Average
C- =	70-73	
D =	66-69	Below average but passing
F =	65 and below	Failure
S =	Satisfactory**	
U =	Unsatisfactory**	
N =	Needs Improvement**	

\*\*The following grade codes are used in Grades 1 - 3 for the following subjects only:  
 S=Satisfactory, N=Needs Improvement, U=Unsatisfactory for Foreign Language, Art, Music, Computer Skills, Physical Education

### HONOR ROLL (Diocesan Policy)

HONORS are given only in Grades 5-8.

HIGH HONORS: No grade lower than A- including only 1's and 2's in conduct and effort. All subjects are included in calculating High Honors.

HONORS: No grade lower than B- including only 1's and 2's in conduct and effort. All subjects are included in calculating Honors.

### NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

St. Mark School has Chapters of the National Elementary Honor Society (Grades 4 & 5) and National Junior Honor Society (Grades 6-8). Membership in these organizations is by invitation and successful application. Students who meet the academic criteria of a 3.0 GPA (B-) on a 4.0 scale or better **for one year and one semester** AND only 1's and 2's in conduct and effort on their report cards are invited to apply for membership. A student's final grades from the preceding year and the first semester of the current school year are used to determine eligibility. They must not have any grade below a B- during the prior year. This includes Art, Gym, Music, Spanish and Technology. Students must complete an application which details how they display academic achievement, leadership, character and service. The applications are reviewed by a faculty committee and students are notified of their acceptance to the society.

### PROMOTION POLICY AND RETENTION POLICY

Advancement to the next grade at St. Mark School is based on a student's attendance, daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully in a timely manner. By the end of the second marking period which ends in January, parents will be notified by the teacher if there is a possibility of retention. This allows time to work together to prevent the retention if possible. In accordance with Diocesan Policy #4006, a decision on whether to promote, advance or retain will be made by May 15th. In the case of retention, parents will be alerted in the early spring in accordance with diocesan guidelines.

Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The Administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students graduating from Grade 8 must meet the following standards:

1. Students have a passing final grade in all subjects.
2. Attendance and discipline records are in good standing.
3. All tuition and all fees (graduation, volunteer hours, lost books, etc.) are paid by May 15.
- 4. A graduation fee will be set by the graduation committee and is paid by January 31 of the graduation year.**
5. Completion of 5 service hours.

## **ACCEPTANCE POLICIES FOR ST. MARK SCHOOL**

*Schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport admit students of any religion, race, color, national and ethnic origin. - Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 4002*

**PRESCHOOL:** Please see the Preschool Handbook.

### **KINDERGARTEN**

In the event that there are more applicants ready for Kindergarten than there are seats available, the administration will use the following criteria to determine acceptance:

1. **Readiness:** The child must be developmentally ready for Kindergarten, as determined by the screening team. Placement in full-day kindergarten is made with the child's level of development in mind. The BRIGANCE Test is an approved screening tool used in the Diocese of Bridgeport. It is designed for a child who is 4 years and 9 months old. Therefore, younger children may be screened in the summer. Children may need more time to mature. If so, they will not be accepted to the program for the upcoming year but will be offered the opportunity to re-register the following year. Acceptance is guaranteed if re-screening shows that they are ready.
2. **Age:** The child must be 5 years old prior to December 31 of the applicable school year.
3. **Priority:** Acceptance of students who are ready for school is made in the following order:
  - First Priority:* Children who have siblings currently enrolled at St. Mark School and for re-tested children.
  - Second Priority:* Children of new families who are registered parishioners of one of the five Catholic parishes in Stratford or recognized National parishes.
  - Third Priority:* Children transferring from a Catholic school outside the local area.
  - Fourth Priority:* Catholic children from outside the local parish area.
  - Fifth Priority:* All others
4. Applicants for Kindergarten will be accepted for a probationary period of ninety (90) days in regard to academics and discipline. This means that the applicant must maintain satisfactory grades and a personal discipline, which does not impede his or her progress or the progress of his or her classmates. The probationary period may be extended or removed at the discretion of the Principal.

### **GRADES 1 THROUGH 8**

Students in Grades I through 8 are accepted in the following manner:

1. An initial interview takes place with the parent, prospective student and principal.
2. The parent agrees to allow the applicant to visit with his or her perspective classmates for a day. A visiting date is set that is convenient for the parents and the school.
3. The parent/guardian agrees to share all school records and reports with the school system for review prior to admission.
4. Applicants for Grades I through 8 will be given current school work/tests to determine readiness for that grade.

5. Applicants for Grades 1-8 will be accepted for a probationary period of ninety (90) days in regard to academics and discipline. This means that the applicant must maintain satisfactory grades and a personal discipline which does not impede his or her progress or the progress of his or her classmates. The probationary period may be extended or removed at the discretion of the Principal.
6. In the admission of new students, the priority will be as follows:
  - First Priority:* Re-registrants
  - Second Priority:* Children who have siblings currently enrolled at St. Mark School
  - Third Priority:* Children of new families who are registered parishioners of one of the five Catholic parishes in Stratford or recognized National parishes.
  - Fourth Priority:* Children transferring from a Catholic school outside the local area.
  - Fifth Priority:* Catholic children from outside the local parish area.
  - Sixth Priority:* All others

### **ACCREDITATION FROM NEASC**

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in Bedford, MA accredits all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport. St. Mark School received its first accreditation visit from NEASC in 1997. We were visited in May of 2017 for our ten year review and have been given accreditation until 2027. A yearly update report is filed with NEASC each fall. This accreditation also is valid for State of Connecticut accreditation.

NEASC serves the public and educational community by developing and applying standards assessing the educational effectiveness of elementary, secondary and collegiate educational institutions. The accreditation process involves a lengthy report prepared by the school faculty and staff in anticipation of a three-day peer visitation of a team of four or five educators from New England. Every aspect of the school is reviewed and a written report is filed by the visiting team. The report is then reviewed by the NEASC Commission who votes to accredit the school.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY FOR CONTINUED ACCEPTANCE**

St. Mark School Administration requires complete cooperation of parents and students in the policies stated herein. Parents have the right and duty to remind the Principal, faculty and staff of their responsibilities in a respectful Christian manner. We are partners in education. Therefore, the Administration and the faculty are open to constructive suggestions and insights.

At no time does a parent or guardian have the right to enter the school or a classroom in a negative, hostile or intrusive manner. The faculty and Administration should be afforded the necessary respect as your child's teacher and Administrator. Parents should present their concerns first directly to the classroom teacher. The Principal will see parents regarding classroom incidents only if parents have had a full discussion with the classroom teacher.



### **ADVISORY BOARD**

#### **Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 1.111 - School Advisory Board**

*Each school in the Diocese of Bridgeport will have a School Advisory Board (SAB).*

*The School Advisory Boards will provide the leadership to foster an environment which provides underlying Catholic values, long-term strategic planning and financial stability. This role of the School Advisory Board compliments the school's mission who is to nurture and foster the spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical, and social growth of the student through its relic curriculum and extracurricular programs.*

*The school Principal will work interactively with his/her School Advisory Board to fulfill the School Advisory Board's responsibilities in the school's strategic planning, finance, facilities, marketing and development activities. Pastors and principals recommend new School Advisory Board members to the Bishop. They do this by sending a letter and the candidate's resume to the Office of the Bishop as well as to the Superintendent of Schools. Only those candidates who have received written approval from the Bishop or his designee may serve as members of the School Advisory Board. All School Advisory Boards are expected to comply with the Diocesan Manual for School Advisory Board Member*

### **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

The St. Mark After School Program runs for the entire school year for students in Kindergarten through Grade 8. It includes all full-day and half-day sessions with a few exceptions: the first few early dismissal days at the beginning of the school year, the early dismissal days before Thanksgiving and Christmas, and the last day of school (early dismissal day). The program does not run when school is not in session (i.e., snow days, emergency closings, vacations, holidays) and will not be held when school dismisses early due to weather or an emergency. You will be kept informed throughout the school year if the program is cancelled for the afternoon.

The After School Program offers a wide variety of activities for your child, including play time, homework time and other special activities such as sports and arts and crafts.

#### **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FEES**

**Registration fee per child: \$25.00**

##### **Rates:**

- I child - \$20.00 per day - \$85 per week
- 2 children - \$30.00 per day - \$140 per week
- 3 children - \$40.00 per day - \$185 per week
- 4+ children - \$52.00 per day- \$230 per week

For half-day sessions, when the children will be in the After School Program from 11:25 a.m. until 6 p.m., there will be an additional charge of:

- 1 child - \$10.00
- 2 children - \$15.00
- 3 children - \$20.00
- 4+children - \$25.00

A **\$15** penalty fee will be charged if your child is picked up after 6 p.m. This fee will be due by the next payment period. Payments are to be made **each Friday** to the school office. You may send

your payment in with your child. Checks should be payable to **ST. MARK SCHOOL**. Please write "After School" on the notation. If paying in cash, please have exact change. When there is no school on Friday, please make your payment on Thursday. If your child is absent on a Friday, please make payments when your child returns to school.

### **BICYCLES**

Students may ride bicycles to school; however, they should walk them across the school grounds to avoid possible accidents. Riding double is not permitted. Bicycles are parked in the rear of the school near the garage behind the gym. The school is not responsible for damaged or stolen bicycles.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Students may bring a **non-food** birthday treat to share with classmates when it is their birthday. Parents may send in treats such as stickers, pencils, etc. Parents may also come in and read to the class. Please contact the teacher to arrange for this. Student birthdays will also be recognized at morning announcements. Students may also pass out invitations in school as long as every student in the class is invited to the event. **PARENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO SEND IN EDIBLE TREATS. PLEASE SEE THE "FOOD ALLERGY POLICY".**

### **BLOGS**

Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to Facebook®, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student or parent's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty and staff, other students, or the parish. Parents should refrain from creating a Facebook® account or similar blogs for members of a class under the name of the school or a particular grade or organization. The only official St. Mark School Facebook® page is the one created and monitored by the St. Mark School IT Specialist. A parent who chooses to create such an account may subject his/her child (ren) to separation from the school. In the event that a student is involuntarily separated from the school, there will be no reimbursement for tuition and/or fees.

### **BUCKLEY AMENDMENT**

St. Mark School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) in regard to privacy of student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address.

Be advised that if a teacher is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parent must pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.).

## **BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING**

St. Mark School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (seriously or in jest or online) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. Please see pages 23 and 24 for detailed information.

## **BUS**

The Stratford Board of Education provides bus transportation for Stratford residents who live more than 1.5 miles from the school or if the student must cross a major road in order to come to school (such as Cutspring Road or Huntington Road). This is a free service to **Stratford residents only.** **Only eligible students may ride the bus. Students may not ride a bus that is not assigned to them unless they have written permission from their parent/guardian and the note has been approved by the principal. "WALKERS" cannot ride home with a "BUS RIDER" classmate. Car transportation should be arranged.** The note is then given to the bus driver. Students should not change their assigned stops.

Inappropriate behavior on the bus may result in the loss of the bus privilege or suspension for a period of time. The bus driver is in complete control during the bus route and will report disruptive, disobedient or disrespectful behavior to the Principal. Students should always remain seated and be reasonably quiet on the bus. Shouting, screaming or disruptive behavior is not permitted.

It is a custom, not a right, for the older students to occupy the rear of the bus in order to watch the younger students. The younger students sit in the front. **The Principal or assigned teacher reserves the right to assign seats if necessary.** Students should listen to the bus driver or one of the older students who may be attempting to correct poor behavior. Safety concerns regarding bus service should be reported to the Principal.

## **CALENDAR**

A monthly school calendar is published listing all important dates. Additionally, there is a yearly Diocesan calendar. It is the student's responsibility to bring the monthly calendar home.

## **CELLPHONES**

If a student needs a cell phone after school, s/he may bring the cell phone to school and leave it in the "off" position upon arrival in the morning. Cell phones must be kept in backpacks throughout the day. At no time during the day should a cell phone be in a student's possession. Items such as cell phones that are taken away from students will be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) at the end of the day. Repeated offenses will result in consequences such as detentions.

Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion. In accordance with the law, the Stratford Police Department will be notified.

## CHEATING

Cheating of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

## CHILD ABUSE LAWS

St. Mark School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Connecticut. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

## CURRICULUM

The Diocese of Bridgeport prescribes our basic curriculum. The curriculum includes: Religion, reading, English, language arts, science, math, social studies, spelling, music, art, computer science, Spanish and physical education in grades K-8. The textbooks are chosen from a list approved by the Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Grades K-2 are self-contained classrooms with attention given to individualized instruction. Grades 3 and 4 are departmentalized for Science and Language Arts only. Additional part-time teachers give instruction in music, physical education, library, Spanish, computer science and art. Grades 5-8 are departmentalized in the areas of language arts, math, social studies, science, computer education, art, music, Spanish and physical education.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Please see page 6 of this handbook

## DELAYED OPENINGS AND SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

When weather conditions or other emergencies warrant the closing of school, announcements will be made on WICC (600 AM) or WEZN (99.9 FM) starting at approximately 5:30 A.M. Cancellations may also be viewed on line through a link to WTNH via the school's website. **When the Stratford public schools are closed or delayed due to inclement weather, St. Mark School will also be closed or delayed.** Parents will also be notified through our emergency notification system.

If school closes early for weather related reasons, dismissal will be at **11:25 A.M.** Phone calls home for early dismissal due to weather or other emergencies should not be necessary (except in the case of extreme emergency). Parents will be alerted through our emergency notification system. This information will also be on WICC and WEZN. Our After School Program will not be held when there is early dismissal due to weather or emergencies. Please do not call the school for this information. Phone lines must remain open to get any additional necessary information from the Superintendent's Office - especially if there is an emergency. **Please discuss this ahead of time with your children so that they know what to expect when there is an early dismissal.**

## DISCIPLINE/ SCHOOL REGULATIONS

- I. Students of St. Mark School are expected to show respect to the Administration, teachers, staff, volunteer parents and peers.
2. Students are expected to take proper care of their desks, textbooks, classroom and school. Any damage to school furniture or property (including books) incurred by the student will become the parents' responsibility. Only students who have a written IEP will be allowed to take textbooks home over the summer. Parents who wish to have textbooks over the summer months must secure them through the Principal's office.
3. Students may make phone calls from school only in an emergency. **Students may not use classroom phones unless a teacher has given them permission.** Phone calls should not be made for forgotten items such as homework.
4. Students may use rolling book bags. All textbooks should be covered.
5. Students are expected to behave during class time in a manner that will not infringe on the rights of their peers to learn.
6. Gum chewing is not permitted anywhere on the school property or during school activities (i.e. field trips, after school program, etc). Children who violate this rule are subject to disciplinary action. Please note that this rule also applies during the dismissal process.
7. Running, loud talking, screaming and littering are prohibited in the corridors and in the lavatories. **IN AN EFFORT TO RESPECT EACH CLASS AND THE OFFICE PERSONNEL, ALL TRAVEL IN THE SCHOOL HALLWAYS SHOULD BE DONE IN A QUIETLY AND ORDERLY MANNER.**
8. During recess, students are only permitted to play with balls that are soft. Hitting one another, rough contact, and "keep away" games are prohibited.

## DISCIPLINE: DETENTION/SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

If a student is given a detention, s/he usually spends his/her detention time missing recess. This behavior modification has been effective for correcting most problems. However, after-school detentions may also be given. It is the teacher's decision based upon the seriousness of the student's action. Detentions may be issued for a variety of reasons and may be issued for more than one day. Multi-day detentions count as one detention on the student's record. A student usually receives a warning before the detention is issued. Detention should be a rare occurrence and not a daily event. Detentions may be given for academic as well as disciplinary reasons and are usually given after warnings, discussions and possibly conferences. If there is a question about the detention, it is best to consult the classroom teacher who issued the detention to clearly understand the problem.

When a student has received a detention slip, it must be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the teacher on the next school day. Failure to return the signed slip or serve the detention may result in a second detention. Detentions are filed in the Principal's Office each day.

At times, a student may receive an after school detention. The teacher who issues the detention is responsible to see that the student serves the detention. Parents will be given 24-hour notice via the detention slip for an after school detention and are responsible for picking their child up at school after detention. When a student accumulates three detentions for disciplinary and/or academic reasons, a student may be required to serve a Saturday detention with the Principal. Parents will be given a 24-hour notice about a Saturday detention. Before the detention, parents will be called. A meeting will be requested. At that time, the matter will be fully discussed with the parents and student. In meeting together, our hope would be to modify the student's behavior with clear rules and consequences for the student at home and at school. Please note: a consequence for repeated inappropriate behavior and detentions may be losing the privilege of attending a class trip.

On rare occasions when a student commits an extremely serious offense, the student will be suspended from school. Suspensions are noted on a student's permanent record. These serious offenses are: a blatant disrespect of a teacher or the Administrator, fighting or antagonizing a fight (physical harm), endangering the safety of the school community (this includes verbally threatening a teacher or student with any type of harm), bullying, vandalizing school property, theft, truancy, or dishonesty (including cheating, immoral conduct or habitual disregard for school rules). The student will not be re-admitted until a conference between the Principal, teacher, parents and student is held. In addition, the student will be placed on a Disciplinary Contract. If the contract is broken, the student will risk expulsion from St. Mark School.

**St. Mark School has a zero tolerance policy in regard to the use and/or sales of drugs or alcohol on school property and weapon possession in the school or on the school grounds. These will be cause for immediate expulsion from school.**

St. Mark School follows the guidelines set by the Diocese of Bridgeport in dealing with all disciplinary issues. The statements below are from the Diocese of Bridgeport Policy on Student Discipline and Bullying.

**Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 4016 - Discipline**

*The primary goal of any disciplinary code is self-discipline: enabling the student to internalize Catholic values and principles and to behave in accordance with those values and principles. Each student has the right to learn in a safe, caring, Catholic environment. This right must be respected and safeguarded. The Diocese of Bridgeport has a published Student Code of Conduct which outlines specific behavioral expectations and consequences to be used as a guideline for each individual school's own discipline policy. Additionally, the following guidelines apply to all:*

- 1. A teacher should never dismiss a pupil from the classroom for a disciplinary reason without notifying the Principal.*
- 2. A student must be accompanied by school personnel when dismissed from class,*

3. *On the rare occasion when it is necessary to remove a student from the school for part of a School day, the Principal will resolve the situation and notify the parents/guardians.*
4. *Direct supervision of a pupil who is being disciplined is the responsibility of the teacher or Principal and is required in all cases. Placement in corridors, closets, or corners is never acceptable.*
5. *The use of corporal punishment is forbidden.*
6. *Discipline records shall be maintained.*
7. *Bullying of a student by another student is forbidden.*

### **Bullying Policy**

Bullying is prohibited in all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport. It must not be tolerated during the school day nor during any school sponsored activities on or off the school grounds. Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ. This behavior is against the fundamental tenet of "love your neighbor as yourself," and destroys respect for the dignity of the student, undermines the Christian atmosphere of the school and deprives the student of a safe and caring learning environment.

Bullying is defined as any repeated overt act(s) perpetrated over a period of time by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity. Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault, extortion, oral or written threats, teasing, putdowns, name calling, threatening looks, gestures or actions, cruel rumors, false accusations and social isolation.

### **Reporting:**

1. Students may report acts of bullying directly or anonymously. Each school shall set up a procedure for such reporting and publicize the procedure. Each school shall also set up a procedure so that parents/guardians of students may make written reports of acts of bullying.
2. Any school that receives an anonymous report from a student or a written report by a parent/guardian shall investigate such report. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting bullying may be subject to the consequences listed below.

### **Investigation Procedures**

Upon learning about a bullying incident, the administrator or his/her designee shall thoroughly investigate the circumstances. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents, school staff, review of school records, and identification of parent and family issues.

Bullying incidents that demand in school/out of school suspension shall be reported to the respective Assistant Superintendent (elementary schools) or Superintendent (high schools).

### **Consequences/Intervention**

If it is concluded that an act of bullying has occurred, the parents/guardians of the student who committed such acts and the parents/guardians of students against whom such acts were directed shall be notified. Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the result of the investigation and may include a parent conference, professional counseling, detention, suspension

and expulsion. Depending on the severity of the incident, or the series of incidents, the administrator may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan, separating and supervising the students involved, providing staff support for students when necessary, reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate, and developing a supervision plan with the parents.

A student on a Disciplinary Contract will be allowed to remain in school with a written contract that restricts the number of future serious detentions. This contract also stresses good behavior and effort. If the student does not comply with the terms of the contract, the parents and student will meet with the principal to make decisions about the student's future. At the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools, the principal and in consultation with parents and teachers, the student may be asked to withdraw from St. Mark School.

**Students may be suspended for the following reasons:**

1. Failure to abide by school rules on a continual basis
2. Bullying or endangering the safety of the school community (this includes threatening another student with any type of harm and fighting)
3. Deliberate disrespect toward teachers or other students
4. Harmful physical conduct and instigating such conduct
5. Vandalizing school property
6. Theft
7. Forms of dishonesty such as cheating
8. Truancy
9. Immoral actions

The Principal will meet with the parents regarding their child's suspension. This suspension means that s/he will be excluded from all class and school related activities. Before re-admittance, a conference with the principal, parent, teacher and student is required. In the event that the student makes no improvement, the most severe step will be taken--expulsion. The student will be expelled from St. Mark School after consultation with the parents, teacher(s) and Administration.

**DRESS CODE**  
**REGULATIONS REGARDING APPEARANCE**

Faddish haircuts or any change in hair color are not permitted. Boys' hair must remain above the collar in length. A student may be sent home to correct these matters. The Principal will have the final decision.

Make-up, fake nails, bracelets, dangling earrings and multiple earrings are not appropriate with school uniforms and may not be worn. Boys are not permitted to wear earrings while in uniform or at any time during the school day. All neck chains and other jewelry are to be worn under the student's shirt or blouse. These items are easily caught on passing objects and are also easily lost.

Neatness is the rule for all students. A boy who chooses to wear his trousers in a pushed down or excessively baggy fashion will be sent to the Principal and issued a detention or sent home. **Boys and girls must have their button-down shirts or blouses tucked in at all times.** Girls may not



wear extremely short skirts, skorts, or shorts. They should be within two inches of the knee in length. Girls may keep only the top button of their blouse unbuttoned. No work boots or backless shoes are allowed. Failure to wear the school uniform may result in detention.

Uniforms may be purchased at Blake's Uniform in Merchant's Walk in Stratford or from LANDS' END catalogue.

### **School Uniform**

*Dates for Fall uniform: beginning of school until October 31*

*Dates for Spring uniform: April 1 to end of school*

#### **FALL/SPRING UNIFORM - BOYS AND GIRLS**

**Please note: students have the option during this time to wear their winter uniforms (long pants, jumpers, plaid skirts, and plaid skorts).**

#### **Boys (K-8)**

##### **Pants or Shorts**

- Navy blue walking shorts or Navy blue pants (pull up pants or shorts suggested for Kindergarten)
- Black or Brown belt (Kindergarten boys do not need a belt)
- *No shorts with flaps, snaps, or cargo pockets*
- *Excessively loose or baggy pants are **NOT** permitted*

##### **Shirts**

- White, short sleeve polo shirt **with the school logo**
- Grade 8 students have the option of wearing pastel blue or yellow polo shirts **with the school logo**

##### **Shoes/Socks**

- Regular school shoes (no sneakers)
- White or navy blue socks (covering the ankle)
- *Low white socks are not permitted*

#### **Girls (K-8)**

##### **Pants, Shorts, Skorts**

- Navy blue walking shorts or Navy blue skort (pull on shorts suggested for Kindergarten)
- A black or brown belt (Kindergarten students do NOT need a belt)
- *No shorts with flaps, snaps, or cargo pockets*
- *Excessively short or tight shorts/skort are not permitted for girls*

##### **Shirts**

- White, short sleeve polo shirt **with the school logo**
- Grade 8 students have the option of wearing pastel blue or yellow polo shirts **with the school logo**

##### **Shoes/Socks**

- Regular school shoes (no sneakers)
- White or navy blue socks (covering the ankle)
- *Low white socks are not permitted*

**FORMAL WINTER UNIFORM** *Dates for Winter uniform: November 1 to March 28*

**BOYS/K-8**

**Pants**

Dark navy blue uniform dress pants--no jean-like pants (pull on pants suggested for Kdg.)  
Excessively loose or baggy pants are not permitted.  
Black or brown belt (Kdg. students do not need a belt)

**Shirts**

Grade K: short or long sleeve, white polo shirt with collar  
Grades 1-8: short or long sleeve, white dress shirt with collar  
Grade 8 short or long sleeve white, PASTEL blue or PASTEL yellow dress shirt with collar  
Only white t-shirts or undershirts may be worn beneath shirts

**Vest/Sweater**

Grades K-8 sweater: If a student chooses to wear a sweater, it must be plain navy blue with or without our school name

Grades K-4: If a student does not wear a sweater, he must wear a knit navy vest **with our school name**. This is now a part of our school uniform and not an option.

Grades 5-8: If a student does not have a sweater on, he must wear a zip up navy fleece vest **with our school name**. This is now a part of our school uniform and not an option.

Grade 8: class sweatshirt (option to wear this instead of a sweater or vest)

**Ties**

Grades 1-7: school uniform Black Watch Plaid (Kdg. boys do not wear ties)  
Grade 8: any color tie (in good taste)

**Socks**

Grades K-8: navy or black dress socks

**GIRLS**

**Jumper and Pants/Ks4**

Black Watch Plaid uniform jumper with round neckline and dropped waist/buttons  
Dark navy blue uniform dress pants --no jean-like pants (pull on pants suggested for Kdg.)  
Black or brown belt with pants (Kdg. students do not need a belt)

**Skirt or Skort and Pants/Grades 5-8**

Black Watch Plaid uniform skirt or skort  
Dark navy blue uniform dress pants (no jean-like pants)  
Black or brown belt with pants

**Shirts**

Grades K-4: short or long sleeve white blouse or polo shirt with collar (without logo)  
Grades 5-7: short or long sleeve white blouse or polo shirt with collar (without logo)  
Grade 8: short or long sleeve white, PASTEL blue or PASTEL yellow dress shirt or polo shirt with collar

**Sweater/Vest**

Grades K-8: Navy blue or white sweater with or without school name  
Grades 5-8: If a student does not wear a sweater, she must wear a zip up navy blue fleece vest

**with school name.** This is now a part of our school uniform and not an option.  
Grade 8: class sweatshirt (option to wear this instead of a sweater or vest)

### **Socks**

White or dark navy blue ankle socks, knee socks, tights, or slim leggings  
Students may not wear sweatpants or yoga pants under their jumpers, skirts or shorts.

### **SHOES AND ACCESSORIES FOR ALL STUDENTS**

#### **SHOES**

Students K-8 may wear plain black, brown or navy shoes. They must be conservative, substantial shoes with tie, buckles, or Velcro. Slip on shoes such as loafers, top-siders (like Sperry), and Merrell shoes are also permitted.  
Heel height may not exceed 1½".  
Sneakers may only be worn on physical education or dress down days for students K-8.  
Clogs, backless shoes, ballerina-style slip on shoes, sandals, flip-flops, boots, moccasins, slippers, and work shoes **may not be worn.**

#### **ACCESSORIES**

**Earrings:** Girls may wear one pair of small stud earrings. Boys may not wear earrings.

**Jewelry:** Bracelets may not be worn. Only a watch may be worn on the wrist. All neck chains are to be worn under the student's shirt or blouse.

**Make-up and Nail Polish:** Nail polish may be worn. Make-up and fake nails are prohibited.

**Hair Length for Boys:** Boys' hair can fall to the top of the eyebrows in front, to the top of the ear lobe on the side, and must be trimmed neatly above the shirt collar.

**Tattoos:** Tattoos of any kind are not allowed in school.

#### **GYM UNIFORM - BOYS AND GIRLS**

- Navy blue t-shirt **WITH SCHOOL LOGO** or **Field Day T-Shirt**
- Navy gym shorts **WITH SCHOOL LOGO** to be worn during the fall/spring uniform season
- Navy sweatpants **WITH SCHOOL NAME** to be worn during the winter uniform season (yoga pants or leggings are not permitted)
- Navy sweatshirt **WITH SCHOOL NAME OR LOGO**
- Grade 8 students have the privilege of wearing their Grade 8 class sweatshirts. Additionally, starting in January, Grade 8 students may wear the t-shirt and sweatshirt of the high school they will **officially** be attending in the fall
- Sneakers (in good condition) and white socks

#### **GENERAL RULES TO FOLLOW:**

- Yoga pants or leggings are not permitted to be worn as pants on dress down days.
- All jumpers, skirts and shorts must be within 2 inches of the knee.
- All shorts must be finger-tip length.
- Shirts and blouses must be tucked in at all times.
- Girls may only have the top button unbuttoned on their blouse or shirt.
- Ties must be inside the vest.
- Students may NOT wear St. Mark basketball shirts, club shirts, or any other shirts/shorts/sweatpants with company logos.

### **DRESS CODE - OUT OF UNIFORM DAYS**

Each month, a day is set aside as "OUT OF UNIFORM DAY" aka Dress Down Day. In order to participate, the student must pay \$1 for this privilege. The proceeds from this collection go toward charitable causes including "The Michael Cristini Scholarship Fund" which benefits two graduating eighth graders or other causes as designated. On this day, students may wear clean jeans without holes or tears, an appropriate clean shirt or sweater for boys and girls, clean sneakers or simply dress up. Students may not wear hats in the building, "crop" tops or any top with straps instead of sleeves, make-up, extra jewelry, chains, or color their hair. **Shorts or skirts must be within 2 inches of the knee.** The Principal may also award free out of uniform days as incentives or rewards for special school-wide accomplishments. Dress down days are not intended to have students appear in outlandish outfits but are intended to give them several uniform-free days for a good cause. Only the principal can declare an "OUT OF UNIFORM DAY" as a reward at any time.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS**

Parents must notify the Principal's Office and the homeroom teacher of a student's need to be dismissed early. Parents or guardians must report to the school office when picking up a student who is to be dismissed early and the student will be called to the office. Parents should make this request in writing. Phone calls are not acceptable. In the event of an emergency, the Principal shall give permission for a student to be released.

Under no circumstances may a parent/guardian interrupt class to pick up a student. The school secretary, Principal or school nurse will bring the student to the office. At that time, the student will be "signed-out" in the nurse's office before leaving.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The use of personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day. Electronic devices are defined as but not limited to cell phones, electronic games, radios, CD players, pagers, DVD players, iPods, etc. No device which accesses cell phone networks should be brought to school. Display or use of these devices during the school day is strictly forbidden. Unauthorized devices will be secured in the office for parents to pick up and the child may receive detention. For safety purposes, students are not allowed to use these devices in the school parking lot. Violators will be asked to remove the device.

Parents are encouraged to have their children leave these devices at home. They create a distraction in the learning environment. In addition, these devices are expensive and fragile and are at risk of being lost, broken, or stolen. St. Mark School does not assume responsibility for the damage, loss or theft of electronic devices.

Students may be allowed to bring in a laptop computer for a special accommodation for academic use. However, permission from the parent, the teacher and the Principal must be obtained. Students and their parents will be asked to sign the "Acceptable Use Agreement" form before the child is allowed to use the device in class. The School will not assume responsibility for the damage, loss, or theft of electronic devices including laptops.

## **EMERGENCIES**

Parents will be contacted by telephone when an illness or injury occurs. No child will be permitted to leave the building without a parent or designated substitute with parent's permission. The parent/guardian must sign the student out at the main office.

The school office must be notified of any changes in address or work telephone numbers. Emergency forms are filled out in September. Please be sure that we have updated information about your child and you.

The school also has emergency plans on file for fire, illness of students and personnel, hazardous chemicals and danger to students by an intruder.

## **ENRICHMENT AND SUPPORT**

### **READING PROGRAM**

The St. Mark School Enrichment Program (Grades 1-4) is designed as a tool to aid the classroom teacher in meeting the individual needs of students in his/her reading program. Students leave the classroom on a weekly basis. During this time, students work with the enrichment teacher to explore different facets of literature, to develop techniques needed to interpret an array of literary works and to develop written and oral presentation skills.

Writing is a large component of the program. Students are expected to use proper grammar and sentence structure while expressing creativity and clarity of thought. Students who are considered for this program must meet all of the following criteria:

- A student must possess a reading ability one grade level above the current grade.
- Be able to work independently and be well-disciplined.
- The student must have recommendations from current teachers AND last year's teacher.
- Final approval will be made by the school Principal.
- Students must do all homework and class work to the best of their ability or risk being asked to leave the program.

### **READING RECOVERY PROGRAM**

The St. Mark School Reading Recovery Program (Grades 1-8) is designed to provide extra support, when needed, to the current reading program and its students. Students meet with the recovery teacher in small groups outside of the classroom. The mechanics of the lesson are tailored to meet individual student needs. Students with active IEP's or students who are currently on a 504 Plan will be given first priority for this program.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

1. Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals.
2. Field trips are re-evaluated each year to determine the compatibility of the field trip with curricular goals.
3. A field trip is a privilege and not a right.
4. There are no "traditional" field trips. Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that this trip has become a school tradition.
5. All grades do not always have the same number of field trips.
6. Field trips are permissible for all grades when advanced planning, location, and the experience insure a successful learning opportunity.
7. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
8. A written official permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission cannot be accepted.  
Note: An email does not take the place of an original signature.
9. A telephone call will not be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip.

10. Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the proper form. Students who do not attend a field trip will remain at home with the parent and will be marked absent for the day.
11. Students who are participating in the field trip must ride the bus to and from the field trip with their class. Students not on the bus may not participate in the field trip and will be counted absent for the day.
12. All monies collected for the field trip are non-refundable.
13. The students may wear uniforms or other clothes depending on the nature of the trip as determined by the teacher.
14. Cell phones are not allowed on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.
15. Parents who are not "official" chaperones may not drive their car to a field trip destination with the plan of accompanying the class on the field trip. Our risk management insurance company insures the "official" chaperones and participation by unofficial chaperones jeopardizes the protection for our students and all other "official" adults on the trip.
16. Parents who chaperone a field trip may not bring pre-school or school-age siblings on the field trip.
17. All chaperones must be 25 years of age or older.

Parents are required to complete and sign **the Diocesan mandated** permission slip that the school provides for each field trip and medical consent form that is provided by the school. Parents and relatives may act as chaperones. Chaperones are selected by the teacher on a rotating, first come and/or as-needed basis. All chaperones must have Virtus training along with a completed background check. This is required by the Diocese of Bridgeport.

### **FINANCIAL AID**

Tuition assistance is based on need. Bishop's Scholarship Fund applications for tuition assistance must be submitted each year using FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment. Applicants can apply online to [www.factsmgmt.com](http://www.factsmgmt.com). There is a \$30 application fee. If you have specific questions or concerns about the application process, you may speak with a FACTS Customer Care Representative. All questions regarding tuition payments and tuition assistance should be directed to Mrs. Lesko, St. Mark School bookkeeper, at 203-375-4291. Financial aid is also available through the TAC (Tuition Assistance Committee) at St. Mark School for qualified families. More information can be secured about financial aid through the school Principal or the school bookkeeper.

### **FOOD ALLERGY POLICIES**

St. Mark School has adopted a strict food allergy policy in order to protect the safety of students who have allergies. As much as possible, we wish to minimize or avoid the chances of an allergic reaction that may threaten the well-being of a student. While we make every effort to maintain a **nut-aware school**, St. Mark School cannot ensure that a student will not come in contact with a product he/she may be allergic to. Ultimately, the responsibility lays with each individual student and his/her parents/guardians. As part of our effort to maintain a safe environment for children, we will limit the amount of food based celebrations and activities--especially those that occur in classrooms.

**St. Mark School is a Nut-Aware School. Our classrooms and school are kept free of peanuts and tree nuts to the best of our ability. While school is in session, we make every effort to see that our classrooms and school are free of peanuts and tree nuts. We cannot control what groups outside of our school community bring into our environment.**

1. Foods containing nut products are not allowed in the school building.
2. If a teacher is aware that a student has come to school with a peanut or tree nut product, the student will be sent to the nurse and asked not to consume that food product. The nurse will inform the Principal and the Principal may contact the parent.
3. Signs are posted throughout the school indicating that we try to maintain a peanut and nut - free environment.
4. Food-celebrations and activities must adhere to the guidelines listed in our Parent and Student Handbook.

### **Celebrations in School**

St. Mark School strives to provide all of its children with a safe and nurturing educational environment. In order to facilitate a safer environment: events where food is present will be carefully planned, parental permission will be obtained and food ingredients will be checked.

#### **1. Classroom celebrations**

Teachers and room parents plan class celebrations during the school year which include food. The following guidelines are to be adhered to at celebrations where food is to be served to children:

- A. Two weeks prior to the event, a permission slip will be sent home that describes the event and any food that will be present.
- B. All food must come from a commercial producer and have a label with ingredients listed. Food items must not contain peanuts or tree nuts, nor should they be made in a facility or on equipment which processes nutproducts.
- C. School personnel will review ingredient lists.
- D. If possible, parents of children with food allergies should be included in the planning of events where food will be served.

#### **2. Class celebrations that do not involve food may also be planned.**

#### **3. Student birthdays**

- A. Student birthdays will be recognized and celebrated at St. Mark School. Student birthdays will be announced at our morning assembly. Students with birthday in June, July and August will be recognized during the school year so that they can benefit from using the Dress Down pass.



B. If parents wish to send in treats on their child's birthday, treats must be a non-food item such as stickers or pencils. Food items cannot be brought in for the class. Parents may send in a special treat **for their own child** as long as it is nut free. Parents are also welcome to read a story to the class on their child's birthday. Please make arrangement to read to the class with your child's teacher.

#### **4. Other Celebrations occurring after school hours** (not related to the after school program)

A. Adults that organize activities that are planned for after school hours will follow the guidelines for in-school events. However, no permission slips are required. Parents must supervise their children at these events.

B. Home-baked goods will be allowed at after school events. We ask bakers to refrain from using nut products in their treats. A sign noting that baked goods are present at the event should be displayed.

C. All clubs and afterschool classes will send home permission slips if food is to be included in the activity of the group.

#### **After School Program**

Every effort will be made to prevent the presence of allergens. Parents of children with food allergies must provide a snack that is safe for their child. On early dismissal days, all students in the after school program must bring in their own lunch--consistent with our lunch and food allergy policy.

#### **Food Fundraisers**

##### **1. Food Fundraisers during the school day**

The sale of food items during the school day will be strictly limited.

A. All food sales which occur during the school day must be approved by the principal.

B. An ingredient list must be available for review before the sale occurs.

C. Parental permission for students to participate in the activity as sellers or buyers must be obtained and the permission slip will be specific to the item being sold.

##### **2. Food Fundraisers after school hours**

The sale of food items by students and the Home School Association will be allowed and must follow these guidelines:

Parents must be present to supervise students

A. If the preparation of food items is to occur at school, a permission slip describing the activity must be obtained.

B. The sale of food items from fundraising catalogues is allowed. However, the food items may not be opened at school.

#### **Food on Field Trips**

Field trips that involve students eating meals need to be planned to accommodate children with food allergies. All field trips will have a permission slip which accounts-for how meals will occur.

I. The staff will try to provide opportunities for all children to participate in a class trip

There will be no academic penalty for children whose parents opt them out of a trip.

2. For trips involving a visit to a restaurant, the name and address of the restaurant will be on the permission slip. Parents have the responsibility of contacting the restaurant to see if the menu choices are suitable.
3. If students are asked to bring their lunches from home, parents are asked to follow the same guidelines for sending lunches to school.
4. Parents of children with special medical needs (including food allergies) will be invited to chaperone all field trips.

### **Individual Care Plans**

The school nurse, parents, and Principal will ensure that every child with a serious medical condition has a care plan for how the child's needs will be addressed at school. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure that school officials are aware of their child's medical conditions.

The care plan will be developed in consultation with parents and the child's physician. The plan will also include directions for emergencies. All appropriate staff will be apprised of a child's needs and care plan.

### **HOME SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (HSA)**

The Home School Association is a group of dedicated parents who chair the various committees of fundraising, hospitality, staff appreciation, school culture, ect. **Fund raising; parent education; and building community are goals of this organization.** The HSA President meets regularly with the Principal to establish goals, report their progress, plan school events and fundraisers. The HSA focuses on the current school year when planning events and programs. The fundraising committee is responsible for meeting the fundraising goal set in the school's budget.

### **Instagram®**

Photos and captions on a student or parent's Instagram® account that depict the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish in a defamatory way may result in disciplinary action. Please see the section labeled "BLOGS".

### **INTERNET USAGE POLICY**

**THE USE OF COMPUTERS, THE INTERNET** - St. Mark School offers each student the privilege of using our computer network to access the Internet. **To gain access to the Internet, all students must obtain parental permission as verified by the signatures on the form at the end of this handbook.** Should a parent prefer that a student not have Internet access, use of the computers is still possible for more traditional purposes such as word processing. Please note that students are not to use school computers for e-mail or social media.

Access to the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, museums, and other repositories of information and to exchange personal communication with other Internet users around the world. Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive. While we expect students to use Internet resources for constructive educational goals, students may find ways to access other materials. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet in the

form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages. But ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Therefore, we support and respect each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for access.

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school's computer network just as they are in a classroom or on a school playground. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. It is expected that users will comply with district standards and the specific rules set forth below. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and utilizing the school's computer resources. The students are advised never to access, keep or send anything that they would not want their parents or teachers to see.

Privacy- Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators (Principal and faculty members) may review communications to maintain system integrity and will insure that students are using the system responsibly.

Storage capacity- Users are expected to remain within allocated disk space and delete other materials that take up excessive storage space.

Illegal copying - Students should never download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or disks, unless they have written permission from the Network Administrator. Nor should students copy other people's work or intrude into other people's files.

**Inappropriate materials or language: No profane, abusive or impolite language should be used to communicate nor should materials that are not in line with the rules of school behavior be accessed. A good rule to follow is never view, send, or access materials that you would not want your teachers and parents to see. Should students encounter such material by accident, they should report it to their teacher immediately.**

### **IMPORTANT COMPUTER GUIDELINES**

These are guidelines to follow to prevent the loss of network privileges at school:

1. Do not use a computer to harm other people or their work.
2. Do not damage the computer or the network in any way.
3. Do not interfere with the operation of the network by installing illegal software, shareware, or freeware.
4. Do not violate copyright laws.
5. Does not view, send, or display offensive messages or pictures.
6. Do not share your password with another person.
7. Do not waste limited resources such as disk space or printing capacity.
8. Do not trespass in another's folders, work or files.
9. Do notify an adult immediately, if by accident, you encounter materials that violate the rules of appropriate use.
10. BE PREPARED to be held accountable for your actions and for the loss of privileges if the Rules of Appropriate Use are violated.
11. Do not take pictures of other people without their consent and only do so if it is part of a

supervised school activity or project.

**12. Use of computers or other communications devices to harm students in or out of school is cause for disciplinary action and referral to appropriate authorities.**

**LIBRARY**

Students visit the library once a week on a scheduled day. They are expected to avoid unnecessary talking, follow library rules, handle books and magazines with care, return books and magazines promptly, return books and magazines in good condition and inform the librarian of any damaged books before checking them out. Students in grades K - 2 may borrow one book or magazine per week. Students in grades 3 - 8 may borrow two books or magazines per week.

**Students may use the INTERNET or library computer encyclopedias with permission from their teacher, librarian or Principal. STUDENTS WILL FORFEIT THE USE OF THE LIBRARY UNTIL AN OVERDUE BOOK IS RETURNED. LOST OR DAMAGED MATERIALS MUST BE REPLACED OR THE STUDENT WILL BE CHARGED.**

**LOST AND LEFT**

Any items left in the school building or on the school grounds should be given to the school receptionist to be placed in the Lost and Left basket. Items placed in the Lost and Left remain there for 10 days. After 10 days, items are donated to charity.

Students who lose a library book, textbook or workbook must pay the replacement cost of the book plus shipping in order to receive a new copy.

**LITURGY**

As part of our religion curriculum, each class from Grade I to 8 is required to attend 8 a.m. weekly Mass on an assigned day. Children should not be late on their Mass day. We also encourage and invite parents and grandparents to attend Mass with the children during the week.

Mass is celebrated for the entire student body on the First Friday of each month. Beginning with Grade 8, each month students in particular grades are lectors at the liturgy, carry the gifts to the altar and read the Petitions. Parents are always welcome to attend. Mass is at 8 a.m. on Holy Days and the children attend Mass with the Parish. We also encourage students in Grades 4 - 8 to become altar servers and assist with Masses throughout the year.

When traveling with a school on overnight trips, students in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport are expected to attend Mass in the Roman Catholic *Rite* on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. It is the responsibility of the school administrator, moderators and coaches to provide this opportunity and to attend Mass with all the students from the school who are participating in the trip/event. No student should be expected to pay an additional cost to attend Mass. While this primarily applies to overnight trips, schools are to make every effort to see that students traveling only on a Sunday know that it is their obligation to attend a vigil Mass on the prior evening.

In addition, athletic programs within Catholic schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport must be designed that no games or practices occur before 12 noon on Sundays. School administrators, athletic directors and coaches are expected to emphasize the importance of our student athletes attending Mass on Sundays. If a practice or game is scheduled for a Holy Day of Obligation, it is essential that provision be made for the athletes to attend Mass. Under no circumstances may practices or athletic games be hold on Good Friday.

### **LUNCH AND SNACK**

Students bring lunch and snack to school which they eat in the school lunch room/church hall or their classroom. Students are asked to clean up after themselves at the end of meals. Every day students should bring a snack and bring or buy lunch. Parents are encouraged to pack nutritious snacks, lunches and drinks in reusable containers in order to help promote an earth-conscious attitude in children. Students may bring water bottles to school. Please follow your teacher's rules.

The hot lunch program is offered Monday through Friday. Lunch order forms are sent home a month in advance. **Students must order and pay in advance. Please note the monthly due dates.**

### **MILK PROGRAM**

Milk is available on all full days of school. It is ordered and purchased at the beginning of the school year for the entire year. Parents may change the choice of milk (white or chocolate) at any time by phoning the Main Office. Refunds cannot be given for missed days of school.

### **OFFICE RECORDS**

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the School Office in writing of any change of address, custody, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers of emergency contacts. This will guarantee that office records are accurate, complete, and up-to-date.

### **PARENT ORIENTATION**

New families are assigned a "buddy family" by the "Buddy" Parent Coordinator when they register at St. Mark School. It is our hope that the "buddy" family will spend some time helping the new family adjust to their new school community and reviewing the school handbook. Meetings are held for new families prior to or shortly after the beginning of a new school year. "Meet The Teacher Night" is scheduled shortly after classes begin in September. Each teacher acquaints the parents of his/her students with class requirements and procedures.

## **PARKING LOT-ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

**Please use extreme caution in our parking lot. There are large numbers of cars, school buses and vans that transport our students. A 5 MPH speed limit should be respected at all times while the children are on the property.**

### **ENTRANCES TO USE IN THE MORNING:**

**Please DO NOT use the Nemergut Drive as an entrance. This will be an exit for our school parents.**

If your child will remain in the car until you drop off in the car line, please use the Wigwam Lane entrance **BY THE CHURCH RECTORY**. The car line will then be able to "hug" the area around the buildings and not extend into the other driveway and block traffic.

If you would like to park your car so that your child will get out of the car in the parking lot and cross to go into school, please use the Wigwam Lane entrance **BY THE FARM**.

### **PROCEDURE FOR STAYING IN THE CAR LINE AND DROPPING YOUR CHILD OFF IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL ENTRANCE:**

1. Use the Wigwam entrance by the church rectory. When driving in, "hug" the area around the church and school. Please stay in line.
2. When dropping off your child, please wait in the car line. Do not pass drivers.
3. Please ask your child to have backpacks, water bottles, etc. ready when you are dropping him/her off.
4. Say good-bye in the car before you pull up to let your children out. Please do not get out of the car, walk around the car, and help your children out of the car. This defeats the purpose of the car line. Many drivers are waiting behind you. We will be glad to help the children out of the car.
5. Please be aware of the volunteer crossing guard. S/he will stop traffic so that groups of children can cross safely into school.
6. When directed by the crossing guard, please pull down as far as possible to the beginning of the orange traffic cones. Do not block the crossing path or stop directly in front of the school doors. When the crossing guard stops the car line to cross the children, three or four cars may unload. This will keep traffic moving smoothly.
7. Once the crossing guard has crossed the students safely and returns to the "waiting area", cars will be signaled to exit the parking lot.

8. When exiting, please use the exit at Nemergut (exit closest to the playground). Please be aware of parishioners coming to daily Mass who may use Nemergut as an entrance.

#### PROCEDURE FOR CHILDREN WHO WILL CROSS WITH THE CROSSING GUARD:

1. Please enter at Wigwam Lane only by the farm. Please be aware of parishioners who may be driving across the lot to park for daily Mass.
2. Park in the SECOND/ROW GROUPING of cars in the parking lot. You will be able to back up or drive out easily and will not interfere with the crossing guard or oncoming traffic from the drop off line.
3. Walk your child to the designated "waiting area" to wait to cross with the crossing guard. The "waiting area" will be directly across from the school entrance. Orange safety cones will mark off the area. The crossing guard will be in the "waiting area" wearing an orange safety vest and carrying a "stop" sign.
4. When there is a sufficient group of children, the crossing guard will stop the traffic and cross the children safely. You may say goodbye in the "waiting area" or cross with your child and say goodbye at the entrance. However, please observe this procedure and cross with the group when the crossing guard says it is safe to cross. The same will hold true for walking back across the oncoming car lane. You must cross both ways with the guard or this will defeat the purpose of a smooth, steady, safe procedure for walkers and drivers.

#### RECESS AND SCHOOL YARD REGULATIONS

Students have at least fifteen to twenty minute of recess each day. This does not include snack time. Weather permitting; they spend this time outdoors playing games. Students should remain in their assigned areas. **NO AGGRESSIVE PHYSICAL CONTACT OR ROUGH PLAY IS PERMITTED AT ANY TIME. The teacher has the right to terminate games if he/she determines they are not appropriate for recess at school.** When there is inclement weather, the children remain in their classrooms for recess or use the gym on a rotating schedule.

#### SCHOOL NURSE AND MEDICATION

The town of Stratford provides a nurse for each school day. The nurse keeps a current medical file and attendance record on each student. The nurse also will assess a student who is ill. It is expected that parents keep the nurse and/or the principal advised of any medical conditions that may affect their child during the school day. **It is very important to fill out and return the Emergency Card immediately. Please keep the information current.**

Connecticut State Law requires a physician's written order and parent/guardian authorization for a nurse (or the Principal in her absence) to administer medication. Without the required authorization, the parent or guardian must come to school and administer the medication. The authorization form can be obtained from the school office. It is effective for one year and must be renewed each September.

All medications must be brought to the nurse or Principal with the proper authorization and directions for administering. The child's name and the name of the medication must appear on the bottle. **NO STUDENT IS ALLOWED MEDICATION WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION AND PROPER AUTHORIZATION.**

### **1. State Requirements**

In accordance with State laws, no student can be admitted into school without the following:

- A. Grades K and 6 require a physical examination by a doctor. This form must be submitted **by the first day of school.**
- B. In accordance with state requirements, all immunizations must be up-to-date and verified.

### **2. In-school Screening**

According to Connecticut State Law, Section 10-213, each school must administer screening for vision in grades K-6 and hearing in grades K-3, 5, and 8. Vision and hearing screening are started in early September and continue until all grades are completed. Written notices must be sent home if a child shows a vision or hearing problem. This is a screening not an examination. A follow-up with your doctor must be made on any referral for vision or hearing and a completed form returned to the Nurse's office.

### **3. Emergency Medical Treatment**

In the event of an emergency, all necessary medical treatments will be given immediately. If needed, a student will be transferred to the nearest hospital via ambulance. If certain medications (such as epinephrine) are given for any allergy, it is required that a student be transported to the emergency room via ambulance.

### **4. Illness**

No child is permitted to remain in school if he/she is sick, i.e. elevated temperature or vomiting. Please do not send your child to school if he/she is sick in the morning especially during times of high absenteeism due to the flu, chicken pox, conjunctivitis, etc. The nurse will contact the parent/guardian to pick up a sick child.

### **5. Administration of Medication**

According to Connecticut State Law, Section 10-212A, administration of medication by the school nurse is permitted as long as it is a written order from a licensed physician or dentist. In the absence of the school nurse, the principal may administer medicines with the proper signed forms. If a student has to receive medication prescribed by a physician during the school day, the parent must submit the medication order slip to the physician for his written order and signature. This policy applies to all medications, i.e. antibiotics, ointments, cough medicine, cough drops, etc. The medication must be in a proper container, labeled with the student's name, name of medicine, dosage and time of administration. Send only one (1) week's supply of medication. Medication for allergies and asthma inhalers which are to be used daily or as needed may be sent to the nurse's office at the beginning of the school year and will be returned to the parent at the end of the school year. Each year medication permission forms must be filled out and signed by the attending physician. If your child is prone to headaches, you will need a medication form signed by the doctor. This should be done at the beginning of the school year and kept on file for the year.



**NO PRESCRIPTION OR OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION WILL BE ADMINISTERED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM A PHYSICIAN. NO MEDICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED IF IT IS NOT IN A PROPER CONTAINER.**

This applies to a one-day dosage as well.

This is a state law and an administration policy.

No exceptions allowed.

**SEARCH**

St. Mark School reserves the right to search items that a student brings onto school property. This includes back packs, cell phones, and other electronic devices.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT: DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT POLICY  
RELATING TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

(Executive Summary)

**Introduction**

As required by our insurance carrier, the Diocese of Bridgeport has adopted a policy relating to sexual misconduct. The policy, summarized here, provides guidelines to help prevent sexual misconduct and to help diocesan personnel in responding to allegations of sexual misconduct if any do occur.

Sexual misconduct is contrary to Christian principles and is in violation of the conditions of employment of all paid and unpaid personnel of the Diocese. Therefore, all diocesan personnel must comply: with applicable civil and canon law regarding incidents of actual or suspected sexual misconduct and with the requirements of this policy.

It is understood that sexual misconduct encompasses sexual harassment which is prohibited by the Connecticut Human Rights and Opportunities Act; and that sexual misconduct by any personnel of the diocese, whether in the course of work or not, will be considered grounds for suspension or termination of employment or involvement with the work of the Diocese.

**How is Sexual Misconduct defined?**

Sexual misconduct means any actions or words of a sexual nature which are contrary to the moral doctrine, teachings and canon law of the Catholic Church and are proscribed by Federal, state or local law or cause harm to another. Sexual harassment, included in the category of sexual misconduct, refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which explicitly becomes a term or condition of an individual's employment or whose purpose or effect is to interfere substantially with an individual's work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

### **Who is required to report sexual misconduct and to whom?**

Any personnel of the diocese who have actual knowledge of, or who have reasonable cause to suspect sexual misconduct by any other personnel of the diocese shall comply with the requirements of Connecticut civil law (confer full policy, section 6.3). He or she will make an immediate verbal report of the incident to the superior or supervisor who will relay it to the diocesan Director of Finance and Administration or the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and Religious; or it can be made directly to the aforementioned diocesan officers. This will be followed by a written report to be prepared on forms obtained from either office.

### **How will the report be handled?**

Each report will be investigated with a high level of Christian care, concern and confidentiality for the alleged victim, the family of the alleged victim, the person reporting the incident and the accused person. When accusations are made of sexual misconduct involving personnel of the Diocese, contact by a representative of the Bishop of Bridgeport, with the alleged victim and family, if applicable, will be promptly initiated. Medical, psychological and spiritual assistance, and, in appropriate circumstances, economic assistance may be offered in the spirit of Christian justice and charity.

### **What about the accused person?**

The accused person will be assisted in obtaining legal advice. If the alleged claim appears substantiated, the accused person may be relieved from the exercise of any function or responsibility or ministry and/or employment in the Diocese and placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the internal and any outside investigation, such leave to be with or without pay and/or benefits, as competent diocesan authorities may decide.

Any personnel of the diocese who admit to, do not contest, or are found guilty of an incident of sexual misconduct shall be relieved immediately from the exercise of any function or responsibility of ministry and/or employment in the diocese of Bridgeport. Subject to the conditions of any applicable contracts or terms of employment and at the discretion of diocesan authorities, such personnel may be assisted with any required rehabilitative or convalescent care.

### **Do we need more education on this topic?**

Yes, we certainly do. To help support each adult's responsibility for his or her own sexual growth and maturity, the diocese, from time to time, may be able to arrange programs providing additional information and training concerning this sensitive topic. **The Diocese of Bridgeport now requires each volunteer who works on the school grounds to receive training from VIRTUS. More information can be found by viewing their WEBSITE at [www.VIRTUS.ORG](http://www.VIRTUS.ORG).**

### **What about false accusations and unsubstantiated claims?**

There is always the possibility of false accusations or unsubstantiated claims made for whatever reason. Civil law provides penalties for the crime of falsehood in which individuals become victims of false denunciations and calumny, and the courts often impose financial reparations in such cases. Canon law also makes provision for canonical sanctions in various cases of falsehood and calumny. This document is a summary of the policy relating to sexual misconduct for the Diocese of Bridgeport. It is designed to make you aware of the existence of the policy but does not purport to give you all of the important details. Therefore, all employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Bridgeport are encouraged to read, and to become familiar with, the policy as a whole.

## STUDENT RECORDS

St. Mark School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the U.S. Mail. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school.

Parents requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a request to the School Office. Please give five (5) school days notice. All forms should be submitted to St. Mark School Office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

**No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.**

## STUDENT SERVICE REQUIREMENT

In an effort to enhance our school religion program and to teach Christian responsibility, the students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 are required to perform service for their school, parish and town communities. The service must be documented. The form must be completed and signed by both student and parent. Service statements should be sent to the child's teacher as they are completed in order to have the student's service logged in a timely manner. Students may work in groups to assist their school, parish and town communities. **STUDENTS MAY NOT RECEIVE PAYMENT FOR THEIR WORK UNLESS THE PAYMENT IS DONATED TO A WORTHY CAUSE.** Service hours should be above and beyond what is done in school. The service must be completed by the end of the school year or the student's final grade will be lowered one full grade if not completed.

**The service hours required during one school year are as follows:**

**Kindergarten, Grades 1 and 2 - 1 hour**

**Grades 3 and 4 - 1 ½ hours**

**Grades 5 and 6 - 2 hours**

**Grade 7 - 3 hours**

**Grade 8 - 5 hours**

## TESTING

Students in grades (2, 4, 6, and 7) take the Iowa Test each year and grades (1,3, and 5) take the CogAT Test. Both tests are administered in the month of March. In addition to these, students will also participate in the MAP test, three times a year to track their growth in math, reading and science.

## TRANSFER OF STUDENTS

Notice of withdrawal of a student should be made by the parent in **writing** to the Principal in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the school to prepare necessary information and settle accounts. **No student records will be forwarded to another school until all Business Office accounts have been settled.** (See previous section on Student Records for transcript information.)

## TUITION AND FINANCIAL OBLIGATION POLICY

### **DIOCESAN POLICY 5.205**

*Approved: May 26, 2015*

A goal of the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools is to provide a Catholic school education to every student that desires one. Tuition payments are an investment in a student's education and religious formation. Tuition payments are also a financial reality necessary to keep the school in business. Every family must be registered with FACTS (ES)/SMART (HS) Tuition Management.

The school relies upon the tuition and fees for a substantial portion of the .budget to operate an excellent spiritual and educational program. Therefore, when tuition and. fees payments become delinquent it is a serious matter.

### **PROCEDURE**

*Approved: May 26, 2015*

Tuition is billed, collected and deposited by FACTS (ES)/SMART (HS) Tuition Management Company. Tuition may be paid by **credit card or automatic withdrawal** using one of the four options listed below :

monthly	payments are July through April (this is 10 month period)
quarterly	payments are July, October, January, April
semi-annually	July and January
full	July

In very rare cases where tuition payments are made as cash at the school level, the Bookkeeper will:

1. Record the cash payment in tuition management system, print a receipt for the parent and one copy for the school;
2. The Bookkeeper will secure the funds in a locked area until it is deposited;
3. The Bookkeeper will deposit the funds in the bank the same clay it is received;
4. The Bookkeeper will retain the original deposit receipts and back-up documentation for the schools files.

### **Delinquent Tuition/Fees:**

When payments are not made in the manner described by a parent/guardian's tuition agreement form, the following steps will take place:

### ***30 Days Past Due***

1. When an account becomes **30 days past due** under the arrangements established by the Tuition and Fees Agreement Form or an accepted alternate plan for payment, the family shall receive written or phone call notification from FACTS (ES)/SMART (HS) that their account is past due.
2. It is the responsibility of the family to contact the respective ES School Bookkeeper or respective HS Business Manager within 15 days of receipt of the past due notice to correct the situation or make an acceptable alternate plan for payment.
3. If the parent does not contact the Bookkeeper or Business Manager, the Bookkeeper or Business Manager will contact the family to set-up a payment plan by sending a letter via certified mail, email or regular mail.
4. If families are unresponsive, the Principal will arrange for a meeting to discuss the delinquency.
5. The Bookkeeper or Business Manager will prepare a mutually agreed upon payment plan with the family and agreed upon by the Principal.
6. Late Fees will be assessed based on the school's Tuition and Fees Agreement Form.

### ***60 Days Past Due***

1. When an account becomes **60 days past due** under the arrangements established by the Tuition and Fees Agreement Form or an accepted alternate plan for payment, the family shall receive written notification from the Principal that their account is past due **and their child(ren) may not return to school until an acceptable tuition payment is made.**
2. Report cards and transcripts will be withheld until payment in full is received.
3. Students will not be permitted to register or to return for the following academic year until the balance is paid in full or an acceptable alternate plan for payment is in place.
4. Late Fees will be assessed based on the school's Tuition and Fees Agreement Form.

### ***90 Days Past Due***

1. When an account becomes **90 days past due** under the arrangements established by the Tuition and Fees Agreement Form or an accepted alternate plan for payment, the family shall receive written notification that their account is past due.
2. Students will be withdrawn from their respective Catholic school at the end of a quarter.
3. Report cards and transcripts will be withheld until payment in full is received.

In connection with tuition and fees commitment delinquencies, the school may pursue legal action against, or require promissory notes from, parent/guardians for failure to honor their tuition agreement.

Such notes or legal action will only be sought in an amount equal to the fair market value of the educational goods and services provided as established annually by the school, or the parent/guardian's unpaid tuition and fees commitment, whichever is less.

Parent/Guardian account information and activity will be submitted to the Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Superintendent of Schools, and diocesan attorney for review.

If a parent/guardian refuses to act in good faith, the administration, after consultation with school, may refuse to accept the child(ren) as students in the diocese and may turn the delinquent balance over to a collection agency.

#### ***Families with Senior (8th and/or 12th Grade) Students***

- I. All account billing and fees for senior students must be paid by May 1st or the family must have an alternate plan for payment approved by Principal.
2. Senior students will not be permitted to participate in graduation ceremony or receive grade transcripts until the balance is paid in full or acceptable arrangements for payment are made.

#### ***End of School Year Balances***

1. All account billing and fees must be paid by June 1st or the family must have an alternate plan for payment approved by Principal and respective Business Manager. This includes fees charged for unmet volunteer hours.
2. Families with account balances and unpaid fees that do not have an alternate plan for payment approved by Principal shall receive written notification that their account is past due with copy of this commission policy.
3. Report cards and transcripts will be withheld.
4. Students will not be permitted to register or to return for the following academic year until the balance is paid in full or an acceptable alternate plan for payment is in place.

#### ***Middle School and High School***

All elementary and middle school families that have an open balance at year end and wish to be considered for enrollment in the Middle School or a High School, **must settle their balances prior to acceptance into the school.** The Middle School or High School must receive financial clearance from the elementary or middle school principal to ensure the families' financial obligation has been satisfied.

#### **Withdrawal from St. Mark School**

- In the event of a withdrawal from school before the opening day, your first tuition payment (all plans) is not completely refundable. A withdrawal fee equal to one month's tuition will be subtracted from the total payment.
- Tuition due at withdrawal during the year will be computed on a ten-month basis. Withdrawal after the 15th of the month will be considered a full month for tuition purposes.
- If a child is asked to leave ST. MARK SCHOOL, the same tuition policy applies as stated above.
- Prepayment for slot holding - after 2 months of non-showing by a registered student, any tuition paid will not be refunded and space will be given to another child.

#### **Special Circumstances**

- If a child cannot complete the school year due to illness, tuition will continue to be paid if school contact is made for homebound instruction.
- Children entering the school during the year will pay tuition which is pro-rated according to the month they entered the school system. The family will be given the option of entering into the full or a four payment plan the following school year.

### **Other Information**

- **Registration money is not refundable.** A registration fee will be paid whenever a child is registered at any time during the year.
- Tuition increases will be recommended by the Finance Committee of the School Advisory Board and approved by the Diocese.
- There is a \$125 to \$200 graduation fee for the graduating Eighth Grade class. This fee must be paid prior to graduation.

Any grievance by a parent/guardian against the school or its employees shall be resolved through Diocesan School Office.

### **VISITORS**

School visitors (volunteers, parents, etc.) must come to the main office using the school entrance under the blue St. Mark School awning. For safety and security reasons, each person is required to sign in at the office when he/she enters the building for any reason. All visitors and/or volunteers are required to wear a designated badge that may be picked up in the office. Visitors and/or volunteers are to sign out at the time of departure. Visitors may be asked to show identification in the form of a driver's license or other government issued identification.

No one is permitted to enter the classroom without the permission of the Principal. Parents are asked to deliver forgotten items to the school office and the school secretary will deliver these items to the student. Parents who volunteer to serve lunch or who volunteer in another capacity in the school **may not drop in to a classroom to see their child** during the day. This is an interruption to the teacher and to the educational process.

### **VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS FOR FAMILIES**

A major difference between a good school and a great school are the parents. This is certainly true at St. Mark. Our school has great parents! St. Mark parents have been extremely generous in donating their time as volunteers in numerous ways. Volunteerism makes our school a better place and benefits our children. Time spent with the children and the school community is infinitely more valuable than money. **THE SCHOOL REQUIRES EACH FAMILY TO GIVE 30 HOURS OF SERVICE TIME EACH SCHOOL YEAR.** Donated items for parties and school activities such as paper goods, crafts, etc. may count towards volunteer hours. Please save your receipts for these items. **Items that total \$10 are counted as one service hour.** If families do not donate the full 30 hours of service during a school year, **parents will be billed for uncompleted service hours.** The fee is \$10 per service hour. PLEASE NOTE: All unpaid fees including volunteer hours must be paid in order for students to receive report cards, transcripts, etc. Arrangements must be made with the school bookkeeper if a parent is experiencing financial difficulty. Additionally, since this is considered an unpaid debt, a student may not return to school in the fall until it is paid.

## Volunteer Program for Parents

The St. Mark Volunteer Program will run from June 3<sup>rd</sup> through June 2<sup>nd</sup> of the following year. Every family will be required to complete **thirty** (30) hours of volunteer service to benefit St. Mark School.

Each hour is worth \$10. The total monetary obligation for volunteer time for each family is equivalent to \$300. We encourage parents to volunteer 30 hours of time. In lieu of volunteering for service, families also have the option of paying \$300 to the school office by June 10th. This Volunteer Assessment is not optional. It is a mandatory obligation that must be met by all St. Mark families.

There will be a minimum of one hour credit for helping with hot lunch, at classroom parties or school events. For example, if 45 minutes is spent distributing hot lunch, you may take a one hour credit. However, if you set up for the talent show and it takes you an hour and a half, you should take credit for 1.5 hours not 2 hours.

All hours should be recorded on the Volunteer Hour Reporting Form (found on the school's website) and should be submitted to the school office. Please report all hours including those in excess of the required 30 hours. We are asking you to track all hours so that we can get a true idea of how many hours it takes annually to run the events and day-to-day activities at the school.

Please remember that in order to volunteer your time with our school children, you must be VIRTUS trained. After completion of the training, your VIRTUS card must be registered with the school office. In addition, volunteers are expected to follow the same standards of behavior as any employee of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Volunteers maybe removed from school positions by the Principal or Office of Superintendent if they breach professional decorum or compromise the best interests of the School or the Diocese.

Each family will receive volunteer forms that will go home with the oldest sibling. You will be responsible for completing the form and submitting it to the Office. Instructions and due dates are indicated on the form.

### VOLUNTEER HOURS MUST EXCLUSIVELY BENEFIT ST. MARK SCHOOL AND/OR ITS STUDENTS

Breakdown of hours and events:

**EVENT:**

Room Parent (see description below)  
Chairperson of a major event/fundraiser  
Serve on Home School Association  
Hot Lunch Distribution  
Holiday/class party  
Chaperone field trip/help teacher in classroom  
with special project  
Bake for an event  
Set up/clean up at event

**HOURS EARNED:**

20 hours  
actual hours worked + 5 hour bonus  
actual hours worked + 5 hour bonus  
actual hours worked  
actual hours worked  
actual hours worked  
actual hours worked  
one hour  
actual hours worked



Library volunteer	actual hours worked
Event volunteer	actual hours worked
Scout volunteer for a troop/pack	actual hours worked
Note: at least 50% of the troop/pack must be St. Mark School children	

**Important Notes:**

Any volunteer hours accumulated in excess of 30 hours are greatly appreciated. They cannot be carried over to the following school year.

**The following are examples of activities that are NOT considered as volunteer hours for St. Mark School:**

Teaching Religious Education at St. Mark Parish or any other parish  
 Coaching sports teams not exclusively made up of St. Mark School students  
 volunteering at St. Mark Parish (lectors and Eucharistic Ministry)

**Volunteer Room Parents**

Mothers and fathers are needed to serve as room parents. At least two parents are needed per grade to assist the teacher with large-projects, host holiday classroom parties, celebrate the teacher's birthday and inform the class parents of family emergencies. The room parent will serve a term beginning July 1st and ending June 30<sup>th</sup>. Room parents will be expected to meet with the Room Parent Coordinator and Principal before the school year begins. The Room Parent Coordinator will provide a detailed list of expectations/ responsibilities to each room parent.

**RIGHT TO AMEND**

St. Mark School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents through e-mail communication.

*St. Mark School  
500 Wigwam Lane  
Stratford, CT 06614*

Dear Parents,

After reading the handbook and discussing the appropriate school rules and requirements with your child, please fill out the following forms and submit them to the school office. These forms are due on the following dates:

- Media Release Form on page 50 - due September 8
- Parent Permission and Computer User Agreement Form on page 51. Please read pages 33 to 35 in the handbook. - due September 8
- Signature Page for St. Mark School Parent/Student Handbook on page 52 due September 15

If you have any questions about our handbook, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Scott Clough  
Principal

**MEDIA RELEASE FORM**  
**2017-2018**

St. Mark School and the Diocese of Bridgeport have active marketing programs. Students and their work may appear in school newsletters, newspapers, brochures, videos, websites and official social media pages as well as other promotional material. **Please complete one form per student and return it to school no later than Friday, September 8.**

**Please check one:**

**YES**

I give permission for my child and his/her classroom work to be photographed videotaped in a school related setting. I realize that the photo may be published in the newspaper, the school website, or other publications or media and may be used for informational or educational purposes regarding the programs or curriculum at St. Mark School. I understand that no last names, home addresses or telephone numbers will appear online or in publications with his/her work or photographs.

**NO**

Please do **NOT** publish my child's photos, video or classroom work.

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT PERMISSION FORM and USER AGREEMENT**  
**2017-2018**

As a parent or guardian -of a student at St. Mark School, I have read the information about the appropriate use of computers at the school (pages 33-35). I understand this agreement will be kept on file at the school. Questions should be directed to the Principal for clarification.

\_\_\_ My child(ren) **MAY** use the Internet while at school according to the rules outlined in this handbook.

\_\_\_ I would prefer that my child(ren) **DOES NOT (DO NOT)** use the Internet while at school.

Parent Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

As a student at St. Mark School and a user of the St. Mark School computer network, I agree to follow the rules stated in this handbook and to use the network in an appropriate, constructive manner.

Student Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature Page**  
**St. Mark School Parent/Student Handbook**  
**2017-2018**

I have read the 2017-2018 St. Mark School Parent/Student Handbook and agree to follow the school policies and procedures as stated.

FAMILY NAME \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please note: Both parents and students must sign this agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature

Date

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Student Signature

Date

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Student Signature

Date









