

St. Mary's Academy Middle School

Parent-Student Handbook Policies and Procedures 2017-2018



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INTRODUCTION

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

The Mission, Beliefs and Assumptions, a brief history, and the four Loretto school values ground the details that follow them. **Thank you for taking the time to read and understand the contents of this handbook.**

MISSION STATEMENT

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

BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Students at St. Mary's Academy are part of an intriguing and interesting history. They are carrying forward a tradition of risk-taking and initiative that found its earlier expression in the pioneering spirit of the Sisters of Loretto.

Three Sisters of Loretto, Sisters Beatriz Maes, Ignacia Mora, and Joanna Walsh, left Santa Fe, New Mexico on June 22, 1864 to undertake an arduous five-day journey in a crowded mail coach from Santa Fe, passing through beautiful and rugged lands to establish St. Mary's Academy in Denver, Colorado. The school was modeled on other Loretto schools in Kentucky and Santa Fe, and welcomed children of all faiths. The founding sisters were risk-takers in every sense.

Joanna Walsh's diary gives a glimpse of the start of SMA:

"Well, school opened with quite a number of pupils, large and small, (twenty) and though we were so few, we were obliged to receive as many boarders as space could accommodate. Father Vicar General having promised their parents this advantage. We had to do everything ourselves. No help to be had just then. So with boarders and day scholars, classes of different grades in the school, music lessons and all the accessories of day and boarding school confronting us, we had besides to apportion all the housework and cooking, and reserve time for our spiritual exercises. Now, all this seemed enough to puzzle the head of an engineer. But no engineer being at hand, we made use of our own heads, and indeed, not only our heads, but our hearts and souls, to solve the problem. The expectation of shortly recruiting our number animated our courage, though it had reason to flag many times before that help came, still we went on quietly, as best as we could."

SMA's Jessie Forshee was Colorado's first high school graduate in 1875. Since that time, the school has grown and evolved to meet the needs of thousands of children. In turn, those thousands of children have enriched and deepened the SMA legacy.

THE LORETTO SCHOOL VALUES

The four Loretto school values serve as the foundation for all interactions that occur among members of the St. Mary's Academy community – students, parents, and school employees. They are discussed and clarified on a regular basis by members of the student Loretto Leadership Council with input from the larger Middle School community through the Community Action Teams. Standards of behavior and discipline are based upon and guided by the Loretto school values.

What follows are student-generated beliefs about what the values mean and how they look in action:

FAITH

We, the students of SMA's Middle School, define FAITH as having the courage to trust God and to listen to and believe in each other and ourselves.

FAITH allows us to try even when we feel inadequate to the challenges facing us.

We show FAITH by having the confidence to stand up for what we believe no matter how hard that might be in given situations, and by being able to recognize and speak out when what someone else is doing is wrong.

FAITH allows us to trust our moral conscience. Though what is right may not be easy to see, FAITH allows us to believe that good results are possible and so gives us the ability to act for good.

COMMUNITY

We, the students of SMA's Middle School, define COMMUNITY as a group of people working together to accomplish a common task or reach a common goal. The individual's skills and talents are valued as they contribute to the well being of the group. Following rules and standards of behavior are necessary parts of a healthy COMMUNITY.

COMMUNITY means cooperation in work and play, and the ability to freely trust and share feelings and ideas. We show COMMUNITY by being inclusive and not discriminating against people who are different. Visitors and others who are not part of our immediate group are made to feel welcome. To build COMMUNITY, we try to make sure no one is left out. COMMUNITY requires that we exercise forgiveness, patience, and caring.

JUSTICE

We, the students of SMA's Middle School, define JUSTICE as being treated fairly and with compassion. JUSTICE is served best when the Golden Rule is followed: *Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.* When we treat others equally and without discrimination, we act JUSTLY and earn JUSTICE for ourselves.

We show a sense of JUSTICE when we work and play fairly, when we avoid gossiping and try to stop rumors, and when we step up for what we believe is right. JUSTICE means that we admit when we are wrong and accept the consequences. When we see others doing the wrong thing, we support JUSTICE by finding ways to intervene that do not attack the person, but do try to make things right.

RESPECT

We, the students of SMA's Middle School, define RESPECT as treating self and others courteously and thoughtfully. By showing RESPECT we show that we are grateful for others' and our own abilities and belongings. People and materials are deserving of respect, meaning that we take care of each other, materials, and the school building.

We show RESPECT by really listening to others and trying to understand them. We really look at them and not past them. We talk with and not over others. RESPECT is demonstrating kindness, giving effort and trying to do your best, avoiding name-calling and foul language, and being sensitive and generous to the needs of others.

RESPECT means that we take the time to clean up our own messes and pitch in when we see a need. Taking care of our cubbies, lockers, and pods shows respect for our surroundings. Recycling as much as possible shows respect for the earth and future generations.

CONTACT PROCEDURES

PROTOCOL

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

WHOM TO CONTACT

To reach a person through the school voicemail: **enter 303-762-8300 and request to be connected to the specific extension.** To reach a person through email, enter: **first initial followed directly by the last name @smanet.org or @stmarys.academy**

President of the Academy – Bill Barrett – 222

Principal of the Middle School – Martha Ashley – 213

MS Admissions – Kristen Dieterich – 205

Advancement – Charlie Arbogast – 227

Middle School Sports and Physical Education – Mary Kolbach – 296

Business Office – Patty Disney – 242

Language Arts Mr. Mark Garcia 221 Ms. Victoria Fernandez 346 Ms. Anna Smith 322	Spanish Mrs. Celsa Rutan 319 Mrs. Christina Garcia 272 Mrs. Ana Fonseca 370	Media and Music Geoff McVie 392
Math Mrs. Janice Schmitt 357 Mr. Pritchard 362 Mr. Michael Pattison 325	French Sabine Lerus-Watson 231	Music Roberta HG 355 Sharon Gayley 367 Rick Nelson 309 Cherie Swisher 390
	Program Liaison and Academic Support Laura Waldron 381	Visual Arts Cheri Buxman 295 Jason Jung 236
Science Mr. Steve Mayfield 217 Mrs. JoAnn Cencula 311 Mrs. Rosborough 212	LS/MS Counselor Ashley Harding	MS PE/Sports Sara Griffin 297 Zac Hood 321 Mary Kolbach 296
Social Studies Mr. Andy Rodgers 253 Mr. Terrye Easton 380 Mr. Joe Riehl 333	MS Admin Assistant Diane Siennicki 250	

Please notify Diane Siennicki when you retrieve your child from school at times other than the regular dismissal time. Thank you. Your child's safety is our primary concern.

CONTACTING STUDENTS

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

Note: Device texting by students during the school day is distracting to everyone and especially to the student who is texting. We insist that cell phones are turned off and stored in the student's locker or backpack. Students are encouraged to call parents/guardians in cases of emergency or changes in the daily schedule. Phone calls home are made from the MS office.

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS

EXPECTED BEHAVIORS

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

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

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

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

The Middle School of St. Mary's Academy reserves the **right to respond with disciplinary action in the event of the following occurrences:**

- ❖ Use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, non-prescription drugs, fireworks, or weapons of any kind by any student.
- ❖ Misuse of prescription drugs.
- ❖ Physical, written, posted (**virtual or hard-copy postings**), or spoken expressions of aggression that threaten the safety of a community member or members.

- ❖ Physical, written, posted, or spoken harassment that attacks a person's gender, race ethnicity, disability, age, religion, and/or sexual orientation.

DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES AND CONSEQUENCES

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

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

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

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

The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are intended to aid the Administration in its efforts to ascertain the facts of a matter and to reach a just decision. They do not confer any contractual rights on the accused or accuser.

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

BULLYING

A bully is a blustering, browbeating person who is habitually cruel to others and badgers and intimidates smaller or weaker people. Bullying involves ongoing and relentless:

- ❖ Intimidation and threat.
- ❖ Physical aggression.
- ❖ Hate speech.

If bullied, a student is strongly encouraged to consult with a trusted school adult.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

St. Mary's Academy will respond with disciplinary action in the case of sexual harassment of students, employees or other members of the school community by anyone, whether on

school property or off. This includes work-related assignments or events and other school-related events such as social functions.

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

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

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

Any student who believes he/she has been harassed should report such actions to the principal, counselor, advisor, or trusted teacher.

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

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

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

OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT

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

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

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

BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS OFF CAMPUS

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

OUT-OF-SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

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

Examples of outside conduct that may result in disciplinary actions are:

- ❖ Any violation of law;
- ❖ Underage purchase, use, or possession of alcohol or controlled substance;
- ❖ Misuse of computers or computer websites;
- ❖ Harassing messages via social networks.

Examples of inappropriate computer use include making threats against members of the school community from a home or off-school computer, sending harassing or offensive messages from a home or off-school computer, displaying or sending images that are pornographic, offensive, or threatening, etc.

COMPUTER ACCEPTABLE-USE POLICY

Student and parent are required to read, accept and sign the SMA Acceptable-use Agreement governing use of computer devices at school before the student is allowed to use the devices and school Internet connection. The agreement can be found by visiting www.stmary.academy and accessing *Resources*. A similar procedure is required for the Chromebook User Agreement.

COMMUNITY ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

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

SOCIAL EVENT GUIDELINES

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

- ❖ No matter how large or small the event, line-of-sight adult presence and oversight is essential during the middle school years.
- ❖ No matter how few or how many guests are invited, use of discretion when issuing invitations will minimize hurt feelings in the community. Remind your hosting student to invite his/her guests in private and to ask his/her guests to avoid talking about the event with others in the presence of those who were not in attendance before and after it has occurred. Remind guests that posting photos of the event on social networks can be very hurtful to those not invited.
- ❖ Please do not arrange to have a **celebratory group picked up during car pool**. The sense of exclusiveness is hurtful even to those who are only tenuously connected to the host or hostess.
- ❖ **Establish behavioral expectations** with your hosting student in advance. Be clear about the behaviors for which there will be zero-tolerance.
- ❖ Establish a specific starting and ending time.
- ❖ Educate yourself about your legal responsibilities when hosting a social gathering.
- ❖ Attempt to speak with the parents of invited students before the event to convey starting and ending times as well as behavioral expectations. Ask for help with chaperoning.

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

- ❖ Call the hosting parents ahead of time to:
 - Introduce yourself and learn more about the specifics of the event;
 - Ascertain the starting and ending times of the event;
 - Insure that the parent and adequate chaperones will be present;
 - Obtain and give contact information;
 - Offer assistance.
- ❖ Be clear with your child about your behavioral expectations of him/her;
- ❖ Discuss possible compromising situations and the protocol for handling them;
- ❖ Specify alternative contacts – a neighbor or friend – to call if needed

Please do not bring special treats or gifts for a small number of students in your child's class. Special treats and gifts may be shared in your child's community action team.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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

Middle School Volunteer Opportunities

- ❖ Community Action Team (CAT) Parent
- ❖ Middle School Previews
- ❖ Picnic Lunch Coordinator
- ❖ Catered Lunch Helper
- ❖ 8th Grade End-Year Events Committee
- ❖ The Island – An Academy Parent-Sponsored Social for MS Students

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

- Assisting the community action teams in the planning and/or preparation of their once-a-trimester CAT luncheon or holiday celebrations;
- Driving students to community service (with few exceptions, teachers drive their CATs using the school activity bus).
- Helping the CAT prepare or collect food for the eighth-grade CAT members to serve to the homeless at St. Elizabeth's sandwich line.
- Drive and participate with eighth-grade CAT members serving the homeless at St. Elizabeth's sandwich line.

CAT parents **do not**:

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

DAILY PROCEDURES

THE SCHOOL DAY

Classes begin at 7:55 a.m. and end at 3:15 p.m. **Note: Students arriving after 7:55 a.m. are asked to check in at the Middle School office** before attending class to ensure attendance is recorded. The most socially and academically productive arrival time at school is between 7:30 and 7:45 a.m. First period classes begin promptly at 7:55 a.m. Teachers are present from 7:25 a.m. until 3:45 p.m. and are available to students needing individual help except on those days that they are in team meetings or when a teacher is coaching.

For safety reasons, students who have not departed school by 3:40 p.m. will automatically be enrolled for the afternoon in the after-school program (ASA) unless they are being tutored or under supervision of a coach or fine-arts teacher. The charge for drop-ins to ASA is \$5 per 15 minutes. At 3:40 p.m., faculty carpool monitors bring students from the designated carpool pick-up point at Bishop Evans to ASA in the Middle School. The carpool driver is then required to sign out students in person, which while an inconvenience, contributes to the safety of SMA students on an open campus.

The MS runs on a rotating schedule with a student meeting four of the five core classes, a sport or PE, an elective, and theology each day except on Wednesday. The core classes occur at different times on different days. Please refer to the PCR calendar to determine whether it is a CORE 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 day. CT or Community Team (made up of seventh and eighth grade students) meets on Monday and Friday. This is a time to build community and address social issues. OH or Office Hours (a study and make-up time) meets on Tuesday and Thursday.

CORE SCHEDULE FOR MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY, AND FRIDAY

Seventh and Eighth Grade Schedule (Not on Wednesdays)

Period	Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
1	7:55-8:50	C1	C5	C4	C3	C2
2	8:55-9:15	CT or OH	CT or OH	CT or OH	CT or OH	CT or OH
3	9:20-10:15	C2	C1	C5	C4	C3
4	10:20-11:05	7/8 Electives Religion, PE, or Sports	7/8 Electives Religion, PE, or Sports	7/8 Electives Religion, PE, or Sports	7/8 Electives Religion, PE, or Sports	7/8 Electives Religion, PE, or Sports
5	11:10-11:50	Lunch followed by Recess	Lunch followed by Recess	Lunch followed by Recess	Lunch followed by Recess	Lunch followed by Recess
6	11:53-12:48	C3	C2	C1	C5	C4
7	12:51-1:46	C4	C3	C2	C1	C5
8	1:48-2:30	Electives, Religion	Electives, Religion	Electives, Religion	Electives, Religion	Electives, Religion
9	2:33-3:15	Electives, Religion, 7/8 PE or Sports	Electives, Religion, 7/8 PE or Sports	Electives, Religion, 7/8 PE or Sports	Electives, Religion, 7/8 PE or Sports	Electives, Religion, 7/8 PE or Sports

For students on sports teams that meet during fourth period, lunch begins at 11:25 and sports practice ends at 11:20. For students on sports teams that meet during ninth period, practice ends at 3:30.

Sixth Grade Schedule (Not on Wednesdays)

Similar to the seventh and eighth grade but at a different time, CT or Community Team (made up of sixth grade students) meets on Monday and Friday. This is a time to build community and address social issues pertinent to the sixth grade. OH or Office Hours (a study and make-up time) meets on Tuesday and Thursday. Recess occurs before lunch and is separate from seventh and eighth grade recess. The Core class days are the same for sixth as for the other two grades.

Period	Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
1	7:55-8:50	C1	C5	C4	C3	C2
2	8:55-9:40	Sports or PE	Sports or PE	Sports or PE	Sports or PE	Sports or PE
3	9:45-10:40	C2	C1	C5	C4	C3
4	10:45-11:05 11:05-11:25	Recess Lunch	Recess Lunch	Recess Lunch	Recess Lunch	Recess Lunch
5	11:25-11:50	CT or OH	CT or OH	CT or OH	CT or OH	CT or OH
6	11:53-12:48	C3	C2	C1	C5	C4
7	12:51-1:46	C4	C3	C2	C1	C5
8	1:48-2:30	Electives or Religion	Electives or Religion	Electives or Religion	Electives or Religion	Electives or Religion
9	2:33-3:15	Electives or Religion	Electives or Religion	Electives or Religion	Electives or Religion	Electives or Religion

LATE-START WEDNESDAY – EVERY WEDNESDAY FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Late start occurs **every Wednesday in the Middle School** beginning with the first week of school. Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on these days. An 8:45 a.m. student arrival is ideal on late-start Wednesday. From 7:30 a.m. until 8:30 a.m., all teachers and staff members are involved in morning curriculum and cross-divisional meetings. On Wednesday, students to engage in Exploratory Seminars: These are seventy-minute seminars. Students explore three different topics, ideas, and processes not presented in their daily courses or touched upon leaving room for further investigation. Instructors alternate between collaboratively and singularly creating and leading seminars.. Exploration of the patterns, literature, creativity, metacognition, cooking, nature drawing, musical or dance genres, leadership development, gardening, or manners barely begins the possible investigations. **Note:** Students arriving before 8:30 a.m. report directly to the multi-purpose for a monitored study hall. On days that the HS and LS do not have a late start, a math lab will be provided by the HS students.

WEDNESDAY EXPLORATORY SEMINAR

EXPLORATORY SEMINARS SCHEDULE
9:00-9:25 MS CAT (grades 6, 7, and 8)
9:30-10:00 Office Hours
10:05-11:15 Exploratory Seminar
11:15-11:55 Lunch Recess
12:00-1:10 Exploratory Seminar
1:15-1:35 Recess Snack
1:40-2:50 Exploratory Seminar
2:55-3:15 Student-led CAT or Community Reflection

Variations in the above schedule occur to accommodate community gatherings, prayer services, masses, and arts performances.

HALF-DAY – EARLY DISMISSAL SCHEDULE

On occasion, the school day is abbreviated. On early dismissal days, the Middle School begins at the regular time of 7:55 a.m. and dismisses at 11:30 a.m. with the exception of orientation. Early dismissal days are marked on the calendar and/or reported on the SMA web site and on PCR. Some of those days include:

- ❖ Orientation Day – Monday, August 28 – **9:00**-11:30 a.m.
- ❖ Afternoon In-Service – Tuesday, October 31 – 7:55-11:30 a.m.
- ❖ Grandparents' Day – Friday, November 17 – 7:55-11:30 a.m.
- ❖ Christmas/New Year's Break – Thursday, December 21 – 7:55-11:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE AND ARRIVING ON TIME

The connection among being on time, regular and consistent attendance, academic achievement, and social competency is a strong one. We do not want students with a fever to attend school. Otherwise, we encourage every effort to be in attendance. **Note:** If a student is absent on a given day from two core classes, he/she may not participate in after school activities (sports games, arts performances, or school socials) on that school day without permission from the principal in conference with the athletic or fine arts director.

DISMISSAL AND CARPOOL

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

The charge for drop-ins to ASA is \$5 per 15 minutes. At 3:40 p.m., faculty carpool monitors will bring students from the designated carpool pick-up points to ASA downstairs in the Middle School building. **The parent/driver/guardian is required to sign out the student from ASA.** After 4:00 p.m., the Middle School may only be entered at the southwest corner of the school.

CARPOOL GUIDELINES

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

- All drivers please, please **exercise courtesy and patience at all times.** Please treat fellow drivers, students, teachers and staff who monitor carpool with respect.
- All Middle School students are to be dropped off and retrieved in the north-Bishop Evans Sports Center lot. (Cherry Hills Village ordinance) Only Middle School students who are in the car with a Lower School student may be dropped off and/or retrieved in the LS lot.
- All drivers please **drive slowly and without talking on your mobile device** when on school grounds. To do otherwise conflicts with common sense, the safety of students and

the positive sense of community that we honor at SMA. Be in the moment. PLEASE, **turn off your motor** when sitting and waiting in line or in a parking space.

- Two Middle School faculty members are assigned to the north Bishop Evans lot from 3:20-3:40 p.m. When these teachers wave you forward or ask you to park, **please respond promptly and with courtesy**. They are charged with maintaining student safety and moving the line.
- PLEASE, PLEASE do not wave your children over to load into your car until you are **in the single line** in front of Bishop Evans Sports Center. **Please load after you have merged into the single line. Do not drive down the adjacent parking lot lanes and wave your child to pass through the carpool line to load.**
- Please, if you have parked to wait for your student(s), do not wave them across the carpool line unaccompanied. Instead, wait for a MS teacher or another adult to walk students across. You may walk across and accompany your carpool student(s) to the car, as well.

REQUESTS FOR A MORE PLEASANT CARPOOL EXPERIENCE

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

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

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY

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

ARRIVING OR LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY OR LATE

For safety, when students arrive at or depart from school between 7:55 a.m. and 3:15 p.m., **parents/guardians sign students in and/or out in the Middle School office or call from the parking lot**. If a student knows that he/she will be arriving late, it is helpful if the parent/guardian calls the Middle School office with this information.

SECURITY AND SUPERVISION

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

- ❖ MS students are to be in line-of-sight supervision of a faculty member during the school day and during school functions/programs.

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

CRISIS PLAN

St. Mary's Academy has a school-wide crisis plan for unexpected situations that disrupt the normal flow of events and call for extraordinary measures. A crisis could be, among other situations, a fire, tornado, blizzard, injury, threat of injury, or death. For that reason, the school is prepared with procedures and drills that are reviewed and practiced throughout the year. Should immediate evacuation from the school be required, students will be evacuated to the Cherry Hills Country Club.

SCHOOL CLOSING OR DELAYED START FOR WEATHER

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

In the event of inclement weather, St. Mary's Academy might call a "Delayed Arrival." **On a delayed arrival day, classes begin at 9:00 a.m. in the MS.** For students who might arrive earlier than the 9:00 start time, school personnel will be present in the school buildings beginning at 8:00 AM. MS students report to the Commons. Regular school hours should be assumed in the absence of cancellation announcements.

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

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

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

LUNCH

Wholesome Foods offers delicious and nutritious catered lunches that are ordered online and delivered daily to the school. Lunch tables are available to students outside behind the Middle School or in the Community Center Duncan Commons. Students may also bring packed lunches from home. Microwaves are available in the Community Center.

Once each trimester, at the discretion of the CAT leaders, his/her CAT will plan a special lunch or food treat. Items may be delivered by restaurants or parents or prepared and brought by students. Several holiday lunches are planned during the school year in CAT.

ATTENDANCE

EXCUSED/UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Students are expected to attend school daily, be on time for all classes and to remain on campus throughout the school day. Because attendance and participation in class are the most significant part of the learning experience, **excused absences** are limited and include illness, emergencies, and religious holidays. Students who are absent are strongly encouraged to meet individually with each of their teachers to determine a schedule for make-up work.

Unexcused absences include extended school holidays, pleasure trips or family vacations, and disciplinary suspension. **Please do not expect assignments in advance** though at times these can be provided.

Note: Students who are **absent more than 50% of the day** are **not allowed to participate** in after-school events, **social or sports** related, on the day of absence. Exceptions are limited and granted by the principal in counsel with leading sponsors or coaches.

Note: Parents/guardians are requested to telephone the Middle School Office (303-762-8300 Ext. 250) by 8:00 a.m. if their child will be absent or late for any portion of the school day. Prompt notification enables us to better serve the individual and community.

Note: The parent/guardian contributes to the safety of the student by signing out the student in the Middle School office or calling from the parking lot if the student is leaving during the school day.

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

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

SMA requests that medical/dental appointments be made outside school hours whenever possible. A note should be sent with the student on the day of the appointment indicating the time the student will be leaving.

FAMILY-TEACHER CONFERENCES – SCHOOL DAYS

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

This year, setting a formal family conference is optional with the exception of specific conferences requested by the teaching team. Such requests are relayed well in advance of the conference dates in support of parent schedules. Online sign up for conferences begins several days in advance of the meetings. The first formal conferences occur on Thursday and Friday, October 12 and 13. The second set is Thursday and Friday, March 8 and 9.

Conference days are counted as school days and students are assigned reading, math, and second-language study to complete on those days. The days provide students with an opportunity to make up missing or late work, as well. Students attend with one or both of his/her parents/guardians and sometimes a mentor.

Please know that parents and students are encouraged to contact the teacher, grade-level guide, CAT teacher, or principal throughout the school year to review their child’s progress or to discuss situations that may be affecting their child’s attitude, academic performance, or behavior.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

ST. MARY’S ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL DRESS CODE 2017-18

In order for students and teachers to optimize their time together, SMA insists on modest attire. **The school reserves the right to require offending students to cover themselves, change clothes, or remove distracting jewelry or make-up.** If a student receives three dress code infractions, he she will check in each morning before attending classes for a designated period of time. In some cases, per grade-level, a dress code infraction precludes being free to participate in the Friday dress-down day. Thank you for supporting the dress code.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS

Blouses/Shirts/Tops

- Cleavage, shoulders and undergarments must be covered.
- Necklines must be high and close enough to the body so that cleavage is not seen when bending.
- May have small logos of at most 1.5 inches squared.
- Sleeves are required. Collars are not required but are allowed.

- See-through material that reveals underwear is unacceptable. Wear tighter weaves that do not show underwear or add a sweater/jacket.
- Neck and shoulder straps are not allowed nor are low lines in the back.
- Shirts that fall off of the shoulders are not allowed.
- Official SMA shirts are allowed. Other school's logos are not allowed.

Skirts/Shorts/Dresses/Pants

- All skirts, dresses and shorts must be 4" above the ground when kneeling with straight upper body.
- Shorts and pants must have usable pockets and zipper rather than being pull on leggings with fake pockets and/or zipper.
- Leggings are allowed if worn with a hemline falling at fingertips when arms are held at rest.
- Traditional denim blue jeans are not allowed. Ripped jeans of any color are never allowed even on dress-down days.

Hoodies/Jackets/Fleece

- 1.5in² logos or smaller are allowed.
- Official SMA hoodies and fleeces are allowed.
- Other school hoodies and clothing are not allowed, even on dress-down days.

Shoes

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

Not Allowed:

- Hats inside the building;
- Sweats, sports apparel; sweats (athletic wear is for PE/sports practices)

Not Allowed even on Dress-Down Days:

- Unhemmed, torn, or frayed clothing;
- Sleeveless, see-through or low-neckline tops;
- Short shorts or any shorts unless within four inches of the knees;
- Low-riding pants or shorts that result in visible undergarments;
- Visible midriff, cleavage, or undergarments;
- Pajamas;
- Leggings/yoga pants unless shirt hem falls at fingertips.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS

Shirts

- Shirts must have collars, buttons or snaps, and sleeves.

- Solid, striped, flowered, or checked patterns are allowed.
- May have small logos of at most 1.5 inches squared.
- Official SMA shirts are allowed.
- Other school's logos are not allowed.

Shorts and Pants

- Solids or patterns are allowed.
- Athletic shorts and sweats are not allowed.
- Traditional denim blue jeans are not allowed. Ripped jeans are never allowed even on dress-down days.

Hoodies/Jackets/Fleece

- 1.5in² logos or smaller are allowed.
- Official SMA hoodies and fleeces are allowed.
- Other school's logos are not allowed, even on dress-down days.

Shoes

- Shoes that fully enclose the feet.
- Sandals and flip-flops are not allowed even on dress-down days.

Not Allowed:

- Hats inside the building;
- Sweats, sports apparel; sweats (athletic wear is for PE/sports practices)

Not Allowed even on Dress-Down Days:

- Unhemmed, torn, or frayed clothing;
- Sleeveless shirts;
- Undershirts;
- Short shorts or any shorts unless within four inches of the knees;
- Low-riding pants or shorts that result in visible undergarments;
- Pajamas;
- Other school's logos or inappropriate logos.

DRESS-DOWN-NOT-TOO-FAR-DOWN DAYS?

Dress-down days are when students can wear jeans and athletic, sports clothes. Please refer to the Not Allowed even on Dress-Down Days listing above. Truly, these days are dress-down-not-to-far-down days.

What about . . .

Hair? Hair that falls into the eyes must be secured back during the school day and when representing the school at functions.

Hair Color? Natural hair colors & tints; clean.

Make-up? A modest amount is acceptable.

Jewelry? Non-distracting.

Socks? RECOMMENDED for school and sports.

Personal Hygiene? Brush teeth, shower/bathe, and **use deodorant daily**.

FAMILY PICNICS

On designated days during the school year, parents/guardians are invited to join the Middle School students for lunch. Families bring their lunch or reserve lunch through Wholesome Foods or the MS Office depending on the event. We enjoy this time together. Please see the MS Calendar to determine the dates.

GUESTS

Because guests change the dynamics of class and the school environment, **contact the Middle School office in advance of issuing an invitation**. Guests are welcome on most school days **during lunch and recess only**. Guests are subject to the SMA Middle School disciplinary code.

LOCKERS & BOOK BAGS

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

Students may store book bags in cubbies or other assigned spaces. Book bags or belongings that are left out in the pod or in any unassigned location may be confiscated and held with disciplinary consequences or such items may be relocated to the lost & found.

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

LOST AND FOUND

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

SCHOOL-SPONSORED SOCIALS

Two school-sponsored social evenings and one or two afternoon mixers are scheduled throughout the year. **These events are open to SMA Middle School students only**. Outside guests are not allowed. The members of SMA faculty/staff provide supervision. The

school-sponsored socials take place from 6-8 p.m. and the mixers take place from 3:15-5:00 p.m. on Fridays during the school year.

SECURING BELONGINGS

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

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

TEACHER NOMINATIONS FOR OUTSIDE PROGRAMS

If a parent is interested in having his/her child participate in outside programs such as the Junior National Young Leaders Conference in Washington D.C. or the Duke Talent Search, please contact the agency or organization directly. Many fine organizations ask SMA to submit nominations for leadership conferences and academic programs. Because we believe all of our students are potential leaders, we will no longer choose among our students by nominating specific students for these for-profit organizations. The principal will submit nominations with the permission of the parents.