

***ST. MARY'S SCHOOL***  
*Early Learning Center*  
162 Washington Street, Winchester, MA 01890  
781-729-5515

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

*Please read the attached . . .*  
*Sign and return the Handbook Policy Agreement on the last page.*

**2021-2022**

**Rev. Paul K. Hurley, Pastor**

**Nancy Riley, Principal / Director**

**David Worthen, Asst. Principal/Asst. Director**

**Patricia Petrulavage, Director of Admissions**

This handbook is written in accordance with EEC and CDC Guidelines for health and safety precautions.

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## **St. Mary's School, Winchester**

### **Mission Statement**

St. Mary's School, Winchester provides opportunities for each child to learn and develop in a nurturing environment. We believe that each child is a unique individual with skills and talents that must be cultivated. We are dedicated to providing a curriculum that fosters curiosity, exploration, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

### **St. Mary's Faculty and Staff**

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### **Background Checks**

All employees and volunteers are required to pass CORI, SORI and DCI background checks as well as fingerprinting prior to being hired by both the Archdiocese of Boston and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Additionally, all necessary documentation in compliance with EEC will be completed by each staff member.

### **Tuition Payments**

Tuition forms must be filled out per family as requested by the director. FACTS/SIS tuition company will be the provider for St. Mary's School's tuition collection. FACTS reserves the right to charge a late fee or application fee for this service. No family may enroll in St. Mary's School without using FACTS/SIS service.

### **Non-Discriminatory Policy**

Admission to St. Mary's is made without regard to race, religious affiliation, ancestry, national origin, disability, age, or gender.

### **Health History**

A child's health record must be up to date prior to starting school. A copy of the most recent physical (within one year of enrollment) must be produced. This includes a record of all immunizations and health concerns, including allergies. If there is a chronic condition, the child must have an individual health plan explaining diagnosis and treatment instructions filled out and signed by their physician. These forms must be submitted prior to the opening of school along with any medication to treat the condition. The health records are kept by the school nurse who distributes necessary health information to classroom teachers. Children's health records will be reviewed by the school nurse yearly, or as needed to reflect any changes.

### **Administering Medication / Healthcare Needs**

Masks are required at the start of the school year by all children and adults. The Executive Director will monitor this requirement throughout the year.

Students are required to wear a face mask at drop off and dismissal time. Students will be encouraged to wear a face mask while inside the school. It is required that students bring a mask to school and an extra one to be kept in their backpack.. All staff members will be required to wear masks. Staff members may wear transparent masks so that children can see smiles and facial expressions from staff and teachers. Practicing will be encouraged by parents with children at home so that children will feel comfortable.

Administration of all medications is done by the school nurse. Doctors need to fill out an Administration of Medication Form which outlines the diagnosis and treatment for a child. A prescription will be copied from the medication with a written permission slip to administer medication from the parent, as well as a dosage chart and a list of possible side effects. The nurse

will record dosage and time of day given. A copy goes into the child's folder and a copy is sent home so that the parent has a record.

Each classroom is equipped with a first aid/emergency bag. This bag travels with staff and children wherever they go. Included in each bag are provisions for any child who has a need for emergency medication such as an EPI-pen. These medications and instructions for administration are in the bag. All staff members are required to complete the staff orientation for the school's reopening to discuss health and safety guidelines including medication administration. All staff are trained in emergency procedures including CPR and first aid certification.

### **Parent/Teacher Information Sharing and Confidentiality**

At the beginning of the school year, parents enroll in the FACTS/SIS program and RENWEB communication program. This will be a source of communication. Email lists with addresses and phone numbers are given to all staff.

When managing sensitive information, there is an ethical and legal responsibility to protect the privacy of individuals and families. This information is shared only when necessary, particularly when there are specific health and safety precautions that need to be addressed.

During the school day, staff communicate to one another. An emergency communication system is in place throughout the building to be used if necessary.

### **Student Records**

Student's records are available when a child transfers to another program. These records will be sent to the new program only when the parent/guardian has filled out an authorized "Release of Records" form.

### **Daily Schedule**

St. Mary's calendar months will be September - June. Regular school hours are 8:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. However, we have a 15 minute time frame for drop-off and pick-up to alleviate traffic. **Drop-Off is 8:00a.m. - 8:15a.m. and Pick-Up is 2:00p.m. - 2:15p.m.**

St. Mary's After School Program begins at 2:15 p.m. each day and runs until 6:00 p.m. Parents should arrive by 5:45 p.m. to allow ample time for parent/teacher contact.

Attendance: Daily attendance will be taken. Anyone who arrives after 8:15a.m. will be considered tardy. If your child is tardy, please come to the front door to sign your child in. A staff member will take your child to his/her classroom.

### **Lunch and Snacks**

Food is not served by the school. Students are required to bring snacks and lunches in bags/containers. Lunches/snacks can not be microwaved or refrigerated. Please plan accordingly.

Children are allowed to bring water bottles from home that will be refilled by the teacher as necessary throughout the day.

Strict hand-washing procedures are adhered to and hand washing before and after eating is supervised by the teacher. Handwashing procedures are posted in all places where sinks are present.

### **Celebrating Birthdays and Holidays**

St. Mary's teachers celebrate each child's birthday within their classrooms. Birthday crowns, balloons, ribbons, etc. are given to the child to celebrate his/her special day. Before sending in a birthday treat for the class, please contact your child's teacher for any allergies.

St. Mary's celebrates cultural, national, and Catholic religious holidays.

### **School Uniforms**

The school uniform consists of St. Mary's School navy blue shorts/skorts with gray t-shirt and navy blue sweatpants with sweatshirt. Elastic-waisted pants, shorts, or skorts work best with young children. Uniforms may be purchased at J. B. Pride Uniform Company in Woburn.

All children should wear comfortable closed shoes such as sneakers. Sandals and open back shoes are not allowed due to safety reasons.

Twice a month on Fridays will be a N.U.T. Day (No Uniforms Today). Students pay \$32, which is collected in September, to wear their own choice of clothing. Money collected will go towards school enrichment programs.

### **Storm Closings or Delayed Openings**

We use the FACTS/SIS form of communication. Parents will receive a text message, an email and/or a phone call. We will send you a list of television stations to inform you of delays or school closings. Please be sure to maintain up-to-date contact information in your FACTS/SIS account, as well as the school office should your email or phone number change for proper electronic communication.

### **Evacuation/Emergency Plan**

Staff members have been trained in evacuation and emergency procedures through the A.L.I.C.E. program (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) in collaboration with the Winchester Police Department. In the event of the need to evacuate the building, a designated safe space near the school has been

predetermined and approved by the Winchester Police Department. In the event of an emergency, all communication to parents and staff will come from the Executive Director.

Each classroom is equipped with an emergency backpack containing student contact information, medications and dosage instructions, and first aid equipment.

All evacuation instructions are posted in classrooms and common areas of the building.

Monthly fire/evacuation drills, as well as quarterly shelter-in-place drills are conducted as required by EEC.

### **Parent Volunteers/Visitors**

St. Mary's School is equipped with security cameras and buzz- in entry features.

All volunteers and visitors need to check in at the office upon arrival and sign in. They will receive a visitor's badge to wear while in the building.

In order to comply with the regulations for all schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we ask all volunteers to complete a CORI form. Forms are available in the school office.

### **Parent Involvement**

We recognize that parents play an important role in their child's development and school success. We encourage family involvement in the classroom and teachers will discuss all the opportunities with you.



The St. Mary's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) conducts various fundraising activities throughout the year. These activities are essential to their success. These activities also provide an excellent opportunity for children to witness the dedication and commitment of their parents to the mission of St. Mary's School.

### **Curriculum**

St. Mary's School offers students a well-researched, theme-based Preschool curriculum. It provides a variety of age-appropriate themes, with lessons and activities designed to facilitate learning, encourage curiosity, build confidence and help children to develop academic and social skills. Similarly, the Kindergarten program extends and expands learning in all areas through a theme-based approach. Teachers will provide updates and information throughout the year in newsletters that are emailed to parents.

Should we have to offer remote instruction, teachers will be prepared to provide a recorded lesson with a live lesson to supplement each day. The live lesson will also be recorded for those who are not available to join at the scheduled time. This allows students to continue the all important need to be connected to their peers, teacher and curriculum. Also, this allows the academic year to continue smoothly when we return to in-person learning.

### **Student Assessments**

Assessments are used to gather data and provide educators and parents with critical information about a child's development and growth. EEC regulations require that these assessments be used as a form of evaluating and maintaining a high-quality program.

Preschool Progress Reports and Kindergarten Report Cards will be distributed two/ three times a year. Assessments are conducted by teachers and shared at parent conferences, held two times during the school year. Student portfolios are kept for each child as well, documenting the progress that he/she is making in all areas.

Staff members meet with the Executive Director on a regular basis to discuss curriculum, share ideas and assess the program.

Professional Development is a regular part of the program and is provided as outlined in the school calendar. In addition, teachers are encouraged to take courses offered through the Catholic Schools Office and EEC. All of our lead teachers are certified and licensed by the State of Massachusetts.

## **Behavior Management**

Our discipline is based on respect for self and respect for others. Each teacher will explain and teach positive school-wide behavior expectations in their classroom in a developmentally appropriate manner. Students will learn school and classroom expectations of behavior and are guided in making appropriate choices.

Given the importance of social/emotional development in young children, discipline policies will reflect the latest research on practices that support positive behavior, learning expectations, and rules of being in a school. Teachers will support children in becoming good citizens.

Guidance for children should always be conducted with respect and dignity of the individual. No student should be ridiculed or publicly humiliated. Teachers will manage children's behaviors and situations in their own classrooms whenever possible in order for the student to build a trusting and secure relationship with his/her teacher(s). The Executive Director should be made aware of on-going challenges in the classroom that are not responsive to developmentally appropriate practices; for example: redirection, teaching the appropriate action, encouraging problem solving, etc.

St. Mary's School ensures that every possible step is taken to address behavioral concerns.

The process that we have developed is called "Child Study." After consultation with the Executive Director and parents, a teacher may present a child to the child study team for review. The team consists of the Executive Director, the school nurse, and the classroom teacher. The teacher presents the concerns to the team and recommendations are made for adjustments to the child's program to address identified needs. Parents then meet with the Executive Director and teacher to consider the recommendations.

If further intervention is deemed necessary, parents may be asked to consult with an outside agency or request an evaluation through the school system where the family resides. Removal of a child from the program is only necessary if a determination is made that, after all appropriate interventions have been tried, the program is not able to support the needs of the child.

At that time, parents will be consulted as to the best way to help the child separate from the program. Every effort is then made to assist the parents in identifying an educational setting that can best accommodate the child's needs.

## **Transitions**

When a child enters the program for the first time, every effort is made to ensure a smooth transition. This visit to the school includes interaction with the teacher, familiarizing the child with the setting and explaining routines.

Transitions throughout the school day are managed by each teacher in his/her classroom through the use of daily orientation, visual scheduling and verbal reminders to help children transition smoothly from one activity to the next.

Children who find transitions challenging are offered reminders in advance of a change, and positively encouraged when they are able to make the transition without incident.

Transitions from one class to another are planned to best accommodate the needs of the child or children. When a child transitions from one teacher to another, closure activities are included and appropriate information is shared with the receiving classroom teacher.

## **Toileting**

Toileting procedures follow EEC guidelines. Children are supervised by the classroom teacher and assisted when needed by the teacher or an assistant. All children are supervised in handwashing after using the bathroom. Only paper towels are used for cleaning and drying purposes. Parents are asked to provide an extra set of clothing in case of an accident. When a child needs a change of clothing, the nurse will assist the child in cleaning him or herself and making sure that the soiled clothing is placed in a zip-lock bag to be taken home. Two adults will always be present when a child is being cleaned and changed following an accident. No child will be excluded from the program because they are not completely toilet trained.

## **Preparedness/Steps for Reducing the Spread of Germs**

The building is cleaned daily by the custodian. All common areas of the building, including bathrooms, are cleaned and sanitized daily.

## **Handwashing Practices and Hygiene**

Children will be asked to wash their hands upon arrival before entering the classroom. Handwashing areas will be equipped with soap, water and hand sanitizing solutions. Paper towels are used exclusively for hand washing.

Students will also wash hands before and after eating snacks and lunch. Children will wash their hands after toileting and coming in from outside play.

Classrooms are equipped with sinks for easy access to hand washing. Portable sinks are available for rooms that do not have permanent ones. Signs will be posted in each classroom for handwashing, coughing and sneezing instructions. Teachers will make sure that children know the proper length of time for handwashing and supervise them in the process.

### **Mandated Reporters**

St. Mary's School staff are mandated reporters and are required to make a report when they suspect, in the course of their professional duties, that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect. The staff member who suspects abuse or neglect should immediately inform the Executive Director, and together they will contact DCF. In the event that the Executive Director is not available, the teacher should make the call.

### **Building Security**

All building doors are equipped with camera security systems. The main door is also equipped with a buzz-in entry feature. No one is allowed entry into the building unless cleared by the office through camera and voice communication. The employee monitoring the entrance will determine if it is appropriate to open the door. Once inside, all visitors are required to check in at the main office.

### **Building Certifications**

All certificates required by the Town of Winchester, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese of Boston are kept on file in the school office and are available for inspection at any time. These include, but are not limited to hazard and safety inspections, lead paint certificate of inspection, and certificate of occupancy.

### **Referrals**

St. Mary's School maintains referral information from each of the school systems in which our families reside. Families are entitled to access the services that the public schools provide in their town of residence. In case of the need to request an evaluation and/or other services for a student, the Executive Director will provide the necessary contact information and process for the parent to make the request. The parent, and not the school, must make the initial request for an evaluation to their city or town school department.

### **Additional Resources**

St. Mary's School has access for staff and students to the following resources. We maintain regular contact with each of these agencies and can access assistance both for the school and for individuals as needed.

- Winchester Police and Fire Departments
- Winchester Board of Health
- Winchester Public Schools: Special Education testing and services
- Archdiocese of Boston, Catholic Schools Office: Consultation, Professional Development resources, Director and Staff support, Legal and HR services

**Please call the school office with any questions that you may have at 781-729-5515.**

**St. Mary's School is online. Our website is: [www.stmaryswinchester.org](http://www.stmaryswinchester.org)**

*HANDBOOK POLICY*  
*AGREEMENT*  
**(2021-2022)**

**We have read the St. Mary's School Family Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and financial obligations contained in it.**

*All families are required to sign and return this form.*  
*Thank You*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Child/Children (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please Print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature