

St. Mary's Episcopal  
Day School

Student/Parent Handbook  
2022-2023

**St. Mary's Episcopal Day School**  
24 North Masonic  
Bellville, Texas 77418

**School Office: 979-865-5551**  
**Church Office: 979-865-2330**

**Website: [www.stmarysdayschool.com](http://www.stmarysdayschool.com)**

Natasha McGee  
Head of School and Director

Licensed by the  
Department of Human Resources of Texas  
for children from 18 months--Kindergarten  
Accredited by the  
Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools

A ministry of  
St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Member of:  
The Diocese of Texas  
and  
The Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools

**Mission Statement:**

*The congregation of St. Mary's Episcopal Church through its Christian Day School creates a learning environment where children can flourish as unique individuals in God's sight. St. Mary's Episcopal Day School provides a foundation of academic excellence allowing children to grow spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and socially in a Christian environment.*

*St. Mary's Episcopal Day School  
Board of Education*

Terrie Hudgins (281.814.0600).....President  
Brooke Grell (979.877.4665).....Vice-President  
Keri Richardson (979.203.7371).....Secretary  
Justin Richardson (979.885.9820).....Treasurer  
Dixie Hardin.....Member  
Chris Masters.....Member  
Justin Noviskie .....Member  
Neville Remmert .....Member  
Christi Vest .....Member  
Wesley Winkelmann.....Member

*Staff Members*

Natasha McGee.....Head of School  
Father John Campbell.....Rector

## *Our Mission*

St. Mary's Mission Statement expresses the value we place on the church and school relationship and the support of St. Mary's Episcopal Church. We strive to provide an excellent learning environment for our students and value their uniqueness. Our mission encompasses the growth of all aspects of a child: spiritual, intellectual, emotional and social. We recognize that attendance at St. Mary's Episcopal Day School is the first step towards a solid foundation of academic excellence. Thus, we will do our utmost to provide a learning environment where children can flourish in their own unique and special way in God's sight. Our mission is, therefore, to work in conjunction with the congregation of St. Mary's Episcopal Church to support the growth and development of each of our individual students.

In His Name,

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School

*St. Mary's Episcopal Day School Staff  
2022-2023*

***Head of School & Director***

Natasha McGee  
979-865-5551  
[nmcgee@stmarysdayschool.com](mailto:nmcgee@stmarysdayschool.com)

***Director of Operations & Finance***

Sara Barnett  
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***18-month-olds/Enrichment Time***

Rebecca Girts  
[rgirts@stmarysdayschool.com](mailto:rgirts@stmarysdayschool.com)

***18-month-olds Class Aide***

Tommye Northrup

***Two-year-olds***

Dori Harrison  
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***Two-year-olds/Enrichment Time***

Cayle Southerland  
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***Two-year-olds Class Aide/Enrichment  
Time Lead Teacher***

Hailey Quinton

***Two-year-olds Class Aide***

Lacey Winch

***Three-year-olds***

Roxanne Buro  
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***Three-year-olds/Enrichment Time***

Lorena Guerrero  
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***Pre-Kindergarten***

Shadel Engler  
[sengler@stmarysdayschool.com](mailto:sengler@stmarysdayschool.com)

***Pre-Kindergarten/Enrichment Time***

Holly Lewis  
[hlewis@stmarysdayschool.com](mailto:hlewis@stmarysdayschool.com)

***Kindergarten***

Sabrina Wilson  
[swilson@stmarysdayschool.com](mailto:swilson@stmarysdayschool.com)

***Motor and Technology Lab Teacher/  
Enrichment Time***

Cierra Tellerine

***Music/Art Teacher***

Ashley Slater

***STEM/Art Teacher***

Alyssa Honeycutt

***Spanish Teacher/Enrichment Time***

Alyson Guerrero

## *Our History*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School was founded in the fall of 1964 by the women of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Bellville, Texas, under the leadership of The Rev. Don Keeling. In the start, there were five members on the Board of Education, composed of the Rector, one representative from the Vestry (Mr. Kick Schneider), two from the congregation at large (Mrs. Hillia Donahue and Mr. Lee Dittert) and one from the Episcopal Church Women's group (Mrs. Charles Sander).

The first Head of School and teacher of St. Mary's Day School was Mrs. Hugh (Cora) Keeling, who served from 1964 until her retirement in 1976. Today a scholarship fund has been set up in her honor to assist with children and families who require financial assistance in order to attend St. Mary's.

The first class Mrs. Keeling taught in 1964 had five, four year old students. Members of the original class were: Stephen Browning, Dules Luedke, Alisa Windham and Betsy Trenckmann. By the end of the first school year, there were twenty students between the four-year-old and Kindergarten classes, as well as an additional teacher.

Today we have an eighteen-month-old class, two two-year-old classes, two three-year-old classes, two Pre-Kindergarten classes and a Kindergarten class. St. Mary's currently offers Enrichment Time, an extended day program for those families who desire afternoon care. The early afternoon program consists of lunch and rest time. Students staying for late enrichment have a wide variety of activities which enhance the school experience, such as story time, music and movement, Smart Board activities, snack and outside playtime.

St. Mary's Day School is certified by the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools and licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective services. We uphold the standards of excellence in addition to meeting the minimum standards for child care in the State of Texas.

## *Our Episcopal Tradition*

The Episcopal tradition is built on a long history of welcoming a great variety of belief and expression. As far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, our mother denomination, the Church of England, stretched itself to include members of Roman Catholic beliefs as well as those of Calvinist, evangelical persuasion (and everything in between). Today, the great majority of students in St. Mary's Day School are not Episcopalian, but represent the full range of Christian, as well as value systems outside the Christian tradition. Consistent with our Episcopal heritage, St. Mary's welcomes all and will make sure that each student and family feels they have a firm place in the school's spiritual community.

The proximity of the church building to the school wing emphasizes the close connection between our spiritual grounding and our educational program. Families, who enter the school foyer and children, on their way to the playground, are conscious of the worship space they pass by. St. Mary's clergy lead a once-weekly chapel service in the main sanctuary so that children can grow comfortable being in a holy place. This chapel service is designed to give children a lively understanding of Bible stories drawn from the Old and New Testaments, as well as an introduction to prayer, a spirit of reverence, and the importance of giving through a weekly collection that benefits worthy charities.

The Tuesday chapel services are mirrored in daily classroom worship time where teachers tailor reverence to the age-level of their children. In worship, as well as in all playground and classroom interactions, teachers model loving and respectful treatment of others based on the knowledge that we are all creatures, beloved of God. In the classroom, our Episcopal affiliation encourages intellectual inquiry as well as moral and spiritual development.

Episcopal affiliation also means that St. Mary's Episcopal Church is involved with St Mary's School in important ways. Parishioners are frequently present at School activities and support school fundraisers. Joint programs for both parents and parishioners are planned during the school year. A majority of members of St. Mary's School Board are required to be Episcopalian, providing the School with a secure and well-established base of support and governance.

The Episcopal Church may be invisible to many parents and children on a day-to-day basis, but its presence is positive and pervasive.

### *Our Philosophy*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School recognizes each child develops differently and at a different rate; therefore, we focus on the whole, unique child. While there are shared characteristics and development for particular age groups, each individual develops at his/her own pace. We are committed to offering a safe, loving, and fun Christian environment for each child to explore, discover, and learn about themselves and the world around them.

We present numerous stimulating and fun activities that are developmentally and age appropriate for each class. Through guided and independent playful activities, students attain many of the skills necessary for educational growth and learn many basic concepts which lay a foundation for further learning experiences. St. Mary's utilizes the Frog Street Press curriculum in our younger classes, supplemented by additional hands on activities. Kindergarten incorporates Saxon reading and phonics, Go Math, Studies Weekly and teacher made activities and resources into the Kindergarten program in order to assist the students in a smooth transition into the Bellville Independent School District.

For over 50 years, St. Mary's has provided a solid foundation of academic excellence. Our staff plans activities to engage our students and develop them spiritually, academically, emotionally and

socially. Our weekly chapel services and lessons are enhanced with in class Bible lessons, stories music and crafts. We provide students with extensive exposure to literature. Reading readiness and appreciation of books is emphasized in our classrooms. We spend a lot of time reading to our students and sharing a love of books to promote good reading habits. We encourage parents to engage in reading activities at home to help continue this important developmental process. We feel it is very important for there to be a solid partnership between home, school, and church for the success of our children.

### *Goals and Objectives*

It is the goal of St. Mary's Episcopal Day School to give your child a strong foundation for his/her education for the future. We strive to assist your child's development socially and emotionally by helping him/her to develop leadership skills, self-esteem, gain a positive attitude towards life, and exhibit cooperative and pro-social behavior.

In order to assist in your child's cognitive development, the staff promotes the acquisition of learning and problem-solving skills and an increase in logical thinking skills. Participating in make-believe play, verbal communication skills, and reading and writing readiness allow an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the world in which we live.

Above all things, our goal at St. Mary's Day School is to encourage your child's spiritual development through demonstrating God's love for his children. Each child has the knowledge that each one of us is God's loved child forever.

The goals and objectives set forth will be achieved through an educational curriculum, theme study, and hands-on learning in a center-oriented classroom. Different units of interest are introduced in many subject areas encompassing art, language, science, reading, math, computers, music, physical activity, social studies, and Spanish.

### *School Board*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School is governed by a Day School Board consisting of nine voting members who meet monthly in order to conduct the business of the school. In order for St. Mary's to have the best possible school for current and future students, the Board members encourage input from the parents and guardians of our students. If you have any problems or concerns of a policy nature, please feel free to contact any or all members of the Day School Board.

## *Staff*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School employs teachers who share both our spiritual and educational goals for our students. Teachers in the Early Developmental through Kindergarten classes are required to maintain a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education and all staff must be certified in CPR and First Aid. All staff members are encouraged to be active Christians and have the desire, training, and personal characteristics necessary to achieve the goals set forth by the Day School's Board and Director.

## *State of Texas Licensing*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 832.595.3000. A copy of the Minimum Standards is available at: [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/documents/Standards\\_and\\_Regulations/746\\_Centers.pdf](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/documents/Standards_and_Regulations/746_Centers.pdf). The most recent inspection report is in the red binder outside of the Head of School's office. Other information can be obtained from the Department of Family and Protective Services website at: [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us). Suspected child abuse should be reported by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.252.5400. To view a list of these offices, please visit the PRS website or call the Child Care Information Line at 1.800.862.5252.

## *Enrollment*

Class size will be limited based on the staff to child ratio, available room space, and the policies established by SAES, the Day School Board and State regulations. Enrollment age will be the age of the child on September 1<sup>st</sup>. A pre-registration period is held each school year for current families. Tuition must be current and all past due amounts paid before registering for the new school year.

Pre-registration opens in late February for church members, currently enrolled students, siblings of currently enrolled students, alumni and former families. Registration opens to the public in early March on a first come, first served basis. Information about upcoming enrollment can be found on the St. Mary's website: [www.stmarysdayschool.com](http://www.stmarysdayschool.com) in mid-February. Registration fee and enrollment forms are required to hold a child's place in our program. Once a class is full, potential students will be placed on a waiting list.

Students are enrolled upon receipt of the non-refundable registration fee and signed binding contract. Contracts are dated when received to reserve a class place for your child. Please note that this contract is a binding and legal document and that you are agreeing to full payment of your child's tuition for the academic year. Because the school bases its annual budget on contracted tuition, you are required to fulfill your tuition commitment even if you withdraw your child from school before the end of the year. Only the St. Mary's School Board can release you from your contract under special circumstances. If you wish to apply for release from your

contract prior to the end of the school year, you will need to write a letter to the Board detailing your reasons and requesting termination of your contract. Termination of a signed contract is at the sole discretion of the St. Mary's School Board.

### *Admissions*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School admits children of any race, color, creed or country of origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to the students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed or country of origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions, policies or scholarship programs. Our admissions policies reflect good faith efforts to invite inquiries from students of diverse backgrounds in keeping with the Episcopal commitment to diversity.

In order to derive benefits from the programs being offered, the child must be of sufficient maturity. The administration reserves the right to place a child in the class that will be the most beneficial for the student after the parent or guardian has been notified. Requests for certain teachers will be considered but not guaranteed. St. Mary's Episcopal Day School follows these guidelines for class age ranges: Early Developmental: 18 months; Developmental: 2 years old before September 1<sup>st</sup>; Early Childhood: 3 years old before September 1<sup>st</sup>; Pre-Kindergarten: 4 years old before September 1<sup>st</sup>; Kindergarten: 5 years old before September 1<sup>st</sup>. **Students enrolling in the three-year-old program must be fully potty-trained by the first day of school.**

Each St. Mary's student is required to have a signed, updated copy of their immunization record on file at the time of registration.

**Enrichment Time** students are required to provide the following:

**\*\*Lunch that does NOT require refrigeration or heating, including necessary preparation and eating utensils. We suggest finger foods for young ones. We serve water with lunch.**

**\*\*A nap mat, pillow and/or blanket for naptime, no oversized mats, sleeping bags or toys. The pillow and blanket must fit in our nap storage cubbies and will go home each Friday for laundering.**

### *Open Door Policy*

St. Mary's Day School has an open door policy where parents have the opportunity to visit our school at any time during the School's hours of operation, Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. to observe their child or children, the school's operation and program activities, without having to secure prior approval from Day School Staff or Administration. Please be aware that due to Covid, this may need to be adjusted during the year.

## *Children with Special Needs*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School recognizes there are children with special needs and is willing to work with parents and their special needs children. If a child has a special need, our school will make every reasonable effort and modification to accommodate the needs of that child so that s/he may benefit from our program. However, as we are a tuition-based facility, the school may not be equipped to provide the financial resources and trained staff necessary to meet the needs of each child with special needs. Note: St. Mary's cannot allow the admittance of any child who poses a direct threat to the health or safety of other students. The Head of School reserves the right to make the final decision as to continued placement in the School.

If a child is enrolled in St. Mary's who may have a special need, but has not been diagnosed, our staff will follow a plan to ensure that steps are taken to raise awareness of a child's possible special needs in order for the child to receive professional help as soon as possible: 1. bring a concern to the attention of the Head of School; 2. document uncommon behavior or health issues for several weeks to discern patterns which may facilitate a diagnosis only provided by a health professional; 3. inform the parents of noticeable uncommon behavior or health patterns; 4. contact ECI, if student is under age 3, for an evaluation. ECI (Early Childhood Intervention) is a statewide program for families with children, birth to three, with disabilities and developmental delays. Or, contact the Bellville ISD Special Education services, for students 3-5 years old, for a possible evaluation.

### *Tuition*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School operates as an educational non-profit agency. It is financed by registration fees, tuition receipts, support from the St. Mary's parish family, fundraisers, and support from Day School families and friends. A registration fee is required upon enrollment and is non-refundable upon submission.

All tuition payments are to be placed in your child's zipper pouch in their folder or deposited in the tuition drop box in the hallway by the Day School office. Cash is discouraged as a means of paying tuition for your benefit as well as the school's; however, if unavoidable circumstances require a cash payment, you must deliver payment in person to the Head of School or Director of Operations and Finance so that a receipt may be filed.

Tuition payments are due on the *first* school day of each month and may be paid by cash, personal check, cashier's check, or money order. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the school's director. An assessment of \$25 will be added to payments received after the *fifth* of each month. If the fifth day of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, payment must be received at the start of the school day on the following business day. A \$30.00 charge will be assessed for each returned check. Past due notices are issued after the fifth of each month. **Please note that it is the policy of the School that tuition payments (and other payments) may be deposited upon receipt. It is the responsibility of the payer to guarantee payment.** On an account

that is overdue by one month, the parent or guardian will have to pay \$75.00 per week (+\$25.00 each additional child) until the account is brought up to date. Families with delinquent accounts will not be allowed to participate in activities which require an additional fee until the account is brought current. **This may include Enrichment Time.** If a parent misses a weekly payment the board reserves the right to remove the student from the day school program. There are no reductions for illnesses, holidays or vacations in the school year. Should a student need to withdraw, the Day School Board has the sole discretion and reserves the right to waive the tuition due to circumstances sufficient to justify withdrawal of the student. Please see Enrollment section above.

### *Tuition Assistance Program*

The goal of St. Mary's Episcopal Day School is to provide an opportunity to benefit from a quality Christian education for all. Tuition assistance forms are available in the school office and are strictly confidential. A St. Mary's Day School Board Tuition Assistance Committee reviews all applications and final approval of applicants is made by the Day School Board upon recommendation of the committee. Tuition assistance is available to students based upon need and fund availability. Approved applications are valid for one school year only and all information is held in strict confidence. **Please note that tuition assistance is partial in nature and funds are limited.**

### *Inclement Weather*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School, including Enrichment Time, will close for bad weather if the Bellville Independent School District closes. Staff and student safety is our primary concern. Please sign up for your class's Bloomz communication system and listen to local radio stations or television stations for announcements pertaining to these closures.

### *Emergency Evacuation*

St. Mary's takes every precaution to ensure the safety of your child. Fire drills are practiced once a month. We also practice bad weather and lock-down drills four times a school year. In the remote event that an emergency or disaster occurs at our facility, St. John Lutheran Church is prepared to receive us as our in-town evacuation site. St. John's Lutheran Church's location is 520 N Holland in Bellville and their phone number is 979.865.2081.

In the event of an evacuation, children under 24 months of age will be walked, two students/per one adult and all special needs children will be walked one on one.

## *Chapel*

Striving to meet your child's needs for growth and development in a Christian environment, St. Mary's will teach about God's never-ending love, Bible stories and have a short worship service in the Sanctuary every Tuesday. St. Mary's Rector, Head of School, a School Staff Member, or visiting Minister will lead Chapel time. Our Kindergarten, Pre-K and three-year-old classes have chapel at 9:00. Our younger students go to chapel at 10:30. Parents are always welcome to share in these special worship times.

## *Arrival and Departure*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School classes will begin promptly at 8:10 a.m. If possible, please call the school office to indicate that your child will be late to school due to an emergency, a doctor's appointment, or other reason. Punctuality is important to the success of your child's school day, as well as to the smooth operation of the classroom. Please enter the School quietly, with the least disruption possible if class has begun. (This includes goodbye hugs and kisses in the foyer to allow class to continue uninterrupted.) **Late arrivals may drop their child off at the Day School Office to minimize disruption.** Please ring the doorbell at the glass entrance doors if it is necessary to enter the building after this time.

For morning drop off, parents are to park in the front row or lower parking lot and walk their child to the Parish Hall. Parents may sign their child in and leave them in the Parish Hall, or walk them to class. If walking them to class, please sign them in and, if applicable, set their lunchbox on the designated table and nap mat in their cubby prior to walking them to class. If you are planning on dropping them off, staff will be on hand inside the Parish Hall. The Parish Hall door will be closed and locked at 8:10 a.m. If you arrive after 8:10 a.m. please ring the bell at the main doors in the foyer. Note: children walking into the school unaccompanied by parents will not be allowed.

**It is very important that you sign your child in on the sign-in sheet when dropping him or her off every morning.** We have found it best to develop a ritual of saying goodbye to your child with a hug, kiss, special phrase, and then leaving the child with a staff member. This will limit tears and allow your child to go about his/her day. Please minimize noise and conversations and do not linger in the halls in order to keep from disrupting the classrooms. Again, we have found it to be better for our students if they can begin their day quickly.

If you need to pick your child up early please ring the doorbell and sign him/her out on the list adjacent to the classroom door. **For routine pick-up at the end of the class day or at 3:00, we ask parents to adhere to the following procedure for picking up students:** Please pull into the parking lot following the line of cars. Students will stay with staff members inside the building until the party responsible for picking up the child is in line. **Please stay in your vehicle until a staff member brings your child to you. We ask for you to buckle your child into his/her car seat,**

**booster seat or safety restraint.** Please avoid parking in the lined parking spaces along the sidewalk during school hours. These safety measures and procedures have been put in place to keep our students and staff safe during dismissals. There will be no car line for the Late Enrichment Time program after the 3:00 carline. To pick up your child after 3:00, please come to the glass doors, push the button and say your child's name into the "speaker box" once it is answered.

In the event that your child is to be picked up by another person/party, parental written authorization must be provided to the teacher. Your child **WILL NOT** be released to anyone not listed as an authorized contact. This also applies to children riding in a car pool. On the day the child will be picked up by someone else, ***teachers or office staff must be notified, in writing***, as to how the child will be riding home. Proper identification will be required of anyone picking up a child whom the staff does not know. The staff is instructed not to release children to anyone under 18 years old; it is imperative that a parent or authorized adult picks up their child from school. We ask for everyone's understanding as our primary responsibility is your child's safety.

### *Late Pickup Policy*

Students picked up after 12:10 in the morning, 3:10 or 5:30 in the afternoon are considered to be picked up late. The first late pickup will be no charge, after that a late fee of \$10 will be invoiced per late pickup.

### *Safety Policy*

Here at St. Mary's Episcopal Day School the safety of our students, teachers and staff is held as the upmost priority. In order to ensure that our campus continues to be a safe institute for children to learn and grow at, the following rules have been implemented: Parish Hall doors will close and lock at 8:15 am promptly for drop offs in the morning. If you arrive later than 8:15 am you will need to ring the doorbell at the main entrance of the school and wait to be buzzed in by the office. Magnetic locking capabilities have been added to both doors connecting to the main school hallway. St. Mary's Day School can be completely and safely locked down if needed. We have partnered with Bellville Police Department and in an effort for our students to build a positive relationship with police officers and an added measure of security, we will have Bellville police officers present at morning drop off two to three times a week. They will also drive by the school throughout the day as an additional security measure. Lastly, the School and Church have added security cameras both inside and outside the building. The successful implementation of this policy requires commitment from all levels. We thank you in advance for your commitment and willingness to continue to make St. Mary's Episcopal Day School a safe institute.

## *Discipline and Guidance*

A major objective of early childhood education is for the child to develop self-control, to feel responsible for his/her actions and words, and to be capable of controlling them. This is an ongoing process which is first demonstrated by a teacher who is loving, kind, considerate, forgiving, knowledgeable, and a leader of his/her group. Each staff member of St. Mary's Day School understands that a child: needs to know and understand classroom rules; needs to understand another's feelings; needs training in solving his/her own problems; responds to praise rather than punishment; learns when allowed to experience natural consequences of behavior; has a self-image that needs to be protected when discipline is needed; and can experience success through rewarding progress in exercising self-discipline.

The word discipline is derived from the root word "to teach." Our discipline policy is based on time out and in positively redirecting children; our goals are to help children feel good about themselves, develop self-discipline, and to teach children to respect the rights and property of others. There will be no harsh, cruel or unusual treatment of any child. This includes, but is not limited to, corporal punishment, threats of corporal punishment; punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training; humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child; subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language; or requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

St. Mary's recognizes that without the home supporting its discipline policy, changes in behavior are impossible. In extreme disciplinary cases, the Day School Director may request that the parent pick up the child from school for the day. If deliberate disrespect and disobedience continue and cannot be corrected through the efforts of the parents and School, the child may be dismissed from the school. Our first priority is providing a safe and loving environment for all our students, and we cannot allow that to be disrupted or endangered.

### *Biting Policy*

While biting can be an age appropriate developmental stage, St. Mary's Day School is required to provide and maintain a safe environment for all children. The following measures will be put in place for any students who bite others to help them learn that it is not allowed at school and to ensure the health and safety of the other children at the school:

If a student bites on two days in a one week period, the biter will be asked to remain at home for 2 contracted school days. Once the student returns, each subsequent bite will require them to be picked up immediately and remain at home for 2 additional contracted school days. If the child goes two weeks without biting, they will revert back to the initial step. Excessive biting by a student, as determined by the Head of School and the School Board, with multiple, repeated

offenses, may lead to the student being asked to remain home for the remainder of the semester or school year.

### *Health and Safety*

An immunization/medical form must be submitted prior to, or on the first day of, a child's enrollment at St. Mary's Day School. This health record form must be signed by the child's attending physician or licensed medical personnel. It is important that parents indicate on the enrollment form any allergies or medical issues their child may have. As per state policy, children with severe allergies that require medical treatment must have a completed emergency plan signed by the parent and physician prior the first day of school. St. Mary's conducts vision/hearing screening on all children four years of age or older, in accordance with policies mandated by the State of Texas.

Medication will not be given by school personnel, unless it is under a doctor's prescription and is in a prescribed bottle with the student's name on it; or it is an over-the-counter medication that is age-appropriate. The parent must provide written authorization and instructions on the day the medication is to be given. All notes must be dated and signed. Medication must be given to your child's teacher or a staff member to be stored in the Head of School's office; ***DO NOT put medications in your child's backpack.*** Also, please note all medications must be current, expired medications will not be administered by the Day School staff.

***Please DO NOT send your child to school if he/she is ill. Each child is briefly evaluated on arrival and if he/she appears ill, may not be admitted to class or may be sent home in an effort to protect classmates from illness. To avoid a return trip to School, please evaluate your child at home.*** Indicators that your child is sick are: fever, sore throat, acute cold or persistent cough, red-inflamed or discharging eyes, swollen glands around the jaw, ears or neck; vomiting, nausea or abdominal pains; more than two accidents with diarrhea; pediculosis capillitii (head lice); earaches; thick, colored nasal discharge. Children exhibiting these symptoms cannot adequately learn or participate in class AND may be contagious; parents will be called to pick up a child. To return to School, that child must be symptom-free for 24 hours or have a note from a physician stating that the child is not contagious and may return to school. A child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school, ***without the use of fever-reducing medication.*** As per state minimum standards a temperature of 100 or above is to be considered fever. If a child comes to school with fever or develops a temperature during the day, the parent or guardian will be called to pick up the child. Isolation space will be provided for up to 30 minutes with a staff member until the parent or guardian arrives; after that time, additional charges accrue at \$10/hour or part thereof. Please notify the teacher when your child is known to have been exposed to a contagious disease outside of the school. \*\*If your child has pediculosis capillitii (head lice), the student must be released by a physician before returning to school and a physician's note must be presented to the Day School Director. The School Board, staff and families thank you in advance for your cooperation in keeping the School family as healthy as possible.

If a child has a communicable disease such as chicken pox, measles, hepatitis, etc., he/she may not return to school until he/she is no longer contagious, according to a note from his/her physician.

Staff Vaccination Policy - our staff provide vaccination documentation and are encouraged to get an annual flu shot. Staff follow state mandates and guidelines in regard to personal illness, hand washing, sanitizing and wearing gloves when dealing with bodily fluids.

Teachers and Staff members do not apply sunscreen or insect repellent to students during the school day. In the event that your child requires either of these, please apply at home.

**In order to keep our campus as safe as possible, St. Mary's Episcopal Day School is designated as a gun-free, drug-free, gang-free, smoke-free campus.**

Our toys are periodically screened and those which have been designated or appear to pose a safety threat are removed from the campus.

If a child is involved in an accident at school, every effort will be made to reach the parent or guardian. The child will be given first aid if needed. In the event a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school will have the authority to call a doctor or to hospitalize the child at the parent or guardian's expense. If parent or guardian cannot be reached, a friend or relative specified on the emergency form will be called and notified of the emergency. Staff members have been certified in First Aid and CPR. Enrollment at St. Mary's releases the School and staff from liability for injuries to students. In the event of an accident that requires medical attention occurs while your child is at school the St. Mary's Episcopal Day School staff completes an Accident Report for the parents, who will sign the report and return a copy to the office.

### *Child Abuse and Neglect Policy*

State law requires all staff members to report suspected child physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and neglect. St. Mary's Day School will provide training for all staff on the identification and reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect each program year. The director will provide this training for new staff at an orientation within 30 days of their hire date, including any new staff hired during the school year. All employees must complete at least one clock hour of annual training from the Department of Family and Protective Services or other source including but not limited to face to face and /online training.

DFPS defines abuse and neglect as the following acts or omissions by a person:

(a) Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of

substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including any injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given. This does not include an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing possessory conservator that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm. (b) Sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of continuous sexual abuse of young child or children under Section 21.02, Penal Code, indecency with a child under Section 21.11, Penal Code, sexual assault under Section 22.011, Penal Code or aggravated sexual assault under 22.021, Penal Code. (c) Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning.

Neglect includes the following acts or omissions by a person:

(a) Placing a child in or failing to remove a child from a situation in which a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child. (b) Failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a child with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of a child. (c) The failure to provide a child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Community resources are also available from the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Department of Family and Protective Services Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program (CBCAP Program).

### *Dress Code*

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School believes personal appearance is important to the success of a child's school day and high standards of dignity and pride are closely associated with proper dress and grooming. In addition, the children play actively every day, and it is important that they are comfortable, safe and confident as they play. Therefore, the following guidelines are to be followed:

1. Children will wear clean, comfortable clothing suitable for play. Since independence is a goal for every child, parents are asked to choose clothing that their children can manage by themselves--this includes limiting the use of belts, buttons, and zippers to those children who cannot manage. Elastic waist pants and shorts are a child's best

friend! Girls need to wear leggings, shorts or bloomers with dresses to preserve modesty.

2. Hair will be kept clean and well-groomed, with long hair secured away from the face.
3. Acceptable shoes must be worn which do not create a health or safety hazard for the children. Socks and tennis shoes are required. Sandals, crocs, and flip flops are not encouraged as they pose a safety hazard and are uncomfortable on the playground.
4. Children are to be dressed appropriately for the weather. Heavy coats, gloves and hats are recommended for very cold weather. Unless it is raining or extremely cold, the children play outside during the day. Fresh air is beneficial to everyone's health, so please send coats, caps, mittens, etc., and remember to label each item of clothing with your child's name.
5. Two extra sets of clothes along with an extra pair of shoes and socks are required to be kept at school. These should be seasonally appropriate and replaced the following day if your child has an accident.
6. Parents should mark all belongings with the child's first and last name.

### *Attendance*

For the school year to be the most beneficial for your child, regular attendance and punctuality are necessary. If a child misses' school for more than two days or if you know in advance that your child will be out for a few days, please contact the office or your child's teacher. Remember, we care about them, and worry when they are not in class.

### *Snacks*

Each child will receive a mid-morning snack (and mid-afternoon snack if attending Enrichment Time) with water or milk. We serve crackers, fruit, pretzels, cheese, cereals, yogurts and other nutritious snacks. St. Mary's encourages healthy eating habits through our snack menu and teaches portion control during snack time. Please provide your child with breakfast prior to arrival so they can concentrate during busy morning activities. A snack menu is posted on the parent bulletin board in the hallway.

### *Outdoor/Indoor Physical Activity*

Throughout the day children will have ample time for outdoor play. Children do not just play for fun; they play to learn. Research shows that playing in any way will help develop core cognitive, social, and creative skills, but the benefits of outdoor play for children's development are infinite. The playground and outdoor play are where exploration, imagination, fun, excitement, relationships and laughter flourish. Our 18-month-old and two-year-old classes will have two 30-minute recess times on the playground. Our three-year-old, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes will have one 30 min recess time on the playground and any Enrichment Time students will have an additional outdoor play time before lunch. For our Late Enrichment Time students,

another 45 min outdoor play time is scheduled to follow the student's afternoon snack time. If weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, classes will be moved to the Parish Hall for recess time.

Students also participate in Motor Lab weekly where they practice skills that aide in their gross motor development.

In addition to the above, Kindergarten students participate in two 30-minute Physical Education classes weekly.

It is important that your child wear appropriate clothes/shoes to school, so they can participate safely in all the play opportunities offered throughout their daily time at school. Closed toed shoes are best for physical activity for all ages. Comfortable clothing that allows your child to move, bend and stretch will allow them to benefit from their activity time the most. Girls need to wear leggings, shorts or bloomers with dresses to preserve modesty.

### *Field Trips*

Throughout the year your child's class, primarily the Kindergarten and Pre-K classes, might be involved in field trips off of the St. Mary's campus. A permission slip signed by a parent or guardian must be on file in order for your child to participate. Notification of each field trip (including date of departure and return times and host/hostess information) will be provided to the parent or guardian prior to any field trip. If you prefer your child not attend a field trip, you must contact the director of the school to make alternate arrangements. All children and adults will be buckled into seat belts or appropriate safety restraints and all safety precautions will be taken. The teacher assigns the drivers and chaperone responsibilities before the field trip. All chaperones will need to take the appropriate training required by the Diocese of Texas called "Safeguarding God's Children" before being in the car alone with Day School children. It is also required that the Day School office have a copy of each chaperone's current driver's license and proof of insurance before the trip. As field trips are for the benefit of our St. Mary's students, we ask that siblings not attend as they can distract from the experience and/or be a safety hazard. If unavoidable circumstances require that siblings attend, we ask that parents take the sibling's developmental abilities into account and obtain approval from Head of School. Note: Parents with siblings along may not chaperone other students.

All safety precautions will be taken. St. Mary's Episcopal Day School is not responsible for any injury or accidents that occur during the transportation of students to and from off campus field trips. All students attending field trips off-campus are required to wear their St. Mary's Episcopal Day School t-shirt. These shirts are included in the supply fee families pay.

## *Sharing and Money*

Sharing and storytelling are important developmental tasks for young children. We encourage your child to share a book, souvenir, music cd, video, experience, etc. with his or her class. The teacher will inform you of which day will be designated for "Show & Tell." The St. Mary's Day School staff reserves the right to use their discretion with all items shared from home.

Remember: Nature items are excellent for sharing!! Also, please remember to label items your child may bring to school.

Please Note: Students are not to bring money to school unless it is for chapel offering. All money collected for special purchases, field trips, etc. will be collected by the office or teacher.

## *Photography*

Individual school pictures, as well as class pictures, will be taken during the school year. Parents will be notified in advance of the date pictures are scheduled to be taken. Purchase of pictures is optional. Photo permission is given or denied through a form in your child's school record.

## *Birthdays*

Your child has *one* day a year that is just for him or her. We want to help make that day extra special in order to reinforce that he or she is God's special creation. We celebrate your child's birthday by singing the Happy Birthday song, recognizing him/her during Chapel, etc. Due to time limits during school hours we do not hold birthday parties for individual children. If you would like to send special birthday treats, such as snacks, cupcakes, or cookies, please coordinate it with your child's teacher. Goodie bags, balloons, decorations, meals, and cakes are not permitted.

## *Class Parties*

Parties in each class will be celebrated at Halloween (All Hallow's Eve), Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and End-of-Year. Parents sign up to help with these parties. "Helping" is furnishing refreshments or decorations and attending the party, if possible. Teachers will celebrate Valentine's Day with students in class, but without an "official" party. Parents should consult with the classroom teacher about party guidelines. Holiday parties and activities typically begin at 11:00 a.m.

## *Meet the Teacher*

Good communication between home and school begins with an opportunity to get acquainted with your new school at meet the teacher, held before the school year begins in August. The St. Mary's Episcopal Day School staff will provide answers to many questions and will help ease

many anxieties about a new school year. The Head of School will provide a short informative meeting to discuss any new policies or procedures being implemented.

### *Communication and Support*

Upcoming events will be available on our school website and sent out via Bloomz to each parent monthly. School and snack calendars can be found on the website as well. This will be the best way to stay informed of current and upcoming events during the year. Weekly or Monthly updates from your child's classroom teacher will be posted outside of your child's classroom and through Bloomz as well. Please take the time to look over what has been covered in the classroom and reinforce letters, numbers and skills at home. We also ask that you check for notices on the hallway bulletin board and near the classroom sign-in sheet daily, as well as your child's backpack, in order to keep informed on the latest news. All notes sent home in your child's communication folder will be approved by the Head of School and distributed by the office.

St. Mary's School will also be communicating with parents through Email and Bloomz. As inclement weather, policy changes and other important information is sent through the Bloomz system, it is imperative that parents join their teacher's Bloomz page. Each teacher has an email account as well and will check it regularly. Please note that teachers cannot respond to emails throughout the school day as their main priority is to stay focused on teaching and caring for their students. Please call the school office (979.865.5551) if you have any immediate information you need to give about your child throughout the course of the day, such as transportation changes.

### *Parent/Teacher Conferences*

Parent/Teacher conferences result in better understanding and guidance for your child. St. Mary's Episcopal Day School conducts scheduled conferences with each parent in the middle of the year. Your child's teacher will provide sign-up sheets to schedule your conference time. Parents are encouraged to stay in touch with their child's teachers regularly. Please feel free to call or email them with any questions or concerns. If you email or make these calls during school hours, the teacher will respond after school and at their earliest convenience.

### *Parent Volunteers*

Parents are encouraged to get involved and volunteer at our school, as they are extremely helpful to the day school staff. Volunteers are welcome to help with different activities such as assisting in the classroom, chaperoning field trips and helping with annual fundraising events. Note: regular volunteers participating in the care/interaction of children will be required to take a *Safeguarding God's Children Class*. If you are unable to volunteer during the school day due to work or other

responsibilities, please consider helping after hours with the Austin County Fair Parade float, Pumpkin Patch or our Annual Fundraiser.

The list below details some of our major annual events. Sign-up information for these events will be sent home prior to these functions. *All volunteer and fundraising participation is strictly voluntary in nature.*

Classroom volunteers are to keep *confidential* any personal information they may see or hear. Questions or concerns should be discussed with the classroom teacher or the Head of School.

*St. Mary's Episcopal Day School is blessed with many loving, caring parent volunteers!*

Austin County Fair Parade Float- It is an annual tradition at St. Mary's Day School to ride in the Austin County Fair Parade. Planning, construction and decorating of the float is a parent volunteer project. Due to limited space and safety concerns, Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten students and staff members are our representatives on the float.

Trunk or Treat-along with our Costume Parade at Halloween, parents/grandparents decorate their car trunks or backs of SUVs and hand out treats for all!

Pumpkin Patch and Fall Festival- Each year St. Mary's Day School hosts a pumpkin patch fundraiser in the fall. This is a fun event for the entire community as Bellville businesses and the Square are decorated with St. Mary's pumpkins. Each family is encouraged to sell pumpkins to friends and family and to volunteer before, during or after the event in any way possible. Our courtyard is turned into a pumpkin patch and many fun festival activities are held for all.

Heavenly Beginnings Annual Fundraiser-Our annual fundraiser, held in January, is quite involved and includes silent, live and dessert auctions. Class projects and baskets are offered for auction as special items. Good-natured bidding makes the evening fun for all. Families are asked to sell dinner and donation tickets to this event and many volunteer hours are required to make the event a success. Lots of fun, great food, entertainment and fabulous fellowship is a guarantee!

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School is a family of families. Please help us maintain and improve our beloved school. We welcome your input to help us maintain high standards of Christian education for our students. Thank you for entrusting us with your child's development and precious soul.