St. Mark School

Family and Student Handbook
2026-2027

15724 Montrose Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44111

Phone: 216-521-4115

www.stmarkwestpark.com

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St. Mark Catholic School nurtures Faith, inspires Academic Excellence, and instills Hope for the Future.

Introduction

- Principal's Introduction
- Mission Statement
- Philosophy
- Statement of Beliefs
- Policy Support Statement
- Provisions
- School Personnel
- Teacher Responsibilities
- Student Responsibilities
- Parent Responsibilities
- Parent Volunteer Program

Administration Procedures

- Admission Policy
- Registration of Current Students
- Registration of Kindergarten Students
- Registration of New Students
- Admission Criteria
- Waiting List Procedures
- Withdrawal
- Cleveland Scholarship/ EdChoice Expansion Programs

Tuition and Fee Agreement

- Tuition and General Fees Policy
- Fees
- Past Due Accounts

School Records

- Permanent Record Form
- Emergency Forms
- Transcripts

School Hours

- Assembly
- Dismissal
- After Care Program
- Office Hours

Attendance Policies

- Reporting Absence
- Tardiness
- Appointments
- Make-up work due to absence
- Prolonged Illness

- Family Vacation
- Emergency Closing Procedures

Home-School Communications

- Digital Academy Communication Offerings
- Emergency Operations Plan
- Contacting a Teacher
- Emergency Messages During School Hours
- Parent Conferences
- Parent Travel
- Student Phone Calls/ Cell Phones
- Family/Custodial Situations

Instructional Program

- Religious Formation
- Sacramental Preparation
- Curriculum
- Homework
- Field Trips
- Classroom Assignments
- Departmental Classes
- Grouping

Student Evaluation

- Monitoring and Evaluating Student Achievement
- Third Grade Reading Guarantee
- Report Cards
- Digital Academy
- Interims
- Promotion/Retention
- Academic Probation
- Final Report Cards
- Standardized Testing Program

Academic Honors and Awards

- Outstanding Performance Grades K-4
- Academic Honors Grades 5-8

Educational Resources

- Auxiliary Services
  - Speech, Language and Hearing Services
  - Psychological Testing and Counseling
  - Intervention Specialist
- Library
- Technology/Life Skills Lab
- Computer Integration
- STREAM Lab

- Telecommunications Center
- Foreign Language
- Fine Arts Program

School Policies and Procedures

- General School Policies
- Student Code of Conduct
- Consequences of Behavior
    - ❖ Demerit
    - ❖ Detention
    - ❖ Suspension
    - ❖ Withdrawal
    - ❖ Expulsion
- Student Threat Policy
- Chemical Use/Abuse Policy
- Pregnancy Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Sexual Harassment
- Hazing
- Sexual Violence.
- Policy on Reporting Child Abuse
- Gangs
- Weapons
- Search Policy
- Electronic Devices and Personal Property Policy
- Technology Acceptable Use Policy
- Media Release and Consent Policy
- AIDS Policy
- Online Integrity Policy for Gr. 5-8

Uniform Policy and Dress Codes

- General Information
- Boys
- Girls
- Boys and Girls Shorts Uniform
- Footwear
- Sweaters
- Hair
- Headbands
- Make-up, Jewelry, Cosmetics
- Physical Education Uniform

- Dress Up Days
- Spirit Wear Days

General School Information

- Lunch/Recess Regulations
- Birthday Celebrations
- Wellness, Food, and Beverage
- Collection of Money
- Care of Books and Property
- Lost and Found
- School Supplies
- Lockers

Health and Accident Procedures

- Health Services
- Health Guidelines
- Immunizations
- Food Allergy Plan
- Contagious Diseases
- Pandemic
- Strep Throat Cultures
- Dismissals Due to Illness
- Medications
- Universal Precautions

Extra-Curricular Activities

- Servers
- Student Clubs

Transportation and Safety

- Traffic Patterns
    - ❖ Arrival by Car
    - ❖ Walkers and Bike Riders Arrival/Departure
    - ❖ Afternoon Departure by Car

- Responsibility for Safe Conduct

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Introduction

Principal's Introduction

It is with great joy that we share our Parent-Student Handbook with you, a reflection of our mission, our values, and our deep commitment to providing a quality Catholic education. As a proud member of the Diocese of Cleveland, St. Mark Catholic School is blessed with a dedicated faculty and staff who work in partnership with families to support the academic and spiritual growth of every student.

For over 75 years, St. Mark has upheld a legacy of excellence in education, serving students from Preschool through Grade 8. At the heart of our mission is a shared commitment to forming young minds and hearts. Together with our parents, we nurture students to become thoughtful, faith-filled, and responsible citizens, encouraging them to recognize and develop the unique gifts God has given each of them. Having been shaped by Catholic education myself, I can speak to the deep and lasting influence it has had on my life, an impact I continue to witness in the lives of our St. Mark students as they grow in faith, character, and purpose.

This handbook serves as a vital connection between home and school. Inside, you'll find the key policies and procedures that guide our daily operations and help ensure a safe, respectful, and effective learning environment. Know that we review and revise its contents annually to reflect the evolving needs of our school community. It is always accessible to you via our school website.

Strong collaboration between families and educators is essential to our success. We ask for your support in upholding the guidelines within this handbook, trusting that they are in place for the well-being and benefit of all students. Your partnership helps us build a culture of mutual respect, trust, and shared responsibility.

Thank you for choosing St. Mark and for entrusting your child to our care. Let us continue to work together to guide our children closer to Christ in a community that embraces Gospel values and fosters a true love of learning.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions. I look forward to seeing you throughout the school year!

Wishing you a joyful and blessed 2026-2027 school year!

Mrs. Christine Gunn

Mrs. Christine Gunn

Mission Statement

St. Mark Catholic School nurtures Faith, inspires Academic Excellence, and instills Hope for the Future.

Philosophy

St. Mark Catholic School, in partnership with the Church, the St. Mark parish community, our state and the family, provides a Catholic education through which Gospel values are presented, lived and fostered.

We believe each student is a child of God. Our purpose is to educate the whole child following the examples of Christ and the Gospel Values of peace, acceptance, kindness, understanding, and service. Instruction is developed for each individual child with uncompromisingly high standards and varied learning tasks to help each child reach the highest potential. Curriculum serves as a guiding tool to meet individual needs for intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and cultural growth. Assessment is varied and developed for individual learning styles. Continuous improvement is achieved through interaction and mentoring by administration, teachers, support personnel, and families providing for the education of the individual child. Community-building, service, and faith formation are integral elements of our daily lessons and our overall dedication to the children in our classrooms. God is present in our school.

Statement of Beliefs

We believe St. Mark School, in partnership with parents as primary educators, aspires to:

- Cultivate an environment which instills the Gospel messages of peace, acceptance, respect of oneself and others, kindness, understanding, and service to others
- Provide and foster an instructional program which meets the needs of all students spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically
- Prepare students to make their “Mark” on the world

Policy Support Statement

Since the education of your child is considered to be a partnership between the family and the school, if in the opinion of the administration, the partnership is irretrievably broken, St. Mark School reserves the right to require parents to withdraw their child. All parents and students of St. Mark Catholic School are required to follow and support the policies contained in this Parent-Student Handbook.

Provisions

The administration of St. Mark Catholic School reserves the right to amend this Parent-Student Handbook at any time and will notify parents if changes are made. These rules and regulations are not all inclusive.

The implementation and interpretation of the provisions in this handbook rests with the administration. The administration's interpretation of the provisions in this handbook shall be the final and authoritative interpretation.

School Personnel

St. Mark School is staffed by highly qualified and state-certified administrators and teachers. They are dedicated to the vital role of contributing positively to each child's education. They include the following:

- Pastor
- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- School Secretaries
- Classroom Teachers
- Specialized Instructors in the areas of art, music, library, physical education, technology, Spanish, STREAM, and Enrichment expand our curriculum
- Educational Aides
- Auxiliary Personnel, including the school health aide, Basic Skills teacher, psychologist, speech and language therapist, fiscal liaison, tutors, and intervention specialist.

Faculty and Staff

Pastor	**Rev. Adam Zajac** Masters of Divinity
Principal	**Mrs. Christine Gunn** B.A. John Carroll University M. Ed. Cleveland State University License Catechetical Leader Certification
Assistant Principal	**Mrs. Allsion Finkovich** B.A. Notre Dame College License Catechist Certification
School Secretary	**Mrs. Patricia Donahue** **Mrs. Kirsten Glazier**

Grade 8	**Room 12**	**Miss Michelle McLaughlin** B.S. Miami University License Catechist Certification
Grade 8	**Room 15**	**Mrs. Elizabeth Riordan** B.S. Ashland University M.Ed. Ashland University License Catechist Certification
Grade 7	**Room 10**	**Ms. Gina DeGennaro** B.A. John Carroll University License Catechist Certification
	Room 11	**Ms. Maria Keohane** B.A. Cleveland State University M.Ed. Ursuline College Ohio Standard Catechist Certification/ Initiate Program
Grade 6	**Room 9**	**Miss Bridget Wazevich** B.A. John Carroll University License Catechist Certification
	Room 16	**Miss Abigail Gaudreau** B.S. Kent State University License Catechist Certification
Grade 5	**Room 13**	**Mrs. Colleen True** B.A. St. Mary's College License Catechist Certification
	Room 14	**Mrs. Megan Baillis** B.S. Bowling Green State University License Catechist Certification
Grade 4	**Room 1**	**Miss Bridgette Beal** B.A. Kent State University License Catechist Certification

	Room 8	**Mrs. Melissa Gonzalez** B.S. Lynn University Ohio Standard Catechist Certification
Grade 3	**Room 2**	**Mrs. Josephine Litten** B.A. Notre Dame College License Catechist Certification
	Room 7	**Mrs. Linda Kehl** B.A. Cleveland State University License Catechist Certification
Grade 2	**Room 3**	**Mrs. Catherine Gorman** B.S. Cleveland State University License Catechist Certification
	Room 6	**Miss Samantha Colegrove** B.A. Cleveland State University License Catechist Certification
Grade 1	**Room 5**	**Mrs. Lainey Schimming** B.S. The Ohio State University License Catechist Certification
	Room 4	**Miss Kate Dunleavy** B.S. University of Dayton License Catechist Certification
Kindergarten		**Ms. Natalie Maroon** B.A. Cleveland State University License Catechist Certification
		Miss April Gaukin B.A. Notre Dame College License Catechist Certification

Preschool	**Mrs. Amy Melvin-Marko** B.A. Notre Dame College License Catechist Certification
Physical Education	**Mr. Scott Troyan** B.A. Baldwin Wallace College M. Ed. Baldwin Wallace College License Catechist Certification
Art	**Mrs. Rita Hanna** B.A. Cleveland State University License Catechist Certification
Spanish/Reading Intervention	**Mrs. Andrea Schmidt** B.A. Cleveland State University M. Ed John Carroll University Ohio Standard Catechist Certification
Music	**Dr. Heather Rentz** D.M.A University of South Carolina M.M.A University of North Texas B.M.D. Ohio Wesleyan University Ohio Standard Catechist Certification
STREAM	**Mrs. Rachel Henley** B.A. Cleveland State University Ohio Standard Catechist Certification
Computer	**Mr. Weston Kincade** M. Ed Radford University Ohio Standard Catechist Certification
Additional Staff:	Mrs. Rachele Morchak (First Grade Aide) Mrs. Linda McNeeley (Kindergarten Aide) Mrs. Virginia Greuloch (PreK Aide) Mrs. Julie Hill (PreK Aide) Mrs. Victoria Diamond (Aide, Recess Monitor) Mrs. Madeline Kincaid (Librarian) Mrs. Dianne Gorsek (Lunch Monitor, Aide, Aftercare)

Mrs. Bilijana Jandric (Lunch Monitor, Aftercare)
Mrs. Marilyn Space (Lunch Monitor, Aftercare)

Teacher Responsibilities

The students are supported and encouraged to develop a mature and Christian character by all faculty staff members by:

- Providing personal attention and interest in each student
- Discussing with a student his/her growth in character, appropriate behavior, and self-discipline
- Notifying parents when there is a concern about character development, self-control, or cooperation with school rules
- Conferencing with student, parents, and others school support personnel
- Maintaining confidentiality between the school and home

Student Responsibilities

Students at St. Mark Catholic School are responsible for:

- Developing a personal relationship with God
- Accepting personal responsibility for choices
- Developing good study habits and skills
- Completing classwork and assignments
- Showing thoughtfulness, kindness, and respect for others
- Respecting school and parish property and personal property of others
- Demonstrating leadership through service
- Adhering to school policies and procedures
- Demonstrating appropriate behavior walking to and from school, cooperation with Safety Patrol guards, crossing guards, and other safety personnel
- Demonstrating self-care which includes: good grooming and cooperation with the dress code
- Supporting and participating in school activities
- Taking pride in St. Mark Catholic School

Parent Responsibilities

The primary responsibility for the education of children belongs to parents. At St. Mark School we consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of your children.

Parents are responsible for:

- Supporting school policy and the authority of the administration and teachers
- Modeling and supporting your children's practice of the Catholic Faith. This includes attending Mass (or worship service of family's faith) and teaching Christianity by word and example
- Promoting the religious development of your children
- Providing a home atmosphere that promotes good habits

- Discussing problems with the persons concerned and avoiding any criticism of the teachers and school policy
- Maintaining confidentiality between school and home
- Following the policies and procedures stated in this handbook, **especially at drop-off and pick-up**
- Setting rules, times, and limits so that your child:
    - Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
    - Is dressed according to the school dress code
    - Completes assignments on time
    - Has materials needed for school each day (supplies, lunch, homework, etc.)
- Paying all fees on time
- Reimbursing for any property destroyed (accidentally or intentionally)
- Completing the Diocesan *Virtus* program and remaining current on monthly bulletins if volunteering at any school functions
- Notifying the school with a call by 8:15 A.M. on the day of an absence and a follow up with a written note when the student returns to school after an absence
- Notifying the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers

Parent Volunteer Program There are many opportunities for parents to become actively involved in the life of St. Mark School. The St. Mark Parent Club meets throughout the school year and plays an important role in supporting our students, staff, and school community. Parents also assist teachers in a variety of ways both inside and outside the classroom. Each year, the Parent Club distributes a volunteer interest form, allowing families to sign up for activities, events, and committees that match their interests and availability. Through these opportunities, parents make valuable contributions that help strengthen our school community.

The relationship between a teacher and a volunteer is a professional one of mutual respect and confidence. Volunteers must be fingerprinted, have a background check and complete the Virtus program, and complete a *Volunteer Application*. *Policy and Standards of Conduct* forms from the Diocese of Cleveland must also be signed. When volunteering at a school function during the school day, volunteers must first report to the school office to sign in.
Empowering God's Children is a second-generation multi-media training program focused on matters of personal safety, abuse prevention and the creation of safe environments for children in Grades K-12. **It does not replace the Virtus training, but is supplementary to that for parents and students.** A yearly parent meeting is offered covering topics such as how offenders gain access to children, warning signs to look for in children and adults, and actions to take when noticed. A one-time training is requested for all parents.

Administrative Procedures

Admission Policy

St. Mark School is a Catholic elementary school intended to provide a quality Catholic education to children. Non-parishioners will be considered for admission as space and finances permit. Applications for St. Mark School will be considered on the basis of the following non-discrimination guidelines:

Non-Discrimination Policy

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

St. Mark School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel.

Registration

Registration of current students

Families whose children already attend St. Mark School are required to renew their registration for the following academic year. Registration occurs in January. Students are accepted on a yearly basis and parents must apply for re-admission each year. Acceptance for admission/re-admission will be based on academic progress, appropriate conduct, and fulfillment of all financial obligations. The school has the final authority for acceptance for admission/re-admission The administration reserves the right not to invite a student to return to St. Mark School for the next school year if fees are not current or policies are not followed during the current school year. Fees are due at the time of registration. Registration is not complete until all forms, including scholarship paperwork, is complete.

Registration of Kindergarten students

Children entering Kindergarten must be five years of age by September 30th. Registration occurs in January. Fees are due at the time of registration. Registration is not complete until all forms, including scholarship paperwork, is complete. All incoming Kindergarten children will be given the Early Prevention of School Failure screening before acceptance is complete.

Registration of new students Grades 1-8

Registration of new students takes place in January after the re-registration of current school membership has been completed, and the number of available places has been determined. An interview with the student and their family and a grade level entrance assessment for students in grades 3-8 are part of the admissions process. Children entering Grade 1 must be six years of age by September 30th and provide evidence of successfully completing Kindergarten in an accredited school. Fees are due at the time of

registration. **Registration is complete when all academic and health records are received from the previous school and scholarship paperwork is complete. All students new to the school are accepted on probation for the first semester of the school year.**

These documents are required to complete the registration:

- Application for Enrollment – through Digital Academy
- Birth and Baptismal certificates
- Academic records, including standardized test scores
- Special Services Form
- Health Questionnaire
- Scholarship Paperwork (if applicable)
- Other records the Principal may require to establish the applicant's complete registration

School Tours

Tours of the school are available throughout the year and are scheduled on an individual basis. Please contact the School Office at 216-521-4115 to schedule.

Admission Criteria

Review Process

The Admission Team will review the application once all of the documentation has been submitted. To be considered for admission, we look for students who are successful in their current environments, students who conduct themselves in a manner fitting with our St. Mark behavioral standards, and whose parents/guardians are invested in the education process. Applicants meeting these criteria will be invited to continue the application process with the following steps:

- Principal Meeting
- Grade Level Entrance Assessment for students entering Grades 3-8
- Student Shadow Visit
- Enrollment Decision
- Registration

Enrollment Decision

After a family has completed the above steps, the application will be evaluated and an enrollment decision will be made. A student may be placed on a waiting list for classes that are at or near capacity, and parish families have priority in cases where class space is limited.

Waiting List Procedure

Families on the waiting list will be contacted according to the admission priorities and as class size permits.

Admission of Non-Parishioners

- Families are required to accept and work within the school philosophy.
- Admission in this category can only be considered if class size permits.

Providing for Individual Differences

- Acceptance of any child depends upon the school's ability to meet the child's educational needs.

In accordance with St. Mark School Policy, any student, whether parishioner or non-parishioner seeking admission to St. Mark School for reasons related to the racial composition or desegregation of the previously attended school will not be accepted.

Withdrawal

When a family wishes to withdraw their child from St. Mark, a written authorization must be sent to the School Office. Final report cards and student records are the property of St. Mark School. The school will release student records after all financial accounts have been settled. When a student withdraws from St. Mark School, records are sent upon the receipt of the request from the accepting school. A copy of the Permanent Record Card, Standardized Test Scores, Intervention Plans, and health records will be sent directly to the receiving school after a signed request is received and all payments are complete. The school may request students to withdraw because of serious disciplinary reasons or financial considerations.

Tuition Information

Tuition per child	Annual	Semi-Annual	10 Monthly Payments
Grades K – 8	**$6,300**	**$3,150 x 2**	**$630 x 10**

<u>The following Tuition Payment Plans will be available</u>:

- **Annual** – Due by August 20, 2026
- **Semi-Annual** – Due on August 20, 2026 and February 20, 2027
- **10-Monthly** – Due on the 20th of each month, August 2026 through May 20, 2027

1. The Parent/Guardian will accept the philosophy of St. Mark School defined by the Mission & Statement of Belief, as found in *the St. Mark School Handbook*.

2. **Tuition and fees must be paid when due**. Failure to pay tuition and fees may result in your child not being eligible to continue as a St. Mark School student.

3. **St. Mark School reserves the right to withhold any academic records for non-payment of tuition and fees.** If tuition and fees are not current no academic records or report cards will be released.

Non-refundable Registration and Technology Fees for the 2026-2027 School Year were due Feb. 15, 2026. Your child's enrollment is NOT guaranteed until fees are paid in full.

Tuition Assistance:

St. Mark School welcomes all families to apply for Need Based Tuition Assistance provided by any Ohio Department of Education Scholarships available to you, the Diocese Angel Scholarship, Diocesan Tuition Assistance, and St. Mark Parish Assistance. These awards are based upon various eligibility, as indicated in the individual assistance applications.

If the maximum tuition assistance awarded is less than the stated St. Mark tuition, the school families will be required to pay the difference.

All tuition assistance applications can be found on the St. Mark School website under the Admissions tab.

Cleveland Scholarship and the EdChoice Expansion Program:

Cleveland Scholarship is available to students who reside within the boundaries of the Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) and will be entering kindergarten through 8th grade.

EdChoice Expansion is an income-based program available to students in kindergarten through 8th grade who do not qualify for the Cleveland Scholarship program.

All St. Mark School families who have been awarded financial assistance through the Cleveland Scholarship Program or the EdChoice Expansion Program, must provide the School Office with a copy of their acceptance letter before the start of the school year.

Diocesan Angel Scholarship:

These scholarships are made possible through contributions to the Angel Scholarship Fund, a state tax-credit program that is managed by the Catholic Community Foundation and the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland.

Diocesan Tuition Assistance & St. Mark Parish Assistance:

Diocesan Tuition Assistance (DTA) is available to students attending a participating school within the Diocese of Cleveland. Funds are awarded based on financial need.

St. Mark Parish Assistance is available to families who demonstrate financial need after all other forms of tuition assistance have been applied.

This need based financial assistance is handled through the FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment.

Past Due Accounts:

- If tuition and fee payments, including After Care, are not current, academic records and report cards will be held in the school office.
- Failure to pay tuition and fees, including After Care fees, may result in the student being dismissed from St. Mark.
- No academic records will be released for transferring students if tuition and fees, including After Care, are not current.
- Academic Records will not be released for 8th grade student applying to high schools if tuition and fees, including After Care, are not current by January 15, 2027.
- Should the account be left unpaid and referred to legal collection, the account will be subject to all additional costs and collection fees accumulated to clear the account.

School Records

Permanent Record Form
Accurate and complete permanent cumulative records are maintained for each student. Parents have the right to review the educational records of their children (FERPA).

Emergency Forms
Emergency forms need to be kept up-to-date. Any changes, including home address, telephone number, e-mail address, and place of employment etc. need to be reported to the school office and updated in your Digital Academy account.

Transcripts
Student records are the property of St. Mark Catholic School. The school will release student records after all financial accounts have been settled. When a student withdraws from St. Mark, a copy of the cumulative record card, intervention plans, and health records will be **sent directly** to the receiving school after a signed request by the parent is received and all payments are complete.

School Hours

Assembly in Classrooms
Grades 1-8 7:30 -8:00 a.m.
Kindergarten (IELC Building)

Morning Announcements 8:00 a.m.

Dismissal
Kindergarten and Grades 1-8 2:40 p.m. (car riders to blacktop)
2:50 p.m. (walkers)

All children are to leave the building by 2:50 p.m. unless under approved adult supervision or are part of the After School Program or other after school programs or clubs. **Students not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will be sent to the school's After Care Program, and parents will be responsible for paying for this service.** For information contact the school office at 216-521-4115.

The **Aftercare Program** runs from 2:50-6:00 p.m. For information, contact the school office at 216-521-4115. Registration and fees will be available in your Digital Academy prior to the start of the school year. The Student Code of Conduct and the rules found in this handbook apply to students attending the Aftercare Program. **The Aftercare cell phone number is 216-299-8060 during Aftercare hours.**

Office Hours
The school office can be contacted at 216-521-4115 from 7:30 AM until 3:30 PM on all school days, unless there is a scheduled faculty meeting. Students will not be permitted to re-enter the building after 3:30 to retrieve forgotten items or homework.

Attendance Policies

Regular school attendance is essential for student success academically, socially, and spiritually. At St. Mark School, we believe students thrive in an environment characterized by strong academic expectations, caring adults, and a supportive school community. In order for students to fully benefit from their educational experience, they are expected to attend school regularly and consistently.

According to the State of Ohio attendance law and Ohio Department of Education guidelines, students are expected to attend school daily. A student may not miss 10% or more of the school year for any reason (excused or unexcused) without being considered chronically absent. Additionally, under Ohio's Excessive Absence and Truancy guidelines, a student may be considered excessively absent when they are absent for 38 or more hours in one school month or 65 or more hours in one school year, with or without a legitimate excuse.

Students receiving the Cleveland Scholarship or EdChoice Scholarship are required to maintain regular attendance, as schools are required to report attendance data to the state. Students who miss 10% or more of the school year may be considered chronically absent and may become ineligible to receive or renew their scholarship. In such cases, families may become responsible for full tuition costs.

The school monitors attendance on a quarterly basis. Ohio attendance laws consider both excused and unexcused absences when monitoring chronic absenteeism. Excessive absences, tardiness, and early dismissals may negatively impact student achievement, participation, and overall progress. Families are encouraged to communicate with the school regarding medical concerns or circumstances affecting attendance so that we may work together to support student success.

Regular attendance in school is compulsory according to state law Ohio Code 3321.01 and 3321.03. Irregular attendance will be investigated and reported to the proper authorities.

Each quarter, families will receive an Attendance Report that provides two important pieces of information:

Quarterly Attendance Snapshot:

- This shows how your child attended during the current quarter and helps identify any recent attendance patterns.

Year-to-Date Attendance Snapshot:

- This provides a running total of your child's attendance for the entire school year and helps families understand how they are progressing toward attendance expectations.

The Attendance Report will use a simple color-coded system:

🟢 **GREEN – Present & Growing**
Your child's attendance is on track. Thank you for making school attendance a priority and helping your child take advantage of daily opportunities to learn and grow.

🟡 **YELLOW – Pause & Reflect**
Your child's attendance should be monitored more closely. We encourage families to review attendance patterns and work with the school to support consistent attendance.

🔴 **RED – Partner for Success**
Your child's attendance has become a concern. St. Mark will partner with your family to develop a plan that supports improved attendance and ensures your child receives the benefits of consistent classroom instruction.

Parents and students must accept full responsibility for regular attendance. Parents must be aware of their serious obligation to have their children attend school daily unless there is a legitimate reason for **excused absence**.
These include:

- Illness or injury of the child. Any absence which exceeds three days must be certified in writing by a physician or health professional.
- Serious illness in the family necessitating the presence of the child.
- Death of a relative. The absence arising from this is limited to a period of three days and must be documented in writing by the parent/ guardian.
- Urgent medical or dental assistance (ordinarily dental and medical appointments should be made outside school hours).

- Quarantine of the home.
- Emergency weather conditions or transportation difficulties.
- Subpoenaed court appearance

Students who are not present at school for reasons other than those stated above will receive an unexcused absence.

Reporting Absence:
Please notify the school office at 216-521-4115 or via email office@stmarkwestpark.com by 8:15 a.m. if your child is absent. Please be sure to state your child's name, grade, and reason for the absence.

The school will call parents who do not call in an absence. Please notify the school office if the illness is of a contagious nature. The regulations of the Health Department will be followed for students who have had a communicable disease. A note written by the parent must be given to the homeroom teacher when a child returns from any absence.

Excessive absence may result in a student being placed on a Behavior Plan. If improvement is not demonstrated, the student will not be permitted to return to St. Mark the following school year.

If a child must be sent home and the parent or guardian cannot be contacted, another person listed on the Emergency Card will be contacted to pick up the student and sign the release form.

Tardiness
Student tardiness interferes with the child's progress in school and disrupts the classroom. Parents are expected to see that their children cultivate the habit of punctuality. **Students are considered tardy if they are not present in their classroom for morning announcements at 8:00 a.m.**

A tardy slip is needed for admission to class. With a note from a doctor's office, an "Excused Tardy" will be issued for medical appointments. All other reasons will be considered "Unexcused". Students receiving 3 unexcused tardies in a quarter will be issued a demerit.

Chronic Unexcused tardiness will result in a behavior plan and possible dismissal from St. Mark School.

Appointments
Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school time if possible**.** A written note must be presented to the teacher and brought to the office by 8:00 a.m. if the student is to be excused for an appointment during the school day. **The person specified in the note must pick up the student by the main front doors of the school on Montrose.** If a student misses at least 2 hours of school, he/she will be considered a half day absent.

Make-up work due to absence
Students are responsible for making up all work missed because of absence. Assignments must be completed and returned to the respective teacher(s) within the time specified by the teacher. Typically, one day per day the student is absent. **It is the responsibility of the student upon returning to school to ensure that he/she has all assignments and completes all work.**

Prolonged Illness
The school must be notified in the case of prolonged illness of a student. If a child is absent more than 3 consecutive days, parents need to provide the school with a note from the doctor indicating the amount of time the student will be absent and what type of activity the student is permitted to perform upon return to school. It is recommended when a prolonged illness occurs, that the parents contact the teachers regularly to receive/return work. Upon returning to school, the student should meet with the teachers to schedule make-up work that cannot be completed at home.

Truancy
Truancy will be referred to the Pupil Personnel Office of the public school district of residence. If necessary, the case will also be referred to Juvenile Court and/or Children's Services.

Leaving School
A student is not permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day.

Family Vacation
Vacations taken during school time are discouraged. However, if vacations are taken, parents should give the principal and homeroom teacher written notification of the child's impending absence. After the vacation, the student should contact the teacher to get missed work. Teacher may choose to provide routine work before vacation; however, they are NOT required to provide assignments ahead. Students are responsible for the mastery of material presented during their absence. **Work is to be completed within one week of the student's return unless other arrangements are made with the teacher.**

Emergency Closing Procedure
If St. Mark School closes, Digital Academy will be used to notify registered parents via email and text. Please be sure all contact information is correct in Digital Academy.

All TV stations will be notified. The closing will be listed as "**St. Mark School"**.

NOTE: If school is closed, all scheduled activities are also cancelled.

The school administration will continue to communicate updates through the Digital Academy; the classroom teachers will communicate updates through Google Classroom, email and Digital Academy.

Please note, St. Mark School does not automatically close when the Cleveland Metropolitan Schools are closed for inclement weather.

Home-School Communications

Important information regarding the school can be accessed through the school's website: **www.stmarkwestpark.com** and through Digital Academy.

The Digital Academy is the Education Management System for St. Mark School. The Digital Academy offers the following for parents:

- Digital communication including email and text messaging
- Online forms system collects any required forms from the school
- Registration and fees collection
- Cafeteria management if participating in Parent Club Out-To-Lunch Program
- Medication management
- Clinic notifications
- Student grades
- Attendance
- Behavior notification

A newsletter is published by the Principal each Friday through Digital Academy. Bulletins and messages from parish and school organizations will be sent home as necessary. **Parents are asked to check their Digital Academy accounts each week.**

Emergency Operations Plan

The St. Mark School Emergency Operation Plan is approved by FEMA. It is reviewed yearly by all staff members. In the event of an emergency, parents will be notified through the Digital Academy Communication System. You must be registered with the Digital Academy to receive notification.

Contacting a Teacher

Phone messages for teachers will be accepted from 7:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Teachers will return your calls during the day when they are free or after school. You may also send an e-mail to the teachers. All e-mail addresses for the faculty and staff are listed on the school website. Teachers may also receive messages through Digital Academy. Teachers will return all phone calls and emails within 24 hours. Procedure for addressing concerns with your child's teacher is as follows: First, contact the teacher or staff member directly involved to discuss the concern. If the concern is not resolved, contact the Principal or Assistant Principal to discuss the concern.
Parents are not permitted to enter a classroom unannounced to address a concern.

Emergency Messages During School Hours

Students are not permitted to call home for homework, missing supplies, permission slips, etc. once school has begun. In order to allow the school to run efficiently, **only emergency messages** will be delivered to students during the school day. Dismissal plans should be made before the child comes to school.

Changes in Transportation

If an emergency arises during the school day and transportation needs to be changed, please call the office no later than 2:00 p.m. Please do not email your child's teacher with transportation changes.

Parent Conferences
Two scheduled parent conference days during the school year promote a greater understanding of the needs and growth patterns of the student, as well as strengthen home-school communications. If additional conferences are needed, an appointment may be made with the teacher for a mutually convenient time. **Respect for all parties is expected.**

Parent Travel
If traveling and unable to be contacted, please inform the office in writing who is responsible for your child(ren) in case of an emergency.

Student Cell Phone Policy

Research indicates that excessive cell phone use during the school day can have a negative impact on student learning, attention, and overall well-being. Studies have also linked increased cell phone use among children and adolescents to higher rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns.

To support a focused and positive learning environment, students are not permitted to use cell phones during the school day to make or receive calls, send or receive messages, access social media, or engage in other non-school-related activities unless specific permission has been granted by a staff member. This policy applies to all students while on school property during school hours.

Students may not carry cell phones on their person during the school day. If a cell phone is brought to school, it must be turned off and stored in the student's backpack at all times.

Any student found in violation of this policy will have their cell phone confiscated and taken to the principal's office. The device must be picked up by a parent or guardian, and the student will receive a detention.

An exception to this policy will be made for a purpose documented in a student's Individualized Educational Services Plan developed under ORC 3323 or a plan developed as part of a student's Accommodation Plan to monitor or address a health issue.

Changes in Personal Information
If there is a change of address, phone number at work or home, a change in employment or living situation, please contact the school office at 216-521-4115 or office@stmarkwestpark.com as soon as possible, AND make the change in your Digital Academy account.

Family/Custodial Situations – Relationship with the School

In two-parent families, it is assumed that both parents are living at the same address unless we have been notified otherwise. St. Mark School personnel will, therefore, send home notices, communications etc. with the child. **It is assumed that both parents are communicating regarding the child and that all information is shared by and between the parents.** This information includes but is not limited to conference appointments, report cards, interims, discussions with school personnel, and tuition statements.

In families experiencing separation of parents, or pending divorce, the school must be notified immediately. The above information will be sent home with the child to whichever parent currently has care of the child. It is assumed that this information is shared by the parents and between the parents. Since this situation frequently impacts on a child's achievement and interactions at school, parents are asked to inform both the principal and teacher of this fact, so that appropriate support can be given to the child. St. Mark School personnel cannot proceed on hearsay, rumors, or demands of a parent, but only with the appropriate documentation detailed below.

In cases of an actual divorce decree involving clear custody by one parent, the principal is to be informed by the custodial parent of this fact. **A copy of the entire decree bearing the case number and the final page bearing the judge's signature is to be submitted to the principal.** Unless the decree indicates otherwise, school communications will be sent home to the custodial parent. Custodial parents should understand, however, that unless the divorce decree specifically limits the non-custodial parent's right to access to records, the non-custodial parent has a right to the same access as the custodial parent. St. Mark School, will, unless instructed by a Court Order, release such records upon request to the non-custodial parent. "Records" includes official transcripts, report cards, health records, referrals for special services, and communications regarding major disciplinary actions. It does not include daily class work and papers, or routine communications sent through the children to the home of residence. In these cases, the custodial parent is asked to cooperate with the school and share this information directly with the non-custodial parent. This avoids time-consuming duplication of services.

Further, you should realize that unless restricted by Court Order, any non-custodial parent has the right to attend any school activity of his/her child, which includes sport activities and classroom programs. Parents should keep each other informed as to these activities to avoid duplication of communications and to allow the school to better attend to the duty of teaching your children.

In cases of "joint custody" entitling both parents access to school personnel and activities, it is assumed that one copy of communications and information will be sent home with the child, and that this will be shared by and **between** the parents. Regarding parent conferences in all custody situations: It is preferred and will be the general procedure that **one** conference appointment be scheduled "jointly" if both parents wish to be present. It is assumed that parents are able to set aside differences and to come together on behalf of their child for this time. Joint conference further ensures that both parents are given the same information at the same time, thereby avoiding misunderstanding and misinterpretations.

In cases where joint conferences are clearly neither possible nor desirable by the parties involved, alternate arrangements may be discussed with the principal, subject to the approval of both parents, and further reviewed by St. Mark School's legal counsel. Every effort will be made to keep communications open with both parents while at the same time avoiding duplication of services and excessive demands on the teacher's time.

Visitations should generally begin at the home of one of the parents and not at school. It is hoped that visitation arrangements would reflect the sensitivity of both parents to the consistency and routines that foster security in a child and allow for school responsibilities and homework to be taken care of during the school week.

If there are questions concerning this re-statement of procedures or circumstances you feel necessitate other arrangements, please contact the principal.

Instructional Program

Curriculum Guidelines and Procedures

St. Mark School implements the Courses of Study prepared by the Office of Catholic Education in compliance with the Minimum Standards for Elementary Schools in the State of Ohio. The administration and teachers select textbooks to support the curriculum.

Religious Formation

St. Mark Catholic School provides students with an experience of living in a community of faith. The purpose of religious instruction is to:

- Help students develop a personal relationship with Jesus
- Prepare students for a deeper and more mature life of faith
- Nurture a sense of prayer
- Lead students to meaningful participation in the sacramental life of the church
- Complement the family in living the Catholic faith
- Foster the formation of a right conscience
- Promote Christian community
- Assist students in developing attitudes of service
- Encourage awareness of missions and other global needs

Prayer begins and ends every school day. Religion classes are taught daily at all grade levels and include instruction in Theology of the Body. All students participate in religious instruction. The National Catechetical Directory is the norm for instruction in conjunction with the curriculum guidelines from the Office of Catholic Education of the Diocese of Cleveland. The *Blest Are We* series, written by RCL Benziger, is the basic text used for religious instruction throughout the school. The integration of religion and the principles of Christian living are included throughout the curriculum.

Students attend school liturgies, prayer services, and retreats throughout the year.

Sacramental Education Programs

Parent attendance at sacramental education programs is required for Confirmation, Reconciliation and Eucharist.

Confirmation

- Children in Grade 8 receive instruction and have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Parent-led sessions and service opportunities are offered as part of the program.
- Children in Grade 8 will participate in a retreat as part of their sacramental preparation.

Reconciliation

- Children receive formal instruction and have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Grade 2.
- Children in grades 2-8 are encouraged to receive this Sacrament regularly.
- Students have two scheduled opportunities for Reconciliation throughout the year

Eucharist

- Children in Grade 2 receive formal instruction and have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Eucharist. A retreat, Jesus Day, occurs prior to First Eucharist.

Christian Formation in Sexuality

- Parents and students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 participate in the Christian Formation in Sexuality through the Health Curriculum provided by Diocese of Cleveland. This provides a basis of information for parents to expand on when discussing sexuality with their child
- Students in all grade levels K-8 are instructed in the Empowering God's Children program by classroom teachers who have been trained in the program. This program is designed specifically for parents and Catholic students in elementary, middle and high school. It is based upon the latest child development research on how children and youth can best protect themselves. Lessons are made part of the daily faith formation
- Students in all grade levels K-8 are instructed in *Theology of the Body* as part of their religion curriculum

Curriculum

Kindergarten

The students receive instruction in religion, readiness activities in handwriting, mathematics and reading, as well as art, English language arts, health, music, physical education, art, computer technology, science and social studies.

Grades 1-8

Students at these grade levels receive instruction in religion, English language arts, mathematics, reading, science and social studies. Instruction in art, computer

technology, music and physical education is given weekly. Classes are taught on a departmental basis in grades 4-8.

Special Subjects
In addition to core curriculum subjects, Spanish and STREAM classes occur. Enrichment classes are provided for all students. Students in grades 5-8 may elect to participate in the school's instrumental band program.

Computer/Technology
Computer integration is incorporated in all grades, K through 8. Enrichment opportunities and applications of the computer are provided in all areas of the curriculum.

Other Courses of Study
The following topics are included in one or more courses of study:
study skills, career education, citizenship, energy and resource conservation education, human relations education, personal health safety, drug education, human sexuality, Social Justice, and multicultural education.

Classroom instruction is supplemented with a variety of educational and electronic materials. These include ActivBoards, Document Cameras, computer software programs, iPad, and Chromebooks.

Homework
Homework at most grade levels will usually be given daily. The assignments are an outgrowth of class work to supplement learning, to review independently what was taught in class, and to provide opportunities to use research skills. Time allotments for homework depend on the type of assignment and on the age and grade level of the student. No definite time limit can be determined for all, since children work at different rates of speed.
If a student should have a missing homework assignment, the teacher of that subject will issue a missing work notification. Parents will be notified through the Digital Academy. **Missing assignments need to be completed and returned the following day for partial credit.**

Parents can assist children in the following ways:

- Provide a quiet place for homework, free from distractions like cell phones, tablets and television
- Provide assistance with organization when needed
- Check for completeness, neatness and accuracy
- Listen and offer suggestions when needed
- Listen to a child read or recite work and help them study daily

Field Trips
Field trips enrich and extend classroom learning.

- Students will usually travel by bus when taking field trips.

- An official St. Mark School parent permission slip must be signed before a student may participate on a field trip. **(A note or phone call is not sufficient.)**
- The principal may exclude a student from a field trip if it is determined that participation would be detrimental.
- Cell phones may not be taken on fieldtrips, unless the school grants permission.

Students are expected to follow all school rules and regulations while on the field trip.

Classroom Assignments
In classrooms on each grade level, children are assigned heterogeneously. In such an environment, students are able to develop the social skills as well as the skills necessary to interact with a wide variety of achievement levels. The principal, in consultation with the teachers, assigns students to classrooms. **To maintain the balance of classes, changes in classroom assignments will be made for educational reasons only. Parent requests will not be honored.**

<u>Student Evaluation</u>

Monitoring and Evaluating Student Achievement
Student achievement is monitored on the basis of objectives stated in the Course of Study and incorporated into the teacher's plan for daily instruction. Performance based assessment results is demonstrable evidence of a student's understanding of skills and knowledge in unrehearsed ways, new situations, and more complex content applications.

Evaluation of student achievement includes the following: teacher's observation of student responses, directed activities, quizzes, tests, participation in discussion, experiments, projects, oral and written reports, assignments and written class work, as well as other appropriate means to measure achievement in the particular subject at a given grade level.

Third Grade Reading Guarantee
The ability to read is the foundation of learning. Research shows that children who are not reading at a third-grade level by the end of Grade Three will likely have difficulty learning in all classroom subjects in higher grades. Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee ensures that every struggling reader gets the support he or she needs to be able to learn and achieve. Below are some key elements of Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee:

- During the school year, we will be conducting in-house assessments on all students, using diagnostic Reading and Math Assessment Tools.
- As a result of these assessments, which will be given several times throughout the school year, teachers will identify students "On Track" (meaning that their performance is meeting expectations for students in that grade level,) or "Not On Track," (meaning that their performance is currently below expectations for the grade level they are in.)

- Parents will be notified of your child's performance with a letter following the completion of assessments.
- A Reading Improvement Monitoring Plan (RIMP) will be completed and updated throughout the school year for students "Not On Track" in Grades K-4.
- State law requires the State Board of Education to annually increase the promotion score on Ohio's State Test for grade 3 English language arts until it reaches proficient for the 2026-2027 school year. Accordingly, the State Board voted to raise the promotion score for Grade 3 English Language Arts to 700 for the 2025-2026 school year. (Scores for the 2026-2027 school year were not available as of June 2026) Any student who scored 700 or higher on the English language arts scaled score was eligible for promotion to fourth grade at the end of the 2025-2026 school year. Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, a student's parent or guardian, in consultation with the student's reading teacher and principal, may request that a student be promoted to fourth grade regardless of the student's score on Ohio's State Test for grade 3 English language arts. Students promoted to fourth grade through this exemption must continue to receive high dosage intensive reading instruction. For students with identified disabilities, there are exemptions in the Third Grade Reading Guarantee policy.

Report Cards for Gr. 4-8

Report cards provide parents with tangible evidence of their child's growth and development and promote mutual understanding and helpfulness between home and school. Report cards are issued four times a year, and are distributed the week following the end of the quarter. Report cards are to be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to school. The "Achievement Code" for the Diocese of Cleveland includes the following areas: Daily Work, Class Participation, Test Scores, and Homework. Please keep in mind your child's ability and recognize the importance of effort.

A=Superior (100-93%) Consistently does superior work in accomplishing goals, objectives and requirements. Shows thoroughness in daily work and related assignments. Demonstrates ability to work independently and cooperatively. Achieves above average test grades.

B=Above Average (92-85%) Usually does above average work in accomplishing goals, objectives, and requirements. Shows knowledge and use of skills in subject matter. Demonstrates thoroughness in daily work and related assignments. Demonstrates ability to work independently and cooperatively. Achieves above average test grades.

C=Average (84-77%) Usually does average work in accomplishing goals, objectives, and requirements. Shows adequate knowledge and use of skills in subject matter. Completes daily work and related assignments. Demonstrates ability to work independently and cooperatively. Achieves average test grades.

D=Below Average (76-70%) Usually does below average work in accomplishing goals, objectives, and requirements. Shows insufficient knowledge and use of skills in subject matter. Displays limited effort in daily work and related assignments.

Demonstrates limited ability to work independently and cooperatively. Achieves low average test grades.
F=Failing (69-0%) Usually does unsatisfactory work in accomplishing goals, objectives, and requirements. Provides daily and related work, which is below standard. Displays limited ability to work independently and cooperatively. Demonstrates unsatisfactory test grades.
I=Incomplete Incomplete work must be completed within a designated time frame. If work is not completed, the "Incomplete" grade is changed to "F" and the average is determined.

O=Outstanding	**U=Unsatisfactory**
S=Satisfactory	**N=Needs Improvement**

O, S, U will be used for Conduct and Effort and may be used for Music, Art, Physical Education, Computer and STREAM.

The following criteria for Effort and Conduct apply:

Effort The teacher has made students aware of concerns via graded work, conference, after-school time, or extra-credit options. Parents have been notified. An S-, N, or U may appear on the report card for: an accumulation of late, missing, or inadequate assignments/class work; a sudden drop in homework, test, or project grades with no "recovery" following intervention; absentee work, which is not made up in a timely manner.

Conduct The teacher maintains a record of behaviors; parents have been notified. An S-, N, or U may appear on the report card for an accumulation of any of the following: after-school time, detention, conferences with student and/or parent regarding inappropriate or disruptive behavior.

Report Cards for Kindergarten- Gr. 3
A standards-based report card is used for all Kindergarten- Gr. 3 students. students. Students will be evaluated on the mastery of standards. The following achievement code will be used:

3 (Mastered): Student meets or exceeds the demonstration or knowledge of target content for grade-level learning with consistent success, accuracy, and independence.
2.5: No major errors or omissions regarding 2.0 content and partial knowledge of 3.0 content.
2.0 (Developing): Student illustrates base knowledge of prerequisite content, knowledge, or skills necessary for mastery of target content.
1.5: Partial knowledge of 2.0 content, but major errors or omissions regarding the 3.0 content.
1 (Beginning): Assistance needed to demonstrate partial understanding of a score of 2.0 or higher.
Blank: Knowledge of target content was not assessed in the grading period.

O=Outstanding	**U=Unsatisfactory**
S=Satisfactory	**N=Needs Improvement**

O, S, U will be used for Conduct, Effort, Religion, Music, Art, Physical Education, Computer and STREAM.

Digital Academy
St. Mark School utilizes Digital Academy as our online grade book, report card, and parent communication system. Each family must have a Digital Academy account. The parent/guardian is responsible to check their account each week. Teachers provide continuous updates. Access to Digital Academy will be deactivated at the end of each quarter in which a family has an outstanding balance for tuition, registration, or AfterCare. Digital Academy will be reinstated when the account balance is cleared.

Interims
Ongoing grades are posted in the Digital Academy quarterly. An Interim email will be sent home as a reminder to check your Digital Academy account.

Promotion/ Retention
Promotion is based on the satisfactory completion of the respective grade level work. The decision of the principal in these cases is final.

Retention is considered in individual cases after thorough discussion by the teacher, principal and parents. Retention is subject to the final approval of the principal. Parents will be notified by the end of the first semester if a student is being considered for retention. Retention may be considered for the following reasons:

1. Failure to master fundamental skills of reading in the primary grades.
2. Failure in **three or more** subjects, i.e. Reading, Mathematics, English, Science and Social Studies. A student fails an individual subject if he/she receives an average grade of "F" in that subject for the school year.
3. Failure to show the readiness necessary for the next grade
4. Social immaturity
5. Excessive absence

Consistent with Ohio Revised Code, the right to assign students to a particular grade level is the responsibility of the principal. The right to retain a student is dependent on the school's judgment, and therefore, parental permission is <u>not</u> required.

Academic Probation
Students will be placed on Academic Probation when they receive two failing grades, three or more D's or any combination of these grades. A student receiving such grades is placed on Academic Probation for one quarter. During this quarter, it is the responsibility of both the student and the parents to monitor progress in those subject areas where grades are below average. If at the end of the quarter, the student has improved, he/she will automatically be removed from Academic Probation.

Academic Probation is a serious matter. Students who continually fail to show improvement may be asked to transfer from St. Mark Catholic School.

Final Report Cards
Final report cards will be mailed home at the conclusion of the 2026-2027 school year. All financial obligations must be met before the final report card is released.

Standardized Testing Program
The testing program is designed to provide a systematic means of assessing student mastery of basic skills and evaluating the academic programs of the school.

Students in Grades K-8 are given the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) to measure mastery of skills in Reading, Language Usage, and Mathematics three times throughout the year (fall, winter, spring). Students in Gr. 5 and 8 are also tested in Science.

The Ohio State English Language Arts test is given to Grade 3 in the fall and the spring.

Students in Grades 5 and 8 are given the NCEA ACRE Test to access their knowledge of the Catholic faith.

<u>Academic Honors and Awards</u>

Outstanding Performance: Grades K-4
Grades K-4 will be considered for Outstanding Performance certificates at the end of the year at the Awards Ceremony. The criteria will be based on performance for all four quarters in all subjects and nothing lower than an "S" in Effort and Conduct. Families are notified if their child is receiving this award.

Some students are recognized at the end of every quarter for The Principal's Award for Merit, Cooperation, or Effort. Families are notified if their child is receiving this award.
Academic Honors: Grades 5-8
Honors recognition will begin the first quarter for Grades 5-8.

1st Honors	A's in **all subjects** (A+, A, A-)
2nd Honors	A's or B's **in all subjects** (A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-)
3rd Honors	A's, B's, and not more than 2 C's **in all subjects** (A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-)

Effort and/or Conduct grades of **S-, N, U** are not permitted for Honors consideration.

Some students are recognized at the end of every quarter for The Principal's Award for Merit, Cooperation, or Effort. Families are notified if their child is receiving an award.

An Awards Assembly is held at the end-of-the-year, on the last day of school. Awards are given to students for Citizenship, Service, Outstanding Performance, Honor Roll,

Principal's Honor Roll, Principal's Award for Merit, Cooperation, or Effort, and the Peace Award. Families are notified if their child is receiving a special award.

Educational Resources

Auxiliary Services

The State of Ohio Auxiliary Services Program provides St. Mark School the services of a school psychologist, a speech and language pathologist, Intervention Specialist, tutors, Basic Skills teacher, a nurse and a Fiscal Liaison. Either the parents or the teacher may request these services. The parent request for services must be written and sent to the Administration or to the classroom teacher. Parents must sign a parental consent form before a child may receive services other than from the school nurse.

Speech, Language and Hearing Services

All children new to St. Mark School (Grades K-8) are screened for language/speech problems. Children referred by the professional staff, parents or physicians are given a threshold-hearing test. For students identified with speech, language or hearing problems, the therapist plans an individualized follow-up program and maintains on-going parent and teacher contact.

Psychological Testing and Counseling

A school psychologist assistant is available for individual testing and counseling. Group Mediation opportunities are also available. If family counseling is necessary, services outside the school need to be contacted.

Intervention Specialist

Individual and small group instruction is provided for children with special needs or disability. These students are identified through testing administered by the school psychologist or evaluator. After the school psychologist or evaluator assesses the educational needs of the student referred, a service plan is written, and periodic evaluations and parent conferences are held. A teacher certified in special education gives remedial and supportive instruction in the modular educational unit or within the school building when space is available. Parental permission is required for students to participate in this program. The school follows Diocesan Policy regarding children with physical and educational disabilities. Whenever reasonable accommodations can be made, the school will endeavor to do so. The principal and pastor make final decisions.

Library

The St. Mark School Library has a circulation of more than 8,000 volumes of books and reference material available for student and teacher use. Our book collection is constantly updated and expanded. Grades K-5 participate in a bi-weekly library period during which they are instructed to develop, maintain, and expand basic library skills and apply them to a variety of learning tasks at their grade level. Students are encouraged to choose good literature and develop their background of leisure reading experiences. The teacher, for classes involved in independent study or library research activities, may arrange additional library periods.

Technology/Life Skills Lab
St. Mark School has a modern Technology/Life Skills lab. The lab is designed to encourage students to reach beyond the classroom and traditional learning styles toward the computer driven world of communication.

Computer Integration
Integration of technology with all areas of the curriculum, promotes student learning at all grade levels. Keyboarding skills are taught beginning in Kindergarten. Integration takes place on the classroom Chromebooks as well as in the lab. The teacher, for classes involved in independent study, may arrange additional computer periods. St. Mark School follows the Internet policy, which is on file in the office. Parents and students must sign an *Acceptable Use Policy*. Parents and students in Gr. K-8 sign an additional policy regarding the use of Chromebooks/iPads before they are issued for student usage. Students in Grades K-8 use Google Apps for Education as a web based service, which requires an additional permission form.

STREAM Lab
The integration of science, technology, religion, engineering, art, and math will occur for all students in the newly renovated STREAM Lab. Classroom teachers will work with the STREAM teacher to create an integrated program that will teach problem-solving skills, foster ingenuity and creativity, and encourage teamwork and adaptation.

Telecommunication Center
Telecommunication capabilities are available for teachers and students to access on-line databases, electronic bulletin boards, local libraries and general communication with other schools or organizations. There is Internet access in the technology lab, the library, and classrooms. St. Mark School buildings are wireless.

Foreign Language
An introductory Spanish program is taught to students in K-8. Vocabulary, conversational phrases, culture, and background are presented.

Fine Arts Program
All grades participate in a fine arts program, including vocal music, art appreciation and visual art. A music teacher provides weekly instruction to all grades in vocal music, music history and music theory. The optional instrumental music program in Grades 5 through 8 provides the opportunity for small group lessons during the school day and participation in the St. Mark School ensemble groups. A special art teacher teaches art education to all grade levels. Art theory, art history, creative expression through various media crafts, and art appreciation are taught.

School Policies and Procedures

General School Policies
School doors are locked throughout the day, with electric locks, cameras, and buzzer system. Visitors enter by the doors near the church. Visitors must announce their intentions before entering the school.

- Only authorized visitors are permitted on the premises. All visitors must report to the office and sign in and out.
- Parents are not permitted to go directly to a child's classroom without an appointment and stopping in the office to sign in.
- All teachers are in possession of a Crisis Plan, which covers fire drills, tornado drills, emergency evacuations and all emergency situations. Teachers are all instructed in what to do in the case of a true emergency and will instruct students as to what to do.
- In case of emergency dismissal during the school hours, a parent/guardian will be notified by phone, text, email or other means. No student will be dismissed until a parent/guardian is notified.
- Monthly fire drills, tornado drills and lock downs are held during the school year. A full-scale evacuation drill is conducted each year.
- A Photo Release Consent Form must be completed yearly. Children's full names are never submitted or posted on social media with any photos.
- The school uniform is required on all days except designated dress down days, themed days, dress up days, some field trips, and birthdays.
- Students participate in various McKeon Group social emotional learning and service programs.

Student Code of Conduct
St. Mark Catholic School is called to be community based on the shared acceptance of the message and challenge of the Gospel. Students are expected to act in a manner that reflects their dignity as children of God.

Discipline policies and rules:
- Flow from this concept of a faith community, following the teachings of Christ
- Foster quality relationships among students, teachers, and parents
- Assist the students to grow toward true discipleship

In requesting registration at St. Mark School, both student and parents agree to comply with and support the discipline policies and regulations.

Behavior on and off St. Mark properties before, during, or after school must reflect the values of St. Mark School. The goals of the Student Code of Conduct are to develop self-discipline and promote mutual respect.

Standards of Conduct. The word "discipline" stems from a Latin disciplina meaning "instruction" or "teaching." Accordingly, discipline exists to teach a student to act in a way that will better his/her life and will lead to self-discipline. We believe that our school rules exist for the common good of our school community and for the good of each student recognizing that all persons are made in the image and likeness of God and deserve to be treated with respect. Growth in virtue, a responsibility for learning and living Catholic moral values, and a loving respect for the rights of all persons are at the heart of the Code of Conduct. To achieve these ends, parents, faculty and students are expected to work together to create a Catholic school environment. Most fundamentally, in a school, teachers have a right to teach, and students have a right to learn.

Every teacher develops a classroom discipline plan that communicates to both students and parents the expected behavior in class as well as other routines. This plan will be made available to parents and reviewed with students through each teacher's syllabus.

In our school, students:

- Will follow school rules and policies
- Will be faithful to prayer and religious obligations
- Will be punctual when arriving to school and with all assignments
- Will refrain from any deliberate disruption of the learning environment
- Will complete all assignments and participate in class as expected by their teachers
- Will not give or receive unauthorized assistance on tests, quizzes, or assignments, including the unauthorized use of AI
- Will be present for all required activities unless officially excused by the administration
- Will be neat and careful about personal appearance, being in complete uniform as required
- Will demonstrate good sportsmanship when engaged in extra-curricular activities
- Will be honest and committed to integrity
- Will be respectful, accepting, and courteous toward others
- Will speak respectfully to and about others
- Will respect school property and the personal property of others
- Will refrain from harassment of any kind
- Will use appropriate language and refrain from using inappropriate language
- Will not engage in any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with another person (including without limitation touching of another student, fighting and inappropriate displays of affection).
- **Will not bring to school nor possess at school any items inappropriate to a school setting including but not limited to real or toy knives or guns, sharp objects that may be used as a weapon, matches, lighters, sparklers, laser devices, or similar items.**
- Will maintain and support others who maintain a safe and alcohol and drug-free environment at and near school and at all school sponsored functions/activities.
- Will, at all times, whether or not at school or school events, conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, including without limitation with regard to the use of social media and electronic communications.

Disciplinary Actions

Disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to the following:

- Verbal or written warning (demerit)
- Student and/or parent conference
- Detention
- Denial of privileges such as field trips or class projects with parental notification
- Parent conferences with staff and/or administrators
- Behavior Contract
- Suspension (in-school or out of school)
- Dismissal or expulsion

Actions that may subject a student to discipline include violations of the Standards of Conduct, any action contrary to Catholic teaching or values whether or not specifically listed in the Standards of Conduct, and any action that is an offense against the dignity of another person whether or not specifically listed in the Standards of Conduct, all as determined in the sole discretion of school administration.
Final disciplinary decisions are determined in the sole discretion of school administration and may include a combination of disciplinary actions.

When a student fails to make a correct choice, he/she must accept the consequences of the action. The school reserves the right to vary from the following disciplinary procedures described depending upon the particular circumstances involved. Corporal Punishment is not permitted at any time.

Consequences of Behavior

<u>Demerit</u>

Demerits are used as a means of communication between home and school. When a demerit is issued, the parent is asked to discuss the behavior leading to the demerit with the child, and help the child to determine a plan of action to correct the behavior. Parent notification will occur through the Digital Academy. <u>Five (5) demerits issued within a quarter will result in a detention</u>. The following are some, not all, reasons for demerits:

- **3 unexcused tardies within a quarter**
- Chewing gum
- Running in the lunchroom, hallways, or classrooms
- Improper uniform attire
- Missing or incomplete assignment
- Talking in the hallways during classroom exchanges or recess lines.

Detention

Detentions are issued with parent notification. Detentions are 45 minutes and served after school on Thursdays from 2:50-3:35. An accumulation of three behavioral detentions throughout the year will result in a parent conference with all teachers involved, the principal and assistant principal. Parent notification will occur through the Digital Academy. Any further infractions may result in possible suspension. The following are some, not all, reasons for detentions:

- ❖ Failure to observe school rules
- ❖ An accumulation of 5 demerits within a quarter
- ❖ Destructive to school property
- ❖ Inappropriate/vulgar language
- ❖ Disrespectful to authority figure
- ❖ Annoying to classmates
- ❖ Inappropriate use of technology, including misuse of Chromebooks and the use of cell phones without permission (per the St. Mark School Cell Phone Policy)
- ❖ Fighting
- ❖ Rude/discourteous behavior including taunting
- ❖ Disruptive classroom conduct
- ❖ Excessive talking
- ❖ Repeated Uniform Infractions
- ❖ Forged signatures
- ❖ *Plagiarism/ *Cheating (No credit will be given to the student for the assignment and a detention issued.)

*Plagiarism is defined as, but not limited to:

- Taking someone's words or ideas as if they were your own
- Presenting an assignment that has been copied from someone else as your own work, including the unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence (see below)

*Cheating is defined as, but not limited to:

- Talking during a test or quiz
- Copying another student's answers
- Using cheat sheets
- Giving another student the answers during a test, quiz, or an assignment

Use of Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity

AI-enabled tools may be used to support student work (such as brainstorming or feedback), but AI-generated work must not replace student work. Students are expected to complete assignments and assessments in a manner that reflects their own understanding and effort, critically analyze AI-generated content and not misrepresent it

as original work, and use proper citations and references for AI-assisted work according to existing policies and expectations relevant to assignments (such as APA or MLA style formats.)

Suspension

When the previous method has been ineffective in changing a student's behavior or a serious offense has been committed, a student is liable for suspension. **Suspension** may be in the form of either in-school or at home. The student is responsible for missed work while suspended. Some of the mentioned offenses may also warrant contacting the police, referral to the Juvenile Court and/or Children's Services. **A suspension is noted in the student's academic record. In addition, any suspension issued to an 8th Grader will be fully disclosed to high schools to which the student applies.** Suspensions may last from one day to two weeks. Parent notification occurs and a meeting upon the student's return my be requested. **A Behavior Contract may be issued stating the conditions for the student to remain in the school upon the student's return.** The following are some, not all, reasons for suspension:

- Interfering with the teacher's lesson
- Defying a reasonable directive by a person in authority
- Using vulgar/obscene language
- Physical or verbal abuse toward another person
- Continual disrespect of another person including gestures or inappropriate pictures
- Threatening violence
- Inappropriate use of technology (both on and off campus)
- Stealing, cheating, or plagiarism
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Defacing or destroying school property or property of another person
- Non-compliance of any school policy
- Gang-related activity

Withdrawal

If a student or his/her parent or guardian behaves in a way that hinders the school from pursuing its mission, the principal and/or pastor may determine that St. Mark School is not an appropriate venue for the student to continue his/her education**.** In that event, the principal will place the student and his/her parents or guardians on probation. This probation is a serious warning that such behavior is not consistent with an intention to remain a part of St. Mark. If the principal/pastor determines that the behavior does not improve satisfactorily, the student will be asked to withdraw. The following are some, not all, reasons for withdrawal:

- Lack of respect for school employees
- Lack of respect for school property
- Inappropriate use of technology (both on and off campus)

- ❖ Lack of respect for the academic, religious, cultural, and social norms of the school
- ❖ Refusal to accept the required school curriculum

Expulsion

In some cases, the principal and/or pastor may deem an action by a student so severe that it would result in immediate expulsion from school. **Expulsion** of a student is a serious matter and will be used only when necessary. This decision is the right and responsibility of the principal and/or pastor. The following are some, not all, reasons for expulsion:

- ❖ Possession, distribution or use of any illegal drug or alcohol in the school, on school property, or at school events
- ❖ Possession of pornographic material
- ❖ Possession of knives, explosive devices, inhalants, fireworks, or other dangerous material
- ❖ Inappropriate use of technology (both on and off campus)
- ❖ Involvement in gang activity
- ❖ Threatening serious harm
- ❖ Non-compliance with any school policy

Situations with Specific Consequences

- Students responsible for stealing, destroying or vandalizing St. Mark School or parish property or the property of others are financially responsible, with their parents, whether the damage is accidental or intentional. The police will be notified if the situation warrants it. Lockers may be searched.
- Students are prohibited from the use, possession or sale of drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, hallucinogens, chemical substances, explosive materials or look alikes or weapons or any look alike of any kind, on St. Mark property, at St. Mark sponsored events whether held during or outside of school hours. Violations warrant notification of the police, immediate suspension and/or expulsion, and mandatory conference with parents before the student returns to school. Intervention by trained professionals may be required as a condition for the student to remain at St. Mark School. Lack of cooperation on the part of either the student or parents in this matter will result in the student's expulsion.

Student Threat Policy

Any and all student threats to inflict any harm to self or to others must be taken seriously. Whoever hears or sees the threat should report it immediately to the principal. The police may be notified immediately. The student will be kept in the principal's office under supervision until the police arrive. The parent/guardian of the student who has made the threat shall be notified immediately. Any adult or the parent/guardian of any student who has been verbally mentioned as a potential victim or listed in writing as a potential victim shall be notified immediately. The student may be suspended and not considered for readmission to school until a comprehensive mental health evaluation/risk assessment has been conducted by a psychiatrist/psychologist (Ph.D.). Lack of cooperation by either the

student or the parents in this matter will result in the student's immediate expulsion. If a psychiatrist performs the primary evaluation, he/she shall determine the necessity to utilize a psychologist (Ph.D.) for psychological consultation and/or testing. If a psychologist (Ph.D.) performs the primary evaluation, he/she shall determine the need for psychiatric consultation.

The principal will provide the mental health care professional (Psychiatrist and/or Ph.D. psychologist) with all relevant facts, including but not limited to aggressive behavior, details of the threat as known to the principal, copies of any drawings or writings, disciplinary history of the student, behavioral concerns, and the names of any known victims or potential victims.

The principal shall receive a written comprehensive, detailed evaluation and report and a documented treatment plan from the mental health care professionals stating the basis (factual and risk factors and testing results) upon which he/she determined that the student is not/does not pose a danger to self or others. The report shall address the concern raised by the principal to the mental health care professional. The evaluation and report shall be made available to the principal who will share them with legal and/or mental health care consultants and administration assisting the principal in the decision regarding the student's future enrollment at school.

Chemical Use/Abuse Policy
The school/parish is co-tenant of lockers and desks and reserves the right to search them at any time without notice. Parents will be notified immediately if a student is found to have or be under the influence of tobacco, hallucinogens, alcohol or drugs, or any substance or to have drug paraphernalia in his/her possession on school property, or during off-campus activities sponsored by the school or school related activities. A mandatory conference with both parents will be arranged before the student returns to school. Intervention by trained professionals may be required as a condition for the student to remain at St. Mark School. Lack of cooperation by either the student or the parents in this matter will result in the student's suspension or expulsion. If a student gives evidence or signs of chemical dependency, the principal and teachers will contact parents, and an appropriate course of action will be decided upon. Parents who are aware of similar problems with a student are to inform the school so that together we can assist the student in overcoming this dependency.

Pregnancy Policy
Two sets of principles are to be applied in the situation of adolescent pregnancy in the Catholic school setting. One set of principles applies to the teaching of respect for human life. The second set of principles applies to effective school management. If the need arises, the two sets of principles will be applied on an individual basis.

Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy
St. Mark School is firmly committed to providing a safe, positive learning and working environment for everyone in the school, free of harassment and sexual harassment. For this reason, and in keeping with the goals and objectives of Catholic education, St. Mark School expressly prohibits harassment and sexual harassment and sexual violence in the

school environment. This policy re-emphasizes the personal dignity of the individual and fosters positive sexual attitudes and respect for others.

Harassment

St. Mark School seeks to create and foster a school community in which all individuals are treated with dignity, integrity, respect, and compassion. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying behavior by any student/school personnel in St. Mark School is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, " in accordance with House Bill 276, mean any intentional written, verbal, graphic or physical acts including electronically transmitted acts i.e., Internet, cell phone, personal digital assistance (PDA), or wireless hand-held device, either overt or covert, by a student or group of students toward other students/school personnel with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule or humiliate. Such behaviors are prohibited on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, or on school-provided transportation that a reasonable person under the circumstance should know the effect of:

- Causing mental or physical harm to the other student/school personnel including placing an individual in reasonable fear of physical harm and/or damaging of students'/personal property; and
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student/school personnel.

St. Mark School will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student, school employee, or volunteer. A student, school employee or volunteer shall not intimidate or harass another student, school employee or volunteer through words or actions whether in the classroom, on school property, to and from school or at school-sponsored events, or from any computer not on school property.

Such behavior includes overt intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate another student, school employee or volunteer. Examples of conduct that could constitute prohibited behaviors include:

1. Physical violence and/or attacks
2. Threats, taunts and intimidation through word and/or gestures
3. Extortion, damage or stealing of money and/or possessions
4. Exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors; and
5. Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies and other Web-based/online sites (also known as "cyber bullying"), such as the following:
    - Posting slurs on Websites where students congregate or on Web logs
    - Sending abusive or threatening instant messages
    - Using camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of student and posting them online (including Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram or social media of similar nature)

- Using websites and social media to circulate gossip and rumors to other students (including Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram and social media of similar nature.)
- Excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to Internet service providers

Sexual Harassment

For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment includes the following specific instances but is not limited to: verbal sexual abuse; disseminating obscene or sexually explicit material, whether in the form of music, written lyrics, pornographic pictures or other literature, or having such material in one's possession in the school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities; obscene or sexually explicit graffiti anywhere in the school or on the school/parish grounds, continuing and unwanted written or oral communication directed to another of a sexual nature; spreading sexual rumor/innuendoes; obscene T-shirts, hats, or button; touching oneself sexually in front of others; obscene and /or sexually explicit gestures; and any other inappropriate behavior of a sexually explicit or obscene nature that demeans or offends the recipient. The above list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but is intended to provide guidance as to what may constitute sexual harassment. Harassment is not tolerated.

Consequences for Harassment and Sexual Harassment

1. Allegations of harassment or sexual harassment are to be reported to the teacher and the principal.
2. The principal will investigate. Parents of both the offender and the victim will be informed of the allegations. The matter is to be kept confidential to the extent possible by all parties involved, and every effort will be made to protect the alleged victim and witnesses from retaliation. The parents of both the offender and the victim are obligated to cooperate in remedying the situation.
3. **The principal will determine disciplinary action**. If the allegations are substantiated, disciplinary actions will be taken. These will depend on the nature, frequency and severity of the action, the ages of the offender and victim, the history of similar actions by this individual, and the circumstances in which the harassment occurred. Possible disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to any or all the following:

    - Verbal warning/reprimand and apology to the victim
    - A parent/student/ principal conference
    - Written warning/reprimand and parent notification, entered into the student's file
    - Detention or removal from selected school activities and/or extracurricular activities
    - Behavior/probation contracts, possibly requiring professional intervention
    - Suspension
    - Expulsion

It is the desire of St. Mark School to empower students to take a stand against unwanted behavior so that continued intervention is not necessary.

Hazing

Hazing is defined as doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act, including an act of initiation into an organization, that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing does not lessen the offense. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process. No employee of the school will encourage, permit, condone, or tolerate any hazing activities. No student shall plan, encourage, or engage in hazing.

Consequences for Hazing

1. Allegations of hazing are to be reported to the principal.
2. The principal will investigate. Parents of both the offender and the victim will be informed of the allegations. The matter is to be kept confidential to the extent possible by all parties involved, and every effort will be made to protect the alleged victim and witnesses from retaliation. The parents of both the offender and the victim are obligated to cooperate in remedying the situation.
3. **The principal will determine disciplinary action**. If the allegations are substantiated, disciplinary actions will be taken. Possible disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to any or all the following:
    - A parent/student/ principal conference
    - Written warning/reprimand and parent notification, entered into the student's file
    - Detention or removal from selected school activities and/or extracurricular activities
    - Behavior/probation contracts, possibly requiring professional intervention
    - Suspension
    - Expulsion

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence and some sexual harassment may be criminal in nature. If an incident of sexual violence occurs, the principal, pastor, or other school authority is required under state law to report the incident.

The Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately if there is any "reason to believe" that sexual abuse or violence has occurred involving a child less than eighteen years of age. The Diocesan Legal Office will be contacted immediately in these situations. Generally sexual harassment should be construed as sexual violence when the recipient is physically touched without his/her consent in a sexual manner; is expressly threatened or perceives a threat of physical harm for purposes of the offender's sexual gratification; or is the victim of sex offenses under Ohio law. In these cases, the Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately. Any child who feels he/she has been a victim of child abuse should notify their parent and teachers immediately.

Reporting Child Abuse
If a faculty or staff member suspects a case of child abuse, the Child Abuse hotline (696-KIDS) will be called in by the person suspecting the abuse. There are five categories of child abuse: Physical, Sexual, Neglect, Failure to Thrive, and Emotional.

The Principal must be notified. We will follow the recommendations of the Child Abuse hotline Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421.

Gangs
Youth gangs and gang-related activity are prohibited. A gang is defined as any non-school sponsored group, possibly secret and/or exclusive in membership, whose purpose or practices include the commission of illegal acts, unlawful or antisocial behavior, violation of school rules, establishment of territory or turf or any action that threatens the safety or welfare of others or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school. Gang activity includes but is not limited to recruitment, initiation, a manner of grooming, hair style and/or wearing of clothing, jewelry, head coverings, or accessories which by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark or other attribute denotes membership in a gang, displaying gang markings or slogans on school or personal property or clothing, having gang tattoos, possessing literature that indicates gang membership, fighting, assault, hazing, extortion, establishing turf, use of hand signals, gang vocabulary and nicknames, possession of cellular phones, possession of weapons or explosive materials, possession of alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, attendance at functions sponsored by a gang or known gang members, exhibiting behavior fitting police profiles of gang-related drug dealings, being arrested or stopped by police with a known gang member, selling or distributing drugs for a known gang member, helping a known gang member commit a crime, or any other action directly resulting from membership or interest.

Consequences for Gang Involvement
If a student is suspected or identified as being a member of a gang, shows interest in joining a gang, initiates or participates in any gang related activity, or has been approached for recruitment, any or all of the following steps may be taken:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and appropriate intervention initiated.
- A behavior contract will be prepared stating the conditions for the student remaining in the school.
- Students may be referred to counseling (personal and/or family)
- Students may be referred to the Department of Children's Services or other welfare or childcare agencies of the respective county.
- Students may be referred to outside agencies or programs for treatment when use of drugs and/or alcohol is involved.
- Students may be referred to the Partnership for a Safer Cleveland.
- Police, Juvenile Court, and other appropriate authorities will be notified of violence and/or illegal activities.

- Students may be suspended and/or expelled as already outlined in the school discipline policies. Parents/students will be held liable and financially responsible for all forms of vandalism.

Jurisdiction
Realizing that gang activity is a community concern, communication will be maintained with the police department and public school officials on all matters related to gang activity within the community. Involvement and jurisdiction of school authorities in gang related incidents occurring outside the school or off school/parish property will be determined in cooperation with diocesan legal authorities and the police, and will take into consideration the nature of the incident, the safety of the student, the effect of the incident on other students, and the good order and functioning of the school.

Gang Related Policies
In order to prevent the onset of gang related activity, the following related policies will be strictly enforced:

- Dress code and uniform policy as defined in the School Handbook.
- Discipline policies and consequences as defined in the School Handbook
- The right of school authorities to search lockers, student desks, and personal property, upon request if suspicion of gang involvement exists.
- Policies and procedures relative to scheduling, supervision and attendance at school/parish sponsored events, held during the school day, in the evening or on weekends, whether held on parish property or at other public facilities.
- Policies and procedures established relative to participation in and attendance at school/parish sponsored athletic functions whether held on parish property or at other public facilities.
- Insistence on parent cooperation in not permitting children to host/attend unsupervised parties or activities.

Weapons Policy
In furtherance of the overall philosophy, goals, and objectives of the Catholic educational experience, St. Mark School expressly prohibits the use, possession, sale, or discharge of any weapons or explosive devices in the school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities. This policy shall apply to all students, participants in parish programs, teachers, administrators, and other personnel in the school or parish. **No toy weapons are allowed.**

This policy includes, but is not limited to, any firearm, knife, deadly weapon, or explosive or incendiary device. As defined by state law, a deadly weapon is "any instrument, device or thing capable of inflicting death, and designed or specifically adapted for use as a weapon, or possessed, carried or used as a weapon." ORC 2923.11(A). Firearms shall include any loaded or unloaded gun of any caliber or type. This prohibition also includes any pistol, rifle, or other device that uses air or gas propelled projectiles. Possession of hunting weapons is also a violation of this policy.

No student may have possession of a weapon on school grounds, during or immediately before or after school hours; on school grounds at any other time when the school is

being used by a group; off school grounds or while at a place or location for the purpose of or related to attendance at a school-sponsored activity, function, or event; or at any other time when a student is subject to the authority of the school. A search for a weapon may be conducted in a manner consistent with the policy set forth in the Search Policy.

Consequences for Weapons
Violations of this policy may warrant notification of the police, immediate suspension, and possible expulsion. If possession of a weapon is suspected, the principal or other administrator will immediately contact the police department and the Diocesan Legal Office before confronting the individual. If it is determined that this policy has been violated, the parents of the offender shall be immediately contacted and must cooperate with the disciplinary process.

Disciplinary action may include immediate in-or out-of-school suspension or expulsion, pending investigation and resolution. If the student's infraction does not warrant immediate dismissal, then the parents may be required to sign a Probation Contract that includes all conditions of the student's retention at the school. Possible terms of this probation agreement may include professional counseling, participation in the community program addressing youth violence, suspension from extracurricular activities, and any other conditions deemed appropriate by the administration of the school or parish program after consultation with the Diocesan Legal Office. The pastor/principal makes individual judgments of cases.

Search Policy
The school reserves a right to search at any time all school property such as lockers and desks even if assigned to an individual. Additionally, by enrolling in the school, the student and parents' consent to a search of a student's backpack, gym bag, book bag, handbag, purse, coat and students' notebooks and folders, when the school has reasonable grounds to believe a student has in his/her possession some unlawful or otherwise prohibited items or items when on school grounds, during and immediately before or after school hours; on school ground at any other time when the school is being used by a group; off school ground or while any place or location for purpose of or related to attendance at a school-sponsored activity, function, or event; on a school bus or conveyance; or at any other time when a student is subject to the authority of the school. The search may extend to a student's person or clothing only if the school has reasonable grounds to believe the student possesses a weapon as defined under the Weapons Policy. Upon the commencement of any searches outlined above, the school will first request permission from the student in question to conduct the search. If the student refuses to allow the search, the school reserves the right to discipline the student for possession of the alleged unlawful or prohibited item or items in the manner provided in the school's Student Code of Conduct.

Electronic Devices and Personal Property Policy
St. Mark School does not assume responsibility for toys, electronics, cameras and similar items brought to school by a student. Parents are asked to see that these items are kept at home. **No SMART watches, Apple watches, Fit Bits etc. or other electronic devices are allowed unless permission is given by a teacher.**

Cell phones may be brought to school under these conditions:

- Must be in backpacks, turned OFF. Cell phones are not permitted to be carried on the person.
- Cell phones may not be activated while the student is on school property unless a teacher gives permission.
- Cell phones may not be used for picture taking or video.
- Cell phones are not permitted on field trips, unless explicit permission is given by the principal.

Those who violate any of the rules regarding cell phones may forfeit their privilege of bringing them to school. They will be issued a detention. Phones will be taken away and will need to be picked up in the office by a parent.

In order to maintain a Christian learning environment, St. Mark Catholic School firmly and fairly endorses the above discipline code. It is operative on school property, the playground, cafeteria, and at all school-sponsored functions, including sporting events, field trips, etc. Students can be disciplined for on campus and off campus behavior involving inappropriate social media communications, postings, etc.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

St. Mark School (the "School") makes a variety of communications and information technologies available to students through computer/network/Internet access. These technologies, when properly used, promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Illegal, unethical or inappropriate use of these technologies can have dramatic consequences, harming the school, its students and its employees. The Acceptable Use Policy ("Policy") is intended to minimize the likelihood of such harm by educating the School's students and setting standards that will serve to protect the school. We firmly believe that digital resources, information and interaction available on the computer, network or Internet far outweigh any disadvantages.

Definition of school technology system: The school systems and networks (collectively, "System") are any configuration of hardware and/or software whether used on or off school property. The System includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- telephones, cellular telephones, and voicemail technologies;
- email accounts;
- servers;
- desktop and laptop computer hardware and peripherals;
- software including operating system software and application software including without limitation video conferencing software;
- digitized information including stored text, data files, email, digital images, and video and audio files;
- internally or externally accessed databases, applications, or tools (Internet- or District-server based);
- school provided Internet access;

- school filtered public Wi-Fi;
- school provided Chromebooks;
- school provided personal digital assistants ("PDAs"), tablets, IPADs and similar devices;
- school issued access to third party websites (i.e., Google apps, Zoom, Flipgrid, Dojo, etc.) ; and
- new technologies as they become available.

Acceptable Use: Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the System just as they are in a classroom or on a school playground. Communications on the System are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. It is expected that users will comply with school standards and the specific rules set forth below as interpreted from this policy, whether on or off of school property. A student is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and utilizing the school's computer resources in accordance with Student Code of Conduct and may be subject to discipline for misuse of the System.

Access to communication system: Access to the school's electronic communications system, including the Internet, shall be made available to students for educational and instructional purposes. Each school computer/device and Wi-Fi (available for students who bring in their own personal telecommunication devices) has filtering software that block access to visual deceptions that are obscene, pornographic, inappropriate for students, or harmful to minors as defined by the federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Filtered Internet access is provided to students as defined by CIPA.

Access to the School's computer/network/Internet is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked at any time.

Scope of Use: The System is intended for use for educational and instructional purposes only. Incidentally, personal use shall be allowed only so long as such use is appropriate for a school setting, non-disruptive to the school's operations and mission, and not in excess or to the exclusion of the student's studies or school responsibilities.

Inappropriate Use: Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to, those uses that are specifically named as violations in this document; that violate the rules of network etiquette; or that hamper the integrity or security of the System or any components that are connected to it.

Transmission on the System, including through email (personal or school accounts), social media, web pages, blogs and/or forums, of any material in violation of any federal or state law or this Policy is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- cyber bullying;
- threatening, pornographic, harassing, defamatory or obscene material;
- copyrighted material, plagiarized material or materials protected by trade;

- the use of hardware and/or software which disrupts or interferes with the safety and welfare of the school community (even if such uses take place after school hours or off school property).

Vandalism or Mischief: Tampering with or theft of components from the System may be regarded as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. Any attempt to break the law through the use of a school computer/network/Internet account may result in prosecution against the offender by the proper authorities. If such an event should occur, the school will fully comply with the authorities to provide any information necessary for legal action.

Modification of Computer: Modifying or changing computer/device settings and/or internal or external configurations without appropriate permission is prohibited and may result in discipline and/or the revocation of access to the System.

Student Access: System access is provided to all students unless parents or guardian request in writing to the school principal that access is denied. When student is in a classroom setting on school property, student Internet access will be under the direction and guidance of a school staff member. Students must adhere to the following guidelines when using the System on or off of school property:

1. Respect and protect the privacy of others.
    a. Use only assigned accounts.
    b. Decline to view, use, or copy passwords, data, or networks to which they are not authorized.
    c. Avoid distribution of private information about others or themselves.
    d. Decline to record any individual, educational instruction or any portion of communications without prior written consent of teacher or school administration.
2. Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of all electronic resources.
    a. Observe all network security practices as posted.
    b. Report security risks or violations to a school administrator, teacher or network administrator.
    c. Refrain from destroying or damaging data, networks, or other resources that do not belong to them without clear permission of the owner.
    d. Conserve, protect, and share these resources with other students and Internet users as appropriate.
    e. Get appropriate pre-approval before accessing the network with personal devices.
    f. Abstain from overriding the Internet content filtering system.

3. Respect and protect the intellectual property of others.
    a. Refrain from copyright infringement (making illegal copies of educational lessons, music, games, or movies).
    b. Avoid plagiarism.
4. Respect and practice the principles of parish and school community.
    a. Communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful.

b. Report threatening or discomforting materials (cyber bullying) to a school administrator, teacher or network administrator.
c. Refuse to access, transmit, copy, or create material that violates the school's code of conduct (such as messages that are pornographic, threatening, rude, discriminatory, or meant to harass).
d. Avoid accessing, transmitting, copying, or creating material that is illegal (such as obscenity, stolen materials, or illegal copies of copyrighted works).
e. Abstain from using the resources to further other acts that are criminal or violate the school's code of conduct.
f. Avoid sending spam, chain letters, or other mass unsolicited mailings.
g. Refrain from buying, selling, advertising, or otherwise conducting business, unless approved as a school project.
h. Avoid posting or disseminating any harassing, demeaning, threatening or immoral comment or visual injurious to the reputation of the school, the parish, the Church or an individual, whether the action occurs on school property or off grounds.

5. Abide by the Student Code of Conduct in the use of the System at all times.

School Email and Communication tools: Email and other digital tools such as, but not limited to, blogs and wikis are tools used to communicate. The use of these communication tools should be limited to instructional, school related activities; or administrative needs. All communications within these tools should adhere to this Policy.

The Use of Video Conferencing: Staff and students may from time to time use video conferencing software for educational purposes, including without limitation Zoom and Google Hangouts. Video conferencing is a way that students can communicate with teachers, other students, speakers, others from their school, local community, and/or other parts of the country and the world, in real time. All students agree to the following related to use of video conferencing software whether or not on school property during use:

a) Videoconference sessions may be videotaped by school personnel or by a participating school involved in the exchange in order to share the experience.
b) Students' voices, physical presence, and participation in the videoconference are transmitted to participating sites during each session.
c) Students are only permitted to transmit audio/video images using the System when all of the following conditions are met (i) it is under teacher's direction, (ii) it is for educational purposes, (iii) it is sent only to other classmates or school staff members, and (iv) it is sent during classroom hours.
d) Students shall not record any portion of a videoconferencing session without prior written approval from teacher or school administration.
e) Students shall not save, share, post or distribute in any way any part of a videoconferencing session or any photos or audio recording from a videoconferencing session without prior written approval from teacher or school administration.
f) All sessions must be set up only by school personnel and communicated to students and/or parents privately and not through any public domain.
g) Classroom and school rules apply to all remote learning experiences.

The following guidelines must be adhered to by students using a personally-owned telecommunication device at school or with the System whether on or off school property:

a. All personally-owned telecommunication devices must be registered with the classroom teacher prior to use.
b. Internet access is filtered by the school on personal telecommunication devices in the same manner as School owned equipment. If network access is needed, connection to the filtered, wireless network provided by the school is required. Use of any service bypasses the security filter and is considered a violation of the *Acceptable Use Policy*.
c. These devices are the sole responsibility of the student owner. The school assumes no responsibility for personal telecommunication devices if they are lost, loaned, damaged or stolen and only limited time or resources will be spent trying to locate stolen or lost items.
d. These devices have educational and monetary value. Students are prohibited from trading or selling these items to other students on school property, including school buses.
e. Each student is responsible for his/her own device: set-up, maintenance, charging, and security. Staff members will not store student devices at any time, nor will any staff diagnose, repair, or work on a student's personal telecommunication device.
f. Telecommunication devices are only to be used for educational purposes at the direction of a classroom teacher.
g. School administrators and staff members have the right to prohibit use of devices at certain times or during designated activities (i.e. campus presentations, theatrical performances, or guest speakers) that occur during the school day.
h. An administrator may examine a student's personal telecommunication device and search its contents, in accordance with disciplinary guidelines.

Subject to Monitoring: All School System usage on or off school property shall not be considered confidential or private and is subject to monitoring by designated staff at any time to ensure appropriate use. All electronic files, including email messages, from both school-issued and personal accounts, transmitted through or stored in the System, will be treated no differently than any other electronic file. The school reserves the right to access, review, copy, modify, delete or disclose such files for any purpose. Students should treat the computer system like a shared or common file system with the expectation that electronic files sent, received or stored anywhere in the computer system, will be available for review by any authorized representative of the school for any purpose. Personal telecommunication devices are subject to examination in accordance with disciplinary guidelines if there is reason to believe that the Acceptable Use Policy has been violated.

Students have no expectation of privacy with respect to use of the System whether on or off school property and whether the devices are school or personally owned. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the

System in order to further the health, safety, discipline, or security of any student or other person, or to protect property. They may also use this information in disciplinary actions and/or may refer information to law enforcement if a crime is believed to have been committed.

All computers, Chromebooks, devices, laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, or the like, used by students to access the System, including both school-owned equipment and personally-owned devices, are subject to search at any time if a violation of this Policy or other school policies is suspected.

Consequences for Violation: Students have the responsibility to use the System in an appropriate manner which complies with all school policies. Violations of these rules or any school policy may result in disciplinary action which may include the loss of a student's privileges to use the school's information technology resources and/or discipline. Consequences of misuse or abuse of these resources will be disciplined depending on the severity of the situation. In addition to school disciplinary action, appropriate legal action may be taken.

Agreement Form: In order to ensure the proper use of technology resources, it is necessary that each student and parent/guardian *annually* sign the attached *Student Acceptable Use Policy – User Agreement Form*. The signed form must be on file at the School before Internet and other technology access is permitted. Signing the form indicates that the user will abide by the rules governing Internet and other technology access as stated in this Policy.

The school reserves the right to issue additional or more detailed rules for the use of technology resources, and violations of such rules may be a cause for imposition of any of the penalties delineated above. The school reserves the right to seek financial restitution for any damage caused by a student. Upon its discretion, the school reserves the right to request student/parent complete additional forms prior to the distribution of any electronic devices.

Media Release and Consent Policy

There is value with audio-visual and digital technologies in providing an effective education. A *Media Release Form* must be completed granting permission before a child is permitted to be photographed or recorded as part of an educational program produced by the school or a coalition of schools.

AIDS Policy regarding students (Diocese of Cleveland)

Children with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) enrolled or seeking enrollment in Grade K through 12 shall be permitted to attend school or parish religious education programs in regular classroom setting provided:

1. The health of a child, as documented by his/her physician, allows participation in regular academic school activities.

2. The child behaves acceptably; in a manner that would not cause spread of the disease or in any way put others at risk.
3. The child does not have open sores, skin eruptions, or any other condition, which prevents his/her control of bodily secretions.
4. There are periodic evaluations of the child's physical condition with written certification from his/her physician allowing continuing participation in regular academic school activities.

In Parish Elementary Schools and Parish Schools of Religion, the Pastor and Principal will confer with the appropriate persons and consult with the Regional Superintendent before the Pastor/Principal makes the final decision on each case in the parish school. Parents and guardians have the obligation to report to the school administration when any child has been diagnosed as having AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), ARC (AIDS Related Complex), or other illness caused by HIV (Human Immune Deficiency Virus that causes AID, also known as HTVIII or LAV).

In order to protect confidentiality, when a child with AIDS is admitted to school, personnel who are made aware of the child's condition should be the minimum necessary to assure proper care of the child.
Based on the condition of the child and the expected type of interaction with others, the administration, after consultation with the proper authorities, may limit the child's participation in school activities.
A student with AIDS, who is excluded from school or a Parish School or Religious Program, shall be provided with an alternative means of catechetical instruction.

Online Integrity Policy
St. Mark School provides students with the most effective web-based tools and applications for learning both in school and remotely. We abide by all federal regulations. Parental consent must be provided before students are granted access using school devices.

School devices are not permitted to be used for game-playing during class, recess activities or for enrichment.

Uniform Policy and Dress Code for Grades K-8

Appearance tells us a great deal about ourselves. Our school uniform policy encourages students to focus on grooming that presents a positive image of our young people and our school. Neatness, cleanliness, and appropriateness in dress and appearance are conducive to an academic atmosphere. St. Mark School believes there is a correlation between dress and behavior. We believe that a strong partnership between home and school is essential in upholding our dress code. When families and staff work together to support consistent expectations, we not only promote a respectful and focused learning environment, but also set a positive example for our students. By modeling appropriate dress and reinforcing shared values, we help our students understand the importance of personal responsibility and school pride.

Boys

Pants

- **Grades K-8:** Navy blue dress pants
- **Junior High students only (Gr. 7-8):** Junior High may wear dress uniform khaki pants to school as well as navy blue dress pants.
- Dress pants are defined as traditionally styled pants with inside pockets only with plain or pleated fronts. **Jeans, khaki jeans, form fitting, extremely tight fitting, cuffed/stitched hems (jogger style) or excessively large or long pants are not permitted.** For comparison purposes, many Dockers style pants meet these criteria.
- Belts need to be worn if pants have belt loops. Belts must be plain brown, black or navy with no designs, oversized belt buckles, or ornamentation**.**

Shirts

- **Grades K-8:** white, red, light gray polo shirts*
- **NO TIES**
- **Grades K-8**: solid white undershirts with no visible logo and sleeves no longer than the polo may be worn under the school shirt.
- Shirts/polos must be tucked in and not rolled.

*Polo shirts should be free of any logos or insignias, unless it is the school crest, which is offered as an option by both *Schoolbelles* and *J.D. Designs*.

Girls

Grades K-4:

- Red plaid uniform jumper. **Jumpers may not be shorter than the fingertips in length.**
- Navy blue uniform dress pants. Dress pants are defined as traditionally styled pants with inside pockets only with plain or pleated fronts. **Jeans, form fitting, extremely tight fitting, cuffed/stitched hems (jogger style) or excessively large or long pants are not permitted.** For comparison purposes, many Dockers style pants meet these criteria.
- Red plaid uniform pants
- Belts required for any pants with belt loops. Belts must be plain brown, black or navy with no designs, oversized belt buckles, or ornamentation**.**

Grades 5-8:

- Red plaid uniform skirt. **Skirts may not be shorter than the fingertips in length.**
- **Grades 5-8:** Navy blue uniform dress pants.
- **Junior High students only (Gr. 7-8):** Junior High may wear dress uniform khaki pants to school as well as navy blue dress pants. Dress pants are defined as traditionally styled pants with inside pockets only, plain or pleated fronts, cuffed or stitched hems, and no contrasting seams or other adornments. **Jeans, khaki jeans, form fitting, extremely tight fitting, cuffed/stitched hems (jogger style)**

or excessively large or long pants are not permitted. For comparison purposes, many Dockers style pants meet these criteria.
- Belts must be plain brown, black or navy with no designs, oversized belt buckles, or ornamentation**.**

Shirts:

Grades K-8:
- White, red, light gray polo shirts* or plain collared white blouse tucked in.
- Polos should either have a banded bottom or be tucked in.
- Solid white undershirts with no visible logo and sleeves no longer than the polo may be worn under the school shirt.

*Polo shirts should be free of any logos or insignias, unless it is the school crest, which is offered as an option by both *Schoolbelles* and *J.D. Designs*.

Boys and Girls Shorts/Skort Uniform
- Navy blue walking shorts/skorts (not short shorts) are permitted for students in Grades K-8 beginning **from the start of the school year to September 30th and from May 1st to the end of the year**. Shorts with leg pockets or ornamentation may **not** be worn. When shorts/skorts are worn, they are not to be shorter than fingertips in length.
- Students in Gr. 7-8 may wear khaki or navy walking shorts.
- White, red, light gray polo shirts *
- Banded bottoms or tucked in shirts
- **Any time shorts are worn to school (uniform, field trips, special dress down days etc.), they may not be any shorter than the fingertips in length.**

*Polo shirts should be free of any logos or insignias, unless it is the school crest, which is offered as an option by both *Schoolbelles* and *J.D. Designs*.

Footwear

Shoes
- **School style dress shoes must be worn with the uniform. Shoes must be supportive and enclose the whole foot. Plain black or brown sturdy leather or canvas type tie shoes/loafers, or tan or brown Sperry style shoes, as well as black, tan or brown Hey Dude style shoes are permitted. There must not be any other color, pattern or sparkle on the shoes. Saddle shoes and Mary Jane style shoes are permitted in black or brown.**
- **Not Permitted**: White canvas shoes, Ballerina-style shoes, moccasins, slipper-style shoes, Crocs, sandals, flip-flops, slingbacks, backless shoes of any kind, high heel, boots of any kind, booties, work boot, or other "fashion shoes."
- All shoes must be properly laced and tied.
- Shoes worn as boots in inclement weather must be changed before entering the classroom.

P.E. Shoes Grades K-6:

- On assigned P.E. days, students in K-6 may wear **solid (including the soles and laces) black or white or any combination of a black/white athletic type shoe**. **No other colors will be permitted**. High tops, mid top basketball, light up/flashing light shoes, Heelys, Vans, Chuck Taylors, or any other shoe of that nature are not permitted.

Socks

- Socks must be **solid** white, black, or navy blue crew socks. A small logo (example, Nike check) is permitted. **Socks must be visible above the shoe line.**
- Girls may wear white, black, or navy blue tights. In addition, girls may wear **solid black full-length leggings, with no markings or designs**, along with school appropriate socks. Sweatpants, yoga pants or "pajama style" pants are not to be worn under the uniform during the school day.

Sweaters/ Sweatshirts

- Cardigan or pullover solid navy, dark red, black.
- Sweatshirt - Official St. Mark sweatshirt with school crest logo (red/gray) purchased through *Schoolbelles* or J.D. *Designs*

  All other St. Mark sweatshirts may ONLY be worn on Spirit Wear days. This includes any previously purchased spirit wear or sports attire.
- St. Mark fleece quarter zip (red/gray) purchased in previous years
- St. Mark quarter zip dry fit (gray, red, black) purchased through *J.D. Designs*
- **Hooded sweatshirts are not permitted to be worn in school unless given permission for special occasions/dress down days.**
- No logos or insignias (other than school logos)
- Outerwear such as winter coats, jackets, jacket vests, unapproved sweatshirts, hats, baseball caps, are not to be worn during the school day.

Hair

Students will have simple, neat and conservative hairstyles that are consistent with the tailored appearance of the school uniform. No unusual fads or designs may be worn. Students are expected to adhere to the following:

- **Hair dye/highlights are permitted**. **Highlights must be a natural color.** Example: Natural color does NOT include blue, pink, unnatural red, yellow, green, orange etc. Hair must be clean and neatly styled and may not obstruct vision.
- **Shaved heads are permitted**. Designs, ridges, or words are not permitted.
- Excessively teased, spiked, mohawk, or unkempt hair is not permitted.
- **Haircuts for boys should be above their eyebrows and collars and no higher than 3 inches above the scalp. Hair must not cover the eyes**
- Facial hair is not permitted. Hair braids are permitted.

Any student not in compliance will be issued a uniform infraction demerit and one weekend for compliance, or he/she will not be permitted to return to school until the situation is corrected. This will be strictly enforced.

Headbands

- **Accessories that may be distracting are not permitted. This includes: large headbands, scarves, bandanas and large floral ornamentations.**

- Solid color black, blue, white, red, gray, or the uniform plaid may be worn.
- Headbands must be flat, except on special "Spirit" days.
- Girls may wear small headbands and ponytail holders.
- Ponytail holders are <u>not</u> to be worn as "bracelets."

<u>Make-up, Jewelry and Cosmetics</u>

Girls (Gr. 7-8 only)

- "Light make-up" is permitted for school wear.
- Only clear, light pink, natural tan nail polish is allowed with nails properly maintained. **Artificial nails are not permitted.** This policy will be strictly enforced for safety reasons.

All Students

- Girls in all grades may wear **one pair** of small post earrings on the earlobes. **Hoops or other dangling earrings are not permitted.** This policy will be strictly enforced for safety reasons.
- Boys are not permitted to wear earrings.
- A simple watch may be worn. **Apple watches or any other smart watches that have the technology and capability to connect to the internet are NOT permitted.**
- A simple chain necklace may be worn.
- All jewelry must be school appropriate.
- Only one bracelet and one ring per hand may be worn.
- Daily use of deodorant is expected for all students in Grades 4-8.
- Cologne and perfume is not permitted due to allergies.
- Tattoos of any nature, whether temporary or permanent, are not acceptable.

Failure to comply with the uniform policy will result in disciplinary action. The decision of the administration is final.

<u>Physical Education Uniform</u>

Students in Gr. K-6:

- Students will wear their P.E. uniforms, with the appropriate tennis shoes to school on their scheduled P.E. days. **Tennis shoes must be solid (including the soles and laces) black or white or any combination of a black/white athletic type shoe. No other colors will be permitted**. High tops, mid top basketball, light up/flashing light shoes, Heelys, Vans, Chuck Taylors, or any other shoe of that nature are not permitted.

Students in Gr. 7-8:

- Students will use the locker rooms to change into their P.E. uniform.
- Students in Grades 7-8 need a gym bag for shoes and/or clothing.
- Students may wear whatever type of athletic shoe they like. Vans, Chuck Taylors or any other shoe of that nature are not permitted.
-

P.E. Uniform Wear Requirements

- **The P.E. shorts uniform <u>may be worn</u> August through September 30th and May 1st through the end of the school year. On cold inclement days,**

sweatpants may be worn in place of shorts. Shorts may not run shorter than the fingertips in length.

- **The P.E. sweatpants uniform must be worn October 1st through April 30th .**
- The P.E. uniform must be purchased through *Schoolbelles* or *J.D. Designs*.
- The uniform includes: red micromesh shorts, oxford gray dry blend crew neck t-shirt, oxford gray long sleeve t-shirt, black track pants and a red or oxford gray long sleeve pullover sweatshirt. Shorts are not to be shorter than the fingertips in length.
- **All P.E uniform pieces must have the official St. Mark crest logo.**
- Athletic shoes worn for P.E. class must be properly laced and tied.
- Students may wear compression shorts under gym shorts as long as the compression shorts are not visible.

Consequences for students not in dress code compliance is as follows:

- P.E. teacher will record the dress code violation as a demerit.
- Parent notification through Digital Academy
- An accumulation of five demerits/quarter for any reason, including dress code violations, will result in a detention.

Please note: Uniform items and P.E. Uniform items, including the proper shoes, should be replaced throughout the school year if/as needed.

Uniform attire may be purchased from:

Schoolbelles, Inc. - 4747 West 160th Street (888) 637-3037

J. D. Designs - stmarkuniforms@gmail.com

All dress code policies will be strictly enforced. Consequences for students not in dress code compliance is as follows:

- **Teachers will record the dress code violation as a demerit.**
- **Parent notification through Digital Academy**
- **An accumulation of five demerits/quarter per quarter for any reason, including dress code violations, will result in a detention.**

Dress Up Days for Birthdays and School Photos

Students may dress up on their birthdays and Picture Day and for other special events. Appropriate dress code includes khakis, capris, and skorts. Girls are not permitted to wear strapless, off-the-shoulder, thin strap, or spaghetti strap dresses or blouses. If students choose to wear leggings, they must have a skirt/shirt worn over them that is **no more than 2 inches above the knee**. Heels may not be worn.

First Friday Spirit Wear Days

Throughout the school year, students may wear St. Mark spirit wear tops with their regular school uniform on the first Friday of each month, unless otherwise specified.

Acceptable spirit wear includes St. Mark T-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, athletic jerseys, and other St. Mark athletic spirit wear. Athletic jerseys must be worn with a uniform shirt underneath. Spirit wear tops may be paired with regular uniform jumpers, skirts, or dress pants. Students who have PE on these days may wear their spirit wear tops with their PE uniform.

General School Information

Lunch/ Recess Periods

- The lunch /recess period is forty minutes with two grades eating at one time and two grades at recess
- All children are required to stay for lunch every day. Lunches are brown bagged unless the optional Parent Club Out-To-Lunch is purchased on selected days
- Milk is available
- Students have assigned tables by grade
- Students should be dressed appropriately for outside recess at all times. Students have outdoor recess if the temperature is 30 degrees Fahrenheit or above
- It is our goal that all students at St. Mark School understand the importance of correct behavior and proper courtesy on the playground. Recess will be denied to students who consistently violate safety and courtesy rules

Birthday Celebrations

We follow the Diocesan Wellness Policy. To this end, proper nutritional choices are promoted to support healthy lifestyles. Parents who wish may send a wrapped treat for the class on the occasion of their child's birthday. Birthday treats must be individually wrapped and will be sent home for consumption. There are many alternatives to the "standard" classroom food treat for birthdays. A few suggested "non-food" items include: book marks, erasers, glow sticks, fun pads, key chains, notepads, and stickers. **Birthdays are Dress Up Days for the children**. Handing out invitations for private parties is not acceptable in class or on school property. Since we have many children with peanut and other food allergies, no peanut treats are allowed to be given out for birthday treats. Providing lunch for a class is not permitted.

Wellness, Food, and Beverage

Wellness Team Members: Principal, Secretary, School Nurse, P.E. Teacher, Lunch Staff and Aftercare Director.

The schools of the Diocese of Cleveland are committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health and well-being. In the interest of good health, the following procedures will be followed:

- Food and beverages served by the school will meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations, as well as to the maximum extent possible, incorporate the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Foods needing refrigeration or freezing are not acceptable without special permission
- Beverages in glass containers may not be brought to school

- Dietary restrictions are becoming more common, not just due to the specific food allergies with peanuts and tree nuts, but with other types of food allergies egg, soy, wheat etc.). Food containing nuts, peanuts, or peanut oil should not be served as treats
- Chewing gum is not acceptable at school

Wellness Policy Components:

Nutrition Component

- St. Mark School has no hot lunch program but does offer a Milk Program.
- Any pamphlets provided by the state/federal government promoting good healthy lunches are posted.
- Teachers will promote healthy eating habits through instructional bulletin boards, lessons, and activities.
- Rewards for students will consist of healthy choices. Refreshments for class parties will be nutritionally sound. Since dietary restrictions are becoming more common, foods containing nuts, peanut, or peanut oil should not be served as treats.
- Birthday treats must be individually wrapped and will be sent home for consumption.

Physical Fitness Component

- All students at St. Mark School have Physical Education classes
- All students will have daily recess periods
- The After Care program provides opportunities for every child to have physical exercise
- When weather permits, physical exercise occurs outdoors

School Based Activities

- Parents and club moderators are requested to promote good health practices
- The school nurse conducts health screenings throughout the year. Heights and weights are recorded on all students. Body Mass Indices are calculated from these scores, and parents are informed of their children's percentiles. Some children are referred to a physician for further evaluation.

The complete Diocesan Wellness Policy can be found online at www.ocfe cleveland.org

Collection of Money

Students should not bring money to school for personal use, except for specific fundraisers. Parents will be notified of these events in advance. Collecting of money for any purpose from school families must receive the prior approval from the principal.

Care of Books and Property

Since books are expensive both to purchase and to maintain from year to year, parents are urged to help their children be responsible for books used. Books are to be kept clean and free of graffiti. Parents are financially responsible for the loss or damage of textbooks and other materials provided for their children's use during the school year. This includes damage to Chromebooks. Parents are also responsible for any damage caused by their child to property belonging to the parish, school, or other students.

Lost and Found
Please "name tag" all clothing. Lost and found articles will be placed outside the school office. Periodically all unclaimed articles will be sent to various missions. Lost valuables –glasses, watches, keys, and jewelry can be claimed in the secretary's office.

School Supplies
A list of supplies required for each grade level is sent home at the end of the previous school year, and it may be accessed online at the school website. Students are asked to bring only the supplies required for their grade. Parents are asked to check and replenish supplies as needed throughout the year.

Lockers
Every student is issued an individual locker for backpacks, coats, books etc. Students are not permitted in other students' lockers.

Health and Accident Procedures

A health aide, who will provide immediate first aid in cases of injury or illness, staffs St. Mark School Clinic five days a week. The school furnishes an Emergency Authorization Form, which directs the school's course of action in each individual case. It is essential that the parents notify the school of any changes to the home phone number, cell phone number, address, or employment throughout the school year so this data is always up-to-date. Students presenting with symptoms of illness will be isolated in the nurse's office while waiting for pick-up.

Health Services provided by the school health aide

- Provides immediate care for students who become ill or injured at school.
- Conducts vision, height and weight screenings
- Conducts postural screenings for Scoliosis
- Administers medication in accordance with school policy
- Ensures all children are up-to-date with immunizations

Health Guidelines
If a child is not well enough to participate in all activities, he/she should be kept home. Reasonable exceptions to this would include children with severe asthma or broken bones.

- Students must stay home if they are ill and/or have a fever
- Students must be *symptom free for 24 hours* before returning to school
- Students seen in the clinic/office with any of the following symptoms will be sent home:
    a. Temperature 100 degrees or greater
    b. Any vomiting
    c. Diarrhea more than once
    d. Any undiagnosed skin rash
    e. Pediculosis (head lice)

f. Pink eye

- In the event your child is unable to actively take part in physical education class, please send a note to the P.E. teacher and school office providing information regarding the specific condition, restrictions, and length of expected non-participation
- Please contact the school office regarding any accommodations that need to be made for a child returning from an injury

Immunizations

Health immunization reports are due on or before opening day of school for kindergarteners and all new students. Ohio State Law requires that any child who does not meet the Ohio minimum requirements for shots cannot be admitted to school. Parents will be notified if a student is not in compliance. After two weeks, the student will be excluded from school if still non-compliant.

Parents are responsible for sending the dates of immunizations to the school. Sections 3313.67 and 3701.13 of the Ohio Revised Code require the following immunizations:

- **Kindergarten**
  - ❖ Five (5) doses of DTaP, DPT or DT or any combination, if the 4th was administered prior to the 4th birthday.
  - ❖ Three (3) or 4 doses of IPV, the final dose administered after the 4th birthday; four (4) doses if a combination of OPV and IPV were administered.
  - ❖ Two (2) doses of MMR. The first dose must be administered on or after the 1st birthday. The second dose must be administered after 28 days.
  - ❖ Three (3) doses of Hepatitis B. The second dose must be administered at least 28 days after the first dose. The third dose must be at least 16 weeks after the 2nd dose. The last dose must not be administered before age 24 weeks.
  - ❖ Two (2) doses of Varicella vaccine must be administered prior to Kindergarten entry.
- **7th Grade**
  - ❖ One (1) dose of Tdap or Td vaccine must be administered prior to entry.

Food Allergy Plan

St. Mark is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn. Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code 3313.719 (The Food Allergy Protection Policy), the purpose of this policy is:

- To provide a safe and healthy learning environment for children with food allergies
- To reduce the likelihood of severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reactions
- To ensure a rapid and effective response in the case of an allergic reactions

Food Allergy Symptoms or Anaphylaxis is a result of exposure to an allergen, specifically peanuts and/or tree nuts. Tree nuts include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts (or filberts), macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts (pignolias), pistachios, and walnuts.

Symptoms of Anaphylaxis or food allergy may include:

- A feeling of apprehension or foreboding
- Facial symptoms, including hives, flushing, or itchiness
- A feeling of tightness in the chest, throat, or mouth
- Progressive difficulty swallowing or breathing, which could include drooling, wheezing, choking, or coughing
- Nasal symptoms, such as a runny nose
- Changes in the voice
- Digestive symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting
- Dizziness, fatigue, chills, and increased heart rate
- Loss of color to the skin, loss of consciousness

The only way to avoid a reaction to those allergic to peanuts or tree nuts is strict avoidance. Symptoms can begin immediately upon exposure, or up to 2 hours after exposure to an allergen.

Procedures and Practices, Including Responsible Person(s):
When children with food allergies attend school:

- The school nurse will provide the family with the Food Allergy Action Plan to be filled out by the child's healthcare provider or parent
- Based on the child's Food Allergy Action Plan, caregivers will receive training and put into practice:
    - ❖ Preventing exposure to specific foods that trigger allergy
    - ❖ Recognizing symptoms of allergic reaction
    - ❖ Treating allergic reaction
- Parents and staff shall arrange to have appropriate medication (if necessary) on site, proper storage of medication, and training to use medication while in school
- The school nurse, secretary or teacher will promptly take steps outlined in the Action Plan if a student has a reaction while in school.
- The school nurse, secretary or teacher will call 911 if epinephrine has been given and then call the student's parents.
- The student's Food Allergy Action Plan will be given to all school personnel who come in contact with the child throughout the day.
- The Action Plan and medication will be taken on all field trips
- Protocols for cleaning surfaces touched by food products will be implemented
- A "Nut-Free" table will be designated in the Social Hall as needed
- Classroom treats containing nuts are prohibited
- The school nurse will provide training for all school personnel yearly

Contagious Diseases
Parents are asked to contact the school when their child has been diagnosed as having a contagious condition. This includes strep throat, conjunctivitis, chicken pox, impetigo, scabies, or meningitis. A re-admittance statement in writing is required by a physician. A

notice will be sent out to each class that has been exposed in accordance with State Law. **When a child has been home with an illness, the child should not return to school until free of symptoms and temperature has been normal for at least 24 hours.**

Pandemic
A pandemic is an outbreak of disease that can spread easily from person to person. When people do not have natural immunity to a virus, serious illness or death is more likely to occur in any age group. This may be a local or regional or global outbreak.

Functional content areas that may apply:

- Close School
- Emergency Communication
- Medical Response
- Mental Health Services
- Rapid Assessment

Medical Pandemic Procedures

- The school will decontaminate all surfaces when advised by the County Health Department and follow recommended guidelines regarding the safety of children, staff and families
- The school administration will close school when advised by the County Health Department or the State of Ohio. The school will continue its academic offerings and support through a distance learning model. The school administration will continue to communicate updates
- Adjust school academic hours to ensure state academic hours are met for all

Head Lice
Unusual or repeated scratching around the ears and back of the neck may indicate head lice. The best way to confirm a case is to look for nits (small grayish white eggs). Contact the School Office if you suspect a problem, so the other children in the classroom can be examined. The school nurse or administration will examine the child's head before being permitted to return to the classroom.

Strep Throat Cultures
If a child has had a throat culture one day, he/she should be kept home the following day until the results of the culture are known.

Dismissals Due to Illness
When a child becomes ill or injured during the school day and needs to go home, the child is sent by the teacher to the clinic or office to wait until a parent or other responsible party can be reached. Students cannot dismiss themselves by calling home, and an ill child may not go home alone.

Medications
St. Mark School follows the policy of the Cleveland Board of Education for giving medications. School personnel can administer medications only when a specific procedure is followed.

- Forms must be obtained from the nurse or the school office, to be signed by the parent and signed and completed by the physician requesting medication to be given.
- Medication must be delivered by the parent to the school in a properly labeled container from the pharmacy. Parents should not send in medications with the child.
- The child consumes the medication in the nurse's office or school office.
- School personnel may not administer any over-the-counter non-prescription drugs, such as aspirin and Tylenol without written permission by the physician. The specific medication form must be obtained from the School Office and returned prior to administration. This requirement must be adhered to for each illness.
- In order to use cough drops, students must bring a signed permission note from parents. For safety reasons, cough drops may only be consumed in the nurse's office in the presence of an adult.
- We follow Diocesan policy regarding injections. The school nurse is the only one authorized to give injections except for Epi-pens. Teachers and staff are trained yearly by the nurse on how to administer an Epi-pen.
- Medications are monitored for expiration dates. The nurse will notify parents when a medication is about to expire.
- If a student uses an inhaler or an Epi-pen, parents must submit the necessary forms for the child to carry this medication on his person, otherwise they will be stored in the clinic.
- If an evacuation is necessary, all medication will be taken to the evacuation site.
- Before the end of the school year, a parent or guardian must pick up unused medication or the nurse will dispose of it.

Universal Precautions

We follow mandated state guidelines when dealing with blood:

- When a student loses a tooth, the tooth will be sent home in a plastic tooth holder
- Blood on clothes will be covered with tape or clothes will be changed. The soiled ones will be sent home in a bag.
- If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease such as strep throat, pink eye, head lice, chicken pox, etc., please inform the school. A notice will be sent out to each class that has been exposed.
- Children are permitted to bring hand sanitizer to school and use in an appropriate manner for good hygiene.

<u>Extra-Curricular Programs</u>

In order to assist students in the development of positive self-esteem, decision-making skills, and social values, appropriate educational programs and activities will be provided as judged appropriate by the pastor and/or principal. These may include guidance

programs, parent education programs, social activities that foster positive group identification and behavior, CYO and parish-based youth ministry activities, etc.

Servers/ Lectors for Mass
Please contact the Parish Office, 216-226-7577, for more information regarding servers for parish and school liturgies. Serving is open to both girls and boys Grade 5 and up.

Student Clubs
St. Mark School sponsors clubs and activities based upon student interest and availability of moderators. The following clubs are some of the clubs offered at St. Mark: Student Council, Classroom of Champions, Liturgical Choir, Band, Guitar Club, Choir, Drama Club, Stage Crew, Physical Fitness, Safety Patrol, Mission Club, WSMS, Entrepreneurship Club, Gr. 6-8 Book Club, Rosary Club, Art Club, and Chess Club.

Transportation and Safety

The safety of our children is of primary concern. Follow these procedures to assure safe arrivals and dismissals:

Traffic Patterns

Arrival by Car

- Enter by the gate on W. 159th St. beginning at 7:30, and drive to the main doors of the school where children will exit their vehicles
- Cars **should not enter** by the driveway between the rectory and the gym
- Exit the east gate by the Innovation and Early Learning Center building onto Fischer Rd.
- **For safety reasons, children are not to be dropped off by car on Montrose or W. 159th**
- Kindergarten will drop off at the west entrance of the IELC building.
- There is no speeding through the parking lot- **5 mph is the limit**
- **Drivers are not to go around other cars. DO NOT pull out of the line of cars dropping off at the Main Building for any reason.**
- Do not block the driveways of our neighbors on W. 159th while waiting for the traffic light. We want to be good neighbors!

The doors will be unlocked at 7:30 A.M. to begin student drop off. Children will go directly to their classrooms. Children need to be in their classrooms before the 8:00 A.M. announcements. Children will be marked Tardy at 8:00 a.m. Excessive Unexcused tardiness will result in a student's dismissal from St. Mark School.

Walkers and Bike Riders Arrival and Departure

- Children walking to and from school must cross within marked crosswalks or at corners. **There is no crossing permitted in front of the school on Montrose Avenue.**
- All children walking to school enter by the Montrose Avenue entrance. Students in Gr. 1-8 enter by the school offices. Kindergarten students should be walked to and dropped off at the west entrances of the Kindergarten building.

- Bike riders will enter the property using the driveway between the Rectory and Gym. Bikes must be walked once arriving on school property.
- Dismissal for walker and bike riders is at 2:50 P.M.
- Walkers in grades 1-8 exit the building from the east Montrose Avenue entrance, located by the offices.
- Kindergarten students with walking siblings will be brought to the main building for dismissal.
- Bike riders will exit out the main doors to the parking lot to retrieve their bikes.
- Students riding bicycles to school are to assume full responsibility for any loss or damage to the bicycle. Bicycles are to be parked and locked at the bike racks located on school property. Students should walk their bikes to the racks once they are on school property.

Afternoon Departure by Car

- Gates will open at 2:20 for you to pull into the parking lot
- Parents will pull in from W. 159th (by the light) in straight rows facing the St. Mark Innovation and Early Learning Center (Kindergarten building).
- As you pull into the parking lot, you will be directed into a row
- Car riders will be dismissed by the office doors beginning at 2:40 to the blacktop. Please be on time since this will impact dismissal.
- You are welcome to wait outside your vehicles parked on the blacktop for your children.
- Kindergarten students should be picked up at the Kindergarten building.
- All cars will exit heading east, using Fischer Rd. or turning right onto W. 157 along the church.
- Special parking is available for parents picking up students with physical injuries. Please contact the school office, if your child is on crutches.

Responsibility for Safe Conduct

Parents and students are expected to cooperate with Crossing Guards, Maintenance Staff, and teachers on supervision during arrival and dismissal.

Parents and students who do not show respectful cooperation with the Crossing Guards, Maintenance Staff and teachers on supervision during arrival and dismissal will discuss the issue with the Administration, and parents will be notified.

Elastic Clause

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems that may arise, this clause empowers faculty members and administration to issue consequences for any action that violates the spirit of St. Mark School, even though not specified in the Student/Family Handbook. The judgment of the administration in all disciplinary matters is final.