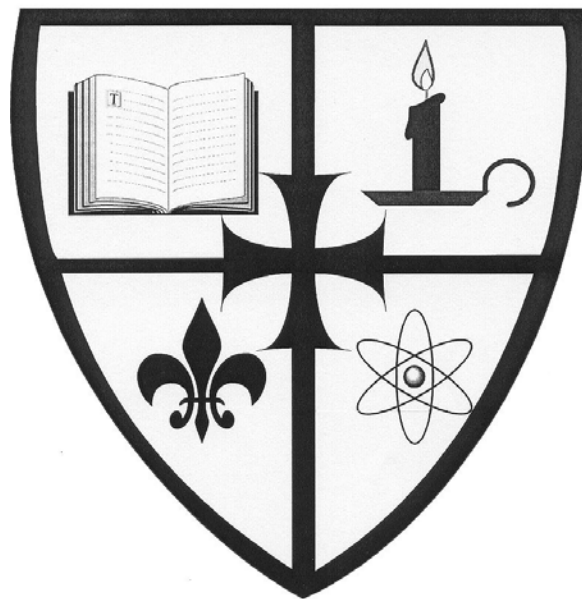


ST. MARY'S ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2011 - 2012

Board Approved AUGUST 5, 2011

St. Mary's Academy Charter School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin and artistic ability to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, or other school-administered programs.

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St. Mary's Academy Charter School acts in compliance with the non-discrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, and also to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Section 504.

ST. MARY'S ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL NOTICE OF FERPA RIGHTS

It is the responsibility of the School to notify all parents regarding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and its provisions regarding student records and directory information. FERPA is the federal law that sets forth basic privacy requirements for personally identifiable information contained in education records maintained in schools. Education records are defined as records that are directly related to a student, and maintained by an educational agency or a party acting on behalf of the educational agency.

The basic provisions of FERPA are:

- I. To allow parents access to educational records relating to their children; and
- II. To prohibit disclosure of education records to third parties unless the school obtains prior written parental consent for such disclosure, or an exception to the consent requirement applies.

In addition, parents have the right to request an amendment to educational records, as well as to a hearing process in the event that parents disagree with the school's decision not to amend a certain record. If you would like to inspect or review records, or request an amendment of records, contact the campus principal.

For the purpose of FERPA "parent" includes a natural parent, a guardian, or individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian.

Some information is considered directory information and may be released by the district. Directory information is information which would not generally be considered harmful or private, including name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status, participation in officially recognized activities, honors and awards received, and the last educational agency or institution attended.

The local educational agency assures that is in compliance with Chapter 26 of the Texas Education Code concerning parental rights and responsibilities. In addition, the local education agency receiving funds under the No Child Left Behind Act certifies that it shall and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding certain right of a parent to access and inspect information; student privacy; the administration of physical examinations or screenings (except for examinations or screenings required by state law); and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or selling the information. The local education agency also assures that it is in compliance with the requirements for annually notifying parents of such policies and specific events (P.L. 107-110, Title X, Part F, Section 1061).

If you do not want the school to release directory information/photograph about your child, you must notify the district in writing within ten days of receiving this notice.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

In 1896, St. Mary's Catholic School was created by the order of Sisters of Divine Providence of San Antonio and the parish of St. Joseph's Catholic Church. The school eventually changed the name to St. Joseph's Catholic School. In the following decades, the school was the largest Catholic school in the Beeville community. In the 1990's, the need for an alternative education continued to be a priority to a vocal and strong group despite the private school problems of increasing expenses and decreasing income. The decision was made to apply for public charter school status. In 2000, a charter application was written and presented to the Texas Education Agency. This charter was approved by the state education agency and the St. Mary's Academy Charter School opened its doors as a public school for the 2001 - 2002 school year.

What did this mean for the school? St. Mary's became a public school receiving public money. St. Joseph's Catholic Church owned the property and buildings, so the school began to lease the use of the facilities. St. Mary's must follow most federal and state laws and regulations governing other public schools, including TAKS testing, attendance reporting, Special Education services, free and reduced lunch programs, etc. Although St. Mary's as a charter school receives public monies, charter schools only receive approximately 60% of the amount given to traditional public schools.

Proudly, St. Mary's Academy Charter has consistently improved school state test scores, and has received recognition as a model charter school.

FIELD TRIPS: Students involved in school sponsored trips are supervised by school personnel, and are expected to meet the required rules and standards of behavior set forth by St. Mary's Academy Charter School. In order for the student to participate in out of town field trips, in town field trips (example: movie theatre, HEB, Park, Coastal Bend College, Family Fun Center, etc.), vocational or any other type of school-related activities during the school year, a completed permission form must be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher prior to the trip.

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM THE FIELDTRIP WILL BE ARRANGED BY THE SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATE CHAPERONES WILL BE APPOINTED.

I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to St Mary's Academy Charter School. The principal, faculty and staff of the school welcome all new and returning students for a challenging and rewarding academic year. School expectations and standards are outlined in this handbook. Parents and other interested persons are encouraged to meet the faculty and staff, ask questions and participate actively in the learning process with their children.

Mission Statement

The mission of St. Mary's Academy Charter School is to establish a challenging curriculum taught in a safe, nurturing, educational environment where children are free to reach their fullest potential.

Vision Statement

Students at St. Mary's Academy Charter School will achieve academic excellence, act as responsible citizens and have a strong moral foundation. The long-range vision of St. Mary's Academy Charter School is to prepare students for the challenges that they will meet living in the 21st Century. In order to accomplish this, the school will have rigorous academic standards, a code of student conduct, and parental support.

St. Mary's Academy Charter School Board Members

Connie Hatfield - trustee

Bernie Seger - trustee

Father Richard Gonzales - trustee

Elden Price – trustee

Arturo Gaitan – trustee

Shawn Ramon - trustee

II. ACADEMICS

A. EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

The school year is divided into six grading periods with report cards to be given out on Friday following the end of the grading period. The report card must be signed by the parent or legal guardian¹ and returned to school the following next school day. The signature does not indicate approval; it merely means that the parent has seen the card.

A student must be present at least half of a reporting period plus one day to receive a report card. An exception to this rule exists if, after an extended illness, the student has made up all his/her work before the end of the reporting period.

Progress reports will be sent whenever a parent should be made aware of a potential problem. Usually this report comes 3 1/2 weeks into a grading period. **Progress reports must be signed by the parent and promptly returned to the student's teacher.**

Conferences are encouraged whenever the parent, principal, or classroom teacher feels that the child would benefit. **Parents are asked to call the school to arrange conferences.** Any time the student makes a failing grade on the report card, the teacher will arrange a conference time, giving the parent a choice of alternate times. **Parents are to call the school or send a note to verify their intent to attend the conference.**

B. FORMAL TESTS

State-mandated testing will be administered during the school year. The test results of the individual students are made available soon after the results are received.

Students in kindergarten through third grade will participate in the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI). Students in third through sixth grade will take the Texas Assessment of Knowledge Skills (TAKS) in the spring semester. In compliance with the Charter, the students will take a standardized achievement test such as the ITBS, Stanford Test, Otis/Lennon Test, Star Math and Reading Assessments to establish a baseline. These tests are diagnostic tools. Test results will be reported to students and parents. Parents may review a sample assessment test released by the Texas Education Agency by coordinating with the principal or visiting the TEA web page. Students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations or a deferment. For more information, contact the principal.

C. GRADES AND GRADING

Each student's academic progress and conduct are evaluated using progress reports and grade reports. Grade reports are issued every six weeks. A conversion scale follows:

Kindergarten, Computers, PE, and Art:

S = consistently demonstrated (S = Satisfactory/Excellent)

I = Progressing with teacher's assistance (I = Improvement Needed)

U = Not demonstrated at this time (U = Unsatisfactory)

First through Sixth:

Numerical Grades -

90 - 100 = A (Excellent)

80 - 89 = B (Satisfactory)

70 - 79 = C (Needs Improvement)

Below 70 = F (Unsatisfactory)

¹ The term 'parent' shall be understood to include 'legal guardian' for those students who may have a legal guardian

D. HOMEWORK

Homework will be assigned. Students are expected to complete and return the work on the due date. Parents are expected to check work and assist if necessary. Failure to turn in completed homework will result in parent contact. Students who come to school without homework will need to bring a letter from their parents.

E. HONOR ROLL

A Honor Roll

The following criteria must be met on the six weeks or semester report cards for a student to qualify for the A Honor Roll:

- Students must have a grade average of 90 or above in each class.
- Students must have 90 or above average citizenship grades.

A/B Honor Roll

The following criteria must be met on the six weeks or semester report cards for a student to qualify for the A/B Honor Roll:

- Students must have a grade average of 80 or above in each class.
- Students must have 80 or above average citizenship grades.

F. PROMOTION GUIDELINES

Promotion, grade-level advancement, and course credit shall be based on mastery of the curriculum. Mastery shall be determined as follows:

1. Course assignments and unit evaluation shall be given to determine student grades in a subject. An average of 70 or higher shall be considered a passing grade.
2. Mastery of the skills necessary for success at the next level shall be validated by assessments which may be incorporated into unit, grading period, and final exams, or assessments which may be administered separately. Mastery of at least 70 percent of the objectives shall be required.
3. In Kindergarten, promotion to the next grade level shall be based upon a parent/teacher conference. Retention will take place only with the approval of the principal.
4. First grade promotion shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in three of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.
5. Grade second through sixth must receive an overall average of 70 or above in language arts & mathematics and a 70 or above average in either Science or Social Studies.

G. PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Please be aware that the requirements for third and fifth graders will condition promotion on the student's satisfactory performance on the TAKS examinations and classroom scores. Students who do not perform satisfactorily will have opportunities to participate in special instructional programs designed to help them improve their performance.

***Failure to pass TAKS in other grades requires Summer School for promotion to next grade.**

H. STUDY HABITS

Orderliness and control are essential in a school if learning is to take place. Staying on task during academic learning time is vital. Students should practice the following study habits at school and at home:

- Be a good listener.
- Keep a neat, clean desk and locker.
- Follow directions carefully.
- Talk only at the proper times.
- Continue working when a visitor comes into the room.
- **Have necessary supplies (pencil, paper, etc) on hand.**
- Do assigned homework and return it on time.
- Read at every opportunity and write in a journal.
- Practice math facts.

III. STUDENT RECORDS

A student's school records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the charter school until the time the student withdraws or graduates.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

IV. ATTENDANCE

During the school year, the St. Mary's Academy Charter School faculty and staff will continue to emphasize using instructional time productively. The intent is to clearly establish teaching and learning tasks as a priority. This emphasis will mean that class interruptions must be limited only to emergencies. In order for students to benefit from this strong emphasis on instruction, **they must attend school regularly and be on time.** Please review the proceeding attendance policy.

A. ABSENCES, MAKE-UP WORK AND STUDENT GRADING

Students are expected to be in school on a regular basis to receive instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as required by the Texas Education Agency. **When absences occur, immediate attention is to be given by the student, parent and teacher to the work missed by the student.** The student will have the same number of days, as he or she is absent to make up work in school. For example, one day absent gives **one day** for make-up. Students who neglect to complete and turn in make-up assignments will receive a zero. **The student is responsible for the make-up work.**

B. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

When returning to school after an absence, a student must bring a note, signed by the parent and/or guardian that describes the reason for the absence. Notes signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will be considered forgery and the student will be disciplined.

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least **90%** of the days the class is offered. The actual number of days a student must attend in order to receive credit will vary, depending on whether the class is for a semester or a full year. A student who attends fewer than **90%** of the days the class is offered cannot receive credit for the class unless the attendance committee finds that the absences are the result of unavoidable circumstances.

If a petition for credit is denied, the student or parent may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees by completing a written request to the principal. The school shall notify a student's parent(s) in writing if, in a six-month period, the student has been absent without an excuse five times for any part of the day [TEC S25.095].

C. ILLNESS OR INJURY

To better serve the school's children, the faculty and staff must know if any students have physical limitations or chronic illness.

Immunizations are vital to the elementary age student. **When notices for required immunizations are sent home, please have your child properly immunized as soon as possible. Please send proof of the vaccination to the Business office so the student's health record will be updated.** When **two notices are sent** and the immunization(s) remain delinquent, the student may be suspended until appropriate vaccinations are received and **proof is submitted to the Business office.** Proof of immunization must be on file **prior to the 30th day following enrollment [TEC S 25.002].**

Vision and hearing and health screenings will be conducted throughout the school year for Kindergarten, First, Third and Fifth grade students. Also, any new students to the school will be screened, as will those for whom parents or teachers request screening. A **Body Mass Index screening** will also be conducted for all students. If there is a problem with the student's screening, the parent will be notified and be expected to take the student to the appropriate health care provider for a professional evaluation. Please notify the school secretary of the evaluation's outcome (i.e. glasses prescribed, ear infection).

If a student sustains an injury while at school, he/she will be immediately evaluated. In the case of major injuries such as fractures, large lacerations or severe contusions, the parent will be notified immediately and emergency measures will be taken. Minor injuries such as abrasions, small cuts, nosebleeds, etc., are treated, and the parent will be notified. In the event of a potentially serious head or eye injury, the parent will be contacted immediately and emergency measures will be taken. A note will be sent home with the student if the injury does not appear serious.

****MEDICATIONS**

The following guidelines and policies for medications are in place to protect the student and the SMACS staff involved in administering medication:

- Physician prescribed medications that are required to be given on a daily basis while the student is at school will be given by the school secretary (or designated staff).
- The physician and the parent **MUST properly fill out a medication form.**
- The medication must be in the original prescription bottle with the student's name, correct date, dosage requirements, and name of medication. Please speak to the school secretary for further information if needed.

Under no circumstances will the student be allowed without expressed physician's orders to have medication in his/her possession while at school.

*****The staff cannot give over the counter medications such as Tylenol, cough syrups, throat lozenges, or other types of nonprescription medications.** If a doctor requests that these medications be given while the student is at school, a signed and dated note with complete instructions (including dose and dosage times) must accompany the medication. The medication **MUST** be in the original container. **Antibiotics given *three times a day* will not be given at school *except* when required to be given *with meals* or if the *physician designates* the times for administering.** **Students with asthma need to have a prescription and a second inhaler for school.** **Students should NOT CARRY/KEEP ANY TYPE OF MEDICATION WITH THEM AT SCHOOL.**

In addition to the regular enrollment form, an emergency care form is **required** for all students. It is important for the parent to completely fill out the emergency form, provide emergency telephone contacts and sign and return the form to the school.

If you have an address, phone, contact change at ANYTIME during the school year, please make it known to the school secretary.

D. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING STUDENT ABSENCES

1. If a student will be absent from school, parents are asked to call in and the parent is required to send a note upon the child's return to school.
2. After consecutive absences, verification from a physician will be required. The student is temporarily absent due to a documented appointment with a health care professional if that student commences classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment. The appointment should be supported by a document such as a note from the health care professional [19 TAC S 129.21 (k), TEC s 25.087 (B)]. The school must retain adequate documentation to verify the whereabouts of these students (Section II). With proper documentation, the child will be marked present.
3. **A child MUST be signed out or in through the office before leaving and returning from a doctor's appointment.**

E. SCHOOL DAY

- Fourth - Sixth grade - school hours are **8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.** and Kindergarten – Third grade - school hours are **8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m**
- Students **should not** arrive at school **before 7:00 a.m.** **No adult supervision is available prior to 7:00 a.m.**
- Tardies rob students of instructional time. Tardies are marked after **8:30 a.m.**
- Children planning to eat breakfast in the school cafeteria should arrive between 7:15 a.m. and 8:25 a.m. serving stops at 8:25 a.m. and the students are sent to their classrooms.
- Daily attendance is taken at **10:00 a.m.**; a student will be counted absent if not in attendance at that time. The school receives funding based on student daily attendance. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL ON TIME AND REGULARLY.**
- It is important for students to arrive on time and remain in school all day. Students are asked to be in their homeroom and **prepared to learn by 8:00 am for 4th – 6th grade and 8:30 a.m. for K- 3rd grade.**

F. SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES

A student will not be released unless a parent or guardian comes personally to the school office FIRST to sign him/her out. A note from the parent should be sent to the classroom teacher the morning a student is going to leave early or if other routine changes are being requested. Identification is required to sign a student out of school. **A student will not be released to anyone who is not listed by the parent on the enrollment/emergency care form.**

Signing out early not only means lost instructional time for the student, but it is also disruptive to the teaching and learning activities being conducted in the classroom. Leaving early excessively will result in disciplinary action. **Signing a student out early to avoid dismissal traffic is not allowed.**

V. DISCIPLINE-CODE OF CONDUCT

Applicability of School Rules and Discipline:

To achieve the best possible learning environment for students, campus rules and discipline will apply at these times:

- During the regular school.
- Within 300 feet of school property.
- While a student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location.

A. DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

All students are entitled to enjoy the basic rights of citizens recognized and protected by law for persons of their age and maturity. St. Mary's Academy Charter School shall foster a climate of mutual respect for the rights of others. Students shall exercise their rights responsibly. The school's rules of conduct and discipline are established to achieve and maintain order in the school. Students who violate the rights of others or who violate school rules shall be subject to disciplinary measures.

Code of Conduct

- No food is to be eaten in the classroom without the teacher's permission. Gum and candy are not permitted in the school unless given by a teacher. Lunch and breakfast will be served in the cafeteria and students are expected to keep their area clean after lunch.
- Trash must be put in trash cans; Students (and others) are expected to see that halls and restrooms are kept clean.
- Teachers are in charge of the classroom at all times; pupils are to obey the rules and requests of teachers. Students are expected to obey a substitute teacher in the same manner as if he/she were the regular classroom teacher.
- **Lockers are school property and can be searched at anytime.**
- Students are responsible for their own behavior. St. Mary's Academy Charter School staff will implement an assertive discipline plan, which allows for rewards and consequences for appropriate/inappropriate behavior. (See Discipline Card (Conduct Chart) for students 4th –6th)
- While attending student assemblies, students must enter the area quietly and listen for instructions.
- Students are expected to treat other children, as they would want to be treated. Students will share playground equipment, play cooperatively, and they will line up quietly and listen to the teacher.
- **Toys & electronic equipment of any kind are not to be brought into the school.** If a student is found with these items the teacher will collect them and return items to a parent or turn them into the office where the parent may pick them up.
- **St. Mary's Academy Charter School strongly discourages use of cell phones by students and will not be responsible if lost, damaged or stolen.** However, we understand some parents feel strongly that their child carry them. The following rules apply:
 1. **Students are not allowed to use cell phones during the school day.**
 2. **Inappropriate use of cell phones will result in confiscation and abuse of privileges result in cancellation of the privilege.**
- Students are prohibited from bringing any inappropriate literature to school.
- Students must adhere to the school's standardized dress code. Information is available at the office.
- Students should bring **no more than \$5.00** to school (on field trips days student may bring more money). The school **will not be responsible** for any money brought for non-school related reasons.
- **Students are to show respect for all adults and for other children.** School and classroom behavior should exemplify personal responsibility and respect for the rights of others. **Fighting** at school is not allowed.
- Homework will be given at least four nights each week. Students are expected to complete and return the work on the due date. Parents will be called when students do not have their homework on time. (See Responsibility Chart and Behavior Chart 4th – 6th grade) Repeated late or missing homework will result in a referral to the principal's office. Attendance at Saturday school may be required.

- **STUDENTS AND PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO WORK WITH THE TEACHER TO SOLVE CLASSROOM PROBLEMS. THEY MAY BRING THEIR PROBLEMS TO THE ATTENTION OF A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR AFTER THEY DEMONSTRATED AN EFFORT TO REACH A SOLUTION WITH THE TEACHER.** Conferences will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time.
- Profanity is not allowed. All children are expected to use common courtesy and proper manners at all times. Proper manners include using excuse me, please, thank you and listening when others are speaking.
- No weapons of any kind (real or play) can be brought to the St. Mary's Academy Charter School. This can include but is not limited to screwdrivers and other tools, laser pointers, etc. Students must alert a teacher or other adult if they know of any weapons that are on campus. Toy weapons or other weapons such as knives will be removed from students. At the Principal's discretion violation of the weapons code of conduct will be cause for student suspension.

B. DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES MAY INCLUDE

- Positive reinforcement
- Saturday School (including circuit training)
- Counseling
- Conferences
- Time-out/isolation
- Behavioral contracts
- Verbal correction
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Detention
- Removal from class
- Suspension
- Alternative setting
- Expulsion

C. STUDENT COMPLAINTS/DUE PROCESS

Separate policies cover student complaints regarding instructional materials, loss of credit on the basis of attendance, removal to alternative education programs, expulsion, or prior review of non-school materials intended for distribution to students. Students shall comply with those procedures before bringing a complaint to the Board under Level Three of this policy (See Board Policy Legal and/or Local EFA, FDD, FOA, FOD, and FMA respectively.)

Student or parent complaints regarding the special education program shall be handled in accordance with the procedures set out in the procedural rights information provided to the parents of all students referred to special education. Impartial special education hearing officers shall hear special education matters, not District employees. The identification, evaluation or educational placement of a handicapped student who is not eligible for special education shall be handled in accordance with the standard procedures.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to secure at the first possible level prompt and equitable resolution of student complaints, including those alleging discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, handicap or limited English proficiency.

PRESENTATION:

In most circumstances, students shall be entitled to administrative conferences and informal presentations of the complaint to the Board.

REPRESENTATION:

An adult at any level of the complaint may represent the student. **If the complaint involves a problem with a teacher, the student/parent shall in most circumstances be expected to discuss the matter with the teacher before requesting a conference with the principal at Level One.**

LEVEL ONE:

Parents are welcome to come to the school and discuss concerns. In order not to interrupt instruction, an appointment will be sent at a mutually convenient time. For legal recourse, however, a student/parent who has a complaint shall request a conference with the principal within thirty days of the time the student knew, or should have known, of the event or series of events causing the complaint. The principal shall schedule and hold a conference with the student within five days.

LEVEL TWO:

If conference with the principal does not bring satisfactory resolution of the complaint the student and/or parent must file a written request to appear before the discipline committee. Written request must be filed within 10 calendar days, beginning the day after the conference with the principal. The written request for hearing must include: the nature of the complaint, any evidence in support of the complaint, the date that the principal conference was held, and the solution sought. The student or the parent filing the request must sign the written request. The disciplinary committee will consist of the principal, three faculty and/or staff members, and the school counselor.

LEVEL THREE:

If the outcome of the conference with the Discipline Committee is not to the student/parent's satisfaction, the student/parent may submit to the CEO a **written** request to place the matter on the Board agenda. The CEO shall inform the student/parent of the date, time and place of the meeting. The Board president shall establish a reasonable time limit for complaint presentations. The Board shall listen to the student's complaint and take whatever action it deems appropriate. If the complaint involves allegations or charges against an employee, the Board in executive session shall hear it **unless the employee** that has been complained about requests it to be public.

D. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The St. Mary's Charter School believes that student conduct should not involve any sexual misbehavior or harassment, which includes any form of **pornography, physical contact, suggestive language, or profanity**. **Strict discipline measures will be taken since sexual harassment is illegal, law enforcement officers may be called.**

E. WEAPONS & DRUG FREE SCHOOLS

It shall be unlawful for any individual knowingly to possess a firearm at a place that the individual knows, or has reasonable cause to believe is a school zone. Maximum penalty under this section is \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than 5 years or both. St. Mary's Charter School will call authorities and will file charges under the Judicial Code and/or under State Firearms Code when any violation occurs. A student shall not go onto the school premises with a firearm, explosive weapon, or knife. The student shall not interfere with normal activities, occupancy, or use of any building or portion of the campus by exhibiting, using, or threatening to exhibit or use the firearm, explosive weapon, or knife. Students are also prohibited from bringing to school or a school related activity any other weapons. This prohibition will not normally apply to school supplies such as pencils, compasses and the like, unless they are used in a menacing or threatening manner. Weapons include, but are not limited to: Fireworks of any kind, Clubs or night sticks, Razors, Metallic knuckles, chains, any other objects used in a way that threatens to inflict bodily injury on another person, knives, and guns of any kind. The possession or use of articles not generally considered weapons may be prohibited when, in the building administrator's or designee's judgment, a reasonable perception of danger exists to the student in possession, other students, staff or school property by virtue of possession or use. The local education agency assures that it is in compliance with Section 37.007(e) of

the Texas Education Code, which requires expulsion of a student who brings to school or possesses at a school a firearm as defined by 18 U.S.C. Section 2891 [pursuant to the requirements in P.L. 107-110, Section 4141(d)(1)]. In addition, the local educational agency certifies that it has a policy requiring referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a firearm or weapon to school [P.L. 107-110, Section 4141(h)(1)].

NOTICE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS REGARDING DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

The Charter School's policies and its Discipline Management Plan provide a range of disciplinary sanctions for alcohol and drug-related offenses. Students may be suspended for up to three school days or expelled for a period of time ranging from seven school days to the end of the school year; in addition they may be referred to appropriate law enforcement officials for criminal prosecution.

F. SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

Students are supervised from 7:00 am – 5:30 pm. **Please do not drop them off early or pick them up late.**

VI. PROCEDURES AND ROUTINES

A. BAD WEATHER DISMISSAL

If school is closed, radio stations and Television will be notified. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL TO FIND OUT IF SCHOOL WILL BE CLOSED.** The phone lines need to be kept open for emergency calls!

B. CAFETERIA

Children may purchase breakfast and/or lunch daily in the school cafeteria or at the business office. Menus will be posted in each classroom, in the cafeteria, on the school's webpage and in the local newspapers. In addition, menus are sent home.

- Breakfast is served daily between 7:30 – 8:25 a.m. Students should go directly to the cafeteria for breakfast.
- ***Children will not be allowed to call because they don't like the lunch on the menu.***
- **Teachers will not collect money in classroom for student breakfast or lunch.**
- If a child is allergic to any food item or ingredients, ***a note from the physician must accompany the child or the parent MUST bring the note.***
- Parents should notify the homeroom teacher if they will be joining a child for lunch at least one day in advance.

CAFETERIA RULES

1. **Students must walk in the cafeteria.**
2. **Playing with food will not be allowed.**
3. **Students will be responsible for their own area.**
4. **Pushing and shoving will not be allowed.**
5. **All students must use their inside voice.**
6. **No classroom objects allowed in the cafeteria.**
7. **Absolutely no students allowed in the kitchen.**

St. Mary's Charter School Late Lunch Fees Policy

The following policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees of St. Mary's Charter School at the regularly scheduled board meeting on July 26, 2007:

St. Mary's Charter School shall require parents of full pay students to pay their lunch bills at least monthly. The bills may be paid in advance at the beginning of each month or after statements go out at the end of each month. The parents will have until the end of the month that statements go out to pay their lunch bill in full. (Ex. The August statements go out on Sept. 10. The statement must be paid in full by October 1.) Once a bill becomes past due, the student will no longer be given a full tray for lunch. Instead the student will be given a sandwich and milk for lunch.

All parents will be given the opportunity at the beginning of the school year to apply for the free or reduced National School Lunch Program. Forms will also be made available in the business office at any time during the school year in case the family's income situation changes.

C. COMPUTER RESOURCES

St. Mary's Academy Charter School resources have been invested in computer technology to broaden instruction and to prepare students for an increasingly computerized society. A computer use contract will be filed as part of a student's registration packet.

D. TEXTBOOKS

In the event of lost textbook, the parents will be responsible for the cost of the item. The teacher can ask the business office for the cost of the lost textbook and send a note home to the parents. Textbook monies must be paid separately as it is deposited into a separate assigned account in the ledger. After the money is collected from the parents, the textbook coordinator should order a new book from the manufacturer to replace the lost book.

VII. DRESS CODE

It is recognized at St. Mary's Academy Charter School that cleanliness, personal appearance, and proper dress habits are important in determining the pattern of school and social conducts and that there is direct correlation between student appearance, attitude, and behavior.

Policy Details for Student's Dress will be:

Clothing (will be worn as follows...)

1. Shorts: NO SHORT SHORTS WILL BE ALLOWED. This means PE shorts as well as regular shorts will be worn at a natural waistline and will be no shorter than 2 ½ inches (the width of a dollar bill) when measured from the top of the kneecap. Shorts are to be worn at the hem and not rolled up. No biker or spandex shorts and cut offs **will not be allowed.**
2. Pants/Capri/Shorts or Skorts/Skirts will be appropriately sized and worn at a natural waistline (**no sagging or bagging**). Dockers or Jeans may be worn (no holes in jeans allowed). Cotton sweat pants, breakaway pants **will not be allowed.** Girls may wear decorative jeans.
3. As of this time, tucking shirts in is not required but should circumstances require it adjustments will be made. **ONLY POLO STYLE SHIRTS WITH A COLLAR, SOLID COLORS ONLY, WILL BE WORN BY ALL STUDENTS KINDER-6TH GRADE GIRLS AND BOYS.** Not tucking in the shirt is considered a privilege and may be revoked.
4. **Shirts will be appropriately sized and worn at a natural length**, no sagging or bagging on the shirts. The hems of the shirts will be no longer than 6-8 inches below the natural waistline.
5. Shirts must be long enough to cover the abdomen when arms are raised.
6. Coats, jackets and protective weather garment shall be worn out. Tops of sweater-like materials with an open waistband must be tucked in.
7. All shirts with logos no larger that 1 inch by 1 inch. **Solid color shirts.** Clothing containing obscene slogans, gang-related identifying emblems or symbols, advertisements, for tobacco, alcoholic beverages, drug paraphernalia, or sexual innuendoes will not be allowed.
8. Exception---school approved P.E. Shirt or Friday Shirt. **(Friday (SMACS) Shirts may be worn everyday as part of dress code and PLAID shorts may be worn on FRIDAYS ONLY)**
9. Flat sandals and decorative flat sandals may be worn. **However running shoes MUST be brought for P.E.**
10. Slippers, shower, beach, or house shoes are **prohibited**.
11. Oversized platform shoes are **prohibited**.

Headwear

1. Caps and hats will be allowed outside the building if worn appropriately and for the intended purposes (caps with bills will be worn forward).
2. Bandannas will not be allowed.
3. Sunglasses or sunshades are not to be worn inside the building.

Grooming

Hair:

1. Hair must be neatly groomed. **No extreme hairstyles such as carvings, spikes, tails, shaved or partially shaved heads, ponytails (boys) will not be allowed. No extreme variations of hair length and/or abnormal hair color will be permitted.** Boy's hair may be worn no lower than to the **middle of the ear lobe or the top of the collar of the shirt.**
2. Sideburns will not extend past the middle of the ear.
3. Eyebrows will not be carved or notched.

Accessories:

1. Boys will not be allowed to wear earrings.
2. Girls may wear a maximum of one earring in each earlobe.
3. Body piercing jewelry and/or accessories will not be allowed.
4. Heavy chains or accessories will not be allowed.
5. No theatrical lenses may be worn.
6. One watch and bracelet may be worn.
7. Belts are not required but may be worn.

Make-up:

1. **No make-up will be allowed in kinder through 6th grade.**
2. Boys may not wear make-up.
3. Tattoos and brands are not allowed. No fake tattoos.
4. **Girls may wear clear nail polish only. No colored nail polish will be allowed.**

Dear Parents,

Many of our K-3rd grades students are coming to school wearing expensive jewelry. If this jewelry is lost or damaged, both you and your child will be heartbroken. Please check each morning and make sure the bracelet or necklace your child chooses to wear to school is fine with you. I am sorry but we can not be responsible for lost or damaged jewelry.

Thank you,
Mrs. Ross Brown

VIII. STUDENT EXPULSION AND SUSPENSION

Policies governing administrative actions taken to prevent a student's expulsion and suspension include requiring parents to attend a conference with the principal or assistant principal for unacceptable school behavior by their child. Students may not return to class until the parent conference has been completed.

- Students may be removed from school as an emergency for disruptive behavior for one to three-day. Students may not return to school until the emergency removal days have been served. If students who are emergency removed from school report to school, parents will be called to pick them up. Students may be suspended for persistent and serious violations of the schools code of conduct and other rules.
- The St. Mary's Academy Charter School - Policies and Procedures shall set forth the school's procedures for student expulsion and suspension for students attending the Charter School. The procedure is structured as follows: Pending a hearing, the student may be placed on suspension for up to three consecutive days. Suspension periods pending hearings may be out-of-school, or in school. Written notice of the time and location of the expulsion hearing will be provided. The student's parents, guardian, or advocate who is not an employee of the charter school must represent the student at the hearing. If the decision to expel is made by the Board's designee, the decision may be appealed to the Board.

- A student shall be expelled by written order setting the term of the expulsion. Before the expulsion, the Director/Principal will provide the student a hearing at which the student is afforded due process, which shall include the following:
 1. Prior notice of the charges and the proposed sanctions so as to afford a reasonable opportunity for preparation
 2. Right to a full and fair hearing before the Board or its designee
 3. Right to an adult representative or legal counsel
 4. Opportunity to testify and to present evidence and witnesses in his or her defense
 5. Opportunity to examine the evidence presented by the school administration and to question the administrations witnesses
 6. The notice shall be in writing and shall advise of the nature of the evidence and the names of any witness whose testimony may be used against the student. The student will be notified of the date of the hearing. The decision will be based exclusively on evidence presented at the hearing. The final decision will be communicated promptly to the student and parent.

IX. Enrollment

St. Mary's Academy Charter School is an open enrollment charter school. Potential students must pass through an open enrollment lottery period before they are enrolled in the school. A copy of the open enrollment procedure is on file in the school office.

*** REQUIRED PARENT TRAINING ***

In conjunction with the Home, Child and School for Success program in the charter, St. Mary's Academy Charter School promotes parent involvement and parent education while working together to ensure students' success. Such trainings shall create an environment in the home that supports education and student learning. Families whose children are **new** to SMACS are **required** to attend at least **5** Parent Education sessions throughout the first year enrolled in order to enroll for the upcoming school year. All returning students' families **will attend** at least **3** Parent Education sessions before they may enroll the student for the following school year.

Parent Education sessions will be scheduled throughout the school year with a variety of days and times. A roster will be kept to ensure parents have fulfilled the required number of sessions.

Parent Grievance

Dear Parents,

Welcome back! Our school year has begun; hope each of you had a restful and relaxing summer. The faculty and staff continued to work hard on the school, making repairs and getting ready for another brand new year!

As the Charter School grows and moves forward, the School Board has elected to dedicate this coming school year to teamwork! Our school has received excellent reviews from the Texas Education Agency; we have good solid test scores from our students, and continue to receive a high level of cooperation from faculty and parents. At St. Mary's Academy Charter School we continue to aim high and fully expect to reach new heights of achievement and success.

Because our success is greatly dependent on you, we take this opportunity to strongly urge you to closely review the Student Handbook. There are a few additions and we take this opportunity to invite you to become familiar with policies and procedures that are designed to make the most of our opportunities for student success.

All policies and procedures are set forth with students as the primary focus. It is our intent to ensure that students meet all academic goals and receive the finest quality of instruction.

To ensure that every student meets his/her academic goals and to maintain the highest possible level of quality instruction, distractions from academics must be kept at a minimum. Parent, faculty, staff, and board must work together to assure that all observes the rules outlined in the handbook and with the mission and vision of the school. We must provide our students a safe nurturing environment and we strive to maintain an enjoyable atmosphere conducive to learning.

No matter how hard we strive for perfection, and whether we are a parent, teacher, staff, or board member, we must recognize that there will be times that we come up short and peace and harmony may give way to discord and disharmony. In the past there has been some confusion regarding complaint procedures and due process. On **page 12 and 13** of the Student Handbook procedures are detailed that will clarify procedures for resolutions of complaints. It is important that all those involved work toward the resolution that is in the student's best interest.

Administration. Faculty and staff will make every effort to keep parents informed of their children's progress. Parental involvement and input is valuable to the success of the student but please schedule in advance all parent-teacher and/or parent-administrator conferences. Parents please make appointments and schedule conferences. By doing so you allow teachers and staff members to make more productive and least disruptive use of time. Exceptions should only be in emergency situations.

Charter schools face unique challenges and we have many opponents. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) refers to Charter School as "living laboratories of learning" and considers them experimental. If St. Mary's Academy Charter School is to continue to overcome the challenges and continue to offer quality education parent, teachers, staff, and board members must work cooperatively and by doing so, we will receive the respect and support of the entire community. Good things are happening at St. Mary's Academy Charter School and the State of Texas looks on us with pride in what we have accomplished. If we are to continue with past successes we must all work together to suppress attempts by a few to discourage and tear down what so many of our parents, faculty, and staff have worked so hard to build. Please help by spreading words of encouragement and praise that will build up instead of tearing down.

St. Mary's Academy Charter School is well on its way to become one of Texas finest Charter Schools. It is a privilege and an honor to be a part of this great endeavor.

It is our hope that you are as pleased and excited as we are because you also are an important part of this great endeavor.

With your help and with all of us working together, St. Mary's Academy Charter School will have another great year.

Sincerely,

The St. Mary's Academy Charter School Administration, Faculty, Staff and
The St. Mary's Academy Charter School Board

Principal/CEO

Stan Simonson

Asst. Principal

Mrs. Ross Brown

Director of Special Programs

Becky Simonson

Funds Development

Jeanene Jones

Admin. Assistant

Becky Causey

School Office

Clara Martinez –Secretary

Kathy Redding-Purchasing

Business Manager/CFO

Susan Chincarini

Business Office

Betty Hinkle

Imelda Garza

Danny Dobson

Records Management

Ninfa Garcia

Counselor/Director of Special Ed.

Malinda Cowen

Special Ed Office

Elaine Samford

Patricia Johnson

Reading First Coach

Alice Whitley

Reading Intervention

Anne Dietz

Debbie Brown

Debbie Benavidez

Math Intervention

Kathleen Besancon

Katie Simonson

Kindergarten

Olivia DeLeon

Denise Jenkins

Karen Garza

First Grade

Hirma Elizondo

Delma Garcia

Mary DeLeon

Second Grade

Elizabeth Collier

Rachel Bazan

Marianne Peters

Third Grade

Victoria O'Brien

Tammy Mills

4th – 6th Grade

Sonya Moron

Carrie Shipp

Nancy Cavallin

Merly Ingram

Laura Orchard

Mrs. Ross Brown

Stan Simonson

Becky Causey

Special Ed.

Brenda Horn

Hilda Elizondo

Cara Alstrom

Paraprofessional K-3rd

Sharon Ruiz – Kinder

Dolly Acosta – Kinder

Janie Ayala- Kinder

Mary Puentes – 1stOlga Harrison – 1stDawn Cuevas – 1stLois Virata - 2ndBelinda Benavides – 3rd

Gloria Flores – Special Ed

Judy Lakso- Special Ed

Mary Dembowski-Special Ed

PE

Thomas Brown

PE Paraprofessional

Cindy Brown

Library

Katie Simonson

Joyce McCameron

Fine Arts

Laura Orchard

Technology

Gary Gillett

Science Coordinator**K-6th grade**

Nancy Cavallin

Texas ACE Site**Coordinator**

Meagan Porter

Speech Therapist

Tracy Perkins

Occupational Therapist

Lynne Manarang

Cafeteria/Custodial

Minnie Barrera, Supervisor

Ralph Olivares

Brenda Mills

Brianna Green

Maria Aguilar

Norma Esparza

David Rivas

Abel Esquivel

Kevin Nelson

Irene Dominguez

SMACS EXTENSION NUMBERS

KINDER

Acosta Dolly-----1530

Ayala Janie--1520

DeLeon Olivia --1510

Garza Karen-----1520

Jenkins Denise---1530

Ruiz Sharon-----1510

FIRST GRADE

Cuevas Dawn---1080

DeLeon Mary----1060

Elizondo Hirma--1080

Garcia Delma----1090

Harrison Olga-----1090

Puentes Mary----1060

SECOND GRADE

Bazan Rachel----1040

Collier Elizabeth-1050

Peters Marianne-1550

Virata Lois – 1040/1050/1550

THIRD GRADE

Benavides Belinda-1110/1100

Mills Tammy-----1110

O'Brien Victoria-----1100

FOURTH GRADE

Moron Sonya----1300

Shipp Carrie-----1310

FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE

Cavallin-Howe Cathy----1240

Cavallin Nancy-----1240

Ingram Merly-----1280

Mrs. Ross Brown----1290

Orchard Laura-----1260

Simonson Stan-----1270

SCHOOL OFFICE

Martinez Clara ----1000

Redding Kathy-----1490

LIBRARY

Causey Becky---1230

Mrs. McCameron---1120

Simonson Katie --1170

KITCHEN

Aguilar Maria----1190

Barrera Minnie—1190

Dominguez Irene—1190

Esparza Norma----1190

Esquivel Abel-----1190

Green Brianna---1190

Mills Brenda-----1190

Nelson Kevin-----1190

Olivares Ralph----1190

Rivas David-----1190

SPECIAL ED CLASS

Alstrom Cara-----1030

Dembowski Mary----1030

Elizondo Hilda-----1210

Flores Gloria-----1030

Horn Brenda-----1200

Lakso Judy-----1210

OTHER

Benavidez Debbie---1070

Brown Debbie-----1140

Counseling room---1180

Whitley Alice-----1010

Business office

Chincarini Susan----1400

Dobson Danny-----1401

Garcia Ninfa-----1480

Garza Imelda-----1410

Hinkle Betty-----1420

Jones Jeanene-----1470

Simonson Becky-----1470

Special Ed. office

Conference room (business office)---1460

Cowen Malinda-----1450

Johnson Patricia-----1440

Samford Elaine-----1430

ST. MARY'S ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL PARENT-SCHOOL COMPACT

School-Parent Compacts, a federal requirement (Improving America's Schools Act of 1994) for all Title 1 school wide programs, outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and student will share the responsibility for improved student achievement. Each parent is requested to sign the School-Parent Compact/Agreement on the following pages, and return it to the classroom teacher.

Vision Statement: SMACS is committed to providing a positive school climate where all students can successfully reach their potential. The purpose of this parent-school-student compact is to establish a common understanding of the responsibilities of each of these entities, and to ensure that all SMACS students attain the highest standards of a quality education.

Student: I WILL ----

- Believe that I can learn
- Try to do my best in my work and my behavior
- Attend school regularly and arrive on time every day
- Complete all class and homework assignments and return homework on time to the teacher
- Accept responsibility for my own actions
- Respect the cultural differences of other students, their families, and the staff
- Comply with all school rules and dress code
- Come to school each day with pens, pencils, paper, and other tools necessary for learning
- Communicate with parents, family and teachers on a daily basis
- Encourage and assist other students with homework

Parent/Guardian/Family: I/WE WILL ----

- Believe that my child can learn
- Encourage high standards of academic, achievement for my child
- See that my child attends school regularly and arrives on time each day
- Provide a time for homework
- Encourage my child to complete all homework assignments
- Attend parent-teacher conferences
- Encourage my child to read at home and apply their learning to daily life
- Help my child to resolve conflicts in positive, non-violent ways
- Help my child to follow all school rules and dress code
- Encourage positive attitudes toward the school, learning, and staff
- Respect the cultural differences of students and staff
- Encourage my child and other family members to assist each other academically
- Participate in various school programs and classroom activities
- Maintain open lines of communication with my child and the school staff

Staff (Teacher/Support Staff/Administrators): I/WE WILL----

- Believe that every child can learn
 - Provide a safe, pleasant, caring environment that promotes active learning
 - Maintain open lines of communication with students and parents
 - Seek ways to involve parents in the school programs
 - Demonstrate professional behavior and positive attitude
 - Respect the cultural differences of students and their families
 - Maintain high expectations for myself, students, and other staff
 - Assist students in the development of a sense of personal and civic responsibility
 - Help students to resolve conflicts in positive, nonviolent ways
 - Recognize that students are accountable for every assignment
 - Hold at least one teacher-parent conference each year
 - Give corrective feedback on all assignments
-

**Options and Requirements
For Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning
Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education**

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other support services that are available to all students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date of the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of their rights if they disagree with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards - Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is:

Contact Person: **Malinda Cowen 361-358-5601 ext.1450**