



St. Mary of the Lake School
EDUCATION FOR THE WHOLE CHILD

2009-2010
HANDBOOK

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FORWARD

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students, teachers and parents with important information about policies, procedures and activities at St. Mary of the Lake School.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

“Be it known to all who enter here that Jesus Christ is the reason for this school. He is the unseen but ever present teacher in its classes. He is the model of its faculty and the inspiration of its students.” Anonymous

The teachers and staff of St. Mary of the Lake School consider it a privilege to work with children to further their Christian education which is begun in the home and will continue throughout life.

The vision is to carry out the message of the Gospel which must be heard before it can be practiced; to build a community of love in which all are brothers and sisters in Christ with God as our Creator; and as a community, to serve the needs of all the children of God.

OUR MISSION

St. Mary of the Lake School educates the whole child – spiritually, intellectually, socially and physically. Healthy self-concepts are fostered in a climate that emphasizes God’s unconditional love and lays the foundation for life-long learning and growth. Academic excellence and community service have been our proud tradition for more than forty years.

MOTTO Trusting God’s Unconditional Love.

GOALS

1. To foster personal spiritual growth of students, faculty and parents.
2. To improve the quality of our liturgical celebrations by prayerful planning and active participation.
3. To reach out in service to those in need, at home and abroad.
4. To increase awareness that each of us has a Christian vocation, single or married, with special promotion of priestly and religious vocations.
5. To strive for open communication at all levels.
6. To foster courtesy, consideration, and caring in our school family.
7. To foster a sense of responsibility among our students to help them become life long learners.
8. To strive for academic excellence in all areas of curriculum and to provide a variety of enrichment opportunities.
9. To emphasize our responsibility as Christian citizens for the quality of public life by teaching, and implementing where possible, the seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

ACADEMICS

Every class period is vitally important in a school day. Every assignment has a definite educational purpose. While children may not understand or appreciate this fact, parents do. It is their responsibility to insist that each task be taken seriously and done carefully. Homework assignments are part of the school program and require parental supervision to promote neatness and accuracy. Provide a REGULAR TIME and DEFINITE PLACE where homework assignments are to be done. Parents are not expected to help their children excessively, but parental interest goes far in encouraging a child. Written work is not the only type of homework assigned. Reading, study, research, oral assignments and long-range projects are also given. Students in grades 2-8 will use daily planners to record homework assignments in all classes.

ACCREDITATION

St. Mary of the Lake School is accredited by the Michigan Non-Public School Accrediting Association, a chapter of the National Federation of Non-Public School State Accrediting Associations.

ADMISSION

St. Mary of the Lake School and Kaleidoscope Preschool and Child Care Center do not permit discrimination because of race, color, sex, religion, handicap, or national origin. This policy applies to admission policies as well as employment practices.

Likewise, no child whose parents desire to enroll him/her in St. Mary of the Lake School, provided there is the capacity for additional enrollees, shall be denied admission to the school. Children with special needs may be admitted on condition that the staff can adequately meet those needs.

St. Mary of the Lake School enrolls students in the following order:

1. Members of St. Mary of the Lake Church.
2. Members of other Catholic parishes.
3. Members of the community.

At registration the parents must submit the child's birth certificate and baptismal date. Michigan school law requires that each child be completely immunized before entering school for the first time. If they are not, they will be excluded from attendance at school until immunizations are complete. (See IMMUNIZATION for exact regulations.)

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

School doors open at 7:55 a.m. Classes begin at 8:05 a.m. Children walking, riding bikes, or who come to school in cars should plan their departure so that they do not arrive at school before 7:55 a.m. Parents who are transporting students to and from school must drop them off and pick them up in the church parking lot, and keep the bus stop on Berrien Street free exclusively for the school bus. The parking places on Berrien Street are reserved for faculty, staff and parent volunteers. All others are asked to use the church parking lot as close to the church as possible to keep the basketball courts in the

parking lot open for student recesses. You are asked to enter the parking lot from Berrien Street and exit on Chicago Street.

ASBESTOS SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance for the assumed presence of asbestos was conducted in August 2007. The only asbestos-containing building material present in our school was in the floor tiles. Because potential damage possibilities to the floor tiles are so slight, it was recommended only that we observe and maintain the current good condition of the floor tiles. The asbestos management plans are located in the office and are available upon request. Periodic surveillance is conducted every six months.

ATTENDANCE

Parents should call the school office at 469-1515 as early as possible when your child is absent for any reason. It helps us to inform teachers, as well as to be aware of communicable disease or potential prolonged absence. Notes are required explaining the absence when a child returns to school. Notes are also **required prior** to a planned absence such as a family vacation. (See VACATION TRIPS).

BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

The primary objective of student discipline and control is to produce a school environment in which complete attention may be directed to the teaching/learning activities. The school has an obligation to assist each student in his/her actions, as he/she matures and gains experience. We should never be obliged to invoke serious penalties. However, if flagrant violations of school regulations or repeated indifference are demonstrated, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Refer to the attached St. Mary of the Lake School BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE POLICY.

BOOKS AND BOOK BAGS

It is required that book bags be used by all students K1 through Grade 8. Books are not to be taken home from school unless protected by a book bag. Any loss of or serious damage to books must be reported and payment for replacement will be required. Book bags are an important vehicle of communication with parents and should be checked by parents for monthly menus, bulletins, notes and important announcements, as well as schoolwork.

BULLYING

St. Mary of the Lake School maintains a **NO Tolerance** policy towards Bullying. Bullying can be any word, gesture or action that hurts or could hurt a person's body, feelings, friendships, reputation, or property. Any incident perceived as Bullying should be immediately reported to the supervising adult. That adult will ensure that the principal is informed. The principal will initiate the appropriate action.

Our expectation of Christian behavior is a look, gesture, word, or action that encourages, builds up, and protects others as people of God in body, spirit, friendships, reputation, or property.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

New Buffalo Area Schools provide transportation for children in the school district. If your child should experience any problems with his/her bus schedule, route, etc., please contact 469-6009 so that the matter can be dealt with properly.

Students are to remain seated during the entire bus trip. They are to behave in a polite and respectful manner. For serious infractions the transportation department will notify principal and parents. Bus transportation is a privilege that can be lost as a result of misbehavior.

CALENDARS

A general calendar for the coming school year noting all school vacations and holidays will be sent to St. Mary's school families before the end of the school year. Each month a calendar of all activities will be sent home with students. Extra copies of both calendars are available in the school office.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Every change of address or phone number must be reported to the school office immediately. Up-to-date records are essential in handling emergency situations.

DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

St. Mary of the Lake School Development Council is composed of interested school parents, faculty, parishioners, and community friends to further the mission of St. Mary's to educate the whole child. It sponsors an Annual Giving Campaign just before Thanksgiving and golf outings to benefit the school.

DISMISSAL

School dismisses at 3:15 p.m. at St. Mary of the Lake. Students are asked to leave the building immediately unless they are meeting with a teacher. No child will be kept after dismissal time unless the teacher has arranged with the parents for a child to stay. Time of half-day dismissals will be noted on monthly calendars.

A note **is required** for any student going home with a different person; even if it is on their white card.

Children cannot be left unsupervised, and will be sent to School Age Child Care if not picked up by 3:25 p.m. Students waiting for practice or a game to begin, or waiting to be picked up from practice, **MUST** go to Child Care to wait. They will not be charged during this time. Students **MAY NOT** be left unsupervised anywhere in the building or on school grounds.

DRESS

St. Mary's school clothes are required for students in K1 through 8th Grade.

Rationale: Various studies maintain that good dress habits go hand-in-hand with good work habits, and that students will think and act in a more precise manner if dressed in a more precise manner. School clothes emphasize the importance of school for the students and keep them looking neat. They contribute to a comfortable discipline, give students a sense of belonging and pride and promote a way to dress appropriately for learning. Benefits for parents and children include reduction of clothing competition, elimination of fad clothing from the daily “what to wear?” process, convenience and reduced cost for school clothes.

General Rules: School clothes should be in good repair, always within the boundaries of cleanliness, neatness, modesty (no backs or midriffs showing, **no layered shirts**) and good taste. Clothing should be properly sized for the student. Students must come to school with clean bodies. Hair must be clean and well groomed. Both socks and sturdy shoes with closed toes and heels that are safe for active, outdoor play must be worn—preferably with soles that do not make black streaks on the floor tile. No sandals, flip-flops, or crocs. Body piercings (other than ears), heavy makeup, fake nails and unusual hair coloring are distracting and not acceptable for school. All jewelry should be appropriate for school with safety and possible loss considered. Earrings and other jewelry are not permitted for any Parochial Athletic Conference events.

On Mass Days, appropriate dress clothes are required. No sweatshirts allowed.

Care must be taken that students dress appropriately for Michigan’s variable weather conditions. Hats, mittens, gloves and boots are required during winter recesses. Please label these items with student’s name and grade. Masking tape labels will do.

School Clothes for K1 through 8th

School clothes may be purchased from Target, Penney’s, Sears, Land’s End, Carson Pirie Scott (they participate in our Scrip program) Schoolbelles (our official company) or other retail stores of your choice. Each family will receive a catalog from Schoolbelles every year. Our school plaid number from Schoolbelles is: #672.

Slacks and **knee length** walking shorts for warm weather months must be navy blue or khaki. Students in 6th, 7th and 8th may wear black and brown.

Corduroy is acceptable, but no denim of any color.

Knee length jumpers, skirts or skorts must be navy blue, khaki or our school plaid, #672, from Schoolbelles. Students in 6th, 7th and 8th may wear black and brown.

Solid color, collared, Polo-type shirts or blouses are required.

Turtleneck shirts are acceptable.

Socks or tights should be white or navy blue.

No short shorts, cut offs, mini skirts or biking shorts or layered clothing permitted.

T-shirts, sweatshirts, sports jerseys with pictures, logos, trademarks or sayings are **NOT** to be worn to school. Half shirts, see through shirts, muscle shirts, sleeveless tops are **not** acceptable. St. Mary’s logo hooded (Middle School) and crew neck sweatshirts are acceptable over a collared shirt, however, not on days we go to Mass. Tremont sweatshirts are acceptable for Middle School only.

Gym Day: **Knee length** shorts (solid color khaki or navy blue **only**), St. Mary’s logo wear, sweat suits or wind suits (solid color navy blue, gray or black **only**- side strip

optional) are acceptable. Lace up/Velcro athletic shoes are acceptable, but no athletic spikes or cleats. Athletic wear is only to be worn on designated gym days. The principal will have final determination of any dress code violations.

The Student Council and Student Senate will plan and announce Dress Down Days during the school year when the Dress Policy is temporarily suspended.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If school is already in session and either developing weather conditions or some emergency makes it necessary to close school during the regular school day, parents should have a plan of action worked out for each child about where he/she will go if school closes early. Return EMERGENCY DISMISSAL FORM to office.

Parents are to notify the teacher **in writing** if there is a change in the student's after school routine. The teacher will inform the office.

EDUCATION COMMISSION

St. Mary of the Lake now has an Education Commission. Meetings are held once a month.

EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

Field trips planned with an educational objective are permitted. Parents are requested to sign a permission slip and return it to the school prior to the trip. Telephone calls cannot be accepted to give permission for field trip participation. Classroom teachers supervise all field trips. Often parents are asked to share this supervision by acting as chaperones. School bus transportation for field trips is leased through the New Buffalo Area Schools.

ENRICHMENT (Not offered every year)

After school mini-courses on a variety of interesting topics are offered to students in grades K1 through 8 during the school year. Faculty members and other resource people in the community teach these classes.

HEALTH AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Safety is of prime importance. Our staff is prepared for weather, fire and other emergencies. We have written policies, which may be viewed upon request in the office. Fire and tornado drills are conducted regularly to insure the safety of the students.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

All parents of students at St. Mary of the Lake School are considered members of the Home and School Association, (our version of PTA/PTO). This organization assists the school in fulfilling its mission of education for the whole child. It helps our educational and enrichment programs through input, fundraising and support to the faculty and administration.

All families using St. Mary's School are expected to volunteer for projects and support fundraisers to keep tuition costs reasonable and further the school's mission.

IMMUNIZATION

Keeping children adequately immunized is the responsibility of the parent. The Berrien County Health Department is located in Three Oaks, at 21 Elm Street. For information regarding immunizations, call 756-2008.

Be sure that you keep a record of your child's immunizations and report them to your doctor and the school office for his/her records. Your child will be excluded from school if immunizations are not complete and up to date. Michigan's new immunization rules are attached.

INSURANCE

St. Mary of the Lake School carries liability insurance through Gallagher/Bassett in Lansing. Student accident/medical coverage is available for all students. Go online to www.sas-mn.com to download application forms. Specific details and claims forms are available in the school office.

LEAVING THE BUILDING

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours without a note from a parent or guardian.

LINE OF AUTHORITY

If you and/or your child have a school problem you wish to address openly and honestly, we ask you to follow this line of authority:

Teacher
Principal
Pastor
Superintendent of Schools
Bishop

LOST AND FOUND

Inquiries about lost articles should be made at the school office. Lost and found articles that are not claimed after a reasonable length of time are donated to the Salvation Army, Good Will or the Harbor Country Emergency Food Pantry.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Students in grades K-8 may either bring their lunch or take advantage of the satellite hot lunch program offered through the New Buffalo Area Schools. Reduced or free hot lunches are available to those who qualify. Menus are sent home at the beginning of each quarter.

Lunch tickets may be purchased as needed during office hours. Charging lunches is not permitted. Lunches must be paid in full by the end of the week. Each day children will order hot lunch (milk is included) in the cafeteria. It is not possible for students to use the microwave.

MASS AND SACRAMENTS

The students and staff attend Mass once a week. The Catholic children are encouraged to receive the sacraments as often as possible. Students who have received the Sacrament of Reconciliation are offered two opportunities to do so with their classes during the school year. The children are encouraged to attend weekend Mass regularly and scheduled parish Reconciliation services with their families.

MEDICAL SERVICES

It is never acceptable for students to be carrying any type of medication. The administration of student medications, either prescription or nonprescription during school hours is strongly discouraged.

If a physician deems it medically necessary for a student to take medications, either prescription or nonprescription, during the school day, the Authorization for Medication Form, and parental consent must be complete. The parent will bring this form, along with the properly labeled medication to the school office. A complete form is required for each medication. A new form is required for each medication change, dose change, time change and for each school year. It is the responsibility of the student to report to the office for his/her medication.

If your child is taking any medication which needs to be administered at school, you must have the following available:

1. The original bottle that the medication came in with the correct name and medicine on the bottle.
2. Signed and dated note of permission to school to administer.
3. Specific directions signed by the physician for administering medication: time, amount, etc. This also applies to nonprescription medicine.

First aid given at school is that of cleaning and bandaging. If a child comes home with a cut received while at school, parents should examine it and apply medication if they feel it is necessary.

If an injury appears to need more than first aid, parents will be called to make a determination as to how it should be handled.

BE SURE YOUR INFORMATION CARD IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE HAS BEEN FILLED OUT AND THE INFORMATION IS KEPT UP TO DATE.

The school (administration and classroom teachers) must be notified if any child suffers from epilepsy, diabetes, asthma, allergies, or other conditions which might cause fainting or other emergencies, so that proper procedures can be followed with the least possible trauma for the child.

Allergies (bee sting, food, medicine, etc.) and other physical conditions should be brought to the school's attention by highlighting that information on the child's

emergency card. Parents of students with allergies will be given Emergency Action Plan Packets which must be filled out completely and returned to the school office.

MILK

Milk tickets will be purchased as needed during office hours. Milk may be purchased by the week or month. The price of milk tickets is the same for all students. Children order daily in their classrooms. Chocolate, white and low fat milk will be sold.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are held once each semester in early November and February, and at any time needed upon request by either a teacher or a parent. No parent or visitor is permitted to visit a classroom during school hours without permission of the principal. If a conference is desired, please contact the school for an appointment when the teacher is free from teaching duties.

PARTIES

Students may share a simple treat with classmates to celebrate their birthdays.

Holiday parties are held for Halloween, Christmas and St. Valentine's Day. The entire school celebrates Easter together at the first all-school liturgy after Easter.

Invitations to private parties should **not** be handed out at school unless either **all** children receive one or **all** boys or **all** girls in the class are invited. Please be sensitive to the feelings of all the children in the class when planning such events.

PICTURES

School pictures are taken during the first semester of school.

PLAYGROUND RULES

Playground rules are made for the protection and welfare of all students using the playground facilities. In general, all rules are based on safety, common courtesy and respect of others. Physical contact games are not permitted on the playground. Fighting and foul language will not be tolerated. Students are expected to follow the directions of the noontime and after school supervisors. They are to show the same respect to these people as they would to a teacher. At the end of recess and noon hour, students are to return to class in an orderly fashion.

Detailed playground rules are available in the school office.

PRESCHOOL/CHILD CARE/SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE

Kaleidoscope Preschool is available Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Kaleidoscope Child Care/School Age Child Care is available for parents needing these services Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. for children ages 2 1/2 – 13 years. Information cards and health forms must be on file for children using these programs.

RECESS

Students go outdoors onto the playground daily unless the weather is rainy or severe. Experience has shown that a child studies better if he/she has been permitted to have this recess out of doors. We ask that you do not request that your child stay indoors UNLESS RECOMMENDED BY A DOCTOR. We ask parents to see that children wear warm outerwear and boots in cold weather.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued on a quarterly basis for K through 8th. The envelope should be signed and returned to school.

SACRAMENT PROGRAMS

The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist are usually received by Catholic students in the Second Grade. Catholic students in eighth grade prepare for Confirmation. Preparation for these Sacraments is the joint responsibility of the parents, child and school.

SAFETY POLICIES

Walkers are required to cross streets only at the designated crossing.

Car riders are to be picked up in the church parking lot. For safety reasons, cars need to park in the lot and not remain in the street or on the grass.

Bicycle riders are to follow all safety regulations. They should park their bicycles in the provided rack and lock them. Bicycles are not to be ridden until school is dismissed.

Bus riders are to follow the New Buffalo Area Schools Bus Rules.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Each student is responsible for obtaining the basic school supplies for use in the classroom. A list of these supplies is sent home at the end of the school year or upon enrollment of new students. Supplies should then be supplemented as the need arises throughout the year.

SEVERE WEATHER

When the New Buffalo Area Schools are closed because of severe weather or other emergency, St. Mary of the Lake School and Kaleidoscope Preschool and Child Care Center will be closed. Information about school closings in the New Buffalo area will be announced by the following media stations:

WHFB(AM)1060/WHFB(FM)99.9	Benton Harbor
WCSY(FM)98.3/WCSE(FM)98	Benton Harbor
WIMS(AM)1420/WEHM(FM)95.9	Michigan City
WNDU, Ch 16/WSBT, Ch 22	South Bend
WSJV, Ch 28/ www.wndu.com	South Bend

Children will be kept at school if a TORNADO WARNING is announced by the weather bureau. Parents may choose to pick their child up from school during bad weather conditions.

We will no longer call to alert families to school closings. It is each family's responsibility to monitor T.V. and radio broadcasts.

SICK CHILDREN

When a child becomes ill at school, the parent is called and the child is sent home. We ask that the parents be prompt in picking up a sick child. Homework requests for a sick child can be done with the morning phone call. Homework may be sent home with a sibling or can be left outside the office for pick up on the parent's way home from work. Homework is available after the school day ends. A child should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. See attached guidelines regarding children's illnesses.

If your child has head lice inform the teacher **at once**. Good communication is crucial in dealing with this problem successfully. Per the National Pediculosis Association, St. Mary of the Lake School continues to maintain a “**no-nit**” policy regarding head lice. This means your child's head must be free of lice and nits, which are the eggs, before your child can return to school.

SPECIAL SERVICES

The following services are available to children attending St. Mary of the Lake School. If you feel that one of your children is in need of the special help offered by these services, please call the school office for information.

1. Speech Correction
2. Remedial Reading/Math
3. Psychological/Educational Testing
4. Hearing and Vision Testing
5. School Counselor

SPORTS PROGRAM

It is the policy of St. Mary of the Lake School, an active member of the Parochial Athletic Conference, that students participating in interscholastic athletics at St. Mary's—soccer, cross country, volleyball, girls' and boys' basketball, softball and cheerleading—will have a reasonable opportunity to play in each scheduled game/contest. The purpose of elementary sports, as well as St. Mary of the Lake School's mission in regard to physical education and athletics, is to learn sportsmanship, the fundamentals and purpose of the sport itself and to build confidence, competence, cooperation, self discipline and self esteem in the participants. Coaches will make every possible effort to ensure that each team member has an opportunity to play in every game. The student athlete must be faithful to his/her responsibilities regarding attendance, academics and positive school citizenship, attendance and participation at practices, good communication with coach regarding absence from practice(s) and/or game(s) and the expectations clearly stated for team members by the coaches at the beginning of each season. Students will be expected

to attend school the day following an evening sporting event. Students will be given no credit for the day, if they are absent without a doctor's excuse.

An annual physical is required for participation in sports at St. Mary of the Lake School. Boys and girls in grades K1 – 8th may participate in cross-country. Boys and girls in grades 5th–8th may participate in soccer. Girls in grades 5th – 8th may play volleyball. Boys and girls in grades 2nd – 8th may participate in basketball cheerleading. Boys and girls in grades 3rd-8th may play basketball. Students must maintain satisfactory schoolwork and study habits. Students may be suspended from a sport by the principal due to difficulty regarding academics, attitude or discipline. The student is to be given one written warning before the suspension policy is enacted. The coach, teacher and parent must be notified of this warning. This suspension policy may be enacted without warning by the principal for any serious offense.

A schedule will be given to each participant of practice times and games. Players are expected to attend all practices. A reason for missing practice should be given to the coaches ahead of time as a courtesy to them.

Coaches are responsible for the students in their care at all times. Coaches must remain after practice until each student has been picked up. Students should not be allowed to separate and go off on their own unless they have written permission to walk home. Coaches, assistant coaches and volunteers ARE required to complete VIRTUS training and background checks. No one will be permitted to participate in sports programs unless they have completed VIRTUS training, background checks, and are current with their on-line training.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Diocesan policy requires that MEAP testing be done in the fall for grades 3-8. This test allows teachers to identify student academic strengths and weaknesses and help students become skillful, confident test takers. Parents will receive results of the tests with the final report card.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Students are expected to maintain standards of conduct which reflect Christian principles and teaching. Students are expected to be courteous and respectful to school staff, visitors and peers. They are to respect their own property, as well as that of the school and their fellow classmates. It is expected that students will also help to maintain St. Mary of the Lake School as a clean, safe and orderly place in which to learn. Unruly, disrespectful, threatening, bullying behavior, either verbal or physical, is unacceptable. The individual child, as well as the severity of the offense, will be considered when determining consequences. Possession of or the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco is strictly forbidden.

TARDINESS

The Faculty and Staff at St. Mary of the Lake believe punctuality is an integral part of the education process. School begins at 8:05 am. Students are considered tardy if he/she is not in his/her classroom by 8:05 am. This does not apply to students riding the bus. Teachers will close the door to their classroom at 8:05. Parents need to accompany their

children arriving after 8:05am into school and sign them in at the office. A Tardy Sign In book is available for parents. This will allow us to keep track of students arriving late to school. Students will then be issued a pass to take to class. If a parent fails to sign in their student, a phone call will be made to the parent to remind them of the policy and parents will need to sign their students in at the end of the school day.

TELEPHONE

Any student who needs to make an emergency phone call home may use the phone in the school office. Students must ask permission to use the phone. **Students bringing cell phones to school must secure them with the class or homeroom teacher at the beginning of the school day**, and pick them up at dismissal. A cell phone should only be used at school in case of an emergency when the school phones are unavailable. Play dates should be arranged in advance, and not by school telephone.

No student or teacher will be called to the phone during school hours unless it is an emergency. All messages to students should be made through the school office and the office will notify the teacher. The teacher will see that the student is informed.

TUITION

Every family should have a Tuition Payment Plan form on file with the school bookkeeper.

VACATION TRIPS

When vacation trips must be planned during the school year, students in good academic standing may be excused. Parents are asked to notify the school (classroom teacher(s) and office) **in writing** giving dates **two weeks prior** to the vacation. Teachers should not be expected to provide detailed assignments in advance. Assignments must be made up when the student returns to school. Sometimes teachers assign special projects, such as a journal, for the trip.

VIRTUS: PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

St. Mary of the Lake School is committed to making this a safe environment for all children. All clergymen, employees and volunteers who have regular contact with children are required to attend child sexual abuse prevention training through a program entitled *Virtus: Protecting God's Children*. In addition to this program, all adults at St. Mary's who have regular contact with children have consented to criminal backgrounds checks which are on file in the school office. Parents will not be permitted to attend any fieldtrip unless they have completed VIRTUS training, are current with their on-line training (if needed), and have submitted a background check.

VISITORS

Parents or other adults having business in the school must register in the office. Children are not permitted to bring friends, younger siblings, visiting relatives or pets to their regular school class without receiving permission from the office prior to the day of the visit. Parents are encouraged and invited to visit their child's class. Please contact the teacher and school office to make arrangements for a visitation. If it is necessary to bring

articles of clothing, lunches, etc. to school during the day, parents are requested to leave them in the office rather than disturb the classroom.

WEAPONS FREE POLICY

Unauthorized possession of any form of weapon or look-alike weapon in school, on school property or at a school-related event may result in immediate suspension or expulsion. The possession of or use of weapons, firecracker-type objects, or look-alike weapons is considered very dangerous and will be dealt with severely. Butter knives are **not** allowed at school. An extended suspension and/or expulsion from school, as well as police involvement, could result from this internal investigation.

The Diocese of Kalamazoo has a weapons policy regarding suspension and expulsion that the school will follow if the need arises. The policy book is available in the school office.

WELLNESS POLICY

St. Mary of the Lake School is committed to creating a healthy school environment that enhances the development of lifelong wellness practices to promote healthy eating and physical activities that support student achievement.

Nutrition Education

Every year, all students shall receive nutrition education that is aligned with the Michigan Health Content Standards and Benchmarks. Nutrition education information shall be offered throughout the school campus including, but not limited to, school dining areas and classrooms. Staff members who provide nutrition education shall have the appropriated training.

Nutrition Standards

St. Mary of the Lake shall receive from New Buffalo Area Public Schools and their contracted provider that the meals provided meet the program requirements and nutrition standards found in federal regulations. St. Mary of the Lake encourages students to make nutritious food choices.

Physical Education and Physical Activity Opportunities

St. Mary of the Lake shall offer physical education opportunities that include the components of a quality physical education program. Physical education shall equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for lifelong physical activity. Physical education instruction shall be aligned with the Michigan Physical Education Content Standards and Benchmarks.

Every year, all students shall have the opportunity to participate regularly in supervised physical activities, either organized or unstructured, intended to maintain physical fitness and to understand the short and long term benefits of a physically active and healthy lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

Providing a sound Christian background and quality education for each student is a major goal of St. Mary of the Lake School. In order for this goal to be accomplished, parents

and teachers must maintain good communication. Parents are encouraged to inform the school of any factors that may help or hinder the student's welfare and the mission of the school. Communication between the home and school should not be limited to negative aspects. Parents and teachers should stress the strengths, successes and accomplishments of students. Hard work and good behavior should be noticed and affirmed.

We are very fortunate to have a parish school at St. Mary of the Lake. It is a fine school, and one that prepares students well for further education. Let us work together to keep our school strong.

If at any time you have questions or concerns that are not answered in this handbook, please feel free to contact the school at 469-1515.

Revised : September 2009