

*St. Mark the Evangelist
Catholic School*

**Student and Parent
Handbook**

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Vision Statement

The St. Mark School community strives to provide a Christian and academic environment in which students are encouraged to develop their faith, talents, and social awareness in order to contribute to the betterment of society.

Mission Statement

The mission of St. Mark School is to promote and teach the message of Jesus. In partnership with families, we will provide opportunities for students to achieve academic excellence, to become socially responsible, and to choose to live as Christians.

We value the uniqueness of each individual. The learning experience will be designed with this in mind. Therefore, the St. Mark School community, as a ministry of St. Mark parish, will:

- model Christian attitudes, values, and ideals for daily living
- learn more about our faith
- participate in the spiritual life of the parish
- instill motivation to become life-long learners
- provide academic challenges
- promote physical well-being
- cultivate the value of stewardship with our faith community and society

Absences

The school office should be notified of any absence by 8:00 A.M. If the office has not heard from an absent student's parent or guardian by 8:30 A.M., the secretary or principal will contact the appropriate parties.

When the child returns to school, a written, dated excuse must be sent with the student. All notes regarding absences for the current year are kept on file.

Missing assignments should be requested by the student and should be completed following his/her return to school. Depending on the length of absence and the amount of work missed, generally the student will be allowed one day for each day absent to make-up his/her work. If a child will be absent for an extended period of time, arrangements should be made with the teacher for homework assignments.

Any absence of more than three (3) consecutive days must be explained by a doctor's note.

A student is considered absent when he/she is not in attendance for at least half of the day. Children with doctor or dental appointments during the school day will generally not be counted absent if the child misses less than 2 hours of school. In the case of an appointment, a student is

absent a half day if he or she misses more than half the morning or half the afternoon. See “appointments” section for more information.

If a student is absent for a third of a grading period due to illness, a grade may not be given on the student’s report card. The report card will be marked “incomplete” (IN) and the student will be allowed a designated amount of time to make-up the missed schoolwork. If the work is not completed in the designated time period, the incomplete grades will become failing grades.

Please refer to the school calendar when planning family vacations. Vacations should be scheduled during school breaks. **Generally, vacation days taken while school is in session will be counted as unexcused absences.** Teachers are not obligated to prepare work in advance for absences and credit for daily work may be negatively affected by unexcused absences. If tests are administered during the absence, the student is responsible to ask the teacher to administer the test at a time convenient to the teacher.

Accountability

The obligation of every individual affiliated with St. Mark School is first and foremost to create and maintain an environment of Christian values and behavior. It is only in carrying out this charge, that the daily operations of the school can proceed in the orderly and well-disciplined manner necessary for the pursuit of Catholic Education.

Student responsibilities

1. attend school regularly and arrive on time
2. conduct himself/herself in a polite, courteous, and well-disciplined manner at school, while using school sponsored transportation, or while representing the school at any activity
3. show respect toward all those in authority as well as fellow students
4. complete homework and other assignments as requested by school administrators and classroom teachers in a timely and complete manner
5. consistently put forward his/her best effort in all school related activities
6. demonstrate proper care when using school/parish property and equipment and that of others
7. follow all classroom rules
8. come to school appropriately dressed according to the dress code

Parental/guardian responsibilities

1. set an example of Catholic faith, especially by seeing that the child(ren) attends Mass
2. provide a home atmosphere conducive to learning and the development of good study habits
3. care for child(ren)’s health and personal hygiene
4. keep ill child(ren) at home and arrange to have all class work completed
5. send their child(ren) regularly to school and see that he/she arrives on time
6. make sure their child(ren) observe the school dress code
7. ensure that all homework and class assignments are completed
8. encourage proper behavior and support the school's disciplinary actions
9. cooperate with school personnel in solving school related problems
10. meet the financial obligations they have accepted by sending their child(ren) to St. Mark school

Principal, teacher, substitute teacher, and others in a supervisory capacity responsibilities

1. inspire every student without qualification to achieve his/her spiritual, academic and behavioral potential
2. provide a healthy atmosphere for learning
3. demonstrate a professional, dignified, and respectful attitude while in the presence of students
4. demonstrate openness to all parties involved in a behavioral incident without prejudicial to any person(s) involved - teacher, parent, or student
5. encourage the development of self-discipline in each child
6. maintain the confidentiality of any and all behavioral incidents relating to students as well as coincident supervisory and parental/guardian conversations
7. consistently enforce school policies as adopted by the school
8. seek conferences with parents to resolve behavioral problems before they become serious
9. encourage students to participate in classroom and extracurricular activities

St. Mark Pastor responsibilities

1. inspire and educate students to enhance individual spirituality and a sense of community
2. participate actively in the development of students
3. support those individuals and groups charged with the educational and disciplinary operations of the school

School Commission responsibilities

1. establish local educational policies and programs to meet the needs of the school
2. review the implementation of school policies
3. support the administrator and teachers when they have acted in accordance with existent school policies
4. consider recommendations for changes in school policies
5. establish the school budget in consultation with the administrator and with the approval of the Parish Council and the Pastor

PTG responsibilities

1. develop educational, religious, social and charitable programs through presentations, committees and projects
2. promote and enhance the experience of St. Mark students through fundraising activities

Admission Policy

New/returning students are considered for admission to St. Mark School according to the school's admission policy. Registration is accepted from families who wish to apply regardless of race, sex, or national origin. This process begins around the month of February. Enrollment is dependent upon available staff and class size as determined by the administrator. The order of the admission procedure is as follows:

1. Letters of intent are sent home to existing families of St. Mark School who are current in tuition and other fees to allow these families the first opportunity at enrollment.

2. Active, registered members of St. Mark Parish who do not have children enrolled at St. Mark School may be enrolled as space allows.
3. Families who are active members of other Catholic parishes may be enrolled as space allows
4. Non-Catholic families may be enrolled as space allows

Appointments

If at all possible, doctor/dentist appointments should be scheduled after school hours. If this is not possible, your child must be signed out in the office and must be signed in upon return. Please follow this procedure -

- Prior to the appointment send a note to your child's teacher specifying the date, time, and place
- Wait for your child in the office
- Sign your child out
- Accompany your child back into the school office following the appointment and sign him/her back into school.

Asbestos

St. Mark School does contain some asbestos. It is considered safe and is inspected on a regular basis according to the mandated AHERA plan. All maintenance personnel are trained to work safely around asbestos. The asbestos abatement plan is on file in the principal's office and may be reviewed upon request. This notice is required by law.

Assignment Books

Students in grades 3 through 8 are required to maintain an up-to-date daily assignment book. Students should record daily assignments, tests, materials needed and information/due dates for projects. Parents interested in knowing what a student's homework is may check the assignment book. This also provides a means for parents to communicate with a teacher in writing as well as the opportunity for a teacher to write a note to parents.

Assignment books can be purchased from the school store on the first day of school and throughout the school year should it need to be replaced.

Athletics

(See Appendix for SMAC policies)

The St. Mark Athletic Committee (SMAC) administers athletic programs in conjunction with the Catholic Youth Organization. CYO is the Archdiocesan organization that oversees a number of extra-curricular activities including sports, science fair, music contest, and chess. Most sports activities begin in 4th grade and continue through 8th grade. Physical activity is an important part of a child's development; however, participation in sports should never interfere with a child's academic progress. Sports eligibility guidelines have been developed cooperatively between the school and SMAC. Possible sports available to St. Mark students through SMAC may include kickball, volleyball, cross country, golf, football, track, basketball, baseball, soccer, and wrestling. Coaches are volunteers. Since it is not generally SMAC's policy to 'cut' students from teams, there is often more than one team at a given level. In the event of multiple teams, there

may be an 'A' team and a 'B' team or a Black team and a Gold team. More information on the SMAC program may be obtained by contacting a member of SMAC.

Attendance

It is the policy of St. Mark School that students attend school regularly and punctually in order to be successful in school and in life. When a student is absent 9 or more days a quarter, he/she may not receive a grade for that quarter. Students missing 36 days during the school year may not be promoted on to the next grade. Students who are tardy run the risk of missing valuable class time, especially if this is a regular occurrence. Even 5 minutes a day adds up to 25 minutes a week. Furthermore, students entering the classroom late disrupt the lesson in progress. If your child is tardy/late, he/she must be signed in at the school office. Students who have perfect attendance during the school year will receive a Perfect Attendance certificate at the end of the year.

Before Care/After Care

Parents may choose to utilize either or both of our extended care programs. Registration forms are available in the school office. The Before Care program opens at 7:00 A.M. and dismisses students to their classrooms at 7:55. The After Care program begins at 3:00 P.M. and closes at 6:00 P.M. School rules of behavior apply in both care programs. Students in After Care have the opportunity to do homework in a homework room; however, students may not stay in the homework room if they are not quiet. We reserve the right to deny these programs to students who display significant or frequent misbehavior or who are not current in fees.

Bell Times

In the morning, the bells will ring at the following times -

7:50 – Students may enter Before Care at no charge

7:55 – Students may go to their classrooms

8:05 - Students get ready for exchange

8:10 – Prayer, announcements -Students should be in their seats and ready for school or they will be counted as tardy

Bicycles

Students who ride bicycles to or from school must provide the principal with a signed note of permission from their parents. Those who ride bicycles to school may never ride them on the playground. Bicycles must be provided with locks. The school cannot be responsible for stolen or damaged bikes. Students who do not abide by the Bicycle Rules of the State of Indiana forfeit their privilege to ride their bikes to school. All bicycles must be walked across Highway 31 and Edgewood Avenue. Bike riders must abide by the dismissal rules at the end of the day and may leave only when they are given permission.

Birthdays

Student birthdays are announced during morning announcements. If you wish, you may send in simple, individual treats for your child to share with classmates on that day. Be sure there are enough treats for everyone in your child's homeroom and check with your child's teacher in advance.

Calendar

(see Appendix for current year calendar)

The school calendar is developed in the spring of the school year and provided to parents both in the spring and at the beginning of the school year. In many cases the calendar will align with Roncalli High School and Perry Meridian schools, but there will be differences. Please check your calendars for any conflicts and arrange transportation or alternative care for your child.

Catholic Schools Week

This celebration takes place during the last week of January or the first week of February. It is a time when we celebrate the uniqueness of Catholic Schools. Activities for parents, teachers and students are traditionally planned for this week.

CHEATING – NEW POLICY

Any student caught cheating will receive an automatic “0” for the test, project, assignment, quiz, etc. on which he or she has cheated. Any student who steals or is caught in possession of a test or quiz will receive an automatic “F” for the quarter. A test found in a student’s purse, book bag, locker, etc., is considered to be a form of possession. Parents will be notified immediately. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense. Violations will be documented in the student’s discipline record. Repeat offenses could result in suspensions and/or expulsions. The following represent some, but certainly not all, specific examples of cheating: copying another student’s homework, plagiarizing and copying during a quiz or test. At the beginning of each semester, individual classroom teachers also will specify any other instances of behavior (cheating) which they will not allow in their classroom.

Plagiarism-Plagiarism is a serious offense and will be considered cheating. See Cheating for consequences.

- Teacher documents the cheating episode and speaks with the student.
- Student receives a zero for the work.
- Principal is informed of cheating incident.
- Principal confers with the student and keeps record of cheating.
- Principal calls the student’s parents and reviews with the parents’ school is cheating policy.

Co-Curricular Activities

Our students have many opportunities to participate in other activities of educational value, among them:

Field trips	Scouts
Art contests	Spell Bowl
Academic Olympics (7 th & 8 th)	Band
Quest for Excellence (7 th & 8 th)	Retreats
Math Competitions (5 th through 8 th)	Musical Performances
Sixth grade camp	Science Fair
News Bowl	Hogwarts
Chess Club	Service Club
Yearbook	

Communication

The weekly newsletter, *The Bridge*, is the main means of communication between the school and parents. The Bridge is distributed on Mondays, or the first day of the school week, to the oldest child in the family. It publishes the lunch menu for the following week and keeps parents informed about upcoming events.

A monthly calendar is regularly sent to parents. The calendar includes events for the upcoming month.

Communication between parents and teachers is critical for a child's progress in school. It is essential that parents and teachers work together to ensure a positive educational experience for each child. Conferences and other written and oral communication are used to accomplish this.

If you wish to speak to a teacher by telephone, call the school and leave a message on voicemail or with the school secretary. If you are not available, teachers will leave messages on answering machines or with coworkers. Teachers are asked to return calls within 24 hours

Teachers will contact parents if something demands immediate attention.

Concerns

A process has been developed to enable you to manage a concern. Please attempt to go to the primary source when confronted with a situation that concerns you. Often, misunderstandings can be clarified by a direct conversation between the parties involved. Only after such contact has proven unsatisfactory or the problem needs more clarification should the principal be asked to intervene. "Parking lot gossip" is rarely productive and should be avoided as should any discussion of secondhand information, especially that of a negative nature.

If you have a concern

- Contact the teacher through a phone call or written note and express your concern.
- Ask for a meeting with the teacher.
- Before the meeting, focus your thoughts, make notes if necessary and be ready to clearly express your concern or need. Consider including your child in the meeting if appropriate.
- Meet with the teacher as scheduled.
- Work to resolution with the teacher.
- If you feel that your concern was not resolved, ask the principal to become involved.
- If you feel that your concern was not resolved, contact a member of the St. Mark School Commission.

Some things to consider

- Realize that St. Mark School must work for the common good of all families and students
- Please give the teacher or principal a chance to address your concern. You would appreciate the same opportunity.
- It is unfair to complain to other parents or neighbors about an issue or activity at St. Mark if you are unwilling to spend time working for a resolution.
- If your child is taking part in a sacramental preparation program (First Reconciliation or First Eucharist), and you have a concern in these areas, please contact the Director of Religious Education.

Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are held at the end of the first grading period. Report Cards are discussed at this time. However, since we place a strong emphasis on communication at St.

Mark, we encourage you to speak to your child's teacher more frequently if necessary. You may arrange for a conference by calling the school office.

Curriculum

The study of our Catholic religion is of utmost importance since the primary purpose of our school is spiritual and religious in its outlook and orientation. Religion is taught everyday and will be graded. Emphasis will be placed on the proper development and mastery of reading and math skills, grammar and creative expression, scientific concepts, and social studies. In addition, students participate in special classes such as: Art, Computer, Physical Education, Music, and Health.

St. Mark School follows the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guides, which have been designed to meet state standards. Copies of state standards and Archdiocesan Curriculum Guides are available upon request. Instruction at St. Mark School is curriculum-standard driven rather than textbook-driven. There may be times when a student does not have a textbook for a particular subject. The teacher will be guided by the curriculum guide in the preparation of the lessons and in the assessment of the students. Teachers are accountable first and foremost to follow the curriculum guides and state standards and will supplement and augment the skills and proficiencies developed in the textbook with other appropriate materials.

Delays/Cancellation

If school is canceled or postponed due to inclement weather (heat/snow/cold), the T.V. Channels 6,8,and 13 will have that posting. The fact that Perry Township schools or Roncalli High School are closed/delayed does not necessarily mean that St. Mark School will be closed/delayed. Please arrange for alternative transportation in this circumstance if necessary.

Full school days missed due to cancellations must be made up. Delays of 2 hours or less do not need to be made up. Two to three 'snow' days are built into the school calendar. If these days are not used the calendar may be shortened by the number of unused days. St. Mark School follows the Indiana Department of Education's requirement of 180 school days.

Disaster Drills

The school is required to conduct regular disaster drills. Students are given directions as to the correct procedures for these drills. Students are expected to observe silence at all times during these drills. Fire alarms are kept in working condition and charged at appropriate times. In the event of a tornado watch, the school monitors radio and TV stations for weather reports. In case of a tornado warning, students are immediately sent to their stations and remain there until the warning is lifted. An Emergency Handbook is submitted yearly to the Archdiocese for review. It contains information concerning the procedures which will be followed in emergency situations.

Discipline (see Appendix for Discipline Plan)

Order is essential in effective management of any school. It is maintained not only by parental support, qualified teaching staff, efficient administration, and good educational programs but also by the development of the child as a true Christian and a wholesome American citizen. Discipline is as fundamental to Catholic Education as it is to Christian living. It should be

cultivated in the child from within rather than by regimentation. The Discipline Plan is distributed at the beginning of the year. Our school considers a student's registration as a contract among parents, students, and faculty that the rules will be observed.

Doors

During the school day, students, parents and visitors should enter the school through the west door. All other doors to the school remain locked during the school day. Between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 A.M. and from 3:30 P.M. until 6:00 P.M. entry to the school building is through the south Media Center door.

Dress Code

(see Appendix for Dress Code)

The purpose of the Dress Code is to limit competition among students, to establish some uniformity in regards to dress, and to make it easier for parents and teachers to monitor students' dress. Students not following the dress code will be subject to disciplinary measures as outlined in the dress code.

Drop-off/Pick-up

Beginning at 7:45 A.M., proceed south on Smock and turn right behind the school. Students should be dropped-off at the southwest corner of the school. Students enter school through the west doors. Drivers should proceed west and south through the parking lot.

Students in the building before 7:45 A.M. will be sent to Before Care.

For dismissal, drivers should proceed to form four lines behind the school. All drivers should park their vehicles in these lines until students are dismissed and are safely in vehicles. Inside lines (closest to the school) are reserved for smaller cars. If you are driving a larger vehicle please park in the outside lines as children have difficulty finding small cars when bigger vehicles block the view. A teacher/adult will direct lines to proceed out of the lot.

Parents may park in the Church parking lot and walk their child(ren) to the west door of the school before school or meet them at this door upon dismissal. Students may not walk to the church parking lot without a parent or other qualified escort.

Walkers will be dismissed as soon as traffic clears, if they have not left immediately after the 3:00 bell.

Students who are not picked-up by 3:15 will be sent to After Care.

Electronic Devices/Toys

Students are discouraged from bringing toys, radios, tape recorders, CD-players, cell-phones or other electronic devices such as PlayStation or Sega Genesis to school. Permission for use of any device other than a simple calculator must be obtained from the principal or classroom teacher. These and other items may be subject to confiscation. The school cannot be responsible for toys or electronic devices brought from home that are lost or damaged.

Field Trips/Chaperones

Educational field trips take place several times during the year. Field trips must be approved by the administrator and must have educational value related to state standards or Archdiocesan guidelines. Participation in a field trip is a privilege, not a right.

The 6th graders traditionally take a trip to Camp Tecumseh during the school year. The 8th grade class traditionally participates in a trip toward the end of their 8th grade year.

According to State law, written permission must be obtained from parents for any field trip. **An actual, formal field trip permission form provided by the teacher and completed and signed by the parent or guardian must be on file in order for a student to participate in the field trip.** A hand-written note from a parent will not be accepted in lieu of the formal permission form.

Children who do not participate in a scheduled field trip are expected to attend school on that day in an alternative setting until the class returns. In other words, choosing to not attend a field trip does not excuse a student from school.

On occasion, teachers will request help with student supervision from volunteer chaperones for field trips. Before the trip begins, teachers will give directions and expectations. Some general rules should be implemented:

- school rules and procedures should be followed
- young children should not be brought along unless prior approval from the supervising teachers has been given
- unauthorized stops should never be made
- chaperones should not smoke in cars when students are present

Finances

The school budget is prepared by the finance committee of the School Commission in consultation with the school administrator. It is approved by the Parish Council and the Pastor. The school budget is part of the larger budget of St. Mark parish. The school budget is subsidized by the parish at a rate of approximately twenty percent. The bulk of the school income comes from tuition.

The School Endowment Fund was established in 1990 and continues to grow. It has been funded by generous donors, many of them Lilly employees who have specifically designated their gifts for endowment. The Blanche Kern Memorial Library Fund was established by the Kern family and continues to grow through the generosity of this family.

First Eucharist (Holy Communion)

Students prepare for the Sacraments of First Eucharist and Reconciliation (Penance) in 2nd grade. While some of the preparation is done in the classroom, a number of activities take place in the evening or on Saturday. Liturgies and workshops are designed to involve the parents and the students in the process.

Gum

Gum is never allowed on school grounds. This includes all areas used by the school during school-time (Schafer Basement, Church, etc.).

Gym Shoes

A pair of non-marking gym shoes for exclusive use in PE class is required of all students. Students who do not have their gym shoes for class will write the uniform code. Repeated offenses will result in Discipline Code consequences and a possible reduction in the PE grade.

Health/Medication

St. Mark School maintains students' health records while the student is attending St. Mark. Children entering Kindergarten must present up to date immunization records. Students entering 6th grade must present evidence of having received a measles booster. An emergency medical form is kept on each child. Parents need to update any changes to the form (changes in student health profile, emergency numbers, care providers, etc.). All medication will be given or dispensed by a school employee only upon written request of the parent or guardian. ***Medication that is brought to school should be in the original container clearly labeled with the child's name and dosage instructions. All medicines should be checked into the secretary's office for safe handling and storage.*** A parental medication release form must accompany all medication. If a student comes to school sick, he/she is sent to the office and the secretary calls a parent to come for the child. This is also true if a student becomes sick during the school day. It is the responsibility of parents to have arrangements in place to pick up children from school in the event that they become ill during the school day. St. Mark does not have a sick care facility. A variety of health screenings take place at St. Mark School. Students benefit from vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening.

Holiday Parties

Generally speaking, holidays are not celebrated in the classrooms with a party. If the holiday is a religious one, the religious aspect of the holiday is emphasized. When parties or celebrations occur, they are at the discretion of the classroom teacher. In some cases, celebrations are directly related to curriculum. In other instances, the celebration is part of a special week or event. In any event, these celebrations do not last longer than 1 or possibly 2 class periods.

Homework

Homework is designed to be a constructive tool in the teaching-learning process. Its purposes are:

- to help students develop independent work-study habits
- to reinforce learning that has taken place at school
- to bring the home and school closer together
- to aid parents in observing their children's progress

Parents are encouraged to:

- provide their children with a suitable place and quiet time
- show a positive interest in homework and all school work
- serve as consultants but never do the work
- encourage extra reading whenever possible

The following are the minute and grade level expectations:

- **Grades 1 & 2:** 20 to 30 minutes should be spent in some kind of study. Parents may help with Religion questions and prayers, phonics rules, spelling words, math facts, etc.
- **Grades 3 & 4:** 30 minutes to 1 hour each week night should be spent in home study. Written work will usually be given in some subjects. Some of this work may be finished in school but children should still be required to spend some time at home in actual study.
- **Grades 5 through 8:** 1 hour to 2 hours each week night should be spent in home study. Some of this work may be finished in school but children should still be required to spend some time at home in actual study.

Keep in mind that teachers often ask students to begin work in class. It is true that students have ongoing homework and projects that may be assigned at the beginning of the week or ahead of time and your child needs to work on these nightly rather than wait until the night before they are due. If your child has more homework than indicated above, encourage him/her to take advantage of class time to begin work. An added advantage to this is that if the student does not understand the work, the teacher is present to assist. Please encourage your child to recognize that homework is more than written assignments. It is also studying for tests and reading. Any child that does not have homework on a given night should read 10 minutes to one half hour. If the student does not read well, let someone in the household help with the reading.

Remember that AfterCare offers a study hall to children who choose to participate in this program. You might consider having your child(ren) utilize this option for a specified amount of time each day.

Homework of an absent child may be sent home with a brother, sister, or neighbor. A student will receive one extra day for every day missed. Students are responsible for work assigned. If the assignment is not done or it is incomplete, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Depending upon the age of the child, homework detentions or loss of recess may be given if homework is not complete, not turned in, assignments or tests are not signed, projects are not on time, etc. These detentions are generally served after school at the discretion of the supervising teacher. Detention times vary but are generally between 30 minutes and one hour in length. Students are responsible to have their detention slip signed the evening it is given. If the missing work has since been turned in, the student should bring other work to detention. No group work will be allowed in the detention room.

Junior High/Middle School

Students in the Middle School, grades 5 through 8, change classes during the school day. These students will have more than one teacher. Some of the classes are on Block Scheduling. These classes are 80 minutes long instead of 40 minutes. This allows time for full presentation of the lesson and appropriate reinforcement activities.

Lice/Nits

Please inform the school should your child contract lice. This will enable us to check other students in that grade. Treat your child with a head lice medication and continue to check for nits for at least two weeks. This is a tedious process but successful ridding of nits is essential. You can obtain more information in the school office or from the Marion County Health Department.

Liturgy

Weekly liturgy is an important part of the school curriculum at St. Mark School. Students plan and participate in the liturgy. Students in grades K through 8 attend mass at the designated day/time. The school may also attend Holy Days of Obligation. Prayer services are planned for special occasions several times during the school year. Communion services may be held occasionally if the pastor is not available. Parents are always welcome at liturgies.

Lost and Found

Each year literally hundreds of items find their way to the “Lost and Found”. Many of these items are almost new and most items are never claimed. Occasionally the items are brought into the hall to be displayed. Eventually, the overflow of items is sent to St. Vincent De Paul Society or to the summer garage sale at St. Mark.

If student’s clothes, coats and shoes are labeled with their names, we will make every effort to return these items to their owners.

Lunch

(See Appendix for current lunch prices and information)

Students may bring their own lunch or purchase lunch through the school.

Media Center

The Media Center is the most recent building addition to the school. It was built with the financial assistance of the Parent/Teacher Group. It houses the school library. A part-time volunteer librarian serves the students 2 days per week. Students in all grades use the library each week for library activities or research.

The Media Center is used for a variety of other activities by the school and the parish. Users are asked not to eat or drink in the Media Center. There is adequate space outside the Media Center for refreshments. Sign-up for the Media Center is handled by the parish Business Manager.

Music Program

Students in all grades participate in music class. Generally, students in grades K through 4 present a Winter Program. Students in grades 5-8 may participate in a program during the second semester. Roncalli High School sends a band teacher to St. Mark one morning a week. Band instruction is available to those students in grades 5 through 8 who are interested. Liturgical music is an important part of the music curriculum at St. Mark.

Open House/Back to School Night

Parents are invited to a Back to School Open House early in the school year. This is not a time to conference, but it is an opportunity to meet the teachers and to see your child's classroom. Kindergarten parents have an additional, separate orientation evening prior to the first day of school.

Another open house is held during the school year, frequently during Catholic Schools Week.

Parking

During the school day, parents and visitors should park in the church parking lot on the corner of Edgewood and US 31.

Pictures

Individual student pictures are taken in the fall each year. You are under no obligation to purchase these pictures. Parents may choose from a variety of picture packages for purchase. Special group and activity pictures for the yearbook are taken later in the year. Eighth grade graduation pictures are taken in the spring. These are also optional.

Projects

Student projects are an important part of the assessment process at St. Mark. Through projects students can show that they can apply the proficiencies and skills they have learned in the classroom. In many cases, projects are the only way students can apply higher level thinking skills such as analysis, application, problem solving, synthesis, and evaluation. Projects are intended for completion by students. Parents are advised to let students complete project work themselves. It is important that students learn the value of teamwork and collaboration at an early age. Group projects allow students to begin to develop these skills. Many projects are designed to be completed during school time. Parents are asked to respect and follow the guidelines that teachers set for their projects. The school never encourages students to spend excessive money on projects. Creativity is an important component of projects and not the amount of money spent.

Promotion and Retention

A student is promoted if he or she has attained a suitable measure of success at his or her present level. Performances on various assessments, such as ISTEP+ or other local testing, will also be considered. If testing indicates the need for remediation, plans should be made for tutoring or summer school. Occasionally, retention may be recommended even though remediation is not indicated by standardized test results.

Retention is a serious step. It is rarely recommended for a student in the upper grades. If a teacher perceives an advantage to the child by retention, a conference will be held and a mutually agreed upon course of action will be taken. This conference may include the classroom teacher or teachers, the parents, the principal, and possibly the Resource teacher. Factors such as maturity, developmental skills, and academic performance all play a role in such a decision. The best interests of the child will always be the prime concern.

A student may be assigned to a higher grade when he or she has worked to the best of his or her ability but is performing below grade level. A student may be assigned to a higher grade when a student has not progressed appropriately but has the ability to accomplish the work at the next level. When a child is assigned, if he/she is not able to meet minimum expectations at that grade level, a conference may be held to determine if the child needs to return to the previous grade. If a child is asked to repeat a grade and the parent refuses the recommendation, a statement documenting the school's position and the parent's refusal will be added to the student's permanent record. The child may also be asked not to continue education at St. Mark School if a recommendation of retention is not agreed upon.

Recess/Playground

The following rules apply:

For lunch recess:

- No wrestling, fighting, or throwing each other to the ground
- No martial arts allowed
- Must sit on swings, never stand, swing double, or on stomach or knees

For inside recess:

- Students remain in classrooms playing games or cards as authorized by teacher
- No running, wrestling, or loud talking

* During outside or inside recess, students must obey all supervisors.

Recognition

Awards: Students are often rewarded for their accomplishments. Awards are given quarterly to students who have received no Discipline Slips for that quarter. Students are also given recognition for Perfect Attendance and Christian Attitude.

A Molli Cassetty Scholarship is presented to a seventh grader who demonstrates high academic achievement and who exemplifies Christian Attitude. Molli was a former student of St. Mark.

Honor Roll: Students in Grades 5 through 8 are eligible for the Honor Roll. Honorable Mention signifies a B average, Honors signifies all As and Bs, and High Honors signifies all As. Students may not be on the Honor Roll if they have a C or below in conduct. We pride ourselves in providing a challenging curriculum, therefore, these honors, especially High Honors, are difficult to achieve. It takes exceptional hard work and a student willing to do more than is required to obtain these honors.

Special Awards are given at the 8th grade graduation ceremony. Students are acknowledged for their participation in the Quest for Excellence, Academic Olympics, Spell Bowl, News Bowl, the Midwest Talent Search, Athletics, and as servers at Mass. Additionally, the following awards may be presented:

- Academic: The students with the highest grade point average receive plaques for High Honors, Honors, and Honorable Mention.
- Cathedral High School: entrance test scores and scholarships
- Christian Attitude: given to the student who exemplifies Christian Attitude.

- Evan Taylor: in memory of a former student for improvement/effort in faith, academics, and/or athletics who exemplifies the “Heart of a Champion”
- Joe Cauchi: for family participation in stewardship and service activities
- Mickey Lentz Scholarship: named after former principal Mickey Lentz, this award is given for a combination of Christian Attitude and good academics.
- Principal's Award: given to an 8th grade student based on service, Christian Attitude and academics.
- Roncalli High School Leadership Scholarship: presents a leadership scholarship to one student in each of the South Deanery Schools.
- Roncalli High School Scholarship: students may receive a Roncalli Scholarship for scoring among the top ten freshmen on the High School Placement exam.
- Wells Scholarship: awarded to one student in the South Deanery schools.

Registration

Registration for the upcoming school year takes place in February. First, a letter is sent to parishioners who have children eligible for Kindergarten. Second, a letter of intent is included in the Newsletter for families whose children are already enrolled at St. Mark. Finally, enrollment is opened to families who wish to enroll at St. Mark.

Religious Activities

As a Catholic school, St. Mark celebrates Religious events in special ways. The seasons of Advent and Lent are times to prepare for important Christian events, namely Christmas and Easter.

Report Cards

Report Cards are issued 4 times a year, at the end of each quarter. The school year is divided into 4 quarters, each approximately 45 days in length. The Kindergarten Report Card is a non-graded Report Card that is meant to give a clear picture of what has been introduced to a student and what has been mastered. The advantage of these cards is that they specify the skills and proficiencies more clearly, especially in the areas of language arts and math. *Please note: if you are delinquent in tuition payments, your child's report card may be withheld.*

School Day

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. Students may enter the classrooms at 7:45 a.m. and should not arrive before that time unless they are in Before Care or they have a scheduled, supervised activity. Students should not remain in the school building after 3:15 p.m. unless they are in After Care or they are involved in a scheduled, supervised activity. The School cannot be responsible for students who are on school grounds at times or under other guidelines than those listed above.

School Store

The “Lion’s Den” is a school store which offers various supplies and clothing items for purchase. The store is located in the elementary wing. Hours of operation are posted.

Shadowing

St. Mark arranges with Roncalli for a day of “shadowing” for 8th grade students in the fall. All participating 8th grade students spend this day at Roncalli, paired with a Roncalli student. If a student does not wish to attend the shadowing day at Roncalli, he/she is expected to attend school at St. Mark that day and will be supervised by Junior High teachers.

Social Events

In planning social events and activities, parents need to be sensitive to the feelings of children as well as their safety and welfare. The school has set forth the following guidelines regarding social activities involving the students:

- Invitations to parties or events which are to take place outside of school time are not to be issued at school *unless all students (in the class) are included*. Students should be discouraged from discussing such events in the presence of those not included.
- All social gatherings whether on or off school property should have adequate adult supervision.
- Age appropriate activities should be considered in planning social events.

Special Events

Special events occur throughout the year. These events may include Science, Earth Week, Book Week, and Catholic Schools Week.

Special Services

St. Mark students have the benefit of a variety of additional services. St. Mark School administers a resource program to assist students who have alternative learning styles. Optional programs of both Before Care and After Care are available for parents who need supervision of their children outside of school hours. Perry Township provides speech remediation to eligible students.

Staff

(See Appendix for staff list for the current school year)

Student Progress

Parents are informed of student progress through several means. Students receive a quarterly Report Card. Students also receive a mid-quarter progress report as deemed necessary. Conferences may be arranged between parents and teachers on an as need basis. Further communication regarding student progress can be made by telephone.

Supplies

The end of the year packet contains a list of supplies that students will need to begin the school year. Please see that supplies are replenished during the year as they are used. Students may purchase supplies from the school bookstore, “The Lion’s Den”, during the year.

Technology/Internet/ Electronic Devices

Students and parents must sign an Acceptable Use Agreement in order for a student to have access to the internet during the school day. Students, who do not have this form signed, will not be allowed access and may suffer a grade consequence. Students who do not comply with all aspects of the agreement will also be denied access. A copy of the Acceptable Use Agreement may be found in the appendix of this handbook.

Electronic Devices – NEW POLICY

Because cell phones, pagers, ipods Headsets, Radios, Tape Recorders and other electronic devices now have the capabilities of text messaging, picture taking and internet access, their ability to create classroom disruptions and problematic situations has increased significantly. Thus, St. Mark School takes an aggressive stance in regards to these devices. Students are not allowed to use any of these items or other electronic devices during the day without the permission of the school administration. The electronic device will be confiscated and given to the Principal if it is found being used during the school day.

Telephones/Fax

School telephones are primarily used for school business. Important phone messages for students will be delivered to the teachers to be passed on to the students. **Students may not use school telephones without a teacher's permission.** The school telephone number is 786-4013 and the fax is 783-9574. Teachers' voice-mail extensions can be found on the staff list in the appendix of this handbook.

Testing

Standardized testing may occur in all grades as mandated by the State of Indiana or determined by the school administrator. Parents receive these test results when they become available. Additional local assessments and/or Archdiocesan testing may also be administered.

Academic testing to determine alternative learning styles may be requested through Perry Township after convening a meeting with parents and staff members. Many possible accommodations should be fully explored before a student is referred for testing with Perry Township.

Tuition

(see Appendix for detailed Tuition information)

Tuition is set by the School Commission in cooperation with the Finance Committee and the Pastoral Council of the parish.

Tuition Assistance

The school retains a service to assist in determining special tuition status. Only parishioners are eligible for financial aid. All families are expected to make regular tuition payments.

It is imperative that families who are requesting financial assistance should advise the school office of their need during the designated registration period. Determination of tuition assistance

for a school year is made and communicated in the late spring prior to the beginning of the school year.

Tuition assistance is independently determined each year and is controlled in part by available funds. If a family receives assistance one year, there is no guarantee or commitment for future assistance in subsequent years. Applications are available in the school office.

Visitors

School time is devoted to instructional purposes. No person may interrupt classes, nor may teachers or students be called from their classrooms except for urgent reasons and then only with the permission of the principal. Parents who wish to speak with a teacher may do so by leaving a message for the teacher on his/her voice-mail.

All visitors must report to the school office. You will be issued a visitor badge after signing in.

Forgotten lunches, books, instruments, etc. should be brought to the school office. The secretary will see that your child receives the forgotten item.

Volunteers

We greatly appreciate the contributions of our volunteers. It is a special characteristic of St. Mark School that so many parents are willing to share their time and talent in the school.

The beginning of the year packet contains a 'Volunteer Sheet'. It lists the many opportunities families have to help at school. One of those opportunities is to act as a Room Parent for one of your students' classrooms. Room parents can help the teacher in a number of ways. Often, simply calling other parents regarding a classroom event or activity helps the teacher. Even working parents can assist in many ways. St. Mark School relies on many parents who volunteer their services preparing lunches, as teachers' aides, library helpers, room parents, playground supervisors, cafeteria helpers, chaperones and coaches.

All volunteers are required to complete the Background Check form and the Policy Acknowledgment Form which is required through the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Copies of these forms may be found in the appendix of this handbook.

Walkers

All students who may walk either to or from school must have a note signed by a parent indicating such on file in the school office. This note should address how often this might occur.

Yearbook

St. Mark School publishes a yearbook each year. This is planned and developed by the school staff and students during the months of February and March. Yearbooks may be ordered through the school office.

