

Parent Handbook



2026-2027

**12291 River Road
Richmond, Virginia 23238
(804) 784-2049**

Email – smes@stmarysgoochland.org

Website - saintmarysschool.net

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Mary's Episcopal School! We are beginning our 26th year of enriching the lives of children. We are glad that you have chosen for your child or children to be a part of our St. Mary's family. We want to provide each child with a hands-on learning environment that will optimize their growth and development and prepare them for success in the future.

We invite you to play an active role in your child's education. Get involved in your child's classroom, communicate with your child's teacher, and encourage your child at home by reinforcing the activities that are introduced at school.

Please share your thoughts and ideas with us so that as a team, we as parents and educators, can see "our" little ones reach their highest potential.

Sincerely,

Susan Rawls

Director, St. Mary's Episcopal School

Office Hours: 8:30AM - 2:30PM

School Hours:

Kindergarten -8:30AM-2:30PM

3 Day Class - 8:45AM-11:45AM

4 Day Class - 8:55AM- 11:55AM

JK - 9:00AM - 2:00PM (M-Th)

JK - 9:00AM-12:00PM (F)

Early Morning Drop Off: 8:00 AM

After School Enrichment Dismissal - 12:45PM

After Lunch Bunch Dismissal - 2:00PM

Tuition/After School Payments:

Tuition Payments, August 1 through May 1, 10 equal payments, due 1st of the month

Kindergarten - \$720.00

JK - \$690.00

4 Day - \$430.00

3 Day - \$340.00

2 Day - \$235.00

Early Morning Drop-off -\$10.00 for Kindergarten, \$15.00 for Preschool

After School from 12:00PM-2:00PM - \$26

After School from 12:40PM-2:00PM -\$20.00

Inclement Weather Policy

When the school is closed due to ice and/or snow (or any other weather condition), the closing information will be reported on WTVR Channel 6, and by the Playground App (by 6:30AM). Our delayed opening will run from 10:00AM to 12:00PM (2:00 for JK) for preschool and 10:00AM -2:30PM for Kindergarten). After School programs will be available on late arrival days, unless otherwise noted. If **excessive amounts of snow days are used, the director (in consultation with the Board) will determine the need for makeup days.**

For weather emergencies that occur during school hours, the school will activate a text message through the Playground app to notify parents if early pick up is necessary.

St. Mary's Episcopal School

St. Mary's Episcopal School is a faith-based, early childhood learning program located at 12291 River Road, Richmond, Virginia, 23238 (804-784-2049). It is a Virginia non-stock Corporation that has applied for tax-exempt status under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It operates, according to state law, under the status of religious exemption. The school offers a co-educational experience for children ages 2-years-old through kindergarten. A voluntary Board of Directors operates the school as an independent, non-profit institution. The school functions as a collaborative effort among its students, educators, parents, directors, and the membership of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Dover Parish.

St. Mary's Episcopal School welcomes participants of diverse abilities, and any cultural, racial, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. Students are selected for enrollment on an individual basis and in compliance with non-discrimination laws.

Our Mission:

St. Mary's Episcopal School treasures children and childhood, fosters development through play and exploration, and prepares children for success in all aspects of their education.

We believe in the whole child, learning through:

Play: Children thrive and succeed when education is based on play and exploration. By providing personalized education, we meet each child where they are, helping the whole child develop social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills.

Exploration: We foster curiosity, wonder, independence, and confidence in each of our students. Questioning, investigating, taking risks, and observing builds a child's understanding of the world around them.

Relationship: We are a strong community of students, teachers, parents and families, anchored in our shared faith, mutual respect, and cooperation. We nurture spirituality by sharing the love of God and the lessons of God's teachings.

Nature: We spend time in nature to promote wellness, enhance learning, and instill a love for the natural world. Outdoor environments, as the third teacher, encourage children to explore, using all their senses.

Upon graduation, a St. Mary's child will be:

- Caring
- Confident
- Curious
- Creative

St. Mary's Episcopal School

Curriculum

Our play-based curriculum promotes growth in all areas of development (social-emotional, physical, cognitive, literacy and language). It is research-based and is influenced by the works of child development theorists Piaget, Vygotsky and Montessori. The Reggio Emilia philosophy has encouraged us to follow the children's lead, provide experiences and environments that promote play through hands-on exploration, and assist children to find deeper meaning through projects and common interests. Our unique program offers:

I. Daily Components:

- Outdoor nature play experiences
- STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math
- Interdisciplinary center activities (including literacy and math activities)
- Reading of quality children's literature that promotes values and character development
- Music, creative movement, fingerplays
- Time for wonder and curiosity
- Large and small motor skill activities
- Imaginative and dramatic play opportunities
- Guidance that promotes self- management skills

II. Weekly Components:

- Children's Chapel
- Music or Movement enrichment
- Nature-based Learning
- Volunteer opportunities for parents, seniors and members of the church Parish
- After school enrichment program – 3-to-5-day students
- Library
- Art - Kindergarten and JK students
- Pop, Hop, and Rock – Kindergarten and JK students
- Music Theory – Kindergarten only

III. Monthly Components:

- Holiday celebrations, following the church's calendar
- Enrichment experiences including field trips (mostly in-house) and other special activities
- Community service opportunities (Caritas, Goochland Family Services)

St. Mary's Episcopal School

Board of Directors Membership

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair Becca Brown
Vice Chair Alina Betts
Secretary Alec Boyd
Treasurer Colin McGlynn

MEMBERSHIP

Alex Stowers
Connie Jefferson

Susan Rawls – Director of St. Mary's Episcopal School
Wendy Dixon – Assistant Director
Tim Vest - Financial Advisor

PROGRAM

Classes are provided for children ages 2 to kindergarten. The program is divided as follows:

<u>Programs</u>	<u>Day Schedule</u>
2 Day Twos	Monday / Wednesday or Tuesday / Thursday
3 Day Class (3-year-olds)	Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday
4 Day Class (3-4-year-olds)	Monday through Thursday (4 day)
5 Day Junior Kindergarten (5-6-year-olds)	Monday through Friday
Kindergarten(5-7-year-olds)	Monday through Friday

PROGRAMS and FEES

Registration Fee - Preschool (non-refundable): \$50

Registration Fee - Kindergarten (non-refundable): \$100.00

Deposit: \$400.00 non-refundable deposit for preschool is due with the contract. It is applied to the total tuition. \$800.00 non-refundable deposit for kindergarten is due with the contract and also applied to the total tuition.

***Tuition assistance is available. Applications may be found on our website.
<https://saintmarysschool.net>***

2 Day	\$2750
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3 Day (/Tues./Wed./ Thurs.)	\$3900
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4 Day (Mon.-Thurs.)	\$4700
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Junior Kindergarten Full Day (Mon.-Thurs. 9:00-2:00, Friday, 9:00-12:00)	\$7300
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Kindergarten (Mon.-Fri.)	\$8000
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Early Morning Drop-Off (Must Sign-Up at least 24 hours in advance on Playground APP)	\$15.00 per day
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*After School Enrichment Program (<u>12:00 – 12:45</u>)	Prices and times may vary. depending on the program
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*After School Lunch/Stay and Play (12:00-2:00).	\$26.00 per day
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*After Enrichment Lunch/Stay and Play (12:45-2:00)	\$20.00 per day <u>No reimbursements</u>
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To participate in Lunch/Stay and Play provided by the school staff, children must be paying full tuition for the program in which they are enrolled from 9-12.

****See “Extended Day” under General Information***

Guidelines for Proper Placement in Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten

To be eligible for St. Mary's Episcopal Junior Kindergarten a child must be 5 by June 1 of the year following acceptance (I.e. a child entering JK at 4 in 2025 should be turning 5 by June 2026)

To be eligible for our Kindergarten program a child must be 5 by September 1 of the school entry year (I.e. to be eligible for kindergarten in 2025, the child must be 5 by September 1, 2026).

After applying to Kindergarten, a child will be scheduled for a visit to the school to receive a short assessment that determines readiness in language and math.

In addition, teachers are asked to complete a recommendation form that asks questions related to other areas of development including social/emotional development.

Parents can meet with the administration to review assessments and be given an opportunity to respond to the recommendation made by the school for the child's placement.

Tuition Payment Policy

Tuition checks should be made to **St. Mary's Episcopal School**. Tuition payments are due in full on or before **August 15**. If tuition is being paid in two payments, these are due on or before **August 1 and January 15**. Monthly payments should be paid by the 1st of each month.

- If your payment is not paid by the 15th of the month, you will be assessed a late fee of \$10.
- If payments are 2 months behind and you have not made arrangements to pay:
 1. Your child will not be able to attend school nor participate in any school activities (this includes graduation and summer camp).
 2. Kindergarten teacher recommendations and transcripts will not be sent.
 3. Preschool recommendations will not be sent.
 4. Students will lose their eligibility to be included in enrollment for the following school year.
- When payments are current, students will be considered in good standing.

Being a tuition driven school makes it imperative that all payments be made in a timely manner.

Returned checks will be assessed a fee of \$40.00.

Tuition Assistance

Tuition assistance is available on a limited basis. An application process is required. The application may be found on the website. The following policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees.

- ❖ The family of any child admitted to St. Mary's Episcopal School will be considered for tuition assistance upon completion of the application.
- ❖ All information provided by applicant families will be kept in strictest confidence.
- ❖ First consideration will be given to current students at the school, followed by the siblings of current and former students, and finally to new students. Parishioners will be given priority consideration.
- ❖ No student shall receive 100% tuition assistance.
- ❖ Those receiving tuition assistance may not participate in the After School Stay and Play. They may, however, participate in activities provided by outside vendors paid directly to the outside vendors.

St. Mary's Episcopal School expects tuition assistance recipient families to participate fully in the life of the school.

General Information

Accidents

Parents will be notified immediately by the classroom teacher or director/assistant director if a child has been involved in any mishap in the classroom or on the playground, including biting incidents. Any accident requiring treatment will be reported on the Incident Form. The Incident Form should be signed by both a teacher and a parent and returned on the next school day, or the day on which the child returns to school after the said incident. This form will be kept in the school's records.

Allergies

Please make sure that we have all necessary information related to any allergies your child or children have developed, including the state required Medication Administration form. St. Mary's is a **nut free zone**. This means that no nut products of any kind should be brought from home during the regular school day and during lunchtime. There will be no nut products used in our cooking projects at school. It is important to read each label to determine whether nuts or nut oils are used in the ingredients. Anytime there is concern about a particular food, the school will contact the parent to make sure that it is safe for the child.

Assessment

Teachers actively seek information regarding the growth and development of each child at St. Mary's. The following are some of the ways that we collect information which enables us to provide the optimum learning situation for each child in our care: (these are not exclusive)

For preschool:

- Portfolio for each child which includes work samples, pictures, etc.
- Checklists with developmental milestones
- Anecdotal records and/or narratives
- Parent input in planning for individual children
- Information from specialists such as speech and occupational therapists

For kindergarten:

- Portfolio for each child which includes work samples, pictures, etc.
 - Kindergarten Readiness Assessment - Dibels
 - Kindergarten Curriculum Assessment
 - First Grade Readiness Assessment - Dibels
 - Report Card
 - Parent input in planning for individual children
 - Information from specialists who work with the children outside of the school setting included in planning (speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and pediatricians)

All student portfolios will be shared with parents at conferences and parents will receive a written summary. A signed copy of the written summary will be kept in the student records. If teachers have concerns about individual developmental issues, parents will be notified and given additional resources.

Attendance

We look forward to seeing your child each school day. Staggered school starts at **8:30AM for Kindergarten, 8:45AM for 3-day, 8:55AM for 4-day , and 9:00AM Junior Kindergarten and Two year olds. Kindergarten will dismiss at 2:30PM, Twos at 12:00PM, 3-Day at 11:45PM, 4-Day at 11:55PM.** Each child should arrive on time so that he/she may participate in the opening activities of the day. Regular attendance will encourage developmental growth in all areas. If you know that your child will be out due to an illness or a family trip, please notify the office and your child's teacher via the Playground app. A daily record of your child's attendance is kept.

Bringing Things to School

We are always excited about special discoveries the children make at home or on trips with their families. It is acceptable for the children to bring these things to school to share. The teacher in each class will determine how "show and tell" will be handled. However, if your child has discovered something that he/she wants to share

immediately, please do not hesitate to send it on any given day. **Encourage your child to leave candy, money, electronics, and toys at home unless requested by the teacher. Students may not bring weapons to school (plastic knives, swords, guns, etc.)** These items will be placed in the child's bag for safekeeping when brought to school.

If a child has a transitional item such as a blanket or a special toy that will help the child to adjust, he/she may bring that item to school. After the adjustment period (no particular length of time), the transitional item will be kept in the child's tote bag during the school day.

DROP-OFF/PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Drop-Off

Twos

All two-year-olds must be escorted to the classroom **through the side door each day unless directed otherwise by the teacher.** The teachers will begin welcoming children at 8:55. The teachers request that the two year olds remain with parents or caregivers until the teachers are ready to greet them for the day. Parents/caregivers may sit in the Dover Lounge or take a child to the playground before the school day begins if they arrive before the said time. **The side door will be locked at 9:10AM.** Any late arrivals should go to the school entrance and sign-in the tardy log.

Preschool and Kindergarten

Beginning **the first week of school**, all **preschoolers** may utilize the carpool drop-off through the double doors closest to the school office.

Carpool will begin at **8:30AM for Kindergarten. 8:45AM for 3 day, 8:55 for 4 day and 9:00 for Junior Kindergarten students. Please line cars up facing east under the portico.**

8:55 and 9:00 carpools should wait in the designated area until your scheduled time. (There will be a sign to direct you to the right side of the carpool line) We will motion you to pull forward once the earlier carpool line is complete. Please remain in your car until your child is escorted into the school by a staff member. DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO EXIT THE CAR WITHOUT A STAFF MEMBER PRESENT AT THE CAR DOOR.

If you have a 3-year-old and an older sibling (kindergarten not included), we ask that you drop-off both preschoolers at 8:50AM.

For the safety of all children, please do not pass others in the carpool line unless given the "go-ahead" by staff who are assisting with the carpool.

- Carpool ends at **9:15 a.m.**, which will be indicated by the closing of the double doors. **Students who arrive after 9:15 a.m. must be escorted to the office and the parent or care provider should sign them in before a staff member escorts them to their classroom. Please do not send a child into school by themselves.**
- Children arriving for **early morning drop-off must be signed in each day by the parent (in the log next to the office) and escorted to the early morning drop-off room (Block room). This begins at 8:00 a.m.**
 - **All children must be escorted into the building by an adult.**

Pick-Up

Safety for your children is our primary concern. Please use the following procedure for pick-up:

- Two-year olds must be picked up in the classroom at 12:00 p.m. Please enter through the side door by the parking lot for pick up. If picking up an older sibling, wait by the double doors by the two-year-old classroom and a teacher will bring the older sibling to you. Please do not enter the preschool carpool area where the children are sitting or go to the other classrooms during carpool time. This is a safety protocol and will allow the staff to monitor with whom the children are leaving the building.
- **Preschoolers in the 3–5-day classes and Kindergarteners may be picked up in the afternoon carpool line** (by the double doors next to the school office) Preschoolers who are staying for after school activities may also be picked up in the carpool line at the designated time. **(12:45PM for after school activities and 2:00PM for lunch)**
- **Always display your child's carpool number in the front of your car.** If someone else picks up your child, they should also display the carpool number. They should also be prepared to show an identification card such as a driver's license.
- Please line cars up facing **east** at the double doors near the school office. Carpool pickup will begin at **11:45PM for 3 day, 11:55PM for 4 Day, 2:00PM. for JK (Mon.-Thurs.), 12:00PM (Fridays), 2:30PM for Kindergarten** and will **end when the double doors are shut (at 12:10PM and 2:35PM).**
- You may walk up to pick up your child (Preschool-Kindergarten). Please wait on the grassy area by the double doors and your child will be brought to you.
- If you need to pick up your child early for any reason, please let us know on the PlaygroundApp or by the school phone. You will need to use the double doors by the office to come in and sign your child out if it is before dismissal.
- If your child will be going home with someone else, including a play date with another child, we must have a written note, Playground message or a phone call

for verification. If it is someone we do not know, please notify us in advance and let that individual know that we will ask for an ID. If the person picking up your child needs a car seat, please label the car seat and leave by the double doors. Have the person come early to install the car seat before dismissal.

- Carpool conversations should be kept to a minimum to continuously move the carpool line. Please message your child's teacher on the Playground app to converse about lengthy topics, ask questions, or to share changes in schedule, etc.
- When dropping off/ picking up your child, we ask for your undivided attention. Please wait until the carpool is complete to use your cell phone.
- Accommodations will be made for children with wheelchairs or crutches, if needed.

Late Pick-Up

If you are more than 10 minutes past your pick-up time, this will be considered a late pick up and you will need to park and come in to get your child unless the carpool line is still in motion. He/she will either be with the classroom teacher or in the school office. Please notify us immediately on the Playground App or by the school phone if you will be unable to pick up your child on time so that we may reassure your child of your impending arrival. **After 3 late pick-ups you will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 for the first 5 minutes and \$1.00 per minute thereafter.**

Calendar

The school calendar is available on the website. Some of the dates may change during the year. You will receive a Playground App notification of any changes.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Our staff is legally responsible to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the appropriate local agency.

Class Assignment and Enrollment

Children between the ages of 2 (by December 31st) to kindergarten are accepted in order of application. Priority is given as follows:

- to siblings of currently enrolled children
- to children of St. Mary's Episcopal Church members
- to children of the community

If the teacher or director feels that a child is inappropriately placed, the school reserves the right to reassign the child to the class that is most appropriate for him/her. Otherwise

all children will remain in the same class with the same teachers once the school year begins.

We have space for 80 children in our preschool (per day) and 12 children in our kindergarten.

Clothes

Children are encouraged to wear clothes that are comfortable and appropriate for the season and weather, preferably **play clothes (appropriate for messy play) and closed-toe shoes**. We discourage the wearing of **sandals, Crocs and flip-flops** as they make it difficult for a child to move about safely on the playground. On rainy days, please send your child in a raincoat with a hood and rain boots. For safety reasons, please do not send an umbrella to school. Also, please help us and label all personal belongings with **FIRST and LAST NAMES** of your child/children.

Twos/Preschoolers/Kindergartners

Please send a change of clothing in a gallon-sized zip-lock bag. This should include socks and a change of underwear. As the season changes, you will need to add warmer clothing to these bags. If a child should have an accident at school, please return the Zip-lock bag the next school day with a complete set of clothing. **Please label each article of clothing with your child's name.**

Twos

In your child's tote bag, please have at least 2 diapers (labeled with your child's last name) and 2 large zip-lock bags to send home soiled clothing each day. Parents will be asked to send in wipes for use in the classroom.

Twos and Threes

As much as possible, please dress your son or daughter in elastic waist pants. This allows children to be independent in toileting skills. It is challenging for young children to manipulate belts and buckles.

Chapel

The children ages 3 to Junior Kindergarten will attend chapel every other Thursday. The Kindergarten children will attend chapel each Thursday. During this 15 to 20 minute session, there will be a very simple service in the Sanctuary led by a member of the church staff. The service usually consists of simple rituals: lighting candles, liturgical responses, the Lord's Prayer, an age-appropriate Bible story, songs and prayers for the people. The two-year olds will be invited to attend the Christmas Chapel.

Communication

An essential part of an optimal learning environment for children is parent-teacher communication. It is important for parents to contact the school with any concerns or issues pertaining to their child. It is equally important that the teacher or school keeps the parents informed of any school concerns or issues related to their child. Please notify your child's teacher and the school office if you do not feel you are receiving adequate communication from the school.

We use the following sources for communication between school and home:

- Playground App – this is our primary method for communication.
- Phone calls – Your phone numbers must be kept current.
- Newsletter – There is a whole school newsletter that is posted on our Playground app at the beginning of each month. Teachers will send classroom updates and information using this app.
- Class Schedule – Teachers' class schedules will be posted outside of each classroom. Other class specific information may be posted, as well.
- Website – Our web address is www.saintmarysschool.net, for updates, schedule changes and forms. If you think we are missing information, please notify us.

Your child's teachers will (through written or verbal communication):

- Make you aware of any changes in your child's physical or emotional state.
- Inform you of any behavioral or developmental issues that they have encountered.
- Ask for your advice when assessing and making plans for your individual child.
- Inform you of any school-related changes involving your child such as changing teachers or rooms.

We ask that you contact us:

- In the event of any changes at home such as a death in the family, divorce, a new baby, a hospitalized or injured relative, business trips or vacations when a babysitter is left in charge, and if new nannies are hired who will be transporting the child to and from school.
- If you observe any behavior changes in your child (frequent potty accidents, sleeplessness, etc. – anything that may affect your child's behavior at school)
- In cases of changes in addresses, work phone numbers, or emergency numbers. This is important information for our records.
- With program or policy concerns, **after your documented contact with the school administration**, you may address the Board of St. Mary's Episcopal School through Becca Brown, 12291 River Rd., Richmond, VA 23229.

******Please refer any questions related to communications to the Director/Assistant Director.**

Classroom/School Visitation

We welcome your participation in our school day and grant permission to you to access our program during operating hours. You should always check in with the office when you arrive to visit in the classroom, sign our visitation log, and check out prior to leaving the school. We will also ask that you wear a name tag throughout your visit. The teachers will have opportunities for you throughout the year to participate as a classroom volunteer. Please keep in mind that the first few weeks of school may not be the optimum time to visit the classrooms as the children are all adjusting to their new situations. Your child may not have an issue with you “dropping by” the classroom but your visit could trigger another child’s stress during this very important transition time. Please help us to minimize any stress for our little ones during this adjustment period.

Conferences

During the fall, classroom teachers (Preschool, including 2 Day, 3 Day, 4 Day) will contact you by phone and the 5-day teachers (JK and Kindergarten) will invite you to school to share a brief update of how your child is doing in the classroom. In February, there will be an in-person conference for 2,3- and 4-day parents, and in March, there will be an in-person conference for Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten parents. During your conferences, you will have the opportunity to review your child’s development and make plans that promote further progress. If you have any concern before these meetings, please do not hesitate to ask for an earlier conference. It is very important for us to have a continual dialogue about your child’s progress throughout the school year, not just on conference day. All conferences must be documented by both a parent’s and a teacher’s signature. This information and a summative report of your child’s development will be kept in your child’s portfolio. The school director/assistant director is always available to conference with you and/or to participate in your classroom conference, if necessary.

Confidentiality

Our teachers and staff maintain confidentiality regarding any student records including health, medical plans, referrals to other educational specialists. These records are kept in a file in the office. Parents may access these records with a written request to the Director or Assistant Director. Any other individuals needing access to these documents must have a release form signed by the child’s parent in order to receive copies.

In addition, **parents with outside childcare providers (including nannies) must complete a form stating whether the childcare provider may receive information from the school about the child.**

Diapers and Toilet Training

If your child is not fully potty trained and wears diapers, please make sure they are easy to change! Potty training will be reinforced at school, but teachers cannot be responsible for the training process. **Especially in our two-year-old class, the teachers will be very busy dealing with daily issues and will not have time to toilet train.** Each day, all children who are using the toilet will have scheduled bathroom breaks and/or reminders about the bathroom. If your child can verbalize his or her bathroom needs and has infrequent accidents (1 or 2 times a week max), then he or she is probably ready to wear underwear to school. Please make sure this is the case. Children who participate in the 4 or 5-day classes must be fully potty-trained. To participate in Stay and Play or After Enrichment Lunch Bunch (until 2:00 p.m.) children need to be fully potty- trained, as well.

Any child requiring diaper ointment (OTC) must have a medication form signed by the parent before ointment can be administered. The classroom teacher cannot administer prescription ointment.

When changing diapers, all personnel are required to use gloves as per standard precaution requirements.

Discipline/ Guidance Policy

Discipline/guidance at St. Mary's School is an important part of the learning experience. Children are guided to understand and use constructive behaviors to learn self-regulation, self-control, and respect for others. They are given opportunities to talk with the teacher and their peers to work through any difficulties they may be having with a friend such as sharing a toy or hurting one another's feelings. Teachers help the child or children identify the feelings that they have regarding such incidences and convey those feelings to one another. Our primary goal is for children to learn to take responsibility for their actions and in doing so, learn to accept the consequences. Occasionally, behaviors such as biting, tantrums, defiance, or physical aggression may escalate among young children at school. Sometimes these behaviors occur before an adult can intervene or when a teacher is even right next to the child. In the event that a child's behavior places the child or other children in danger or interferes with the focus in the classroom, our response may include the following:

- the teacher may use a firm, but caring voice.
- the child may be given an opportunity to redirect to another activity (replacing a positive for a negative). This might include moving out of the classroom for a break such as taking a walk with a teacher.
- For continued disruptions, a child may be brought to the office for a "break." If a child is unable to return to the classroom, his or her parents will be called and may be asked to come and pick the child up for the rest of the school day. Often,

“acting out” is a sign that a child is not feeling well or did not sleep well. In order to keep everyone safe, it is sometimes best for the child to return home for the day.

- A parent-teacher conference to design a plan that will encourage positive behaviors in your child. Our discussions will be limited to your child’s behaviors and not the classmates.
- Soliciting advice from a behavioral specialist with parent approval.
- Dismissal from our program if the child is considered a danger to the other children and any plans that have been implemented have not eliminated the problem.

Under no circumstances will your child be subject to corporal or shaming methods of punishment.

Biting Incidences

Biting can be a normal stage of development between the ages of 12 months and 24 months when language skills are still developing and children are still teething.

Repeated biting can become a pattern that is hard to extinguish and requires consistent remedies both at home and at school. Our teachers are very vigilant in their supervising of children in order to prevent biting accidents. However, a biting incident can occur in seconds, even before a teacher can intervene. Our policy for biting incidences is:

- The biter is immediately removed with firm redirection. The bitten child is consoled and administered first aid as needed. The biter will be shadowed and continually redirected from the bitten child and the area of play where the incident occurred.
- Parents of the biter and the child bitten will be immediately contacted in the event of a biting incident.
- For a child who continues a pattern of biting, a parent-teacher conference may be necessary and a plan to help eliminate the behavior may need to be developed. In some circumstances, a child may be asked to take a temporary break from school. Permanent withdrawal is rare.

The school reserves the right to withdraw a contract if the teacher and director feel that the needs of the child may be better met in another setting. We practice non-discrimination in considering the termination of a child’s enrollment.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency Card – Each child should have a completed emergency card on file in the office. If any information should change during the year, you must make revisions to this card. You will be given an emergency card to complete for your child.

Please make sure that the following information is on file at the school and is kept current:

1. Cell phone numbers
2. Work telephone numbers, if different from cell
3. TWO emergency names and telephone numbers, if a parent cannot be reached
4. An emergency information form signed by both parents.
5. Name and phone number of primary physician.
6. Name and phone number of nanny or primary caregiver

***When any of this information changes, please let us know immediately!**

Fire Procedures

Children will have a practice fire drill once a month.

In the event of a fire:

- The children will be evacuated from the building as they have practiced.
- A roll call will be taken to assure that all children are present.
- The classroom teachers will always be with the children.
- · Parents will be notified to pick up their children when police and fire officials give school personnel permission to call.
- Please **do not** call teachers or the school directly. You will be notified as quickly as possible by the Playground App.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency:

- Teachers/directors will administer first aid/CPR and 911 will be called.
- The school will immediately advise you about the emergency. If you cannot be reached by phone, the school personnel will have your child transported by ambulance to the hospital that you have requested on your emergency information form.
- School personnel will remain with your child until a parent or another individual designated as an emergency contact has arrived.

Weather Emergencies

Snow or other weather closures

When the school is closed due to ice and/or snow (or any other weather condition), the closing information will be reported on WTVR Channel 6, and by the Playground App (by 6:30AM). Our delayed opening will run from 10:00AM to 12:00PM (2:00 for JK) for preschool and 10:00AM -2:30PM for Kindergarten). After School programs will be available on late arrival days, unless otherwise noted. If **excessive amounts of snow days are used, the director (in consultation with the Board) will determine the need for makeup days.**

For weather emergencies that occur during school hours, the school will activate a text message through the Playground app to notify parents if early pick up is necessary.

Other Weather Procedures (Hurricane/Tornadoes)

Children will have a weather drill 1 time a year.

In the event of a hurricane or tornado:

- The children will be divided into areas where there are no windows or doors: the teacher resource room, the bathrooms, large classroom closets and kitchen area. Your child's teachers will always be with your child.
- The Director/Assistant Director will use the Playground App to inform parents when and where to pick up your children.
- Please **do not call** the school; you will be notified as soon as possible.

Lock-down for Intruder (Lockdown drills are practiced 4 times a year)

In the event of an intruder, the following plan would be put into effect:

- Our buildings would be locked down immediately. Teachers will be directed to either lock-down with-in their classroom or move to another location.
- If necessary, the children would be moved to a safe place within the building or on the grounds of the church.
- One of your child's teachers will always be with your child. At no time would your child be unsupervised.
- The Director/Assistant Director will use the Playground App to notify parents when and where to pick up your children. If you are unable to pick up your child, you should have alternate plans.

- **In the event of any emergency at school, the Director/Assistant Director of the school or the Rector of the church will be responsible for any media contact.**
- **Should the Director or Rector be unavailable, the church office administrator will be designated as the spokesperson for the school.**

- You will be updated throughout any emergency event through text messaging on the Playground app.
- If you are at school during any emergency or drill, we ask that you actively participate.

Prolonged Closure Due to Emergency or by Government Officials:

A. If flood, fire, wind, hail, hurricane, tornado, or similar severe weather event prevents St. Mary's Episcopal School from conducting normal activities, or if, in the judgment of the Director, or pursuant to order from an insurance official, building inspector or fire official, that a similar event caused sufficient damage to the facilities to result in the staff and students being unable to safely remain in, at, or have access to the facilities, the St. Mary's Episcopal School Director, in consultation with the rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, shall close St. Mary's Episcopal School until such time as the facilities can be safely re-opened.

B. If St. Mary's Episcopal School or St. Mary's Episcopal Church must close due to a health emergency, including, but not limited to, the outbreak of any contagious illness, sickness, bacteria, virus, or disease, or any epidemic/pandemic, as declared by government officials, then St. Mary's Episcopal School shall remain closed until the appropriate officials decide St. Mary's Episcopal School can resume normal activities.

C. If St. Mary's Episcopal School is closed under paragraph A or B for 30 consecutive school days or less, then tuition and related fees shall not be subject to refund or adjustment and shall remain fully due and payable. If St. Mary's Episcopal School is closed under paragraph A or B for more than 30 consecutive school days, but less than 60 consecutive school days, then tuition shall be pro-rated and a partial cash adjustment (or a credit applied, if requested) as the Director of the school in consultation with the school Board of Trustees, may decide. If St. Mary's School is closed under paragraph A or B for 60 consecutive school days or more, then tuition and fees shall be refunded for the portion of tuition and fees allocated to the remaining part of the session occurring after the 60th school day.

Early Morning Drop-off – 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

St. Mary's will offer an early morning drop-off for children in the three, four-day, Junior kindergarten and kindergarten classes beginning the second week of school. All children must be **escorted into the building and helped to hang up their belongings**. A teacher or Director/Assistant Director will be on duty in the Block Room to care for any students dropped off early. **All children who arrive before their designated carpool time must be taken to Early Morning Drop-Off. Reservations for Early Morning Drop-Off are made through the Playground App and should preferably be made at least 24 hours in advance. Under unforeseen circumstances, you may bring your child the morning of, and childcare will be**

available. There is a \$15 per day fee for preschool students. Kindergarten students may stay from 8:00AM - 8:30AM for \$10.00. You will receive a bill at the end of each month through the Playground App.

Evaluation

At the end of the school year, parents will be invited and encouraged to evaluate St. Mary's and its effectiveness in meeting the children's and family's needs. You will be sent an evaluation form in early May (this may be in the form of an online survey) that should be returned before the final day of school. A summary of the gathered information will be compiled and provided for parents. This information will be used to further improve the quality of the St. Mary's School experience. Parent input about the school is also welcome throughout the year. Please email the Director/Assistant Director with any suggestions on ways that we can improve. Your suggestions may be submitted in writing as anonymous however, if it is one that we use, we would love to give you credit! **Please let the Director/Assistant Director know immediately whenever there are concerns about the school's operation.**

Extended Day

(Please see the separate form for sign-up sent through the Playground app)

After School Enrichment (3 day, 4 day). All students must be potty-trained to participate.

Beginning **September**, we will offer after school enrichment from 12:00-12:45 p.m. The After-School Enrichment program will run for 8-to-11-week time blocks throughout the school year and will include activities such as ballet, soccer, Ninja Warriors, art and music/movement. Online sign-up is required for outside vendors. The school will provide the link to the vendors.

Lunch/ Stay and Play - For students who pay full tuition only

After School Enrichment children **may** bring a healthy lunch (we are a nut free environment) and eat once the class has ended and will participate in Stay and Play until 2:00PM. There is a separate fee for this that will be assessed through the Playground App. **In the fall, 3-day children who are potty-trained may stay with the approval of the Director.**

Family Participation

St. Mary's is a community that actively encourages parental participation. In addition to allowing parents to regularly participate in classroom/school activities, we encourage families to participate in the following:

- Fall Festival—Our October event will include trunk or treat, bouncy houses, food and family fun. This is a great time to introduce your friends and extended family to our school community.

- Grand friend's Day - during the week of Thanksgiving, we invite our grand friends (grandparents or a special adult family friend) to visit us. On this day, the children will share some songs and display their artwork for all to see. Parents are welcome, too.
- JK/K Nativity – In December, we invite our JK/K families and our preschool children to attend a special nativity program performed by our JK/K students.
- Mom's Night Out – This fun evening is usually held in February. In the past this event has included Bunco game night and a wine-tasting.
- Silent Auction/Art Night – This adult only fund-raiser is held in early March. Parents and their invited guests may join us for an evening of celebrating the SMES children's artwork and bid on auction items. Some of the items have included a beach house, mud kitchen, classroom themed baskets, artwork, and more.
- Donuts with Dads – This is a special time for each child and their dad (a male substitute is appropriate). The classrooms are open, and each teacher plans a special time of fun for the children and dads or other guests. This activity is provided in the morning before school so that you may choose whether to come.
- Moms and Muffins – Each spring, mothers (or a female substitute) are invited to join their child's class for a special party to honor them. Special treats are provided, and the children usually sing a song or two to welcome their guests.
- Children's Birthday Celebrations - You are invited to come and celebrate your child in the classroom with his/her classmates or you may simply send in a special treat for snack time. Please be considerate of the classmates when sending out invitations and send them directly from home. We will not send them through the school folders.

Facility

Our school is located in St. Mary's Episcopal Church. The children have weekly use of our Block Room (a multi-purpose room that is also used for rainy day play and special events) and attend chapel in the church sanctuary. Outdoor play takes place on our courtyard play area, our two playgrounds in the school/church yard, and our nature trail. Teachers also have access to the state-of-the-art-kitchen on our premises.

Field Trips

There are field trips planned for our JK and Kindergarten students. We encourage parents to attend these trips and require at least one adult per 2 children. There may be times when siblings are also able to attend. Other classes may schedule an off-campus trip. For the younger children, each child must be accompanied by an adult.

Fundraising

As a tuition driven school, we depend on fundraising to provide important educational resources for our students and families. In addition, our funds help to provide tuition-assistance to families who have financial needs.

Some of our Fundraising opportunities include:

- *Fall Festival
- *T-shirt and School book bag sales
- *December Greenery
- *Grandparent Valentine's Day
- *Silent Auction

Health Policies

- All students and staff members will have a Medical Form on file based on a current physical exam; the children's form will include an up-to-date list of immunizations. Virginia State Law requires that the form be on file at the school prior to the student's first day.
- All students attending St. Mary's School must present documentary proof of immunizations. Considerations for exemptions of immunizations are reviewed on an individual basis.

The health and well-being of your child are of primary importance at St. Mary's Episcopal School. Therefore, it is critical that parents and teachers work together to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and illnesses.

Children should be kept at home when they experience the following symptoms:

- 1. Temperature above 99 degrees***
- 2. Vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours of the school day**
- 3. Thick nasal discharge, yellow or green in color**
- 4. Mouth sores with drooling**
- 5. Rash with fever**
- 6. Heavy bronchial cough**
- 7. Strep throat**
- 8. Chickenpox**
- 9. Impetigo**
- 10. Any eye inflammation or discharge/conjunctivitis**
- 11. Sore throat or enlarged glands**
- 12. Earache or discharge from ear**
- 13. Head lice**
- 14. Scabies**
- 15. Flu**

16. Covid-19

***Children who have been ill, must be 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medication to return to school.**

- Please notify the school of any contagious diseases your child may contract. We particularly need to know about **head lice, chicken pox, measles**. In these cases, it will be important to let other families know of these illnesses (through printed materials which) so that they may be alert to symptoms in their children. At the discretion of the Director, some contagious diseases will require a doctor's note to return to the school setting

- **Each day as the children arrive at school, there will be a health inspection completed by the classroom teacher or director/assistant director.** If any symptoms related to illness are observed, you will be asked to come get your child and take him or her home.

- **Should your child become ill at school, he or she will be separated from his classmates and kept in the school office until a parent can return to school to pick him or her up.** An illness report must be completed and signed by the teacher and parent.

Please make every effort to adhere to these important health policies.

Helmets

The children ride trikes and scooter boards on a regular basis. If you desire for your child to wear a helmet when riding, please make sure there is one in his or her bag each day or it can be left on the child's hook in the hallway. Like all items from home, please label the helmet with the child's first and last name.

Holiday Celebrations

We will celebrate traditional holidays throughout the school year. Although we do not completely exclude Santa and the Easter Bunny, we do approach holidays from a Christian perspective, particularly at Christmas and Easter. If your family has any unique ways to celebrate the holidays (traditions, etc.) that you would like to share with the children, please let us know in advance so that we can plan a time for you to visit.

Hours of Operation

The school is open five days a week, Monday through Friday within the designated school year. School hours for children begin with a staggered start at 8:30AM and by

2:30PM. We offer extended day hours throughout the year on certain days of the week. These days will be listed periodically throughout the school year on our app.

Insurance

St. Mary's Episcopal School has public liability insurance through The Church Insurance Company.

Lost and Found

A basket for lost and found items is in the school office. Please check with the classroom teacher and the office if you are missing anything. To avoid losing items, **please make sure all of your child's items are labeled properly.**

Medication

For any medication to be administered at school, there must be a completed medication consent on file in the school office. This form must be signed by the child's pediatrician to be valid.

Epi-Pens

An Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan form and a Medication Authorization Form must be completed annually if your child has a prescription for an epi-pen. Teachers are trained to administer epi-pens. The epi-pen and form will always remain with your child's teacher and a copy of the form and a second epi-pen will be kept in the school office. Any use of the epi-pen will be recorded in the school office. The school will remind you when your child's epi-pen is close to expiration. All epi-pens must be current. **The school will also have an epi-pen available for emergency use only.**

Diaper Ointment/Lotion

To apply diaper ointment and lotion, non-prescription, (per State requirement) on your child, we must have a **Medication Authorization form** completed and kept on file.

Other Medication

Other medication, prescription and over the counter, will be administered at the Director's discretion. The Director will not administer the initial dosage of any medication. The parent must provide written instructions that are consistent with labeling on medication or doctor's note and include medication name, dosage, time and date medicine is to be given. A written log will be kept showing the amount and time the medicine was given. Medicine will be stored in the Director's office in a locked cabinet and will only be administered by the Director/Assistant Director. Medicine must have a current expiration date.

Insect Repellent/Sunscreen

A **Medication Authorization Form** must be completed for the school to administer insect repellent or sunscreen.

Nannies/Sitters

If you have a regular sitter or a nanny, you must fill out a **Caregiver Authorization form**. It is important to have updated and accurate information on file related to who will be bringing your child to and from school. We will check the identification of unfamiliar persons who come to pick up your child. The child will not be put in the car with anyone unless the parent has given written permission. We ask that any regular care providers for your child/children display the carpool number in the front window of the car they are driving.

Nature Trail

Our beautiful nature trail is another place for our students to daily experience nature exploration in the outdoor classroom. This space is also available for you and your family to enjoy during off hours. Be mindful that creatures live in the woods, and you must be cautious when supervising your own children in this area or in any other play area of the church. We have had snake and bee sightings.

Office Hours

The school office will be open daily from 8:00 to 2:30 p.m. If you need to report a change in your schedule, a family emergency, or anything else related to your child, please leave word on our voice mail at (804)784-2049. We will be checking the voice mail several times daily.

Mrs. Rawls may be reached by cell, (804)833-9422 during other times if you need assistance.

Outdoor Play

Weather permitting, we will go outside every day. We have a variety of outdoor spaces that allow for extending classroom activities into the natural environment. In addition to our two playgrounds, the children will also have an opportunity to garden and to explore our nature trail. We often use an open space near our building to play soccer, or parachute games. We value opportunities for children to embrace the joys of nature and their surroundings.

Payments

Payments may be made through the Playground app. Payments may also be sent in the form of a check through the child's folder system (please place check in an envelope, clearly marked for tuition) or mailed to the school at 12291 River Road,

Richmond, Virginia 23238. If you pay by cash, please bring the payment in an envelope directly to the school office. If you are unable to make payments, please contact the Director to make additional arrangements. Please refer to the tuition policy for any additional information. **It is preferred that payments are not presented in the carpool line.**

Returned checks will be assessed a fee of \$40.00.

Parent Resources

In addition to the memos that you will receive from the school, there is an updated list on the website of resources for parents. This includes speech and language specialists and Occupational Therapists.

Playground Safety

Please help us to keep your children (including siblings) safe by observing our playground rules **after hours** as well as during the school program.

- Children should always be accompanied by an adult when on the playgrounds
- Children should not be allowed to climb on the roofs of the houses, stand on top of the play equipment, or stand on the fence
- Children should not be allowed to draw with chalk on the climbing equipment.
- Toys should be put neatly away and the sandbox should be covered by the last visitors
- During our school day, our **playgrounds** are used only by our preschoolers and kindergarteners, unless permission has been granted by the Director/Assistant Director.

Room Parent Committee

Each classroom will have 1 or 2 room parents. Throughout the year they will be responsible for helping to plan and implement some of our schoolwide activities. Room parents will also be responsible for planning class parties and encouraging participation in school events. If you wish to serve as a room parent in your child's classroom, please let your child's teacher know.

School Directory

On our website, we provide a school directory of our students' names, addresses and phone numbers. If you do not wish to be included in the directory, please make sure that is noted on your agreement form.

School Pictures

In the fall a photographer will take individual school pictures. In the spring, we may take a group photograph of each class. **Each photographer has their own billing process. Please read your payment information carefully.**

Snacks

We are a nut-free school. Please make sure that you read all labels for nuts and nut oils. **DO NOT** send peanut butter or items that contain any type of nut for snack or for lunch. We will send home the unopened snack/lunch with nuts and provide your child with another snack, if you mistakenly send one. There are some highly allergic children who cannot risk even sitting next to nut products.

Each day the children will have a mid-morning snack. Parents of the 2-day classes will be assigned a week to provide a group snack for the children in the class. All other children will bring their own snack each day. **Please label your child's snack with his or her name. We are promoting independence at snack time so please do not send containers that your child has difficulty opening (each teacher may have age related suggestions).**

All children will be given water to drink during snack time. Each child should bring a water bottle from home (**labeled with his or her name**) to be used for water. These will be sent home for washing. **Do not send additional drinks for your child unless requested by the teacher.**

Sometimes preschoolers and kindergarteners will be making/cooking a snack at school. A list of the ingredients will be sent home to parents prior to the cooking experience. Please let your child's teacher know immediately if your child may not have any of the ingredients listed. Parents may be asked to help with the ingredients for preparing these snacks. Every effort will be made to include ingredients that all children can eat (even those with allergies). **For those who have allergies**, parents may send an alternative snack for cooking day. We plan for our cooking times to allow us to incorporate foods from other cultures represented in our student population.

We love to celebrate your child's birthday with a simple birthday treat (**purchased with ingredients listed**) of cookies or cupcakes is appropriate (**no nut products**).

If your child has severe allergies, please provide the teacher a box of snacks that your child is able to eat in the event that your child forgets his/her snack or a special birthday snack that your child cannot eat is provided to the class by another student.

Please try to send healthy snacks to school.

Healthy snack suggestions:

Apples

Bananas

Raisins

Yogurt

Cheese

Muffins

Pretzels

Graham crackers

Fresh vegetables

Hummus

Crackers (including Goldfish)

****Please try to avoid cookies and candy for snacks.**

Social Media

The use of social media has become a very important and necessary tool for communication. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn are a few of the many ways to communicate over the internet. As a precaution, St. Mary's has developed the following guidelines.

- Please do not distribute any information that might be deemed personal about any students, including pictures of children (other than your own) where they can be identified and/or use their names without written permission granted by the parent.
- Please do not share personal information of other teachers, parents, or students such as full names, addresses or phone numbers without written permission from said individuals.
- Please do not post any negative information about the school on any form of social media. Instead, bring your concerns to the St. Mary's office.
- Above all, use good judgment when posting anything related to the school, respect the privacy of our St. Mary's families and staff, and make sure you understand copyright and fair use laws.

Special Event Days

During the year, there are several special events planned (i.e. pictures, parties, etc.). **If these events do not fall on your child's school day, your child is invited to attend the event.** The Two's classes will be informed of their special events throughout the year. We ask that you stay with your child during this special activity and take him or her home afterwards.

Student File

Each child should have the following information on file with St. Mary's Episcopal:

- Application/re-registration

- Contract
- Student Health form (required by state)
- Emergency Information form
- School Agreement form
- Copy of birth certificate
- Grandparent Information form
- Caregiver Authorization form
- Handbook review form

Staff Qualifications

Your child's teachers and assistant teachers are well qualified for providing your children with a developmentally appropriate preschool and kindergarten education. Our lead teachers have college degrees in education or a related field and/or have many years of experience. Our assistant teachers have college degrees and/or 2 or more years of experience with working with young children. The Director, at her discretion, may hire a teacher or assistant teacher who has not met the stated qualifications. In addition to training in CPR and First Aid, Daily Health Observations, Child Abuse and Neglect, our teaching staff receives training (20 hours) throughout the school year in topics that relate to working with young children. All hiring and termination of employees follow non-discrimination laws.

Tote Bags

It is much easier for the children to carry a tote bag instead of a backpack. This year, we have tote bags with the St. Mary's Episcopal School logo for sale. The cost of each bag will be \$15.00. The children may use paint pens or permanent markers to put their names on their bags.

Volunteers Other than Parents

We welcome volunteers other than our St. Mary's parents to participate in our program under the following conditions:

- Must always be under the direct supervision of an employee of the school
- Must participate in a volunteer orientation program that includes health and safety, child abuse, emergency procedures and child guidance
- Must have a criminal background check at a cost of \$10.00 per person (if volunteering on a regular basis throughout the year.)

ALL volunteers must enter by the office, sign-in the Visitation Log and wear a nametag throughout their visit.

Withdrawal/Refunds

When enrolling a child at St. Mary's Episcopal School, according to the **Student Contract**, it is understood that each child is enrolled for the entire school year and

therefore responsible for the year's tuition. The tuition has been determined based on the cost of providing quality services including materials, supplies, equipment and a well-qualified staff. If for any reason, the child is withdrawn from the school by the parents, the school in its sole discretion may decide to refund tuition payments or waive future payments. This action will not be considered unless the family has given **30 days written notice**. No refunds or tuition waivers will be granted after **March 31** of any given school year.