

# Keeping Up With Kindergarten

A Handbook  
for the 2015 – 2016 School Year



## Please Read the St. Mary Handbook

Please consult the St. Mary Parent-Student Handbook for information on the following topics:

- Arrival, Dismissal, Tardiness, Absence policies
- Vacation and make-up work policies
- Parking & Traffic guidelines
- General Behavior Policies for the whole school, including policies on bullying
- Dress Code and guidelines for outdoor clothing (what is required at what temperatures and seasons)
- Policies on Electronics & Toys from home (In short, keep them home)
- Administration of medication
- Policies on student illness, injury, and head lice

There is a large amount of other useful information on school-wide safety policies, cold and hot lunches and milk, school closings and delays, PIP, mileage club, Tuition and Financial Assistance, and other topics. Please keep the Kindergarten and St. Mary Handbooks in a safe place, and use them throughout the year as valuable reference tools.

## About the Teacher

My name is Diane Wetmore. I was born in Minneapolis and moved to Jackson with my family when I was four years old. I attended Queen of the Miraculous Medal Elementary School, JCMS, and graduated from Lumen Christi in 2007. I went to Western Michigan University and graduated in 2012 from WMU's Lee Honors College with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with minors in Early Childhood Education, Mathematics, and Language Arts. I spent my first year as an educator teaching second grade at a charter school in Portage, MI. I am thrilled to begin my third year teaching kindergarten here at St. Mary, Star of the Sea!

I look forward to working with you and your child on his/her spiritual, academic, and social growth. Please feel free to contact me at any time throughout the school year. I can be reached through the school office during regular office hours at 784-8811 or any time (especially weekends and evenings) at **my email: [dwetmore@myjacs.org](mailto:dwetmore@myjacs.org)**. I am always happy to schedule time for individual conferences whenever necessary, in addition to the scheduled November conferences.

## Curriculum and Textbooks

I will be following the grade level curriculum guidelines established by the Jackson Area Catholic Schools which are developed from and follow the Diocese of Lansing curriculum. (Note: At this time the Diocese has chosen not to transfer over to Common Core.) This means I will rarely use a textbook in its entirety, or in order, and often use supplemental materials to ensure all benchmarks are covered. If you would like to view benchmarks, please contact the school office.

We use the following textbooks in Kindergarten:

Subject	Textbook	Publisher
Phonics	Sadlier Phonics	Sadlier
Mathematics	Progress in Mathematics	Sadlier-Oxford
Religion	We Believe	Sadlier
Handwriting	Writing Our Catholic Faith	Universal

Students do not have textbooks for science or social studies, so I will be using a large amount of supplementary materials to cover the benchmarks.

## Specials

The following is a tentative schedule for kindergarten specials this year.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Gym Art	Spanish Music	Gym	Spanish Music Library Computer	Mass

## Snack

Since lunch is not until 12:00, kindergarteners will have time for a short (about 10 minutes) snack break each morning (around 9:45 a. m.). Please send a **small, healthy** snack for your child to eat during this time. Fresh fruit or veggies, fruit cups, crackers & cheese, or granola bars are some suggested healthy choices. Be sure to send a paper towel or napkin so tables can be kept neat for school work.

I do not have extra snacks for students who do not bring their own. If a student repeatedly fails to bring a snack, I will send a reminder note home to remind you to send one.

\*\*Students may bring in a **labeled** water bottle to use throughout the day, as long as it closes securely to avoid spills. Screw cap water bottles (especially disposable) are prone to spills and will not be allowed in the classroom. Please, **do not put ice** in student water bottles; the bottle sweats and makes a puddle on the desk. (Students who are found to spill frequently or take excessive bathroom breaks may be asked to leave water bottles in their backpacks.) Please note: **only water** is allowed in the classroom. Juice and milk are for the lunchroom only.

## Birthdays

Each student may bring a small, **healthy snack** to celebrate his/her birthday. We will celebrate the student's birthday and share the treat during our morning snack time (9:45 a. m.). As there has been confusion in the past on what constitutes a "healthy birthday snack", I have simplified my rule to this: the first ingredient in the list must be something other than sugar (refined sugar, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, etc.) with the exception of natural sugar (e.g. fructose that is present in fresh fruit).

Do not send treats that need to be scooped or cut. If you send in a drink, please send it in individual containers (e. g. juice boxes/pouches) that do not need to be poured. (I do make exceptions to the "no juice" rule for birthdays.) Be sure to send any napkins/paper towels/plates that can be used to contain crumbs/spills.

In accordance with the St. Mary Handbook, delivered balloons or flowers will be kept in the office until the end of the day. Home delivery of such gifts is encouraged.

As well, **party invitations should be delivered by mail** (postal or electronic) rather than handed out at school to avoid any hurt feelings by students not invited. The only exception to this rule is if the entire class (or all the boys or all the girls) are invited.

## Homework

According to the St. Mary Handbook, kindergarten students are required to complete a minimum of **15 minutes of homework each night**. (Please note: students who fail to complete assignments in class may be required to complete them at home and return them the following school day.)

In kindergarten, homework is **not** meant to be a rigorous, frustrating activity for students and their parents. Most of this time will be spent on word practice, math concepts, reading together, handwriting practice and other basic skills. Throughout the year, a few special projects will be sent home, and students and their families will have advanced notice of these assignments and extra time to complete them.

Make-up Work: When a student is absent, I will fill out a form listing all the work that needs to be made up and when it is due. Because much of our kindergarten work is done as a whole group and includes many hands-on activities, students may not be able to make up much of the work. In light of this, please keep absences to a minimum!

### Tests/ Progress Report

Students receive a progress report at the end of each quarter. Students will be formally tested on memorization of formal prayers (see the next section for more details), recognition of capital and lower case letters and their sounds, recognition of numbers 1 – 30, counting by 1's, 2's, 5's, and 10's, memorizing days of the week, naming colors, and recognizing sight words.

The kindergarten progress report is somewhat subjective, giving students “Good,” “Satisfactory,” “Improving,” or “Needs to Improve” ratings in all areas. As such, I will strive to provide as much documentation for the basis of each skill rating in the event that you should disagree with any rating your child receives. Most report card grades are based on individual oral testing or simple written tests.

### Prayers

The following list contains prayers we will recite together in class and are to be memorized for end-of-quarter testing. A copy of prayers in their entirety is available upon request.

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter: Sign of the Cross Grace Before Meals (Bless us O Lord...)

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: Doxology (Glory Be)

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter: Hail Mary

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter: Our Father

### Classroom Rights, Responsibilities, and Rules

We will have five classroom rules this year:

- (1) Follow directions quickly.
- (2) Raise your hand to speak.
- (3) Listen when an adult is teaching or speaking.
- (4) Be smart, safe, and kind.
- (5) Keep God happy.

The first week of school we will discuss what each of these rules look like in our classroom.

To keep parents/guardians in touch with their child’s behavior (and classroom news), students will take home a folder every night. **Folders need to return to school every day**, as each one contains the student’s behavior chart. The chart is a calendar (4 – 5 weeks) and contains a key for misbehavior of students (e.g. 1 = excessive talking, 2 = misuse of time). Students who had a good day will have a blank space. Students who had a great day will receive a sticker. An example week is shown below.

Week of:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8/25 - 28	1				No school

The St. Mary Handbook states that each teacher\* must have a hierarchy of consequences for positive and negative behavior.\*\* These are listed below:

Rewards for Positive Behavior

- Verbal praise
- Positive note or call home
- Prize box (based on number of stickers on behavior chart at the end of the month)
- Nomination for Student of the Month

Consequences of Negative Behavior

- Nonverbal/verbal redirection
- Individual verbal redirection
- Time away from the group in the “Cool Down Corner”
- Loss of some or all of free choice time or recess
- Conference with principal and parents and behavior improvement plan

\*Severe misbehavior (as defined by the St. Mary Handbook) will be immediately referred to the principal. These include fighting, threats of physical violence, extreme disrespect, bullying, malicious damage to property, and weapons or drug possession.

\*\*These rewards and consequences are subject to change. The St. Mary's staff is working to implement a school-wide behavior policy. Parents will be notified of this change if/when it occurs.