



**St. Mary Child Development Center and  
St. Mark Christian Academy**

# **Parent Information Handbook**

## **Academic Year 2011-2012**

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**Please Note:** Sections highlighted in blue are changes in the most recent update of this handbook.

# Parent Information Handbook

## (Policies and Procedures)

This parent manual provides valuable information about your child's activities; the Center's philosophy, policies and procedures; and general information about our program. Additional policies may be developed during the course of the year for the benefit of your child. We will send home any additions to this manual with your child in letter or newsletter form. Any questions regarding this manual may be referred to your classroom teacher or the [administration](#).

### Our Mission

*To provide loving child care and education within a Christian Orthodox environment where Christ centered values are taught and exemplified.*

### Program Description

Our Christian Orthodox setting will facilitate teaching the children about God's love by providing opportunities for spiritual, cognitive, physical, social and emotional growth. We encourage hands on experiences in an educational setting with age-appropriate activities. We are located in St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church. Our building is protected by a video camera security system. We offer half day classes as well as full day care if needed.

### Children Eligible for our Program

We offer a program for children between the ages of 6 weeks and the [fifth](#) grade. Our Center is open to children of all faiths and cultures. Kindergarten children must be 5 years old by December 1<sup>st</sup> to enroll in the Kindergarten program. Children must be completely toilet trained to enter the Preschool program, and age 3 by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Toilet training can only take place in the Toddler room.

### Our Educators

The members of our staff have been carefully selected for their academic training in Early Childhood and Elementary Education for their sensitivity to the needs of young children. Assistant teachers are chosen for their ability to guide children's development and to assist in all of their activities. [An administrator](#) will be present on the premises of the Center for a minimum of 7 hours each day during the school year, and 5 hours daily in the summer. All St. Mark teachers hold valid State of Michigan Teaching licenses, and they are all highly qualified.

### Hours and School Schedules

The Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM. The calendar for the school year is included in your enrollment folder. However, we reserve the right to close in order to accommodate the church schedule of St. Mark's & St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Churches. ***St. Mark Christian Academy meets from 8:30 until 3:30 PM.*** Toddler and Preschool children may attend every day, or a minimum of 3 days a week for preschoolers, and a minimum of 2 days a week for toddlers. St. Mary CDC program hours are 8:30 AM – 11:45 AM. Lunch hour care is also available as well as afternoon care. Acceptance in any program is subject to available space and staffing, and must be approved by [an administrator](#).

- **The Center is completely closed on**, Labor Day & the Friday before Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas and New Year's Day, [New Year's Eve \(optional\)](#) [Holy Thursday \(when Western & Orthodox Holy Weeks coincide.\)](#) Good Friday, Memorial Day, and two days for Independence Day. (See calendar for exact dates.)
- **The schools are not in session but child care is available** for the Orthodox Christmas and Epiphany, and Orthodox Easter Monday ([when Western & Orthodox Easters do not coincide](#)) and during the [School Vacation](#) times noted below.
- **School Vacations take place at the following times**. School programs are closed and child care is available as noted above. (See yearly calendar for exact dates)
  - Western Christmas: 1.5-2 weeks in length
  - Mid-Winter Break: Wednesday- Friday (usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of February)
  - Easter Break: Western Good Friday through the week after Easter. Holy Thursday is included if Orthodox & Western Easter coincide.

### Severe Weather Closings-Emergencies

In case of emergency, closings due to severe weather, utility failure or other emergency, St. Mary and St. Mark will announce the closing on WXYZ Action News (ABC) on your television. You can also log on to the WXYZ website at [www.wxyz.com/schoolclosings](http://www.wxyz.com/schoolclosings). If you see the following listings, please note which programs are closed.

- a. **St. Mary CDC School- All School programs are closed**, which means morning classes for St. Mary and full day classes for St. Mark are closed. If St. Mary CDC School is listed, then the child care is still open for both schools.
- b. **St. Mary CDC Child Care- If this is listed, then the building is completely closed** for the day including all school and child care programs.
- c. When severe weather occurs, we make every effort to keep our child care open for our working parents. When we must close, it is because conditions are unsafe for our staff members and for school families.
- d. Children enrolled in "Child Care" are those students who stay for full days.
- e. **On days when the schools are closed, but when the child care is open, we ask parents of Child Care students to call the school by 8:00 AM to let us know whether or not to expect their child. This will help us to determine how many staff members need to report for that day.**
- f. In case of an emergency occurring during the day which would result in the Director's decision to close the Center, parents or emergency contact will be contacted by phone.
- g. Parents agree to have emergency child care plans in place for the occasions when our facility will be closed for the above mentioned types of emergencies

### Admission and Withdrawal Policy

Prior to admission the first day, we ask that your child visit the Center along with you to meet the Director, teacher and tour the center. After visiting, if you wish to enroll the following completed forms and payment must be submitted to the Director:

1. Child Information Card with Child/Family Information
2. Health Appraisal form signed by a licensed physician with activity restrictions noted and including an immunization record. This must be **renewed annually until age 2 ½**. Children ages birth to 2 ½ must have had a physical exam within the preceding 3 months.
3. St. Mary's Child Placement Contract – completed & signed.
4. Long registration form accompanied by a non refundable (**annual**) registration fee, and material fee and book fees (for St. Mark Academy students)
5. Parent Agreement to provide Food & Food Restrictions Form & Confirmation of Parent Reading Parent Handbook (Parents must read handbook online at [www.stmarycdc.org](http://www.stmarycdc.org); Click on About Us; Open Parent Handbook. Hard copies of the Parent Handbook are available at the office upon request for those without internet access.)
6. Illness Policy Form
7. Transportation permission (if applicable)
8. Religion Waiver (All children)
9. Field Trip Permission & Release for Web Advertising
10. Vision Screening Results for Kindergarten entry

Just as a parent may be concerned about the care a child receives, the child care and **teaching** staff may have concerns about our ability to meet the needs of a particular child. If a child's behavior demonstrates that his or her needs are not being met, parents or staff may initiate a parent/teacher conference. A child who consistently acts out, or for some reason needs one-on-one care and attention, will necessitate a series of conferences to determine the needs of the child. **A student plan of action will be put into place and acted upon by the staff and the parents. During an agreed upon period of time, regular communication will continue between teacher and parents to report on the child's progress. If satisfactory progress is not being made, and if it is indicated that the Center is not the best placement for the child, the Administration has the authority to withdraw the child at that time.**

**Parents who are withdrawing a child for any reason must give the **administration** 4 weeks written notice of this action.** This allows us to give accurate notice of available spots to new incoming families, **who are on our waiting list** and thus keep our enrollment as constant as possible.

Admission for St. Mark students who are transferring from another school will require:

- A copy of the last report card and/or progress report
- A parent & child interview with **an administrator**
- A possible interview with the teacher
- Possible reference from previous teacher and or principal
- **Entrance testing at a cost of \$50 to parents when transfer students are entering St. Mark Christian Academy.**

### **Financial Policies: Tuition Payment Information**

- Tuition payments are made a minimum of a month in advance August through May based on a 40-week school year. **There are ten 4-week Installments which are due by the 1st of each month**, unless otherwise agreed upon and stated on your child's contract. See your contract for your specific payment. See chart on following page for tuition due dates.
- Tuition paid in one or two installments is eligible for a 5% or 3% discount respectively.
- **Tuition bills are come home with your child on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and are due in full by the 1st of the following month.** A 3% late fee will be charged on the balance if the payment is received after the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month. **Interest charges accrue on every unpaid amount until it is paid in full. Minimum late fee charged is \$30.**
- **Summer camp is 12 weeks. Payments during the summer are due on the 21 of each month in advance of each session from May through July.**
- A **\$40.00 late fee** will be assessed for any returned checks.
- Registration, material-fees, and book payments are non-refundable, and are paid at the beginning of the school year.
- Book fees for St. Mark students cover the cost of consumable books and rental fees for text books. Students are responsible for returning books at year end in good condition, or **charges will be made for unreasonable wear.**
- Unpaid tuition could result in the dismissal of your child from school and the withholding of report cards.
- Checks are to be made payable to: *St. Mary Child Development Center*. We also accept Visa, MasterCard & Discover. Cash payments are discouraged. A locked payment box is located to the left of the door as one enters the main office.

### **Absence Adjustments**

*There are no tuition adjustments for absences* due to school vacations, emergencies, school closings or illness. (However, illnesses that exceed two weeks may be eligible for adjustment.) See Hours & School Schedules for scheduled school vacations and school closures. See Vacations for descriptions of family vacations that are eligible for account credit.

### **Schedule Changes**

All schedule changes ***must be made in writing on a Change of Schedule Form and given to the Director for approval.*** The following are changes that are allowed.

- **All Decreases must be permanent for the current contract year**, and must be submitted on the Change of Schedule Form 2 weeks in advance to the Director and receive approval. **(No temporary decreases will be credited to your child's account.)**
- **Temporary switching of days within a week will not be allowed.**
- **Adding days to your child's schedule**, either temporarily or permanently, requires approval by the Director. Approval is based upon availability and staffing for any given day.
  - Temporary changes require a two day written notice with Director approval.
  - Permanent changes require a two week written notice with Director approval.
- **If a parent or guardian chooses to withdraw their child** from the program, a 4 week written notice is required; otherwise you will be billed for 4 weeks tuition.

### **Late Pickup**

**Out of courtesy to our staff**, and so that we can maintain proper adult; child ratios, you must pick up your child no later than 12:00 PM for the morning program and 6:00 PM for the all day program. *Late fees are enforced after the first incident.* **Parents who cannot pick up their child at their child's scheduled end of the day need to make alternate arrangements for their child to be picked up on time.**

**Late fees apply to children picked up after 12:00 PM or 6:00 PM.** They are as follows:

- 0-15 minutes = \$10.00
- 31-60 minutes = \$30.00

- 16-30 minutes = \$15.00

- \$1.00 a minute after 1 hour

**Sample Payment Schedule** (Amounts will vary according to contract)

<i>Payment #</i>	<i>Week #</i>	<i>Week of</i>	<i>Payment Due</i>	<i>Amount Due</i>
1	1	5-Sep	<b>1-Aug</b>	<b>Contract amount + extra fees</b>
1	2	12-Sep		
1	3	19-Sep		
1	4	26-Sep		
2	5	3-Oct	<b>1-Sep</b>	<b>Contract amount + extra fees</b>
2	6	10-Oct		
2	7	17-Oct		
2	8	24-Oct		
3	9	31-Oct	<b>1-Oct</b>	<b>Contract amount + extra fees</b>
3	10	7-Nov		
3	11	14-Nov		
3	12	21-Nov		
4	13	28-Nov	<b>1-Nov</b>	<b>Contract amount + extra fees</b>
4	14	5-Dec		
4	15	12-Dec		
4	16	19-Dec		
5	17	26-Dec	<b>1-Dec</b>	<b>Contract amount + extra fees</b>
5	18	2-Jan		
5	19	9-Jan		
5	20	16-Jan		
6	21	23-Jan	<b>1-Jan</b>	<b>Contract amount + extra fees</b>
6	22	30-Jan		
6	23	6-Feb		
6	24	13-Feb		
7	25	20-Feb	<b>1-Feb</b>	<b>Contract amount + extra fees</b>
7	26	27-Feb		
7	27	5-Mar		
7	28	12-Mar		
8	29	19-Mar	<b>1-Mar</b>	<b>Contract amount + extra fees</b>
8	30	26-Mar		
8	31	2-Apr		
8	32	9-Apr		
9	33	16-Apr	<b>1-Apr</b>	<b>Contract amount + extra fees</b>
9	34	23-Apr		
9	35	30-Apr		
9	36	7-May		
10	37	14-May	<b>1-May</b>	<b>Contract amount + extra fees</b>
10	38	21-May		
10	39	28-May		
10	40	4-Jun		

**Total Amount:** **Contract Amount + extra fees**

\***Extra Fees include** field trip and special event fees- billed monthly.

### **Arrival/Departure Policy**

**During arrival and Departure**, parents are to park their car in a *parking space* and walk their child into the building. Parent should not park at the curb. Parking at the curb area will only be allowed for buses and St Mark (standing only) student pick up at 3:30 PM. For the safety of our children, and for the convenience of everyone, please follow this rule. *It is imperative that ALL St. Mary parents sign their child in upon arrival at the school and sign them out upon departure.* (Bus drivers or assistants sign-in the students who ride the bus.) After entering the building, parents of St. Mary children must always accompany their child to their child's classroom where they will be received by a staff member. Doors will open at 8:30 AM for children to enter the classrooms. Parents must remain with their child until the classroom doors are opened by the teachers.

Please note that St. Mark students do not have to be signed in unless they stay for child care before or after school *or if they are attending summer camp.* During the school year, parents may drop *non-child care* children kindergarten and above *at the curb near the front door* and watch them enter the school.

No St. Mary child will be released to a parent unless they come in to the center. Only those persons listed in writing on the child's information card will be able to pick up your child. **If someone other than a parent is to pick a child up, parents should notify the teacher or director of this change in writing in advance.** If we do not have prior written notification of a pick up change, we will not release your child and the parent will be responsible for late fees. Let the alternate pick up person know that they will be asked to show picture identification such as a driver's license if they are unfamiliar with the staff.

*For your child's safety, please be sure you*

- Do not allow your child to go to the parking lot unaccompanied.
- Do not allow your child to run up and down the halls.
- Tell the teacher when you are leaving your child in their care, and when you are leaving the Center with your child.

### **Reporting Absences**

If your child is going to be absent, please notify the center by phone *by 8:00 AM the date of the absence.* Please leave a message if there is no answer. Absences that are not called in for St. Mark Academy students will be considered unexcused and will be reported accordingly on report cards. **The office phone number is 248-619-0530.**

## Nutrition and Food Service

Preschoolers, Toddlers and Kindergarteners who attend St. Mary and St. Mark will receive a snack mid-morning and mid-afternoon (for full day students) provided by the center. Nutrition education goes on throughout the year as children and staff will discuss foods during meals and special food projects and learn about health and what different foods do to help bodies grow. Children with special dietary needs will be accommodated at the parent's request. A monthly **snack** menu for the St. Mary classes will be posted near the classroom for the parents to preview.

Those children who will be staying for lunch are required to bring the following: A lunch in a brown bag or other lunch box that is **labeled with your child's name**. The food, beverage and eating utensils must be wrapped or contained in disposable packaging. Parents will sign a food restrictions notice as well as an agreement stating that the Center does not provide food for lunch.

**Please DO NOT send soda pop in your child's lunch except on very special occasions such as field trips.**

**\*\*\*St. Mark students are asked to bring a sandwich or other type of cold lunch.** With the growth of our school, it is impractical to expect to microwave lunches and have enough time left over to allow children time for recess. **All students have the option to order hot lunch weekly. Orders are placed and paid for by check or exact change a month in advance.**

Occasional treats from home to celebrate a birthday or holidays are welcome. Special ethnic foods from home are very welcome as a snack or meal. (Please discuss **any of these circumstances** with the teacher **to get permission to send a treat in.**) Please try to send low sugar treats with no red food color. Please do not send candy or gum to the center

### **Meals**

**Lunch-**Those children who will be staying for lunch are required to bring the following: A lunch in a brown bag or other lunch box that is labeled with your child's name. The food, beverage and eating utensils must be wrapped or contained in disposable packaging. Parents will sign a food restrictions notice as well as an agreement stating that the Center does not provide food for lunch.

1. **St. Mark students are asked to bring a sandwich or other type of cold lunch.** With the growth of our school, it is impractical to expect to microwave lunches and have enough time left over to allow children time for recess.
2. **A \$5.00 fee will be charged for students who forget their lunches.** The cost will cover a simple ready made replacement cold lunch for that child.

**Breakfast-** This is the most important meal of the day. Make sure your child comes to school well fed. The brain requires a lot of energy. Your child will not perform to his or her optimal

### Meal Routine

Staff members supervise and assist children during lunch time and snack times as needed. Teachers and assistants give reminders to the children as necessary of the following basic rules.

1. Eat main course first
2. Do not trade items from lunch or snacks
3. Stay seated with classmates until lunch is over
4. Eat food instead of playing with it or talking (excessively) with their friends.

### **Food Hazard Warning**

(Also found in Staff Manual)

The State of Michigan Licensing Rules and Regulations for quality Day Care Centers stipulate that certain foods are considered choking hazards and are unsafe for Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and Pre-kindergarten students. The following foods are not allowed to be served to these children **unless cut into tiny one bite size portions.** Whole or large portions of food may be unsafe and a choking hazard to young children. Please review this list. If it is your intention to continue to send any of the following foods in your child's lunch, please cut them into **tiny one bite size portions to avoid a potential choking hazard.** It is our desire to ensure that your child eats a healthy lunch that is both safe and nutritious.

#### **These foods are not allowed to be served in large whole uncut portions:**

Whole hot dogs or hot dogs cut into large, round chunks. Hot dogs should be cut into thin rounds then each round cut into quarters that are tiny one bite size portions to avoid a potential choking hazard.

Grapes should always be seedless and never left whole. Each grape is to be cut into quarters that are tiny one bite size portion to avoid a potential choking hazard.

Meat such as chicken, beef, pork, lamb, etc. should be properly cooked. All meat should not be left whole on the bone in large portions. Large chunks are difficult to swallow whole. All meat should be cut into tiny one bite size portions to avoid a potential choking hazard.

Raw vegetables such as carrots, cucumbers, celery, peppers, etc. should not be served in large chunks. Raw vegetables should be sliced into thin slices then diced into smaller tiny one bite size portions to avoid a potential choking hazard.

Popcorn is **never** to be served to children of this young age. The dry portion of the kernel even if popped is a choking hazard and may become lodged in the throat.

Please keep the above mentioned choking hazard foods in mind while preparing your child's lunch in the future. Providing quality care for your child is always our goal as we strive to do our best for the safety and health of your child.

### **Medication Policy**

(Also found in Staff Manual)

- Only medication prescribed by the doctor will be given to a child. Medication must be in the container from the pharmacy with the doctor's name and prescription number on it, and include dosage directions. No over the counter medication will be given for fever, coughing, etc. **unless accompanied by written permission from the doctor.**
- **If a child needs to receive medication at the Center, the parent will be required to fill out a permission form. (Available in the office)**
- **An administrator** or classroom teacher will give the medication according to the instructions of the physician.

- The Center will not honor any instruction from a parent which contradict the instructions of the physician (for prescription drugs) or the instructions on the label (for over the counter drugs).

## Illness Policy

(Also found in Staff Manual)

It is the policy of the Center to temporarily exclude children from care who may be infectious or who demonstrate physical symptoms that require continual one-to-one care.

### **Guidelines for excluding sick children:**

1. Fever over 100 degrees
2. Vomiting or diarrhea
3. Eye discharge (conjunctivitis is extremely contagious)
4. Excessive cough and/or nasal discharge (green or yellow in color)
5. Any unidentified or contagious rash
6. Lice- (May be included after proper treatment.)
7. Unusual fatigue
8. Any communicable disease

By law, a child who has a contagious disease must stay home from school. Please inform the center when your child has a contagious disease and keep the school posted on his/her condition. The most common contagious illnesses among children are strep throat, pinworm, ringworm, viral infections, ear and gland infections, measles, mumps, chicken pox and scarlet fever.

### **When a child may return to the Center:**

1. The child's temperature has been below 100 degrees for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
2. The child has been diagnosed as having a bacterial infection and has been on an antibiotic for 24 hours.
3. It has been 24 hours since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.
4. The nasal discharge is not thick, yellow or green.
5. Eyes are no longer discharging, or the condition has been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
6. The rash has subsided or the physician has determined that the rash is not contagious.

**Please call the Center and let us know if your child will not be in attendance on a scheduled day.**

Also, please report to the office the nature of your child's illness. A notice of communicable disease will be posted relaying the information to all parents.

**If your child becomes ill while at the center,** the staff will:

1. Isolate the child either in an unoccupied room or in the office with supervision by a staff member.
2. Call the parent and inform him/her of the problem and let the child talk to the parent, if necessary.
3. Care for the child until a parent or parent designee arrives to take the child home.

**Parents** need to have an alternate plan of action for child care to cover these situations. *Parent or designated alternate driver will be required to pick the child up within one hour of notification.*

**The child care center staff will do everything possible to prevent the spread of childhood illness in the Center.** However even with these precautions in place, we cannot guarantee that contagious illnesses or diseases will be completely contained or will not be spread to other children. Parents must recognize that, while in care, it is possible that the child may be exposed to a contagious illness or disease. Our precautions will include:

1. Not allowing sick children to be in care at the center.
2. Hand washing procedures in place for staff and children upon entering the Center, before and after eating, before and after bath rooming, and before and after outdoor play.
3. Disinfecting tables prior to eating.
4. Disinfecting changing and toileting areas regularly.
5. Washing and disinfecting toys that are mouthed by children.

### Emergency Medical Care

Parent gives permission to St. Mary's and St. Mark to call 911 in the even of a serious emergency. Any costs or charges incurred for 911 emergencies are the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

### Allergies

Please inform the teacher of any allergies or ongoing medical conditions your child has. This is particularly important in the case of food allergies. Allergies and food restrictions are posted in the classrooms for staff reference.

### What to Bring to the Center

- Toddlers through Pre-Kindergarteners bring a school bag which will be provided by the school. The cost is covered in the new student registration fee.
- St. Mark students **MUST bring a backpack or sturdy book bag to school each day**. This should be clearly labeled with the child's name. St. Mark student back packs must fit into the lockers. We recommend you measure before you buy.
- Comfortable play clothes, appropriate for climbing, floor play and experiences with water, paint, glue, or sand are suitable for infants-preschool children.
- **Children must wear closed toe/heel shoes with socks to school**. This means no sandals or flip-flops, **crocs or clogs**. It is for your child's comfort and safety that we have this rule. Climbing on the playground equipment and running through the wood chips on the playground is done more safely and comfortably with closed toe shoes. If your child wears sandals, you will be asked to bring the appropriate footwear to school for your child.
- **All students must wear boots and cold weather clothing as the weather dictates as students are sent outside daily** for recess. St. Mark students go outside **unless it is raining and** as long as the temperature **including** wind chill **is** 14 degrees Fahrenheit **or lower**. St. Mary students go outside unless it is raining or the wind chill is 24 **degrees F or lower**. Preschoolers and Toddlers should dress for outdoor recess for all seasons. (i.e.: boots, hats, mittens **for cold & snowy weather**)
- When the weather requires your child to wear boots to school, **you must also send your child's indoor shoes in as well**. For your child's health and comfort, be sure to send in regular shoes when your child wears boots to school.
- We do have emergency clothing at school. If your child should need to borrow something, please wash it and return it to school. Recently toilet trained children should keep an extra set of clean undergarments and socks in their bags **EVERY DAY**.
- **Please leave favorite toys or breakable items at home**. We welcome sharing of experiences or environmental treasures such as caterpillars, frogs, leaves, stones and other theme related items. If a teacher has a special sharing time such as show and tell, **she** will make parents aware of this activity in advance.
- Please leave candy at home instead of sending it to school with your child. Children sometimes put candy into their pockets because they just can't give it up before mommy leaves them at school. Please monitor your child for this.
- Toy Guns, Knives or Weapons **ARE NOT PERMITTED** at any time at the Center. This includes show-and-tell.
- Please see newsletters and/or supply lists (where applicable) for additional supply requirements.

*All children's belongings*, including clothing, *should be clearly marked* with the child's name or family name. This applies especially to coats, sweaters, hats and other removable clothing items.

### **St. Mark Uniforms (Kindergarten-Fifth Grade)**

- Students in kindergarten through the fifth grade are required to wear a **school uniform which is worn at all times unless otherwise notified**. The following are the requirements for the uniform.
  - **Shirts** for boys and girls must be, long or short sleeve, polo or dress style shirts. Acceptable colors are solid white or light blue. These must be worn tucked in to pants or shorts. Purchase shirts & pants large enough to be worn in this fashion.
  - **Pants/shorts** must be a broadcloth uniform- style pant. Cargo pockets, extra loops, denim, and sweat pants, are NOT allowed. Pant color is navy blue. Shorts may be worn only from May 15<sup>th</sup> through October 1<sup>st</sup>. **Plain navy skirts or skorts are also allowed for girls. Shorts & skorts are not** allowed on Liturgy days.
  - Pant or shorts that have belt loops must be worn with a **plain navy or black belt**. (boys & girls)
  - **Solid color sweaters** (no sweatshirts) may be worn in, navy blue.
  - **Exterior Logos** are NOT allowed on any piece of uniform clothing.
  - **Solid white or navy ankle or knee socks** for boys and girls or **white or navy tights for girls**
  - **Shoes worn indoors** during the day are either dress/school shoes or gym shoes. Snow boots and dress boots are not worn during the school day. **Color must be black, white, brown or a combination of these colors.**
  - **Samples** of all of the uniform pieces can be seen at the school.
  - Jumpers are required for kindergarten-fifth grade girls. Plaid skirts or jumpers are allowed for fifth grade girls only
  - Brochures are available at the office.

### **Parent Participation**

Parents are welcome at the Center at all times and encouraged to participate in a number of ways. There are field trips, fund raising, class parties and opportunities to volunteer in the classrooms. We hope to maintain close, positive relationships with the parents of the children in our program.

Formal parent conferences will be offered to review their child's development, to share concerns, and to plan for the future. However, your teacher is always willing to discuss your child's progress in the classroom privately with you. We will also offer events such as open house, Curriculum Night, and school programs. You will be notified of these dates via newsletters.

## Discipline Policy

All children will be treated with kindness and understanding. It is our philosophy that children behave better when they have constant encouragement and reinforcement, i.e. praise for positive behavior rather than punishment for negative behavior. When a child misbehaves, the following progressive discipline will be used:

- The child will be corrected verbally
- The child's attention will be redirected to another activity.
- The child will be given a time out for a length of time appropriate for his/her age. This can be effective because it takes the child away from the situation for a short time and helps with redirecting their attention to another activity.
- If inappropriate behavior continues to be disruptive, the child will be taken to an administrator where the problem will be discussed with the child and the child will spend time in the office.
- Continual discipline problems will be discussed with the parent(s), teacher and administrator. A personal behavior contract may be used to monitor the child's behavior.
- If disruptive behavior continues, and a solution cannot be realized, the child may be dismissed.

**In addition to the above mentioned principles our schools have adopted a program based on Positive Behavior Support which we have named the "Bee Attitudes." This program was developed because**

- It has been proven that exclusion & punishment are ineffective at producing long-term reduction in problem behavior.
- **Positive Behavior Support is PRO active & Supportive.** All students are taught the expected rules and behaviors at the beginning and throughout the school year.
- **Parents will be provided with additional information regarding this program at the beginning of the school year.** Parents who join us mid-year should feel free to ask for an outline of the program.

\*\*\*Also available to our families is a widely acclaimed series known as "Love and Logic" by the nationally acclaimed authors Jim Fay and Dr. Charles Fay. This program works well with the "Bee Attitudes" program which our schools use. In order to be as consistent as possible at our schools, we are promoting the use of these very effective techniques by our staff. A variety of CDs and books are available from the office for parents to sign out and borrow. We encourage you to take advantage of this excellent, free resource. Additionally, our joint use of these techniques will be beneficial to raising responsible children and establishing family harmony.

## Vacation Policy

The vacation policy applies to **St. Mary CDC** students and **St. Mark Christian Academy** students who are enrolled in child care during the school year. Parent/Child are allowed one- two weeks of “free” vacation time per year, meaning that no child care fees will be assessed during that period, provided that the rules set forth in this section have been complied with. Length of vacation allowance depends on the program the child is enrolled in, and this is defined below.

“Vacation time” is meant for the purposes of pre-planned family vacations and should not be used for other reasons. For the purposes of this provision, a “week” means the number of days per week which the child attends the program. The vacation time must be taken all at once and may not be broken into individual days.

Vacation time may be taken at any time during the year, provided the parent gives the administration two weeks written notice of the vacation. The allotted vacation time does not carry over from year to year. The date of admission marks the start of a new calendar year for the purpose of vacations. Any vacation time not used by the anniversary of a child’s admission into the program is lost.

### **Vacation time allotments:**

- Infants: Two weeks of vacation time is allowed.
- Toddlers: One week of vacation time is allowed during the school year.
- Preschoolers: One week of vacation is allowed during the school year for after school care only. Fees for morning programs are not refunded.
- St. Mark students: One week of vacation is allowed during the school year for after school care only. Fees for school programs are not refunded.

Additionally, to qualify for vacation time allowances, a family must be current with all tuition payments. **A student must be enrolled at our school for 6 continuous months to qualify for vacation credits.**

## Parent-Teacher Communication (Report Cards, Conferences)

Conferences for St. Mary and St. Mark students are held twice yearly. Parents of all students are required to attend both fall and spring conferences in order to be well informed about their child’s progress in all areas of development.

**St. Mary CDC:** Parent Conferences are held twice a year.

- Before Christmas Break
- In May

**St. Mark Academy:** Parent Conferences are held twice a year.

- In November after the end of the first marking period
- In late winter toward the end of the third marking period

St. Mark Academy students grades one and above receive four quarterly report cards.

Parents of St. Mark Academy kindergarten students receive report cards in January and June and have the opportunity to conference after the first and third marking periods.

If you have a question for a teacher or an administrator, please call or speak to them directly or send a written note. *Please DO NOT give oral messages to the bus driver.* The bus driver would be happy to take your written note to the appropriate staff member. This method of communication will ensure that the message is properly transmitted.

### **Field Trips & Special Events**

Field trips and special events are announced monthly in newsletters, notes and calendars from the classroom teacher and the [administration](#). Field trips can include walks taken around the grounds of our school. [Walks](#) are not announced on calendars. Parents have already given permission for field trips by filling out the field trip section on his/her child's information form. ***It is the parents' responsibility to take seriously correspondences received from the school. In this way, they and their children will be prepared for these specially planned events. Children whose parents neglect to read these reminders are often very upset when they arrive in class unprepared. PLEASE READ ALL NOTICES!***

Fees incurred by participation in field trips and special events will be added to the monthly statement. Students who are scheduled to attend on a particular day will be billed for that field trip whether or not they attend. For field trips and special events, we have to reserve class spaces in advance, and we are responsible to pay the contracted amount regardless of the head count the day of the event. Parents reserve the right to keep their child home if they do not approve of a particular field trip. Children participate only in the field trips on the days that they are contracted to be in school unless otherwise notified by the teacher or [administration](#). Trips will be scheduled on a [rotating](#) basis in order to accommodate the different class [schedules](#).

### **Transportation**

Transportation is available for both St. Mary CDC and St. Mark Students. Forms are found in the registration folders, or they can be found in the main office. There is more than one route that services the schools. One is the Troy route. An administrator will advise parents on the appropriate bus for your child.

All vehicles are licensed by the State of Michigan to transport preschool through school age children. Our drivers have been properly trained and hold appropriate State of Michigan driver's licenses for the vehicles that they drive. (All drivers hold a Chauffer's license. Yellow school bus drivers hold a CDL Commercial Driver's License.)

**Until children are 8 years old or 4'9", they must ride in a child safety seat or booster seat.** This is only required for children riding in the blue van. This is not required when riding on the yellow school bus.

Parents must be ready and waiting (60 seconds in advance) at the designated time to walk their child to the bus and to receive their child at the end of the school day. The driver cannot wait for children to put on coats and shoes before coming out to the bus. They must be ready or they will risk the chance of being left.

**There are a limited number of spaces for students requesting transportation.** Requests for transportation will be honored on a first come first serve basis. There is a fee for this service which will be added on to your child's monthly invoice. For availability of bus service, please contact the administration.

Rates for children in the Troy area is \$7.00/ daily round trip

Rates for children living greater distances from school will be determined according to location. For rates, please contact the administration.

### **Transportation Rules**

St. Mary CDC and St. Mark Christian Academy are pleased to be able to provide transportation for your child(ren). In order for our system to run smoothly and allow all students to arrive at school on time, there are a few rules we would like you to follow. Thank you in advance for following these rules.

- Make sure that your child is ready and waiting for the bus 60 seconds before the bus is scheduled to arrive. This includes but is not limited to the following.
  - Children should have bathroom needs taken care of well in advance of the bus' arrival.
  - Shoes/boots and snow pants should be on in advance of the driver's arrival.
  - Book bags, back packs, lunches, etc should be laid out near the door.
  - Coat should be ready to put on quickly.
- A parent/ guardian must be dressed and ready to walk the child to the bus 60 seconds before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- The driver's assistant will help the younger children buckle in.
- Buses & vans are not allowed to enter parking lots to pick up or drop off students. This is a safety guideline set forth by Oakland Schools Transportation Department which abides by laws set forth by the State of Michigan for school transportation systems.
- Booster seats are required by Michigan law for children under age 8 or not yet 4 ft. 9 inches tall.
- Parents may need to provide an appropriate car seat or booster seat to be left in the bus weekly for their child's use.
- If parents need to communicate with the school or teacher, send a written note with the driver or your child. Please do not ask the bus driver to deliver an oral message for you. He is responsible for safely transporting the children to and from school.
- If you are not home when the driver arrives to drop your child off, the parent is responsible for picking up their child from school. Your account will be charged for child care while your child is being cared for in child care at the school. **The bus driver will not return to your house a second time** to drop off your child.
- Drop off/ pick up locations can only be changed in writing in advance. This is subject to approval by an administrator. Do not expect to call the school or bus driver to make a last minute change of this location.
- The Driver will not be phoning families to warn them of his arrival, since driving and talking on the phone is not a safe practice. **Do not expect a call from the driver.**
- *If a child is sick, please call the school at 248-619-0530 in the morning and leave a message.*

*Your Child (ren) should be walking out to the bus in less than a minute, or the bus driver will have to leave them in order to stay on schedule. Drivers are instructed to limit their waiting to 60 seconds at each stop. We thank you in advance for having your children ready to board the bus.*

Transportation fees are billed monthly, and are not adjusted for absences, snow days, or holidays.

## Emergency Drills & Building Safety

We have several types of drills to make sure that our school is as safe as possible under all circumstances. Before reviewing those, there are three things that you can do personally that will help to increase our safety here at St. Mary's and St. Mark. They are very simple. Please remember the following:

- St Mary CDC and St. Mark child care families must sign in and out daily. This is a confirmation of our attendance records and is required by law. (The only St. Mark parents required to sign in are those whose children require before school care. St. Mark parents picking up children from after school care are expected to sign their children out.)
- If any contact information changes, please notify an administrator in writing immediately so that we may change school records. Some of this information includes but is not restricted to the following: home & cell phone numbers, emergency contact people, addresses, place of work, work phone number, people to whom your child may be released, etc.
- **Whenever you enter or exit the building, you must make sure that the door closes completely behind you. This only takes a moment, however it is critical to the security of the building.**

We do have emergency evacuation and tornado plans that are posted in each classroom, in the church and in the narthex. We practice fire and tornado drills once each month throughout the school year as is required for NAEYC accreditation.

We also have an emergency plan that covers intruders, threats, and serious accidents/injuries. We have set up a code green, yellow and red alert system and practice each of these on a regular basis so that students and staff and children can remember the procedures. Since we work with very young children, we are careful of how we present these drills to the children. To avoid instilling fear, we will use general explanations like, "We are practicing a code yellow or code red to make sure that we can always be safe in our school." Speaking more directly to children about intruders may only instill fear and anxiety.

### **1. CODE GREEN ALERT:**

- a. If a CODE GREEN alert is announced, all building occupants are to evacuate the building and proceed to the pre-arranged meeting area, unless an alternate meeting area is identified.
- b. Teachers are to **lock classroom doors upon exiting rooms.** (No others can mistakenly go into the rooms.)

### **2. CODE YELLOW ALERT - MINIMUM SECURITY LOCK-DOWN:**

- a. If a CODE YELLOW alert is announced, Teachers/ aides are to visually sweep all hallways and direct students to go to their classrooms.
- b. All classroom doors are to be locked after 3 minutes. Remain in classrooms and continue with daily activities.
- c. DO NOT admit anyone into the classrooms.

### **3. CODE RED ALERT - MAXIMUM SECURITY LOCK-DOWN:**

- a. If a CODE RED alert is announced, Teachers/ aides are to visually sweep all hallways and direct students to go to their classrooms.
- b. All classroom doors are to be locked immediately. Turn off lights, close blinds and shades.
- c. Move students away from glass or open exposures.
- d. DO NOT admit anyone into the classroom.

During Code Yellow and Red Security Lock-Downs, it is important that you know that NO ONE (even a parent) is admitted to the building and NO ONE will leave until we have had an all clear from the police authorities. Your child or children will be safely in our care during this time. It is important that we follow the no entry/exit guidelines for everyone to insure the safety of those inside the building. So as not to jam up phone lines, teachers will call all parents of children in their classes from their cell phone or class phone to assure you of your child's safety. You will be reunited with your child as soon as it is safe.

Please know that we are continually evaluating our emergency and safety procedures. Our goal is to provide a safe, healthy, Christian environment. We are open to suggestions for improvement that you may have.

### **Changes to Handbook**

St. Mary Child Development Center and St. Mark Christian Academy reserve the unilateral rights to add, delete, or amend the policies and procedures provided for in this Handbook upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the parent.

Changes to policies and/or procedures contained in the Handbook are effective only if set forth in a writing signed by the administration.