

SAINT MARY SCHOOL



Gloucester City, New Jersey

*Parent-Student
Handbook*

*Let it be know to all who
Enter Saint Mary School
That Christ is the reason
For this School.
He is unseen, but ever present.
Teacher in its classes,
The Model of its faculty,
The inspiration of its students*

**SAINT MARY SCHOOL
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www.smshope.org

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FORWARD

This handbook has been compiled to keep parents informed of school policies and procedures. It will prove understanding of routines and regulations, which concern parents and children. When questions arise parents should consult this handbook as a first reference. When there is a need for further clarification, parents may contact the school office.

Rev. August 2008

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SAINT MARY SCHOOL
CHILDREN ARE LIVING MESSAGES
WE SEND TO A TIME THAT WE WILL NEVER SEE.

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Saint Mary School. Be assured the faculty of SMS will do everything possible to make your child's learning experiences beneficial to his/her growth and development. Together we can help your child discover ways to develop his/her potential. With Jesus as our center, we will strive to impart the values of Christianity, which will inspire and motivate your child to live responsibly and authentically in our world.

As parents, you too have a serious obligation of providing and supervising the education of your child. The family is the first school and you are your child's first teacher. It is your primary responsibility to instill and develop Christian values and attitudes in your child.

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint you with the vision statement, organization, and policies of Saint Mary School. It provides easily accessible information regarding our school. All policies follow Camden Diocesan Guidelines. We ask you to read the entire booklet carefully and explain it to your child/children. Please keep it on hand and refer to it as needed.

We regard it as a privilege to assist you in the education of your child. We want to strengthen the bonds between home and school because only when parents and teachers work together does a child receive the maximum benefit of Catholic education.

Please feel free to contact the school office if you have any questions. Thank you for who you are and all you do for your children. Together may we be a living example of church for our children.

May you and your child/children experience God's peace and presence as the coming year unfolds.

Sincerely,
The Administration and Faculty

VISION STATEMENT

Diocese of Camden

We, the Catholic Church of South Jersey,
envision growing ever more
into a dynamic community of faith, hope, and love
wherein we reveal the mind and heart of Jesus
through our actions and worship,

Empowered by baptism, inspired by the Holy Spirit,
And formed by the Word of God
And the sacraments, especially Eucharist,
We will – with Jesus living in us – reach out with love:

To proclaim and teach the truths that save,
To welcome back those who have left our family of faith,
To forgive and seek forgiveness,
To care for our sisters and brothers in need,
To work for peace within our families and communities,
To promote respect and justice for all people,
To strengthen unity within our diversity,

And to celebrate the sanctifying love of God
that heals and transforms our world.

HISTORY OF SAINT MARY SCHOOL

Saint Mary School was established in 1858 by the pastor of Saint Mary Church, Rev. James Daly, in the parish rectory where a group of 26 pupils gathered around long tables and sat on wooden benches to receive their Catholic education.

Later that year, Father Daly constructed a two-story brick building on Cumberland Street, west of the present edifice, containing a large lower room and an upper room. On August 26, 1873 four sisters of Saint Dominic under the charge of Sister M. Josepha, Superioress, from Newburgh, New York, opened a convent in Gloucester City and started teaching in the school. In 1893, the current Saint Mary school building was constructed by the Dominican Sisters of Hope.

Saint Mary School continues today as a Catholic elementary school where all are welcomed as family. It is our endeavor to create an atmosphere where students from pre-school through eighth grade, strive to know God through prayer, scripture, and celebration; and they are encouraged to manifest their love of God by service to others.

The mission of Saint Mary School is to teach as Jesus did and to live the Good News of Jesus Christ. We are called to build a Christian community, and to share Gospel values. While we are dedicated to academic excellence, we also believe that education embraces all life experiences and includes all aspects of development. This results in an integrated person who strives for peace and justice, while living the Good News and assuming responsible citizenship of our country and the world.

SAINT MARY SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Following the tradition of the Sisters of Saint Dominic, Saint Mary School of the Diocese of Camden is a Christian community dedicated to serving others as did Jesus, the Master Teacher.

We call our students and their families to be public witnesses to the Word of God by living their faith as responsible Christian people in an ever-changing world.

We offer the school community daily opportunities to strengthen their personal relationship with Jesus and with each other through prayer and worship.

We recognize the importance of the family as the primary unit in the education of children.

We strive to provide a balanced academic program of study which incorporates technology, artistic expression, and basic skills needed for the spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical development of the whole child.

We recognize the individual talents and potential of every student by encouraging each child to develop and share their God-given gifts for the betterment of themselves, their community, and the world they will enter as Christian adults.

We believe that our classroom teachers should serve as role models by facilitating a constructivist learning process that promotes the active participation of every child.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Saint Mary School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, athletic programs, or other school-administered programs.

PRINCIPAL'S DISCLAIMER

The principal has the absolute discretion to interpret and apply any and all of the rules and provisions in this handbook in the manner the principal believes to be correct. Nothing this handbook says limits the principal's authority to interpret and apply the rules.

Even though this handbook explains penalties that can be imposed for certain types of misconduct or prohibited behavior, you should be aware that the principal has the right and the authority to impose different or additional penalties and to impose penalties for offenses that are not specifically listed in this handbook, if the principal concludes that the conduct or behavior is harmful to the good order and discipline of the school, its religious mission, or its educational objectives. This includes disciplinary action for conduct that occurs on the school premises or at other locations. The penalties may include suspension and/or expulsion.

ACCREDITATION

Saint Mary School was reaccredited by the Middle States Association in April 2007. In compliance with the Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools(MCES), Saint Mary School submits a Progress Report to MCES every three years to keep the accreditation updated. This accreditation will be renewed during 2014-2015 school year.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The administration and faculty have developed a Crisis Management plan in conjunction with the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools, the Camden County Education Department, the local police, and the public school district. Teachers and students are informed of, instructed in, and follow procedures outlined in the plan.

SCHOOL HOURS

Regular School Day(K-8) 7:55 AM – 2:30 PM
Early Dismissal 7:55 AM – 12 Noon

Preschool Half-Day Program
 AM Class only 8:15 AM – 10:45 AM

Preschool Full-Day Program 8:15 AM – 2:15 PM
 3 Day: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (4 Year Old Concentration)
 2 Day: Tuesday and Thursday (3 Year Old Concentration)
 5 Day: Monday thru Friday (Both 3 & 4 Year Old Concentration)

SMS After School Program (K-8) 2:30 PM – 6:00 PM

ADMISSION POLICY

Registrations are held in January each year. Information is made known through the parish bulletin and local newspaper, as well as letters sent home from school.

The following are necessary when registering a child for Pre-School or Kindergarten:

- Baptismal Certificate
- Birth Certificate
- Medical Records
- Registration Fees

*All children admitted to Kindergarten must be five years of age by September 30th.

Parents who wish to register a child for any grade other than Kindergarten are asked to submit the following:

- Report card from previous year
- Baptismal Certificate
- Achievement/Standardized test scores
- Health Records
- Examples of student's work
- Registration fee

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is provided for all students who live at a distance of two miles from school and within a radius of twenty miles. Public school districts may reimburse parents if routes are not available to them. An application for each individual student must be filled out each year.

HEALTH SERVICES

The County Health Department provides the services of a nurse. The nurse assists in the general medical guidance needed at the elementary level. She checks immunization records and maintains the school medical records. She takes responsibility for checking the heights and weights of all students each year and conducting vision and hearing screenings. The nurse also checks for scoliosis in students who are 10 years and older.

Health Policy

Students should be fever-free and symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

Policy on Medication

School personnel shall not provide students with any medication whatsoever, unless directed by a family physician and parents. Medication may be administered only on the written order of a physician and parents. This applies to both prescription and non-prescription medications.

All medications are administered from the health office by the nurse, or designated responsible school personnel. The required permission form is available from the school nurse.

All medication must be in its original container and clearly labeled with the child's name, name of the medication and directions on how it is to be given. All medication is to be left at the main office.

It is necessary for the well being of your child that following an illness, the child does not return to school until his/her temperature is normal for twenty-four (24) hours and other symptoms have subsided. Students leaving the school because of illness must be picked up from the office by a parent or guardian.

Immunization Requirements

DPT – Diphtheria, Tetanus Toxoid and Pertussis Vaccine

For children born on or after January 1, 1986, a minimum of four doses with the last dose on or after the fourth birthday is required.

Polio – For those children born on or after January 1, 1986, a minimum of three doses of oral polio vaccine is required, provided one dose is given on or after the fourth birthday.

HEP B – For children born on or after January 1, 1996 – three doses of Hepatitis B prior to school entrance are required. Every child born after 1990 and entering sixth grade must have completed the three dose series. The Merck- 2 dose series is also acceptable for sixth grade when properly documented by health care provider.

MMR – Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccine – All children must have the MMR vaccine administered after the first birthday. Two doses of a measles containing vaccine, preferably MMR , will be required of children born on or after January 1, 1990.

Tuberculin Testing – Specified by N.J. State regulations pupils who have moved to New Jersey from another state or country must provide documentation of a valid PPD Mantoux (Intradermal). Tuberculin Test administered within the previous six months.

For 6th grade students as of September 1, 2008:

Tdap immunizations (Tetnus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis):

- a) Beginning September 1, 2008 every child born on or after January 1997 and entering or attending Grade Six **must have received** one dose of Tdap (Tetnus, dipdhteria, acellular pertussis) given no earlier then the 10th birthday.
- b) Children entering or attending Grade Six on or after September 1, 2008, who have received a Td booster less than 5 years prior to entry or attendance shall not be required to receive a Tdap **until** 5 years have elapsed from the last DTP/DTaP or Td dose.
- c) Children born on or after January 1, 1997 and transferring into a New Jersey school from another state or country after September 1, 2008 **must have received** one dose of Tdap, provided at least 5 years have elapsed from the last documented Td dose.

Meningococcal vaccine

- a) Every child born on or after January 1, 1997 and entering or attending grade Six, or after September 1, 2008 **must have received** one dose of meningococcal- containing vaccine, such as the medically-preferred meningococcal conjugate vaccine.
- b) Every child born on or after January 1, 1997 and transferring into a New Jersey school from another state or country on or after September 1, 2008 **must have received** one dose of meningococcal-containing vaccine

For Preschool Students:

Physical Examinations – Entering students must provide evidence of a physical examination.

Children six months through 59 months of age attending any child-care center or preschool facility on or after September 1, 2008 must **annually receive** at least one dose of influenza vaccine between September 1 and December 31 of each year.

Every child 12 months through 59 months and enrolling in or attending a child-care center or preschool facility on or after September 1, 2008 **must have received** at least one dose of PCV (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, also known as Prevnar) on or after their first birthday.

INSURANCE

In compliance with Diocesan regulations, all students are covered by insurance while at school or while participating in any school-related activity. In the event of an accident, claim forms may be obtained from the office.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The purpose of this organization is to bring about the closest possible cooperation between the home and the school. In order that a school may function at a high level of competency, parental support is of the utmost importance. Parents are urged to become active members of the PTA, attend its meetings, and support any programs or projects sponsored by it. By contributing your time and talents to the building of a strong PTA, you are ensuring the continued existence of our school.

The PTA Executive Board, together with the school principal and priests, is responsible for organizing programs that provide help and guidance for parents.

By doing so, they promote the growth and development of all who are involved in the parish educational endeavor, thus making the PTA a valuable medium of pastoral care.

Volunteers are always needed to assist in school. Notices requesting help are included with the registration information. Any offers of assistance are greatly appreciated throughout the year.

Programs/Activities

Below is a partial list of school sponsored activities and programs available for parent involvement.

Membership in PTA	Parent-Teacher Conferences
Attendance at PTA Meetings	Sacrament Programs
Liturgies and Prayer Services	Student Shadowing Program
School Newsletter	Saints Party
Saint Nicholas Party	Irish Night
Theater Week	Children's Irish Show
Room Parents	First Friday Mass
Cafeteria/Recess aides	Special Persons' Lunch
Athletic Programs	Golf Tournament
Coaching	Kinder Christmas Pageant
International Day	Take Your Child to Work Day
Food Certificate Program	Campbell Soup Labels
"Coffee with the Principal"	Catholic Schools' Week
Open House	Food Drives
Mission Collections	Pennies for the Library
Service Projects	McDonald's House
Soup Kitchen	Box Tops for Education
Chaperones	

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Tuition (Grades K – 8)

The tuition schedule is set up by the Administration and Finance Committee. A ten-month payment plan begins in July and ends in April. A separate fee for technology will be incorporated into your tuition payment.

Payments are received through SMART Tuition Management. In the event financial difficulties prevent payment of tuition at any time, please contact the Saint Mary School Finance Committee.

Eighth Grade students are required to pay an additional graduation fee not included in the tuition payment. The 8th grade payment can be paid in-full or spread out over 10 months, beginning August. Payment should be made directly to the school office.

Registration

A registration fee is required at the time of registration each year.

FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Textbook Aid Entitlement

A per-pupil allowance for the purchasing of textbooks is given under this program.

Chapters 192-193 Auxiliary and Remedial Services

Under Chapter 192 the following auxiliary services are available to eligible students:

- Compensatory Education-Reading, Math and Language
- English as a Second Language
- Home Instruction

Under Chapter 193 the following services are available to eligible students:

- Evaluation and Classification
- Supplementary Instruction for classified students
- Speech Correction

Any questions concerning eligibility requirements may be answered by the Administration.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC POLICIES

Curriculum Statement

The primary goal of the curriculum of SMS is to provide learning experiences that foster the values, attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary for the total development of the students as stated in the school's philosophy.

SMS offers a full Diocesan curriculum, which has been approved by the Middle States Association. This curriculum is aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Throughout the year administration and faculty review and evaluate the curriculum, academic policies, and school procedures to the achievement of the

school's goals. The administration and faculty investigate researched-based, standards-based programs to enhance the curriculum.

Religious Studies (PK-8)

Beginning with an appreciation of God as Creator, our students become familiar with the Bible, traditional prayers, and a variety of Church celebrations throughout the liturgical year. The Church is presented as a prayerful, caring, and ministering community of faith. Saint Mary School encourages students to bring Christ to the world through class and individual service.

Our program moves from a study of the Commandments to an appreciation of the sacramental life of the Church and a deeper understanding of the Bible as the Word of God. The life of Jesus Christ, preparation for the sacraments of First Penance, First Eucharist, Confirmation, and time for self-reflection are important aspects of family life and faith development. The Family Life curriculum concentrates on the relevant issues of personal growth, respect for life, social living, family relationships, and social justice.

All students (grades K-8) participate in Mass the first Friday of the month. In addition to this, each grade level plans monthly liturgies. Paraliturgical services, the lighting of classroom Advent wreaths, the Stations of the Cross, and the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation are an integral part of the spiritual life of Saint Mary School. In addition to this, the prayer life of our students is strengthened through the relationship of the Prayer Partner Program.

The priests and religious of Saint Mary Parish are a vital part of the SMS community through their presence and support.

Early Childhood (Preschool-K)

Saint Mary Preschool Program is committed to the education of children with Gospel values. We focus on basic skills and work to enrich each child while striving for a balance among intellectual, spiritual, social, and physical attributes.

The Kindergarten program is based upon a child-centered developmental approach. We accomplish this goal by structuring a curriculum program that stimulates the awareness and curiosity of each child while challenging him/her to recall, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate their growing knowledge.

Language Arts

The Language Arts curriculum integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing development through a variety of thinking skills and communication techniques. Grade appropriate instructional strategies, including technology, are employed to ensure the continual development of grammar, spelling, phonics, reading, usage, and mechanics required in conventional English.

Our program is literature-based, which allows students to become familiar with different genres, authors, and writing styles. Reading and writing skills are integrated across the curriculum.

Mathematics

The Mathematics curriculum reflects the importance of applying math skills. Math strategies are taught to strengthen the student's ability to solve problems and connect math to real life situations. Math manipulatives and technology are used to enhance the learning experience. Our goal is for all students to reason and communicate proficiently in mathematics.

We offer a full year of Algebra 1 to all eighth grade students.

Science

Topics of physical, earth and life science are incorporated into each grade level. Using the Scientific Method, hands on activities, laboratory investigations, and technology, students are able to apply their scientific knowledge to the real world.

Students are reminded of their role as stewards of the environment. Emphasis is placed on the role of God in all of creation.

Social Studies

Students are encouraged to understand and appreciate the fact that they are members of a variety of communities. Geography, citizenship, social justice, and current events are incorporated.

A focus on the humanities is also connected in the exploration of culture. Students are encouraged to interpret historical events, to see connections between these events, and to focus on effects of events over time. Technology is used to research and explore topics.

MINOR SUBJECTS

World Language

Students will see that language is a key to culture. Language and culture are inseparable. Students will be introduced to foreign languages through customs, demonstration, technology, and practice.

Music

Students at all grade levels are encouraged to enjoy music. Our students are given a comprehensive knowledge of theory, history, styles, and elements of music. In addition to this, students are exposed to instrumental music, with a focus on keyboarding and musical composition for junior high students.

Technology

Each classroom is equipped with on-line computers and software to develop and reinforce academic skills and for research.

Students learn the functions of the computer and how to use technology to enhance different curriculum areas. Skills learned include but are not limited to Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point, Corel Graphics, and Midi keyboarding technology.

Art

All students participate in art classes. The program consists of art history, studying various artists and their styles, as well as providing an avenue for the development of each student's own creativity.

Physical Education/Health

The physical education program at SMS focuses on health and fitness. The program is designed to motivate students to make healthy food choices and to provide a variety of physical activities linked to health concepts and skills. In addition to this, it is the desire of the school to provide our students with the necessary skills that will allow them to maintain good nutrition and a physically active life style.

Enrichment

Saint Mary School offers an enrichment program. The program is designed to challenge the student beyond the classroom. Three of the following criteria must be met to qualify:

- Cognitive Ability Test (CogAt) of 120 or above
- Consistent scores of 90 or above in national percentile (total math and/or language scores on the standardized tests)
- Evidence above average performance in classroom
- Recommendation of the teacher

Our goal is to nurture and support the academic gifts of the students in this program.

REPORTS OF SCHOOL PROGRESS

In accordance with Diocesan policy, Report Cards are distributed four times a year.

Interim reports are sent to parents/guardians for students who are receiving a D in any major subject , or are failing a minor subject, including behavior.

STANDARIZED TESTING PROGRAM

Students in grades three thru eight are given a standardized test in March. The Diocese of Camden currently uses the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (IOWA). Grades four and seven also take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAts). Tests are machine scored by Riverside Publishing. Parents receive a copy of the results.

ASSEMBLY – 7:55 AM

All students are expected to assemble in the designated area upon arrival. Adult supervision is provided starting at 7:30 AM.

During inclement weather, morning assembly will be held in the cafeteria.

HOMEROOM ACTIVITIES

Homeroom activities include taking attendance, lunch orders, collecting of office correspondence followed by morning prayers.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance has a marked influence upon scholastic achievement. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the child is in attendance during the 180 days required by the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

Absenteeism

Whenever a child is absent for any reason a note listing the dates of absence and the cause of absence should be sent to the child's teacher. **This note, written and signed by either parent/guardian must be in the hands of the teacher** on the first day back to school after an absence. It will be kept in the student's file for the academic year.

Any absence whereby the proper documentation was not received from the parents is recorded as truancy. *Unauthorized absence from school is considered truancy and will be treated as such. Continued violation in such cases may lead to suspension and/or expulsion/withdrawal. Diocesan Policy # 407.1*

It is the **responsibility of the student** to work with the teacher in making up all work, homework, class work, and tests missed during his/her absence.

A student may not participate in or attend extra-curricular activities on the day he/she is absent from school. If vacation trips must take place while school is in session, it is school policy not to assign work ahead of time. Students will have five (5) days to make up the work. However, standardized test(s) missed during to vacation will not be made up.

In accordance with Diocesan regulation, absence from school is cumulative for the entire year. After ten (10) accumulated days of absences a written warning notice will be sent to the parents/guardians. It is expected that the parents/guardians will respond to the principal as a result of this warning. After eighteen (18) cumulative days of absence, a conference will be convened with the principal to discuss appropriated corrective measures. If absenteeism continues, the decision to request student retention or withdrawal is the responsibility of the principal.

In addition to this, continued absences may result in your child making up hours in the summer or retention.

Tardiness

A student is considered late when he/she has missed the morning assembly at 7:55 AM. If lateness is anticipated, the parent/guardian should call the office prior to the child's arrival and explain the reason for the lateness. The child reports to

the office to pick up a late slip which is presented to the teacher for admission to class. If a parent/guardian has not called ahead of time, he/she must accompany the child to the office to explain the cause of lateness or send a note of explanation with the person accompanying the child. If a school bus is late the child is automatically excused.

Regardless of the reason, excessive tardiness is not only a poor habit for your child to practice, but is a disturbance to both the teacher and the other students. In addition to this, lateness affects the attendance record of the child – the late slip becomes part of the child's record.

Students who are late twenty (20) or more times during the school year may be required to make up hours during the summer.

DISMISSAL

The school day ends at 2:30 PM. Dismissal will occur after that time. Students who walk home must follow the directions of the crossing guards. Parents/guardians picking up their children should wait on one of the three corners across from the school entrance. Parents/guardians should not be standing on the sidewalk directly in front of the school – this practice hinders the safe exiting of our students.

No child will be permitted to leave the school with another individual unless notification has been given to the office.

For safety reasons, all cars **must be parked** curbside before picking up the child. Parents may not park directly in front of the school – this is a Fire Zone and cars may be ticketed. The crossing guard will direct the traffic flow and we ask that you be attentive and respectful to him/her. Please be patient and regard the safety of every student.

No child will be left unattended after school has ended and students have been dismissed for the day. If your child is not picked up on time, he/she will be placed in the After School Program, whereby you will be charged accordingly.

EARLY PERSONAL DISMISSAL

When an emergency makes it necessary to request an early dismissal, the parent or guardian is responsible to send a note to the homeroom teacher explaining the reason for the request. Parents/guardians are urged to keep such requests at a

minimum and to arrange medical appointments, etc. for after-school hours if at all possible. When an early dismissal is allowed, the parent/guardian should come to the school office. A staff member will call the child to the office. The person accompanying the child must be identified before leaving the school, and sign the early dismissal release.

AWARD SYSTEM

In order to encourage academic effort and consistently good behavior the school operates a system of awards.

Non-Academic Awards:

Act of Kindness Hearts are given to students who demonstrate kindness, thoughtfulness, and courtesy towards another individual.

Student of the Month – During the months of October thru May a student is selected from each grade based on a particular virtue/value. To be eligible for Student of the Month, the student must adhere to the ABCs of Saint Mary School: ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOR, and CLASSWORK. To be considered eligible a student must **attend** school on a regular basis; comply with **behavior** rules and expectations; and invest in academic instruction - complete all **homework** and **class** assignments in a timely manner.

Academic Awards:

Academic awards in the form of Honor Roll Certificates, Pastor's and Principal's Awards are given four times a year, at the end of each marking period for grades 5 to 8.

To qualify for placement on the **Honor Roll** students must have:

- A B or better in major subjects
- An S or better in minor subjects
- A satisfactory grade in conduct

To qualify for placement on the **Principal's** List students must have:

- An A or better in major subjects
- An S or better in minor subjects
- A satisfactory grade in conduct

To qualify for placement on the **Pastor's** List students must have:

- An A+ in all major subjects
- An S or better in minor subjects
- A satisfactory grade in conduct

Community events which students, faculty, and school administrators regularly participate in.

Elementary School Principal's Association	Church Liturgies
New Jersey Science Leader Association	Parish Council
Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers	Community Prayer Services
Association for Curriculum and Development	Soup Kitchen
Diocesan Curriculum Committee	City and Parish Golf
Tournament House of Charity	Irish Night
Needy Children's Christmas Fund	Gloucester City Day
Martin Luther King Day of Service	Lunch with Santa
Catholic Schools Week	Penn Relays
Gloucester City Hero to Hero Run	Vocation Day
Knights of Columbus Spelling Bee	Goals Center
Diocesan PTA Essay Contest	Food Drives
Knights of Columbus Free Throw	Essay Contest
Camden County Basketball League	Special Person's Lunch
Catholic Daughters' of America	Shamrock Festival
Child Assault Prevention Training Mc Donald's House	

CARE OF PROPERTY

Students are expected to take pride in their school and to share the responsibility of keeping it attractive. Any destruction of property- chairs, desks, equipment, materials or the building itself, will result in disciplinary action. Monetary compensation in proportion to the damage caused may also be required.

Textbooks, including library books, are a very important part of school property and must always be handled with care. Textbooks and modules must be kept covered. Scribbling or drawing on book covers or copybooks is forbidden. A book bag is required in all grades. No book bags with wheels are permitted.

COMMUNICATION

Communication between home and school is essential for the success of every student. Every effort will be made by school personnel to keep the channels of communication open between the home and school. Parents are free to communicate with school authorities at any time, on any matter, provided the procedures outlined below are followed.

School communication is sent home via a weekly Brown Envelope and emails. Please read all email communications and papers sent home. Papers that must be signed by either parent or guardian should be returned in the brown envelope. Brown envelopes should be returned to school the following day.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

The Diocesan School Office mandates only one conference. This conference is scheduled at the end of the first marking period. All parents/guardians are expected to attend this conference, at which time they will receive their report card for the first marking period.

The purpose of the conference at this time is to review the student's performance so that parent/guardian and teacher together may assess the student's capabilities and plan accordingly.

Deficiency reports are mailed home midway through the marking periods to parents/guardians of students who are struggling in a subject area or in danger of failing.

A parent/guardian who wishes to consult with the principal should call or write a note requesting an appointment. Should a parent desire to confer with a teacher, a note to that effect should be sent with your child, or a phone call made to the school office. A conference will be arranged as soon as possible at a time mutually agreeable, before or after school. A conference cannot be held during school hours, as teachers may not leave classes unattended.

If a parent/guardian would like to meet or speak with the compensatory education teacher or speech teacher, please contact the school office. Your request will be forwarded to the appropriate teacher.

Coffee with the Principal

Each marking period, the principal hosts *Coffee with the Principal*, whereby parents/guardians meet informally with the Principal to share ideas or address school related concerns.

DISCIPLINE

Saint Mary School will employ various disciplinary measures, including suspension and expulsion, for any behavior that is not consistent with the proper atmosphere for a Catholic school. This section of the handbook explains the types of disciplinary action typically imposed for various types of misconduct and prohibited behavior. Please be aware that similar disciplinary action may be taken for violations that are not listed here if the conduct or behavior is harmful to the good order and discipline of the school, its religious mission, or its educational objectives. In addition, while this section explains typical disciplinary action, the principal and the pastor have the authority to alter these procedures as they determine if warranted in a particular situation.

The purpose of discipline in a Catholic school community as a whole is to lead the children so that their actions promote the Christian development of each member and thereby enhance the community.

Discipline at Saint Mary School is part of a teaching/learning process. It is a constructive process to guide and develop the attitudes of our students so that they may achieve the highest possible standards of Christian behavior and cooperation. In keeping with the regulations of the Diocese of Camden, Saint Mary discipline policy is developed in a positive manner being primarily diagnostic and remedial rather than punitive.

There is a standard form to notify parents/guardians of inappropriate behavior, which must be signed and returned.

Saint Mary School students are expected to respect themselves and others. Any individual's actions that deter Christian development or demonstrate socially or morally undesirable behavior will be considered by Saint Mary School to be injurious to the well being of both the individual and the community.

Each student is also expected to follow the individual teacher's classroom policy.

Inappropriate behavior warrants disciplinary actions (e. g. student-teacher conference, parent/guardian-teacher telephone conference, parent/guardian-teacher-student conference, detention, suspension, and expulsion). Some behavior may warrant immediate detention. Parents will have twenty-four hour notice of said detention.

While it is not possible to list every type of conduct that may require correction, the following is a list of some types of behavior that are not acceptable in a Catholic School.

- Disrespect for oneself, others, or property
- Disturbance in class, cafeteria, playground, courtyard, or corridor
- Disregard for school/classroom regulations
- Willful defiance of authority
- Willful disobedience
- Actions that harm the well-being of the individual or member of our school community
- Uniform infractions
- Behavior outside the school that draws unfavorable attention to Saint Mary School
- Possession of electronic devices such as games, pagers, beepers, lasers on school property
- Possession of anything deemed usable as a weapon

In addition to this, the following consequences will result when:

- Student exhibits chronic misbehavior on school grounds, while being transported on a bus or at a school-sponsored activity, the student may be placed on disciplinary probation for the current and/or subsequent academic year and/or cannot participate in school sponsored co-curricular activities at the discretion of the Principal.
- Students suspected of or caught cheating or assisting any other student in cheating, including disruption of the classroom environment by any verbal or non-verbal means (breach of test security) or academic dishonesty (plagiarism), will be liable to reduction in credit to a maximum of zero points at the discretion of the teacher.
- Students and/or their parents/guardians who by verbal, written or physical conduct create an intimidating hostile, or offensive environment shall be subject to removal from Saint Mary School.

Cell Phones

If a student must bring a cell phone to school:

- Phones **must be** turned over to teacher until dismissal time.
- Phones **must be** turned off at all times
- If a student fails to comply with the above policy, parent/guardian will be immediately called.

Acceptable Use Policy

The Internet has become a global and ubiquitous reality. It is a potential wealth of knowledge, which can be extremely beneficial to students and teachers, adults and minors, and anyone who seeks information. The Internet can also be dangerous. Because the Internet offers the opportunity for anonymity, there is the possibility for cyber bullying and other harmful acts and for sexual predators to have access to minors. Computer use, including use of non-school equipment and use of equipment outside of the school, can have harmful effects on students and the school community. Inappropriate use of the Internet, cell phones, or other means of electronic communications that are harmful to the good order and discipline of the school, its religious mission or its educational objectives, is subject to disciplinary action.

All faculty, staff, and students are required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy form.

Harassment/Discrimination

In recognition of the dignity and worth of each individual in the image of Christ Jesus, this policy promotes an environment in which all persons of Saint Mary School shall be free from all forms of harassment and discrimination including immoral, unethical, and unlawful discrimination and conduct which can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive. Such behavior undermines Catholic values and jeopardizes the integrity of the relationship that exists among staff members and among students with their peers and with all school personnel. This behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

All school personnel and students are required to sign a non-harassment form.

Suspension

Suspension is a serious matter. This means that the student will not be permitted to return to his/her classroom until his/her parents/guardians confer with the principal concerning the offense.

Parents/guardians will be notified of the suspension. The principal in consultation with the faculty determines the length of the suspension.

Expulsion

Several infractions or a serious infraction may warrant immediate expulsion. This is a radical action, which means that the school is saying either that the student's interest would be better served in another environment or that the individual's behavior is a serious threat to the school.

* Students will be liable to **immediate** suspension and/or expulsion whenever they exhibit such misbehaviors as acting in a physically uncontrollable manner resulting in actual or potential physical harm to self or others; violation of the diocesan harassment/discrimination or Acceptable Use policies; threatening violence; stealing; destruction/vandalism of property; possession, use, or sale of a weapon, controlled substance, or other contraband; possession or consumption of alcohol; making a bomb threat; and pulling a fire alarm.

Alcohol/Drugs

See paragraph under Expulsion

NOTE: BECAUSE DISCIPLINE IS NOT AN EASY AREA TO DEAL WITH, AND CLEAN CUT RULES AND REGULATIONS CANNOT ALWAYS APPLY, WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EXERCISE GOOD JUDGEMENT, IN KEEPING WITH OUR CHRISTIAN STANDARDS, IN ALL DISCIPLINARY SITUATIONS.

DRESS CODE

Saint Mary School believes that appropriate dress will promote a positive learning atmosphere. School uniforms help to alleviate peer pressure and unnecessary attention to clothing and accessories.

Students must be habitually well-groomed and wear the prescribed uniform for all class days unless given explicit permission by the school to do otherwise.

School Uniform Requirements

The basic uniform may be worn year round. The optional summer uniform may be worn from September to October 15th, and from April 15th to school closing.

Girls:

Blue plaid jumper with white blouse-Peter Pan collar (K-4)

Blue plaid skirt with white oxford, button-down collar blouse with top button fastened (Grades 5-8)

Headbands or small bows should be blue, white, or blue & white

Navy knee socks or tights

Navy sweater with Saint Mary logo

Regulation uniform shoe

***Skirt length should reach the bend at the back of the knee.**

*** Colored T-shirts or shirt with printing may not be worn under the uniform blouse.**

Boys

Regulation navy pants
White dress shirt
Navy tie
Navy or white crew socks
Navy sweater with Saint Mary logo
Black, tie dress shoes with soft sole
Black or navy blue belt must be worn

*** Colored T-shirts or shirt with printing may not be worn under the uniform shirt.**

Summer Uniform

The summer uniform may be worn up to October 15th and from April 15th until school closing.

Regulation navy blue shorts
White golf shirt with SMS logo
All white sneaker
White crew socks – **worn over the ankle**

All shirts must be tucked inside the waistband (girls and boys), navy or black belt.

Gym Uniform

SMS gym shorts and SMS gym shirts
Regulation sweatpants and sweatshirts
All white sneaker (no high tops)
White crew socks – **worn over the ankle**

*To avoid injury or damage, jewelry, including post earring **may not** be worn during PE (gym) class.

Hair

Please be certain that your child's hairstyle is in keeping with the school regulations. A boy's hair should not touch the collar.

Hair is to be neat, well groomed and pulled away for the face. No fad hairstyles, no hairspray, mousse or gel. No highlighted, bleached, or dyed hair.

Jewelry

Girls are permitted one small post earring per ear. Small faced watch and religious medal may be worn. Faddish jewelry, chains, or bracelets are not acceptable. Nail polish or fake nails may **not** be worn.

*Reminder: Jewelry may not be worn during PE (gym) Class.

Attire for Casual Days and Field Trips

Short shorts, tank tops, open-toed shoes or flip-flops may not be worn on casual days.

Since the location of field trips varies, the teacher will inform parents/guardians of the proper attire for a field trip.

Other

No make-up, perfume, cologne, or scented creams due to allergies/sensitivities.

Students wearing clothing other than that authorized from school-approved vendors will be considered in violation of the school's uniform policy and subject to disciplinary action (SMS currently has a contract with Flynn & O'Hara). Parents/Guardians will be contacted if their child is not properly attired.

*Please note: The administration reserves the right to determine what is or is not acceptable in matters dealing with hair styles, hair accessories, jewelry, uniforms, and casual dress.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

Once school is in session every effort will be made not to close before regular dismissal time. However, circumstances may occur when the school has to be closed. Parents/guardians need to be mindful of such possibilities and have a plan for the supervision of their child/children in mind. If an emergency closing must take place during the school day parents/guardians will be contacted by phone if at all possible.

When inclement weather is severe enough to cause the closing of school for an entire day or a delayed opening, please turn to KYW news or Channel 6 News - the school closing number is 730.

FAMILY SITUATIONS

Some children are in a family situation that involves separation and divorce. For the well-being of your children we ask you cooperate in notifying the school office, if the non-custodial parent will be picking your child up from school.

In cases where it has been a court decision that there be no contact between child and parent, the school must have a copy of the court order for your child's file.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Saint Mary School provides an After School Program each day from 2:30 PM until 6:00 PM. Please contact the school office for program and registration information.

Students will work on homework and receive assistance, have an opportunity for crafts, as well as enrichment, outside playtime (weather permitting). In addition to this a snack will be provided.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

These activities include:

Basketball	Cheerleading	Spring Track
Choir	Student Council	Fall Cross Country
Strategy Club	Game Night	Movie Night
Yearbook	School Dances	School Play
Art Club	Dance club	Peer Tutoring

School Policy for Extra-curricular Activities

Participation in a wide range of activities is encouraged, however, students must adhere to the ABCs of Saint Mary School: ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOR, and CLASSWORK. To be considered eligible a student must attend school on a regular basis; comply with behavior rules and expectations; and invest in academic instruction - complete all homework and class assignments in a timely manner.

If a student is failing a major subject and receives a deficiency report during the interim of a marking period **or** has an unsatisfactory in conduct, **or** has excessive absences or tardiness, the child will be placed on probation and the student's record will be reviewed on a weekly basis. Evidence of definite improvement from week to week will be needed for continuance in any program. If a student receives a failing grade in a major subject on his/her Report Card and/or continues to have an unsatisfactory grade in conduct, he/she will be excluded from all extra-curricular activities for 3 weeks. At that time, the student's record will be reviewed and a decision will be made to determine if and when the child may resume participation in our sports program/extracurricular activities.

LUNCH SCHEDULE

Grades: Preschool, K, Grade 1	10:20 to 11:00 (Snack at 1:15)
Grades: 2, 3, 4	11:00 to 11:40
Grades: 5, 6	11:50 to 12:30
Grades: 7,8	12: 35 to 1:10

*Note: Lunch Schedule may change due to class size.

CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS(Grades K to 8)

In order to comply with diocesan policy on the required number of instructional hours per subject, we ask that classroom celebrations be limited. The principal must approve all classroom parties. The distribution of birthday or other party invitations by school personnel, parents, or students is strictly prohibited unless **every** student in the grade level is welcomed to the gathering. For legal reasons, the classroom teacher or office staff is not allowed to provide student addresses or phone numbers to parents.

FACULTY MEETINGS

The Diocesan calendar allows early dismissal once a month for faculty meetings and In-services. Faculty meetings are scheduled the third Friday of each month unless otherwise indicated on the calendar. The school day will end at 12:00 Noon for Grades K to 8.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are designed as an extension of the classroom to enhance the learning experience (Participation in such activities is a privilege not a right). All trips must receive Principal approval. The trip form must be submitted no later than one (1) month before date of anticipated trip.

Field trips must be aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and Diocesan Guidelines. Teachers are required to submit an outline describing how the trip will impact on the curriculum for that grade level.

A permission slip for the field trip will be sent home along with specific guidelines for the trip. Children who fail to return the permission slip in a timely manner will not participate on the day of that activity.

Due to the nature of the trip, location, and time schedules, gift shop purchases are not a field trip function. Faculty members need to remind parents/guardians that field trips are not family outings. Only assigned chaperones may accompany the children on the field trip. Siblings may not accompany the chaperone. Every preschool child is required to have his/her own parent/guardian for a field trip.

Chaperones are selected from an approved CAP trained list.

A class trip is allowed for 8th grade students only. All eighth grade payments must be up to date for a student to participate.

FIRE DRILLS, LOCK DOWN and SHELTER IN PLACE DRILLS

To comply with state regulations, Fire Drills will be held twice a month (weather permitting). Teachers and students are expected to leave the building quickly and quietly. Adults working in the building are expected to leave by the nearest exit.

Lock Down drills will be held throughout the year. No one, other than police and security personnel may enter or leave the building during a lock down.

Shelter in Place drills will be held periodically throughout the year. No one will be permitted to leave the building until the outside environment is declared safe. The food management service is responsible to keep sufficient amounts of water and packaged food items on hand in case of a real emergency.

CHILD ASSAULT PREVENTION PROGRAM (CAP)

All parents are strongly encouraged to attend a CAP training session if they have not done so. Parents/guardians, who are interested in chaperoning school-sponsored trips, must undergo CAP training.

HOMework

Homework is an essential part of the education process. Its effectiveness depends on the attitude of the child, the parent/guardian, and the teacher. Homework should be seen as a reinforcement and enrichment of the materials covered in class as well as a necessary means of fostering good student habits. All homework should be within the competence of the child's grade level. All children need supervision, while younger ones may need some assistance.

Parent Responsibility

The parent/guardian is responsible for:

- Providing adequate study space, free of distractions
- Ensuring that a set period of prime time is allocated for homework
- Checking the homework for thoroughness and neatness
- Signing all required papers

Parents/guardians can easily assess the quality of their child's academic performance by the quality of the homework. Parents and guardians are encouraged to view the teacher's homework page on the school's website for current and upcoming assignments.

Suggested Time Allotment

Grades K-1	20-30 minutes	Grades 2-3	30-45 minutes
Grades 4-5	45-60 minutes	Grades 6-7-8	60-90 minutes

The amount of work assigned at each grade level should not take the average student more than the allotted time. If it takes extra time, parents should write a note to the teacher explaining the amount of time spent. In no way should a child need or be allowed to spend endless hours on homework. There is a standard homework notice form sent home if the parents/guardians need to be alerted to incomplete, missing, or incorrect assignments. The homework form must be signed and returned to the teacher the next day.

Homework is assigned each night – if there is no written or reading assignment, then the child should review the day's notes. This can best be accomplished if the parent/guardian asks the child to explain what they learned that day. The child's inability to do this is a good indicator that your child may need further assistance – please inform your child's teacher if this occurs.

If a child is struggling with the homework or becomes agitated or frustrated – do not allow the child to continue – please inform the teacher if this occurs – a phone

call or conference may be needed so that the parent/guardian and teacher may address this situation.

*Students do not need to bring every book home every day. Please contact your child's teacher if they are overloading their school bag.

INFORMATION UPDATE

It is of the utmost importance that the school office has current information regarding home address; phone number and up-to-date work numbers of parents/guardians. Each year a form requesting such information is included in the registration packet. You are requested to fill it out even if there is no change from preceding years. Be sure the school has an emergency phone number in case you cannot be reached. Should you change your address, telephone number, or parish registration during the year, please notify the office immediately.

If the parent/guardian is not available, the emergency person listed on your child's card will be contacted. Please notify the principal's office of an address or phone number change. Please be certain that you have informed the emergency person that they have been designated by you.

MEDIA CENTER

Library

The library is available to the students for research, including research using the Internet, and checking out books. Times are allotted by the Librarian for instructional skills.

The following regulations should bring about orderly and effective use of the facility:

- Proper care should be taken of all books issued.
- Books are checked out for one week and may be checked out for a second week and only once for a third week if needed.
- Fines will be levied for overdue books and books destroyed or lost. Students are encouraged to check the condition of the book they are signing out and bring any concerns directly to the Librarian.

Computer Lab

Two computer labs are available for teacher and student use. All users are expected to comply with the diocesan acceptable use policy for technology and

Internet use. Violation of these policies will result in the suspension of the individual from use of the school computers.

LOST AND FOUND

Parents/guardians are requested to mark all their child's belongings very carefully to prevent loss. Any articles that are found are kept in a box in the cafeteria foyer for a suitable period of time. It would be a good idea for parents/guardians to check this box periodically to look for lost clothing, lunch boxes, etc.

LUNCH PROGRAM

A Hot Lunch Program is available at Saint Mary School.

Saint Mary School employs a Food Management Service. Children who bring their own lunch may purchase milk, snacks, and other beverages.

Prices for lunch each year are in compliance with the New Jersey Child Nutrition Program. The New Jersey Child Nutrition Program determines the amount of sugar permissible. SMS complies with these guidelines.

The cafeteria operates on a non-profit basis.

Free and Reduced Lunch Program

Applications for free or reduced lunches for children meeting state requirements are available throughout the year. All families receive application forms the first week of school.

*If the financial situation of a family changes during the school year whereby a family may be eligible to participate in this program – please do not hesitate to contact the school.

MESSAGES

Parents/guardians have access to the school to solve matters of immediate concerns. Work for absent students may be picked up in the office following dismissal.

Phone Calls

Students may not call home for items they may have forgotten to bring to school. In addition to this, students may not return to school to pick up forgotten homework, books, etc. once the students have been dismissed. Children learn responsibility by accepting consequences.

Complaints-grievances

If a parent/guardian has a grievance or complaint, the “Chain of Command” must be followed:

- Confer with the individual teacher
- If you are not satisfied, bring the matter to the principal. If you are still not satisfied, request a conference with the principal, teacher, and student.

Please avoid criticism of Faculty/School Policy in the presence of your child. Remember the School Board was never intended as a court appeal for disciplinary purpose. Discipline is the responsibility of the school Administration and Faculty.

*Please note: any calls made to the Diocesan School Office are referred back to the principal.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Student Council members are elected from the peers to serve the school in a variety of ways. As leaders they are responsible for promoting school spirit and service.

Requirements for Student Council Representatives

- Academic work is to reflect their best effort
- Must have a satisfactory conduct mark
- Must be willing to make Student Council meetings and its activities a priority throughout the year
- Meetings are held monthly
- Must be willing and able to give time and energy to committee work
- Must attend Sunday Mass on a regular basis
- Must be willing and able to represent, give service, and be available when called upon
- Must be habitually well groomed and wear the prescribed uniform for all class days unless given explicit permission by the school to do otherwise
- Must meet with approval of the Principal, Moderators, and Faculty

*Funds raised by Student Council are used for various school community projects.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Kindergarten supplies are ordered for the students and are distributed on the first day of school. Supplies for Grades 1 thru 8 are available for purchase in August – dates will be posted in the Parish Bulletin and on the school website. Supplies will also be available throughout the school year.

VISITS

For the safety of your child/children it is required that all visitors report to the office to sign in and receive a Visitor's Pass. Parents/guardians are always welcome to visit the school but they must not go to the classrooms or seek conversation with a teacher while classes are in sessions.

Should a parent wish to visit a particular class, permission must be obtained from the principal and an appointment made with the teacher so as not to interrupt the classroom routine.

SAINT MARY SCHOOL BOARD

The purpose of this board is to promote and advance the mission of the school for the education and instruction of students in keeping with the principles of the Roman Catholic Church, to secure the finances of the school, and to ensure a course of education as prescribed by the Diocese of Camden and the applicable policies, rules, and regulations of the State of New Jersey.

The board, with limited jurisdiction, is a participatory, policy-making body for all matters pertaining to the school. All decisions of the board shall be binding upon the school administrators and shall be in compliance with canon law, the letter and the intent of the policies, rules, and regulations of the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Camden, the applicable policies, rules, and regulations of the State of New Jersey, and those powers reserved to the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Camden.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT POLICY

The New Jersey School Integrated Pest Management Act of 2002 requires schools to implement a school integrated pest management policy.

The law requires the superintendent of the school district, for each school in the district, the board of trustees of a charter school, and the principal or lead administrator of a private school, as appropriate, to implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM) procedures to control pests and minimize exposure of children, faculty, and staff to pesticides. Saint Mary School has developed and will maintain an IPM plan as part of the school's policy.

The complete policy appears on the SMS website: www.smshope.org.

CONCLUSION

We thank you for your patience in reading this handbook, which is the result of much thought, consultation, discussion, and prayer. We ask that you share it with your child/children, and explain the necessity for rules and regulations at all levels of society. Not every student needs to agree with every rule, but generally speaking students must accept the rules as being reasonable.

We believe that school should be a happy place – a place of learning, but also of love and laughter. School should also be a place of effort and enthusiasm for all that is good and beautiful and true. With your cooperation and support our school can be such a place.

We want the best for your child/children, as you do. Working together as partners in this great task of education, we-parents and faculty – can achieve the best. It is an undertaking based on faith, inspired by hope, and sustained by love. There is no limit to what faith, hope, and love can accomplish.

The principal reserves the right to amend this handbook and the school policies and procedures without prior notice. Every effort will be made to advise students and parents/guardians of such changes.



Please cut, sign and return this page:

I/We, the undersigned parents(s)/guardian(s) have read and understand the aforementioned statements outlined in this handbook and agree to abide by those policies, procedures, and practices of the Diocese of Camden and Saint Mary School as published in the Parent/Student Handbook of Saint Mary School. Saint Mary School reserves the right to require a parent to withdraw from this working partnership with the school.

Parent/Guardian _____
Date: _____
Signature

Parent/Guardian _____
Date: _____
Signature

