



St. Mark
LUTHERAN
CHURCH & SCHOOL

1515 Hillendahl
Houston, Texas 77055
stmarkhouston.org

School Handbook

Kindergarten – 8th Grade

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St. Mark is Joining Jesus on His Mission: Building Life-Changing Relationships

ST. MARK LUTHERAN SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mark Lutheran School is joining Jesus on His mission of building life-changing relationships thorough Scholarship, Ministry, and Leadership.

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

St. Mark Lutheran School is dedicated to helping each student discover and develop his individual abilities and potential. All children should recognize their uniqueness in the sense that they are “fearfully and wonderfully made” by God’s perfect design. At the same time, St. Mark recognizes the importance of preparing students to assume their role as citizens of this world and of God’s heavenly kingdom. Our school program therefore emphasizes the necessity of cooperation, teamwork, and respect for others. In essence, St. Mark Lutheran School strives to develop the following key relationships:

- the child in relationship to God
- the child in relationship to self
- the child in relationship to the community
- the child in relationship to the world created by God

HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL

St. Mark Lutheran School was organized in 1949 as a ministry of St. Mark Lutheran Church. In its more than 60 years dedicated to excellence in Christian education, the school has grown from a small parochial institution to one that now serves over 300 children from a variety of backgrounds and church affiliations. St. Mark is committed to the support and nurture of families, relying on God’s promise to guide us in this rapidly changing and sometimes confusing world.

As an institution of St. Mark Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, the school is under the overall control of the congregational Voter’s Assembly. The Board of Day School Ministries provides direct management and has the primary role of establishing school policy. The Principal is responsible for daily administration of the school operation and programs.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

“St. Mark Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.”

against should write to: Director, Civil Rights Division, MC W-206, Texas Department of Human Services, P.O. Box 149030, Austin, TX 78714-9030 or to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5960. Note: Discrimination complaints based on religion or political beliefs must be referred only to the Director, Civil Rights, Texas Department of Human Services.

ACCREDITATION

St. Mark Lutheran School is fully accredited by the Texas District School Accreditation Commission as well as by the National Lutheran School Accreditation Commission. The Texas Public School Accreditation Commission and the Texas Education Agency recognize and approve the accredited status of St. Mark Lutheran School.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND WORSHIP

Students and staff at St. Mark Lutheran School are encouraged to bear witness to their faith in the Living Lord, Jesus Christ, both at school and in the outside world. Christ's Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) is taken seriously at St. Mark.

Students receive daily spiritual instruction through classroom devotions and regular religious study. "Religion" is not taught merely as a course offering at St. Mark. Reverence for and knowledge of God's creation is emphasized in all aspects of the curriculum. Prayer is an integral part of each school day.

St. Mark strives to create a climate of freedom from guilt and freedom to serve God and others. We recognize the gift of new life in Christ. In grateful response we desire to "love one another" as we support and respect the individual gifts that God has given each one of us.

CHAPEL SERVICES

Regular weekly chapel services are designed to provide topical, relevant, and age-appropriate worship and instruction to all students at St. Mark. School unity is fostered through this corporate worship experience, and children learn how to properly conduct themselves in the House of God. Individual classes have the opportunity to lead chapel services throughout the year. Chapel offerings are directed toward missions, charitable institutions, or other special needs. Parents are invited to join the students and staff for the weekly chapel experience. Chapel services are on Wednesday unless otherwise announced.

- 8:10 am Kindergarten through 8th grade
- 9:00 am Early Childhood

Note: There are special chapels scheduled during the school year that combine preschool through 8th grade.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND GRIEVANCES

Students, parents, teachers, and administrators at St. Mark are encouraged to work in partnership toward the common goal of excellence in Christian education. This requires a climate of respect, understanding, and tolerance. When questions or conflicts arise, they should be addressed courteously and directly with the individual involved. The Biblical directive for conflict resolution at St. Mark Lutheran School is found in Matthew 18: 15-17.

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

It is clear from Scripture that a parent is to discuss concerns regarding a teacher's decisions or actions directly with the teacher. Other people should not be involved and the parent should avoid making negative comments to the student. The following steps should be followed for any grievance or matter of concern at St. Mark Lutheran School:

- Step 1: parent and teacher conference
- Step 2: parent and principal conference
- Step 3: appeal to the Board of Day School Ministries

DISCIPLESHIP EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that all school staff members, parents, and students will regularly attend worship services, Sunday school, and Bible classes either at St. Mark Lutheran Church or the church of their membership. As adults practice and model their Christian faith, they provide a powerful witness for children. St. Mark parents can set a positive example in the home, as volunteers at school, and in their attendance at school-related functions.

All school families, both member and non-member, are encouraged to grow as disciples of Christ as evidenced through the following:

- habits of regular worship attendance and involvement in Sunday school or Bible class groups
- sacrificial giving to the church of their membership

MEMBER TUITION POLICY

In order to qualify for the reduced member tuition rate at St. Mark Lutheran School:

1. At least one parent and the child(ren) must be officially listed on the membership roll of St. Mark Lutheran Church.
2. At least one parent and the child(ren) are expected to be “members in good standing” of St. Mark Lutheran Church. This implies regular worship attendance and the sacrificial giving of time, talent, and treasure. A weekly attendance rate of 60% is considered the minimum standard as calculated annually. Attendance may be counted at any of the regular weekly service, Sunday School, Bible Class, and or special services such as Advent, Lent, or Thanksgiving. Attendance is documented by completing the registration card and placing it in the offering plate during the service. **Note: Only one service each week may be counted toward the family’s attendance percentage.**

School families sign an annual covenant document explaining the tuition policy in detail and agreeing to the expectations contained therein.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Policies Regarding Financial Responsibility

*"The master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them."
Matthew 25:19*

It is understood that, while St. Mark Lutheran School is in ministry to children and their families, operating expenses must be met. St. Mark expects parents to partner with the school in achieving the mission and goals of the school, it is therefore expected that families will treat their financial obligations to the school, including its music conservatory and after-school programs, seriously. Families who fall behind in their financial obligations are asked to contact the Business Office as soon as a problem arises. Parents are urged to work in a partnership of mutual respect and understanding with the school administration to ensure that their financial obligations are met in a timely manner.

REGISTRATION

1. Families with account balances greater than 30 days in arrears will not be permitted to register for the subsequent year until the balances are settled.
2. Families who have registered for the subsequent year, but whose account balances fall greater than 30 days in arrears at the end of the third or fourth quarter will have registration revoked. Registration papers will be returned and the registration fee will be applied to the delinquent account.

TUITION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

St. Mark utilizes an online tuition management system through TADS. All families are required to sign up for this online billing system. Once registered, all families will receive an email with the TADS setup instructions. There is no additional charge for this online service for families who select the one-payment or two-payment option. Those families choosing to pay their tuition with ten installments will be assessed a \$45 annual fee.

Lunch account payment should not be included with the tuition payment.

TUITION INSURANCE

All families who do not prepay tuition by the first day of school are required to purchase a tuition recovery insurance policy. The premium for the policy, as listed in our Tuition Agreement, is due with you first tuition payment.

OVERDUE ACCOUNTS

Payments are due by the 25th of each month, with a 5 day grace period allowed. At this time, a \$29 late fee will be assessed by TADS on all overdue balances. For all amounts over 5 days past due, TADS shall send an email reminder of the amount past due. For all amounts over 30 days past due, St. Mark shall send a formal collection letter. For all amounts over 45 days past due, St. Mark shall send a notification of collection action and possible revocation of credit privileges will occur if payment is not received before the specified deadline.

Revocation of credit privileges may include one or more of the following:

1. Requirement to pay tuition in advance;
2. Requirement to pay tuition in cash or by money order;
3. Requirement to establish an automatic bank draft or automatic merchant card transaction; or
4. Termination of the student contract and expulsion of the student from St. Mark.

Failure to resolve overdue accounts may result in one or more of the following:

1. Withholding of report cards and school records;
2. Denial of registration for the coming year;
3. Denial of participation in graduation ceremonies;
4. Withholding of the graduation diploma;
5. Full legal and credit remedies including, but not limited to, transfer of accounts to attorneys or collection agencies.

RETURNED CHECKS, ACH DEBITS, CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

A charge of \$29 will be assessed on all returned payments. Returned checks are not re-deposited.

ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is essential to the progress of every student. Parents are expected to work with their children to ensure that they are present and on time for school.

SCHOOL HOURS 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Arrival after 8:00 a.m. and before **10:00 a.m.** is counted as a tardy.

Arrival after **10:00 a.m. and before 1:00 pm** is counted as a ½ -day absence.

Departure after 8:00 a.m. and before **10:00 a.m.** is counted as a full-day absence.

Departure after **10:00 a.m. and before 1:00 pm** is counted as a ½ day absence.

Departure after 1:00 the student is counted as present for the day.

Note: Students unable to attend school due to illness (including leaving school early) are not to participate in or otherwise attend after school functions. For example, a student leaving at noon with a fever is not to show up at a sporting event or after- school event that day.

ABSENCES - EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED

Absences for any of the following reasons will be considered excused: personal illness, serious illness or death in the family, medical appointments, school sponsored or approved outside activities, court appearances, or other unavoidable circumstances. If a student is absent due to illness more than three days consecutively then he/she must obtain a doctor's excuse.

Parents are discouraged from scheduling family vacations or outings that conflict with the school calendar.

A written request for an excused absence must be submitted to the principal one week prior to a planned absence. Failure to submit such a request will result in an automatic unexcused absence. The principal has the sole authority to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

When a student is absent for any reason, parents are asked to notify the school office by phone before 8:30 a.m. Parents will be called to verify the location of any child missing from school if no notification has been received. Parents must send a written note to the school office explaining the reason for a student's absence upon returning to school. A doctor's release may be required in cases of serious or contagious illness. (See Health & Safety Section.)

If a student misses more than 10% of an academic school year, the Board of Day School Ministry (governing board of school) must approve the student's enrollment for the next school year.

Parents may call the school office before 8:30 a.m. to request that daily assignments and materials be gathered or arrange to have a classmate do so. These may be picked up at the school office after 3:30 p.m. Students will receive full credit for make-up work due to an excused absence. Missing school due to any school-sanctioned activity (including sports tournaments, music competitions and academic competitions) will be considered an excused absence. **Two** days is allowed for each day absent to complete and turn in make-up assignments unless other arrangements have been made with the teacher. A grading penalty may be imposed for work turned in late. Each teacher will share department details concerning the grading penalty. *For grading policy when a student is suspended, see discipline section. Unexcused absences will result in late assignments and are also subject to a grading penalty.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents are encouraged to schedule medical and dental appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. If a student must leave school for an appointment, the teacher should be notified in advance. Parents must meet students in school office for departure and return students to the school office upon return.

CLASS TRIPS

Students in 6th through 8th grade participate in at least one class trip during each school year. These trips are planned as an integral part of the curriculum and are counted as regular instructional school days. All students are expected to attend. A portion of these expenses is covered by fees or special fund-raisers. Parents with financial concerns may confidentially discuss them with the principal.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Before 7:45 a.m. All students must be checked into Extended Care for proper supervision. Check with the Extended Care Office for contract and cost information.

Between 7:30 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. Kindergarten through 8th grade students may be dropped off in the north parking lot to wait outside the northwest school entrance where they will be supervised by school personnel. Pre-School and Pre-Kindergarten students should be checked into Extended Care or remain with their parents to be walked to class when the school doors open at **7:45 am**.

At **7:45 a.m.** school doors are open. Students may enter the building, take care of any necessary morning business, visit their lockers, and report to class. The tardy bell rings at **8:00 a.m.**, and the outside doors and gates are locked.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

LATE ARRIVAL AND TARDY POLICY

If a student is not in the classroom by the 8:00 a.m. bell, the student will be considered tardy. An admit slip must be obtained from the school office after 8:00 a.m. The school administration will determine whether the tardy is excused or unexcused. An excused tardy will be given for medical or dental appointments, academic or behavioral testing, and personal or family illness. Each student is allowed two excused tardies in each grading period without consequences. Six excused or unexcused tardies in one grading period will equal one unexcused absence.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Pre-school & Pre-kindergarten students are dismissed at 2:45 p.m. and Kindergarten students are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. to a parent or other designated adult for supervision. All 1st grade through 8th grade students are dismissed at 3:06 p.m. to their homerooms; at 3:15 p.m. students will be sent to their designated car pick-up location. All students must report directly to an adult or school staff member and may not remain on campus unsupervised at any time.

Car pick-up for grades 1 through 8 begins at 3:15 p.m. and concludes at 3:30 p.m. This is a drive-up procedure where cars enter from Hillendaghl Blvd. into the north parking lot for grades 1 through 8. The security gate along Hillendahl Blvd. is unlocked at 3:00 p.m. to allow cars to begin lining up. Parents arriving after 3:30 p.m. may pick up their children from Extended Care. In this case parents or other designated adults will park in the south parking lot and check in at the Reception Desk. Their child will be escorted from Extended Care to the Reception Desk. **Parking is not allowed in the following areas: along Hillendahl Blvd., in the school circle drive (which is a fire zone stated by City of Houston ordinance) or in the fire zone by the gym. Do not park in the handicap parking spaces unless you are authorized to do so.** Specific details and diagrams concerning car pick-up procedures are published at the beginning of the school year.

Students will be released only to their custodial parent(s), other adults specified on the registration forms, or designated car pool drivers. Regular car pool lists must be kept on file with the school office. Children going home with friends but not part of a regular car pool must bring a parental permission note to be given to the teacher. Students who walk or bicycle home must have a parental permission note on file in the school office. Students attending Extended Care or participating in scheduled after-school activities are dismissed to the adult in charge.

AFTER SCHOOL EXTENDED CARE

It is the parent's responsibility to keep the teacher informed of their child(ren's) after school activities. If a student is not registered in a supervised after school activity such as sports, music or tutoring classes, they must be in Extended Care. If the student is a JV or Varsity sports player, the child will go to the gym directly after school unless otherwise specified. The parent will be responsible for being there to pick the student up at the end of practice. Students are not allowed on campus unsupervised at any time after 3:30 pm. If a child is not picked up from sports practice in a timely manner, the coach will take the child to extended care.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

ILLNESS OR ACCIDENTS

St. Mark Lutheran School does not have the facilities or personnel to offer medical care beyond routine first aid treatment. If a student is injured or becomes ill at school, the school nurse or office personnel will comfort the child and contact a parent or guardian to pick him up. It is expected that the parent will do this within an hour of being contacted. Parents are responsible to ensure that each child has a current emergency response form on file with the school office with all parent contact numbers and several alternative numbers. In the unlikely event of a medical emergency, an ambulance may be called before the parent is notified. Our primary concern is for the health and safety of the child.

At the request of the school nurse, parents will be called to pick up a child if any of the following are observed:

1. fever of 100 degrees or higher
2. vomiting or diarrhea
3. excessive coughing
4. a significant rash
5. ongoing complaints of pain
6. any injury that appears serious
7. head lice or scabies
8. recurring or heavy yellow or green nasal discharge

9. pink eye

Our school is also required by the law to uphold the following recommendations and guidelines provided by the Texas State Department of Health. Both staff and parents must comply for the health of all of our children.

1. Chicken Pox: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school. The last crop of lesions must be scabbed over, and the child must be examined by the school nurse.
2. Diphtheria: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
3. Hepatitis: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school. By law, parents of classroom contacts must be notified by a school official.
4. Impetigo: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school. All lesions must be healed, and child must be examined by a school nurse prior to returning to school.
5. Measles: You must have physician's permit to re-enter school. Child must be free from rash, and child must be examined by a school nurse prior to returning to school.
6. Mononucleosis: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
7. Mumps: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
8. Pink Eye: May return to school after using physician prescribed eye drops/ointment for 24 hours. If it is viral in nature, child may not return until being evaluated by a school nurse, and it may be as long as 14 days.
9. Pediculosis (Lice): Children will be allowed to return to school once the prescribed treatment has been administered, and the child is checked **by the school nurse before re-entering class**.
10. Ringworm of scalp and skin: Child may return to school with a permit from the physician, provided prescribed treatment has been initiated, and the area is covered.
11. Streptococcal Infection: Also referred to as Strep throat, Scarletina, or Scarlet fever. Child may return to school with a physician's permit, AFTER having been free from symptoms (fever, sore throat, and rash) and on antibiotic therapy for 24 hours.
12. Tuberculosis: Child must have a physician's permit and must be taking the prescribed medication.
13. Whooping Cough: Child must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.

Children with contagious diseases must remain at home until a doctor releases them to return to school. Children with fever should be kept at home until they are fever-free **without medication** for 24 hours. When your child has a fever, keep him home for 24 hours after the fever has broken. For example, if the fever breaks in the afternoon on Monday, do not send your child to school until Wednesday. The temperature should remain below 99.0 for 24 hours. Parents are asked to use common sense and consideration when deciding whether a child is well enough to attend school. Although it may be inconvenient to keep a sick child home, the well being of the child, his classmates, and his teachers must take first priority.

MEDICATION POLICY

Many medications are sent to school for the nurse or, in her absence, a designated staff member, to give to students. Teachers do not dispense medication. For the safety of our students, the school staff will follow strict policies and procedures for administration of medication. No medication is supplied by the school. Medication purchased in a foreign country will not be given. All prescription and non-prescription medication must be kept in the nurse's office and must be registered with the nurse when a student arrives at school. A medication permission slip (either over the counter or prescription) must be completed by the parent and turned in along with the medication before it can be dispensed. These forms are available at Back to School Night, in the school office, in the back of this handbook **and on the school's website**. (Please feel free to make copies.) Please note that prescription medications also require the authorized signature of the prescribing physician.

Prescription Medication:

Prescription medication may only be administered when a signed Prescription Medication Form with complete dosage instructions has been received from the prescribing physician or dentist licensed to practice in the United States. Prescription medication must be provided by the parent/guardian in the original container appropriately labeled with the name of the student, name of the medication, and complete dosage instructions. In cases of repeated daily doses, parents are responsible for providing a one week supply, picking up the

empty container at the end of the week, and returning the container with the following weeks dosage to the nurse's office. *Note: For medications prescribed by a doctor that are given three times daily, you are encouraged to give one before school, one after school, and one at bedtime, unless otherwise advised by your physician.*

Non-prescription Medication:

Non-prescription medication may be administered when a signed Over-the-Counter Medication Form with dosage instructions written specifically for your child has been received from a parent/guardian. All over-the-counter medications must be FDA-approved and must be in the original container. Only the dosage indicated on the container will be given. If there is not an age-appropriate dosage on the container, then you must have a physician complete a Prescription Medication Form with dosage instructions in order for the medication to be given.

These procedures have been implemented with the safety and protection of the students in mind. Parents are encouraged to work with the school nursing staff to minimize any inconvenience.

MEDICAL RECORDS AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

State law mandates that immunization and health records be maintained on each child enrolled in school. Parents must complete a confidential Health History Information Form for each child enrolled at St. Mark. This information is confidential. Parents must notify the school office of any changes in a child's health status, new medications, emergency phone numbers or addresses, or physician and insurance information.

Parents must supply a complete immunization health record from a licensed physician. Immunizations must be current according to the Texas Department of Health requirements. You can view these requirements on the website at www.dshs.state.tx.us.

To claim exclusion for reasons of conscience including a religious belief, a signed affidavit must be obtained from the Texas department of Health, Immunization Division in Austin and presented to the School Nurses Office. The affidavit will be valid for a two-year period.

To claim an exclusion for medical reasons the student must present a statement signed by the child's physician (MD or DO), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the child, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child. Unless it is written in the statement that a life-long condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

An annual sports physical is required for all 5th through 8th grade students who are participating in team sports at St. Mark (including cheerleading). In addition, a scoliosis screening is required for all 6th grade students. Audio-visual screenings were mandated in accordance with the Special Senses and Disorders Act of 1983. For the convenience of our school families, St. Mark engages a certified screener. **Hearing & Vision screening is required of the following: 4yr. olds by Sept. 1, Kindergartners, 1st, 3rd, 5th, & 7th graders, and any other first-time entrants from out of state.** If parents elect to have this screening done elsewhere, it must be performed by an accredited screener and a full, detailed report must be provided to the school office. For new students, the screening must be done during the first semester at St. Mark.

CAMPUS VISITORS

Custodial parents are welcome to visit the school. We allow parents to visit one time per month, unless serving in an approved volunteer capacity. Many of our parents also perform a variety of volunteer duties that enhance our overall day school ministry. For the safety and protection of everyone on the St. Mark campus, parents and other visitors are asked to sign in at the welcome center. Parents who wish to observe their child's class or conference with a teacher or administrator should make an appointment in advance with his/her teacher.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

A non-custodial parent, unless restricted by a court order, will be allowed access to all student records, report cards, and disciplinary action reports. The parent will also be permitted to participate in conferences and other routine school activities, involving parents, unless restricted by court order.

The non-custodial parent is the parent who has neither the right to designate the child's residence nor the right to receive child support under the divorce decree or court order. St. Mark reserves the right to make the decision as to who is non-custodial for purposes of this policy.

The non-custodial parent may not visit the student on campus during the school day nor may the student be released to the non-custodial parent without written permission from the custodial parent. A certified copy of the court order restricting the rights of the non-custodial parent must be provided to the school office if the custodial parent wishes to prohibit the distribution of information to or restrict school visitations by the non-custodial parent. A student may, however, be released to the non-custodial parent if the decree specifies that visits begin at the time school is released, but only on days of possession.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

The laws of the State of Texas mandate that any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect observed by medical or school personnel be reported to Child Protective Services. Suspicion may be aroused by the observation or assessment of a child's behavior, conversation, physical appearance, or emotional condition. In such instances, a timely report must be made, and an independent CPS investigation will be conducted. St. Mark Lutheran School is required *by law* to comply with these procedures.

If any school family needs assistance with parenting issues or any other difficult personal situation, the school principal or any of the church pastors may be contacted for a confidential discussion or referral. The support of families and care for our children is everyone's job at St. Mark.

BAD WEATHER/CLOSING OF SCHOOL

School closings due to bad weather or other emergency conditions are announced on local television and radio stations. St. Mark Lutheran School will notify the media in such an event. Parents should check for school closing broadcasts in cases of severe weather or other emergencies. Typically, St. Mark closes when Spring Branch Independent School District is closed.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

St. Mark follows local city ordinances concerning emergency drills and evacuation procedures. Fire, tornado, disaster, and lock-down drills are conducted on a regularly scheduled basis.

ACADEMICS

CURRICULUM

St. Mark Lutheran School offers a challenging academic curriculum centered on the Christian faith. Our course of study is designed to equip students both intellectually and spiritually as disciples of Christ. The curriculum and textbooks are reviewed on a five-year cycle in order to provide current and high-quality materials in support of the overall academic program.

The basic program of study at St. Mark includes the following:

Art, Composition, Computer, English, Mathematics (including Pre-Algebra and Algebra), Memory, Physical Education, Reading, Christian Religion, Science (including Integrated Physics and Chemistry) Social Studies, Spanish, Spelling, and Vocal Music or Band.

Exploratory course offerings are also available to Middle School students. Some of these are required and some are elective.

STUDENT CHALLENGES

The academic program at St. Mark is geared toward the average to above average student. As a private Christian school, St. Mark does not have the depth of resources available in the public sector to meet the unique educational needs of all children. Students dealing with certain learning disabilities, behavioral and emotional disorders, or developmental programs may be better served in a different type of program. The faculty and staff at St. Mark care deeply about all of our children. We stand ready to assist families with referrals for outside testing and remedial therapy as the individual situation may require. Parents are encouraged to discuss special needs or concerns with their child's teacher.

HOMEWORK

The challenging program at St. Mark Lutheran School has always required that some studying be done at home. This is necessary for accomplishing our immediate goals, and it is important in developing beneficial study habits for future education. The amount of homework varies based on grade level and the ability and study habits of the student. Parents can help by providing encouragement and a quiet place to study. Our teaching staff strives to work as a team to balance homework assignments and testing dates between subjects. Since the classrooms in grades 6-8 are departmentalized, there may be overlap. The student may have to plan his study time accordingly and in advance. If a parent recognizes a student is having difficulty with the completion of assignments, contacting the appropriate teacher is encouraged. If a child is absent due to illness, the child will be allowed two days for each school day missed to complete his/her missed homework.

GRADE SCALE

Grades 1 through 8 use the following grading scale for all academic core subjects:

95 - 100 =	A	85 - 86 =	B-	74 - 75 =	D+
93 - 94 =	A-	83 - 84 =	C+	71 - 73 =	D
91 - 92 =	B+	78 - 82 =	C	70 =	D-
87 - 90 =	B	76 - 77 =	C-	0 - 69 =	F

An evaluation of "E" (exceptional), "S" (satisfactory), "N" (needs improvement) or "F" (failing) may be given for some non-core subjects for grades 1 through 4.

Report cards are issued at the end of each 9-week quarterly grading period. Midterm progress reports are available for grades 1-8 after 4 ½ weeks each quarter.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled at the discretion of the teacher or parent based on the progress of the individual student. Parents may schedule a conference with the teacher at any time during the school year to discuss specific issues or concerns.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A St. Mark student who is academically at risk as of the mid-term progress report will be placed on academic probationary status and his/her progress will be reviewed by the teachers and administration. The parent will be notified of this status. The teacher, student, and parent should meet together to develop a plan of intervention.

A new student may be accepted at St. Mark Lutheran School on academic probationary status. This is done at the discretion of the principal based on progress reports or standardized test results from the former school. Failure to meet the terms of the probationary status may result in dismissal from St. Mark.

Students on academic probation will be ineligible to participate in school sponsored extra-curricular activities. Detailed eligibility requirements may be found in the eligibility section of this handbook and also the athletic handbook.

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher if a student is experiencing ongoing difficulty with the academic program at St. Mark. Open discussion and early intervention are critical in finding an appropriate solution.

Evaluation and testing for academic problems and learning disabilities are available through the student's local public school district and through various private organizations. Parents may obtain a referral through discussion with their child's teacher or school principal.

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

Students in grades 5 through 8 are recognized for their academic achievements through the St. Mark Honor Roll program. Eligibility is based on grade average and weighting of core subject areas during each quarterly grading period. A grade Below 85% in any subject disqualifies a student for honor roll status.

High Honor Roll	95% average or better
Honor Roll	90% average or better

Grade 8 Valedictorian and Salutatorian

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian are determined based on core subject areas averages from Grade 5 (4 quarters), Grade 6 (4 quarters), Grade 7 (4 quarters), and Grade 8 (1st 3 quarters). Core subjects are Religion, Literature, English, History, Mathematics, and Science.

Note: All students considered for Valedictorian and Salutatorian must have attended St. Mark for at least one full year.

PROMOTION POLICY

St. Mark students in Pre School (**age 3 by September 1st**), Pre Kindergarten (**age 4 by September 1st**) and Kindergarten (**age 5 by September 1st**) are recommended for promotion to the next grade level based on their overall academic progress and readiness as determined by the teacher and administration. Social, emotional, and physical development are considered along with academic and intellectual ability. Teachers and parents should communicate throughout the year to discuss the child's progress. The gift of a little extra time to grow can greatly improve the chance for future success for some young children.

Students in grades 1 through 8 are promoted based primarily on their academic performance. Students must attain an average of 70 or above based on the final yearly grades in the core academic subjects (religion, math, science, history, and language arts which include Spelling, Reading, English and Handwriting). A failing final grade (below 70) in any academic core subject must be made up in an approved summer school program in order to progress to the next grade level. St. Mark allows a maximum of two core subjects to be taken in summer school. The parent and student will be required to confer with the principal to agree on an approved plan of remediation. Evidence of satisfactory completion of the program must be submitted to the principal. Failure to comply will result in repetition of the previous grade level.

If a student misses more than 10% of an academic school year, the Board of Day School Ministry (governing board of school) must approve that student's enrollment for the next school year.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Experiences that complement the school's formal learning academic program. These include:

- Private School Interscholastic Association (PSIA)
- Instrumental and vocal concerts
- Music theater performances
- Science, Social Studies, and Art Fairs
- Class trips and field trips
- Bible Bowl
- Spelling Bee
- Geography Bee
- Fields Day – Grades 1-4
- Field Day – Grades 5-8

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

St. Mark offers additional programs for the benefit of the students' development and enjoyment. These include:

- The St. Mark Music Conservatory (private lessons in vocal and instrumental music)
- Athletics (5th – 8th Grade) soccer, volleyball, cross country, basketball, swimming, track and field, tennis, softball, baseball
- West Houston Christian Sports Association (PK-4th Grade) soccer, basketball, softball, baseball
- Special Extended Care Programs
- Boy Scouts
- Girls Scouts

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND GOAL

St. Mark Lutheran School considers physical education and athletics essential elements in the total development of its students. Our goal is to give every student the physical, intellectual, and spiritual tools to lead a healthy life and to make a difference in the lives of others.

We promote health and fitness first, followed by skill development, and competitive athletics. This is accomplished through physical education classes, daily Extended Care opportunities, and team sports. St. Mark's physical education program is grounded upon I Corinthians 6:20 where we are called to honor God with our bodies, which are temples of the Holy Spirit. The athletic programs embrace Colossians 3:23 which says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

The physical education classes focus on health, fitness, and skill development. Students in grades 5 through 8 are required to purchase and wear a P.E. uniform. Uniforms are ordered through the school office. Labeling the students last name on the designated name plates is required. First through eighth grade also participate in yearly field day events.

DRESS CODE AND GROOMING POLICY

Personal grooming and style are largely family issues, but St. Mark Lutheran School has a legitimate interest in maintaining appropriate dress and grooming standards of its student body. The dress code and grooming standards at St. Mark Lutheran School are designed to enhance general school discipline and minimize distractions. The support of students, parents, and faculty in upholding these standards is expected and appreciated.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

St. Mark students in Kindergarten through 8th grade wear uniforms to school. Students are expected to arrive at and leave the campus dressed according to uniform policy. School uniform attire will be worn during Extended Care. A complete list of approved uniform clothing items is available in the school office and on the website under the topic parent resources. St. Mark's official uniform supplier is Parker Uniforms, 1110 N. Post Oak, Houston, TX 77055. Their phone number is 713-681-4045. All uniform clothing must be purchased from Parker Uniforms.

The black uniform sweater or sweatshirt may be worn inside the buildings during the school day. No other sweatshirt or sweat shirt or may be worn during the school day. Eighth grader students are approved to wear the traditional eighth grade class sweatshirt with the exception of during chapel services.

Only the current official St. Mark annual school theme T-shirt may be worn on Fridays or if fitting with other special dress days authorized by the principal.

RESALE STORE

For your convenience we have a school uniform resale shop. You are able to exchange clothing items for the same number of items, or we ask that you donate a small amount for the items that you take. A suggested donation price list is posted on the inside of the uniform doors. Inquire in the school office for access.

GROOMING AND DRESS STANDARDS

1. Students at St. Mark Lutheran School are expected to adhere to the following personal grooming and dress standards:
2. Boys' hair should be cut above the collar.
3. Boys' and girls' hair should be clean and well groomed, out of eyes, and not below the eyebrows. Style and color should not be extreme or distracting. No colored streaks or spray-in coloring.
4. All students are expected to wear athletic shoes, loafers, or oxfords. Boots, moccasins, open-toed shoes, open-heeled shoes, or Ugs are not allowed. Shoes with eyelets must be laced and tied (coil laces acceptable).
5. Appropriate foot wear should be worn at all times. Solid color socks and tights: white, black, dark green. Only girls may wear tights. "No Show" socks may be worn. No Leggings. No Argyle designs.
6. All shirts must be tucked in while on school campus. Exception: girls chapel day dress top.
7. All shirts must have the St. Mark Logo. The pants should have the Parker Uniform tag showing.
8. Smooth black belts are required for all students in grades 2 and above. On any clothing item with belt loops, the belt must be worn inside the loops. Shorts and pants should fit securely at the waist.
9. Girls' skirts, shorts and culottes should be of a modest length. Girls may not roll up the waistband of their skirts. Skirt length can be no shorter than 3" above the top of the kneecap front and back. Shorts should be no shorter than 5" above the top of the knee.
10. Girls should be fitted so no skin is showing when arms are raised. Shirts should not be too tight.
11. Coats should not be worn inside the classrooms. The black uniform sweater or black sweatshirt may be worn inside the building for additional warmth.
12. Hats or caps are not allowed inside the building during the school day.
13. Appropriate, modest jewelry may be worn. Visible body-piercing jewelry other than pierced earrings for girls is not allowed. No upper ear piercing is allowed. Boys may not wear earrings.
14. No visible tattoos or temporary tattoos.
15. T-shirts worn under uniform shirts must be white with no lettering or design. The sleeves must not extend beyond the uniform shirtsleeve.
16. Uniforms must be clean, properly fitting, and in good repair. Clothing items with holes, torn seams, missing buttons, etc. must be repaired or replaced.
17. There may be a need to purchase uniforms or have uniform alterations (i.e. short, skirt, pant length) during the school year due to the student's physical growth.

If you are in doubt about any of these dress standards; please ask in advance. Administration will have the final say.

Dress Code Violations and Consequences

Kindergarten – Grade 1 The classroom teacher will attend to any dress code violations by contacting the parent.

Grades 2-4	1 st Violation – Warning
	2 nd Violation – Warning
	3 rd Violation – Loss of Recess
	4 th Violation – Conference between parent and principal
Grades 5-8	1 st Violation – Warning
	2 nd Violation – Loss of one free dress/jeans day privilege
	3 rd Violation – Loss of one free dress/jeans day privilege
	4 th Violation – Conference between parent and principal

A Dress Code Violation form will be sent home to be signed by a parent and returned to the classroom/homeroom teacher the following day. All dress code violations are forgiving at the end of each semester.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

St. Mark Lutheran School does not equate discipline with punishment. Our goal is to teach Christian values, self-control, orderliness, and respect. As directed in Scripture, children are to be guided in the development of self-discipline, so that they may grow toward behavioral and moral choices compatible with a living Christian faith. The overall purpose of discipline at St. Mark is to literally “disciple” or train students to model Christ-like behavior. We want students to act, not out of fear, but in loving response to God’s sacrificial love for all of His children.

PARTNERSHIP IN DISCIPLINE

St. Mark Lutheran School is committed to assisting parents in their God-given responsibility to educate their children - spiritually, academically, socially, and physically. This requires a learning environment in which disciplinary standards are understood, supported by both the school and the family, and followed by the school community as a whole. Everyone contributes to the creation of a safe and positive climate where learning can take place. Teachers, students, parents, administrators, and the church must work in a partnership of mutual support and respect.

CHRIST AS THE DISCIPLINARY MODEL

To be a Christian means literally to be “a little Christ”. At St. Mark Lutheran School, students, teachers, and parents are asked to remember that all of their actions bear witness (one way or another) to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. None of us is expected to be perfect, and our failings can be handled in the same spirit of love and forgiveness that God freely bestows on us. Everyone in the St. Mark school family can ask the question “What would Jesus do?” in an effort to achieve self-discipline.

THE FOUR SCHOOL STANDARDS

Four basic standards provide the foundation of the disciplinary program at St. Mark Lutheran School:

- Respect for those in authority
- Respect for the rights of others
- Respect for the school property and the property of others
- Respect for the teaching and learning process

Adhering to these standards means that students at St. Mark will:

- Treat each teacher and fellow student with respect
- Treat school property with pride and care
- Fulfill class assignments as instructed
- Take care to do their best work

REINFORCEMENT OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

School discipline has traditionally focused on correcting or punishing “bad” behavior. Logical, predictable consequences should result from poor behavioral choices. It is equally important, however, to acknowledge and reinforce good behavior. Children who receive intentional, positive affirmation for “doing the right thing” are more likely to continue doing it. Teachers at St. Mark are encouraged to develop simple, age-appropriate incentives to affirm positive classroom and individual behavior.

BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES Kindergarten – Fourth Grade

Consistency is critical in guiding children toward good, long-term behavioral choices. Students at St. Mark must clearly understand that certain behaviors will be met with certain predictable consequences.

Consequences of misconduct will be determined by the seriousness of the offense, the student’s age, and the frequency of misconduct.

Steps of Discipline

Minor discipline infractions will be dealt with according to classroom procedures (rules, rewards/consequences). Parents will receive these in writing at the beginning of the school year. Consistent classroom disruption or more serious discipline issues will be dealt with according to the steps outlined below.

Behavior Notice

- A Behavior Notice form will be sent home notifying parents that a child has misbehaved. This must be signed by the parents and returned to the teacher the next day.
- Examples of offenses that warrant a Behavior Notice include:

- Chewing Gum
- Unauthorized eating in class
- Not in assigned area
- Lack of cooperation
- Excessive talking
- Annoying others
- Discourtesy to adults or classmates

Level I

1. A Level I infraction is issued when a student receives the third Behavior Notice. A Level I behavior write-up carries the automatic consequence of after-school detention. Parents will receive a Level I Discipline Referral form notifying them of the infraction and the date child will serve detention. This Level I form must be signed and returned to the teacher the following day.
2. Detention will be handled in the following manner:
 - a. Students will report to an assigned classroom on the following Tuesday or Thursday afternoon after receiving the Level I write-up. Teachers will monitor detention on a rotating schedule. Students will serve detention from 3:30-4:30
 - b. A student will be assigned an additional detention if he/she does not cooperate or if the student is late to arrive at the detention room.
 - c. If a student is absent, he/she will serve detention the following Tuesday or Thursday.
3. If a second Level I is issued, the parents will be contacted by the teacher for a phone conference.
4. A third Level I offense will automatically result in a Level II Discipline Referral

Level II

1. A Level II Discipline Referral will result in an automatic visit with the principal. The principal will meet with the student and decide what action will follow. The administration will be responsible for parental notification of a Level II offense and the resulting disciplinary action.
2. A student receiving a Level II Discipline Referral will receive disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the principal.

Examples of Level II behaviors include:

- Three Level I Discipline Referrals
- Use of offensive language or gestures
- Fighting
- Insubordination or defiance of those in authority
- Lying, cheating, or stealing
- Computer Misuse
- Vandalism
- Skipping class or school
- Physical, verbal, or sexual harassment
- Possession of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or weapons

Consequences of Level II behaviors include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Disciplinary probation
- Work detail suspension
- Restriction from class field trips or extra-curricular activities
- Implementation of a behavioral contract
- Notification of authorities
- Professional counseling
- Suspension
- Expulsion

A student who has a second Level II Discipline Referral will be placed on a Behavior Contract and Disciplinary Probation. Any additional offenses may jeopardize the student's enrollment at St. Mark for the following year. Additionally, breaking the terms of a Behavior Contract may result in immediate expulsion.

Please note that the discipline process described above builds upon prior offenses and remains in effect throughout the school year.

Suspension

A student who is suspended from school will not be allowed on the school grounds, including after-school activities, and will be required to make up all work missed during the suspension period. The maximum grade allowed on homework assignments is a 70%, while the maximum grade allowed on any missed tests or projects is a 75%.

Disciplinary Probation

Students who are placed on disciplinary probation are not allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activities (i.e. sports, drama, music, PSIA) or go on any field trips for two weeks.

Behavior Contract

Students who have repeated behavior patterns that disrupt classroom learning will be required to have a behavior contract. Consequences of not following the terms of the behavior contract may jeopardize the student's enrollment in the school or may result in immediate expulsion.

Expulsion:

If extensive, documented attempts to correct a student's misbehavior have failed, if the misbehavior persists, or if the offense is so serious as to warrant, the student will be expelled from school for the remainder of the year and will not be invited to return for the following year.

Examples of Discipline Policy:

Scenario 1:

Student A is written up for chewing gum. The teacher completes a Behavior Notice and Student A has to serve a consequence determined by the teacher.

Student A is written up a second time for chewing gum. He receives his second Behavior Notice and has to serve a consequence determined by the teacher.

Student A is written up a third time for excessive talking. As this is his third offense, he receives a Level I Discipline Referral and is required to serve an after-school detention.

Student A is written up again for chewing gum. At this point he receives a second Level I Discipline Referral and must serve an after-school detention.

Student A is written up for chewing gum again. As this is his third Level I, he now is at an automatic Level II Discipline Referral. At this point he must meet with the principal. In this instance, Student A is required to serve a supervised work detention.

Scenario 2:

Student B is caught vandalizing school property. As this is a Level II offense, the student is sent to the principal, who completes the Level II Discipline Referral. In this instance, Student B must serve a one-day suspension.

In all disciplinary matters, the administration reserves the right to make the final decision regarding discipline. The administration will always do its best to be fair and consistent (while recognizing differences between students and specific situations) and to make decisions on the basis of what is best for the entire student body. It should be noted that a paramount concern of the administration is the safety of the students, school personnel and property. In the event the administration feels that a situation exists which would jeopardize any of these things, the administration reserves the right to take steps it deems necessary to ensure this.

BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES MIDDLE SCHOOL

Steps of Discipline

Minor discipline infractions will be dealt with according to classroom procedures. These procedures are reviewed by the teacher with each class at the beginning of the year and sent home for parents to review.. Consistent classroom disruption or more serious discipline issues will be dealt with as follows:

Behavior Notice

- The first step in the discipline process for middle school is initiated by the completion of a Behavior Notice. A Behavior Notice form will be sent home notifying parents that a child has misbehaved. This form must be signed by the parents and returned to the teacher the next day.

The consequence of receiving the first and second Behavior Notices is a consequence determined by the teacher.

- Upon the third offense, a Level 1 referral will be given.
- These notices will be given for the following type of offenses:
 - Chewing Gum
 - Unauthorized eating in class
 - Not in assigned area
 - Lack of cooperation
 - Excessive talking
 - Annoying others
 - Discourtesy to adults or classmates

Level I

1. A Level I infraction is issued when a student receives the third Behavior Notice. A Level I behavior write-up carries the automatic consequence of after-school detention. Parents will receive a Level I Discipline Referral form notifying them of the infraction and the date the child will serve detention. This Level I form must be signed and returned to the teacher the following day. If the Behavior Notice form is not signed and returned the next day, the student will receive a second behavior notice.
2. Detention will be handled in the following manner:
 - a. The student will report to an assigned classroom on the following Tuesday or Thursday afternoon after receiving the Level I write-up. A teacher is scheduled to monitor the detention. Students will serve detention from 3:30-4:30. There will be no talking or leaving the room.

- b. A student will not participate in any extra-curricular activities on the day of he/she is serving an assigned detention.
- c. A student will be assigned an additional detention if he/she does not cooperate or if the student is late to arrive at the detention room.
- d. If a student is absent, he/she will serve detention the following Tuesday or Thursday.
3. If a second Level I is issued, the parents will be contacted by the teacher for a phone conference.
4. A third Level I offense will automatically result in a Level II Discipline Referral

Level II

1. The third offense of a Level I write-up will automatically result in a Level II Discipline Referral.
2. The first Level II Discipline Referral will result in a half-day in school suspension.
 - a. A parent will be required to incur the cost of a substitute at \$45.00 (half day rate) to supervise the student for this in school suspension.
 - b. The student will not be allowed to participate in any field trips or after school activities the day the in school suspension is served
 - c. The student is responsible for getting the missed work from all teachers. All work is due when the student returns to the classroom.
3. The administration will be responsible for parental notification of a Level II offense
4. The second Level II Discipline Referral will result in an automatic out-of-school suspension.
 - a. A student who receives a second Level II Referral will be required to meet with his/her parents and the principal. At this time the principal will determine the length of the suspension.
 - b. A student will be placed on Disciplinary Probation, which means a two-week suspension from all extra-curricular activities and field trips.
 - c. A student will be required to enter into a Behavior Contract. Any additional offenses may jeopardize the student's enrollment at St. Mark for the following year. Additionally, breaking the terms of a Behavior Contract may result in immediate expulsion.
 - d. The student is responsible to getting all missed school work from all teachers. All school work is due when the student returns to the classroom.

Please note that the discipline process described above builds upon prior offenses and remains in effect throughout the school year.

Examples of Level II behaviors include:

- Three Level I Discipline behaviors
- Use of offensive language or gestures
- Fighting
- Insubordination or defiance of those in authority
- Lying, cheating, or stealing
- Computer Misuse
- Vandalism
- Skipping class, school or detention
- Physical, verbal, or sexual harassment
- Possession of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or weapons

Suspension

A student who is suspended from school will not be allowed on the school grounds, including after-school activities, and will be required to make up all work missed during the suspension period. The maximum grade allowed on homework assignments is a 70%, while the maximum grade allowed on any missed tests or projects is a 75%.

Disciplinary Probation

Students who are placed on disciplinary probation are not allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activities (i.e. sports, drama, music, PSIA) or go on any field trips for two weeks.

Behavior Contract

Students who have repeated behavior patterns that disrupt classroom learning will be required to have a behavior contract. The administration will meet with the student and parents to discuss the terms of the behavior contract, and all parties must agree to the terms and sign the document. Consequences of not following the terms of the behavior contract may jeopardize the student's enrollment in the school or may result in immediate expulsion.

Expulsion

If extensive, documented attempts to correct a student's misbehavior have failed, if the misbehavior persists, or if the offense is so serious as to warrant, the principal will ask the student to leave the school.

In all disciplinary matters, the administration reserves the right to make the final decision regarding discipline. The administration will always do its best to be fair and consistent (while recognizing differences between students and specific situations) and to make decisions on the basis of what is best for the entire student body. It should be noted that a paramount concern of the administration is the safety of the students, and school personnel and property. In the event the administration feels that a situation exists which would jeopardize any of these things, the administration reserves the right to take steps it deems necessary to ensure this.

Grievance Procedure

If a student, parent, or staff member has questions or concerns regarding the behavior of another (including disciplinary action by teacher or administrator or the policy under which an action is taken), he/she should follow the principles given in Scripture as state below:

1. Go directly to the person involved and discuss the matter with the teacher. Be straightforward and forgiving, do not bring grievances to others. "... first be reconciled to your brother..." (Matthew 5:24) "Moreover, if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone..." (Matthew 18:15)
2. If the matter is not resolved in discussion with the other, take the matter to the next higher authority, the principal. "...take with you one or two or more, that in the mouth or two or three witnesses every word may be established." (Matthew 18:16)
3. If the matter cannot be resolved at other levels, a hearing before the Board of Day School Ministries may be requested. The decision reached at this level is final. "...take with you one or two or more, that in the mouth or two or three witnesses every word may be established." (Matthew 18:16)

Steps to follow:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Resolve with the Teacher</u> If satisfaction is not reached, then:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Appeal to the Principal</u> If satisfaction is not reached, then:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Appeal to the Board of Day School Ministries</u> The decision reached at this level is final.</p>

COUNSELING AND INTERVENTION

St. Mark Lutheran School will not tolerate the possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances on campus. An age-appropriate curriculum is in place to educate students about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. Confidential referral for counseling and rehabilitation resources is available to parents and students who identify concerns in the family and seek assistance.

THE SCHOOL HONOR CODE AND CHEATING

Cheating is a serious offense, both for those who give and those who take information. Students at St. Mark are expected to follow the school honor code to do their own work to the best of their ability. The consequences of cheating at St. Mark Lutheran School are serious. They may include a grading penalty of zero on the assignment in question, automatic failure of the subject for the grading period, placement of the student on disciplinary probation status, conference with the principal, suspension, and expulsion.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

St. Mark Lutheran School does not employ corporal punishment as a means of effective discipline.

NUISANCE ITEMS

Parents are asked to help ensure that nuisance items are not brought to school. These include (but are not limited to) gum, candy, trading cards, comic books, inappropriate magazines, matches, pocketknives, radios, tape or CD players, electronic games, squirt guns, dolls, games, toys beepers, handheld electronic devices. These items may be confiscated and will be returned at the discretion of the teacher or administration.

Students are not to chew gum at any time during the school day, during car pick-up, or at Extended Care.

GENERAL RULES

The following applies to all students in the building.

General School Rules

1. Walk on the right side of the hallway. Single file
2. Use a quiet voice in the learning areas.
3. No toys are allowed to be brought by students in grade 4-8
Grades K-3 may bring toys to be used as the teacher directs. No playground or athletic equipment should be brought to school without teacher permission.
4. No electronic equipment should be brought to school.
5. Cell phones are allowed but can only be used before 7:45am and after 3:30pm. Cell phones are not to be used while the student is in Extended Care.
6. Respect school property and the property of others. All is God's property.
7. Listen to all in authority.
8. No loitering in the hallways.
9. No gum or candy is allowed in the building.
10. No over-aggressive games will be allowed.
11. No fighting.
12. No cheating
13. No cursing or substandard language is allowed.
14. Ice Cream can only be eaten in the lunchroom.
15. Students are allowed to have water bottles with water in them.
16. Students will respectfully address all adults that enter the classroom
17. No horseplay in car pick-up line.

Cafeteria Rules

1. Follow the directions of the teacher/adults.
2. Speak in soft voices. Lower grades quiet for 1st ten minutes.
3. Do not throw food.
4. Clean up your area.
5. Wait quietly to be dismissed.
6. No fast food is allowed in the lunchroom.
7. Line up to walk to class/recess.

End of Recess

1. Stop play when the teacher signals.
2. Walk to line up at designated spot.
3. All talking stops at entrance to the building.

Hallway Rules

1. Walk on the right side of the hallway.
2. Always walk; do not run.
3. Follow the directions of the teacher.
4. Do not talk in a quiet zone. (*School hallways*)

Telephone – Students may use only the telephone in the school office. They must present a telephone pass from their teacher.

Nurse Pass – Students must have a Nurse Pass to visit the nurse.

Discipline Policy Overview Kindergarten-Fourth Grade

Behavior Notice

A child who commits the following offenses will receive a Behavior Notice:

- Chewing Gum
- Unauthorized eating in class
- Not in assigned area
- Lack of cooperation
- Excessive talking
- Annoying others
- Discourtesy to adults or classmates

The consequence of receiving a Behavior Notice is determined by the classroom teacher.

Three Behavior Notice write-ups will then result in a Level I Discipline Referral.

Level I

Three Behavior Notices result in a Level I Discipline referral and automatic after-school detention.

Parents will receive a Level I Discipline Referral form notifying them of the infraction and the date detention is to be served.

Detention Guidelines:

- Students will serve detention from 3:30-4:30 on the following school day afternoon.
- Additional detention will be assigned if student does not cooperate or if student is late.
- If a student is absent, detention will be served the following school day.

A third offense will automatically result in a Level II.

Level II

A Level II write-up will result in an automatic visit with the principal, who will meet with the student and decide what action will follow.

Examples of Level II behaviors include:

- Three Level I Discipline Referrals
- Use of offensive language or gestures
- Fighting
- Lying, cheating, or stealing
- Insubordination or defiance of those in authority
- Computer misuse
- Vandalism
- Skipping class, school or detention
- Physical, verbal, or sexual harassment
- Possession of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or weapons

Consequences of Level II behaviors may include:

- Disciplinary probation,
- Work detail detention,
- Restriction from class field trips or extra-curricular activities,
- Contact authorities,
- Professional counseling
- Implementation of a behavioral contract,
- Suspension, or
- Expulsion

Repeated Level II offenses

A student who continues to have disciplinary concerns and receives repeated Level II write-ups during the course of the semester will be placed on a Behavior Contract and Disciplinary Probation.

Behavior Contract:

Students who have repeated behavior patterns that disrupt classroom learning will be required to have a behavior contract.

Consequences of not following the terms of the behavior contract may jeopardize the student's enrollment in the school or may result in immediate expulsion.

Disciplinary Probation:

Students who are placed on disciplinary probation are not allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activities (i.e. music, drama, PSIA, sports) or go on any field trips for two weeks.

Suspension:

- **A student who is suspended from school is required to make up all work missed during the suspension period.**
- The maximum grade allowed on homework assignments is a 70%, while the maximum grade allowed on any missed tests or projects is a 75%.

Expulsion:

If extensive documented attempts to correct a student's misbehavior have failed, if the misbehavior persists, or if the offense is so serious as to warrant, the principal will ask the student to leave the school.

Discipline Policy Overview Middle School

Behavior Notice

A child who commits the following offenses will receive a Behavior Notice and a consequence determined by the teacher.:

- Chewing Gum
- Unauthorized eating in class
- Not in assigned area
- Lack of cooperation
- Excessive talking
- Annoying others
- Discourtesy to adults or classmates

Three Behavior Notice write-ups will then result in a Level I Discipline Referral.

Level I

Three Behavior Notices result in a Level I Discipline referral and automatic after-school detention.

Parents will receive a Level I Discipline Referral form notifying them of the infraction and the date detention is to be served.

Detention Guidelines:

- Students will serve detention from 3:30-4:30 on the next school day afternoon.
- Detentions will not be excused for any extra-curricular activities. Written work will be "checked" for nonsense.
- Additional detention will be assigned if student does not cooperate or if student is late.
- If a student is absent, detention will be served the following school day.

A third offense will automatically result in a Level II.

Level II

First Level II

The first Level II write-up will result in a half-day in-school suspension.

The parents will be required to incur the cost of a substitute at \$45 (half-day rate) to supervise the student for this in-school suspension.

The student will not be able to participate in any after-school activities or go on any class field trips that day.

The student is responsible for getting the missed work from all teachers. All work is due when the student returns to the classroom.

Examples of Level II behaviors include:

- Three offenses of Level I behaviors
- Use of offensive language or gestures
- Fighting
- Insubordination or defiance of those in authority
- Lying, cheating, or stealing
- Vandalism
- Computer misuse
- Skipping class, school or detention
- Physical, verbal, or sexual harassment
- Possession of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or weapons

Second Level II

The second Level II write-up will result in an automatic out-of-school suspension. The number of days of the suspension will be determined by the principal.

In addition to suspension, the student will be placed on Disciplinary Probation and will be required to enter into a Behavior Contract.

Disciplinary Probation:

Students who are placed on disciplinary probation are not allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activities (i.e. music, drama, PSIA, sports) or go on any field trips for two weeks.

Behavior Contract:

Consequences of not following the terms of the behavior contract may jeopardize the student's enrollment in the school or may result in immediate expulsion.

Suspension:

A student who is suspended from school is required to make up all work missed during the suspension period.

- The maximum grade allowed on homework assignments is a 70%, while the maximum grade allowed on any missed tests or projects is a 75%.

Expulsion:

If extensive documented attempts to correct a student's misbehavior have failed, if the misbehavior persists, or if the offense is so serious as to warrant, the principal will ask the student to leave the school.

Please note that the discipline process summarized above builds upon prior offenses. Students in Kindergarten through Fourth Grade will go back to the beginning level, which is a Behavior Notice, at the beginning of each semester.

FACILITIES

SCHOOL LIBRARY

St. Mark Lutheran School maintains an on-campus library for use by students at all grade levels. Each class has a regularly scheduled library time. Pre Kindergarten & Kindergarten students may check out one book at each library visit. Older students may check out two books. A fine of \$.05 per day per book is assessed on overdue books unless the student is absent. Parents may also check out books from the library to be used for reading enrichment at home.

If a book is lost or severely damaged, the student will be charged for the full replacement cost. A repair charge will be assessed for less serious damage. Fines left outstanding or a repeated pattern of fines may result in the suspension of library privileges and the assessment of a processing fee. Library issues not resolved by the end of the school year may result in the withholding of the final report card and school records.

CAFETERIA SERVICES

St. Mark Lutheran School offers a well-balanced, hot lunch to students in Toddlers through 8th grade. Menus are planned with children in mind, yet are designed to be nutritionally sound. Students may buy a hot lunch or bring a lunch from home. Milk, ice cream, and a la carte items are also available for purchase. Parents may not bring in fast food meals/pizza for students.

St. Mark maintains a cafeteria account for each student using the “Café Prepay” system. Lunches may be purchased with cash, checks, or on-line at www.gostmark.org.

Please deposit lunch checks or cash (place cash in an envelope and write your child’s name, grade and dollar amount on the front of the envelope) in the silver box near the school office. This system is not integrated with tuition billing, so please do not combine your payments. Put the student’s name and grade on lunch deposits, and list the amount you want to allocate to each child. Minimum deposits should cover two weeks of hot lunch.

Students are notified if their cards have low balances. When their account is negative \$15.00, they will be given a sandwich and milk. After that, they will not be able to receive hot lunch. They will continue to receive a sandwich and milk until their account is active again.

Reduced cost and free lunches are available to eligible families by a confidential application. See the business office for the forms.

Parents and grandparents are invited to join the students for lunch either as guest or volunteer “Lunch” parents. Just tell the teacher before school that you are coming or call the cafeteria before 9:30a.m.

Reminder: Parents may not bring in fast food meals/pizza/snacks/coke, etc. for any students during the lunch periods.

LOCKERS

Upper grade students may be issued lockers. They are responsible for the use and proper upkeep of the locker, keeping it neat, clean, and locked. No decorations are permitted outside or inside the school lockers. As school property, lockers are subject to inspection at any time by faculty or administrative personnel.

STUDENT ACCESS TO MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

A goal for middle school students at St. Mark is to provide a learning atmosphere that fosters problem solving skills as well as helping to develop students into thoughtful, respectful, and responsible adolescents.

Expectations for Middle School Students (6th -8th Grade)

Students must collect all school materials (assignments, books, personal belongings, etc.) from the middle school classrooms during school hours. School hours are from 7:45 AM-3:45 PM Monday through Friday.

Guidelines for Student Access to Middle School Classrooms:

1. Students and parents should not access middle school classrooms after school hours for school materials.
2. A staff member may make a decision for an exception due to unusual, unforeseen, unanticipated circumstances. For example: emergencies, injuries, unique family situations, etc.
3. If a staff member makes the decision to access a classroom to assist a student and or parent gather school materials, the staff member needs to follow these procedures:
 - a. Personally escort the student and or parent to the classroom and oversee the gathering of school materials.
 - b. Responsible for unlocking and locking the classroom door.
 - c. Reports to the homeroom teacher of the classroom that access was granted the following:
 - i. Name(s) of those who were provided access
 - ii. Reason why the exception was granted

Reminder for staff from an excerpt of the St. Mark Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual: Any St. Mark key that has been personally issued to an employee to perform their job is to be used solely by the issued employee.

LOST AND FOUND

Unidentified found articles will be placed in the school lost and found area. Valuable items such as money, jewelry, wallets, and purses should be turned in to the school office for safekeeping until they are claimed. Students are asked to avoid bringing large amounts of money or very valuable items to school to avoid the possibility of loss.

VENDING MACHINES

These machines are located in the gymnasium lobby. Students are asked to observe the following guidelines for their use:

- No sodas may be purchased at lunch or during the regular school day. Students may ask their supervising teacher for permission to buy a juice drink or a snack from the vending machines.
- Juice and snacks may not be taken into school classrooms or outside during PE and recess without the approval of the supervising teacher.

- Students may purchase sodas, juice, or snacks after school and after athletic or music practice. **Extended Care students may purchase items from vending machine only on Fridays and must ask permission of their supervising caregiver.**
- All cans and garbage should be disposed of properly. Recycling containers are available for cans.

TELEPHONES

Students may not use a telephone during the school day without a pass from their teacher. Extended Care students must have permission from their supervising caregiver to use a telephone. Students will not be called to the school office for telephone calls except in emergency situations. A message will be relayed to the student by the school office if necessary.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones are not to be used during the school day. They should be kept in a student's backpack and turned off during school hours of 7:45am to 3:30pm. Used in any other way, a cell phone is considered a nuisance item and it will be confiscated. An electronic device used in violation of this policy will be confiscated the first time and given to the student the following day. A second violation will result in the parent having to pick up the electronic device from school administration.

Students may not use their cell phone while in Extended Care.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SPORTS

CHAPERONE POLICY

All parents and others serving as chaperones will behave in an ethical and moral manner, remembering that they are representatives of St. Mark Lutheran Church and School. To ensure the safety and well-being of all persons involved, each parent and other persons acting as a chaperone will observe all applicable laws and statutes during the course of the function. Consumption of alcoholic beverages by chaperones during school field trips or functions is strictly prohibited.

All parents and others acting as chaperones will also agree to enforce all rules and policies of St. Mark Lutheran School with respect to each child under their care. No favoritism or exceptions will be allowed.

Any deviation from the function itinerary during the course of the function is discouraged. The teacher or staff member in charge of the function prior to the function must approve any deviation from the function's itinerary. During the course of the function, the teacher or staff member in charge is in full authority to direct all activities. Parents and others acting as chaperones may not withdraw themselves or their child(ren) from the function activities determined by the teacher or staff member in charge without prior approval by the teacher or staff member in charge.

Each parent and other persons serving as a chaperone will be required to complete all required written forms, including the field trip information form, prior to the commencement of the function.

If the operation of a motor vehicle is involved, each parent and other persons serving as a chaperone who will be operating a motor vehicle will be required to provide information concerning their driver's license, motor vehicle and insurance on the field trip information form.

The teacher or staff member in charge of the function will be responsible for obtaining chaperones prior to each function and must obtain the completed field trip information form for each chaperone at least two business days prior to the commencement of the function.

The teacher or staff person in charge of the function must obtain a medical information form for each student two days prior to the function and will retain them during the course of the function.

The teacher or staff member in charge of the function must turn the original of each field trip information form into the school office at least two business days prior to the function. The teacher or staff member in charge of the function will retain a copy of the field trip information form along with a completed medical information form for each student participating in the function during the course of the function. Each chaperone will retain a copy of the field trip information form along with a copy of the medical information form for each student for whom they are acting as chaperone.

During the course of the function we request that each chaperone be equipped with a cellular telephone which should be kept on during travel.

Prior to all functions, the teacher or staff member in charge will designate a school contact not participating on the function to provide information concerning any deviation from the function schedule.

MISCELLANEOUS

FUNDRAISING

All fundraising activities at St. Mark are coordinated by the parent volunteers and staff. Fundraising is approved by the principal and the director of operations. Funds are raised to supplement the annual school budget through the Fall Festival, Annual Giving Campaign, and other miscellaneous projects.

The annual school auction and Cougar Golf Tournament provide additional funding for designated school improvements.

These fundraising opportunities, while providing much needed “extras” for the school, are designed to be of limited duration and to cause minimal disruption to the school routine.

BOOK LOSS AND DAMAGE POLICY

If a student loses or damages a textbook or workbook, he will be expected to pay for its replacement. A new book will be issued only after payment has been made for the book. If a textbook is later found, the newly issued book may be returned to the school office and a refund issued. There are no refunds on workbooks unless they are unused and in new condition.

BACKPACK GUIDELINES:

- BACKPACKS – Please use a STANDARD BACKPACK that will fit in cubby or locker.
- ROLLER BACKPACKS – may be purchased from St. Mark or elsewhere. Maximum size: 20”H x 15”W x 10”D

To help keep classrooms orderly and avoid clutter, students may use standard or rolling backpacks for transporting books and school supplies. To regulate the size and type, the bag shall be in the category of backpacks and have maximum dimensions of 20”H x 15”W x 10”D. Additionally, locker rooms are open before school for students in grades 5-8 who are playing sports for St. Mark to drop off their sports gear. This reduces the amount of storage in the classrooms and gear is easily available after school for practices and games.

ENRICHMENT AND FIELD TRIPS

Education is not limited to classroom activities. Field trips, guest performances, and class trips are an important part of the enrichment program at St. Mark. Students are expected to show courtesy and self-control during these special activities. The same behavioral standards and consequences apply as during regular school activities. A teacher may, with the approval of the principal, elect to exclude a student who does not show adequate behavioral control. The teacher will explain this decision to the student and parents.

Parents acting as chaperones or attending extra-curricular functions must follow the established policies and procedures for such events. **Siblings should not accompany the parent on the field trip if the parent is responsible for chaperoning students.** They are asked to remember that they, as well as the students, are representing St. Mark Lutheran School. This is a serious responsibility aimed at maintaining the safety and security of all our students.

CLASS PARTIES AND BIRTHDAYS

St. Mark students celebrate several special occasions during the year with class parties. Pre-School and Kindergarten students have parties at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, and Easter. Students in grades 1 through 8 may have Christmas and Easter parties.

Teachers may allow a parent to bring a class treat for a child’s birthday or to purchase ice cream for the class at lunch. Parents are asked to please refrain from having flowers, balloons, etc.

delivered to students at school. If parents choose to have an item delivered to school for their child, it will be held in the school office until the end of the school day. If bringing a treat, please make arrangements with the teacher to schedule a time for bringing the treat. Invitations to out-of-school birthday celebrations and parties should be mailed, unless the entire class is invited. This simple courtesy will prevent many hurt feelings.

Any parent who brings in dessert or snack for a birthday, Valentines' party, etc. should be aware of the following rules and guidelines:

- Cakes, cupcakes, donuts, cookies, etc. must be store bought, not homemade.
- They can be served either in the classroom or outside.
- Treats, desserts, snacks, and meals served before 10:30 am or after 1:00 pm.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEERS

St. Mark Lutheran School depends on the support and involvement of its school parents to enhance the day school ministry program. There are opportunities to serve in many different areas for those with a few minutes or a few hours to give. The Parent Teacher League (PTL) offers parents the chance to learn and grow together by exploring special topics throughout the school year. The school library, cafeteria, and school office are in need of regular volunteers to keep their operations running smoothly. Room parents are needed to assist every homeroom teacher with parties and special class activities. Parents, grandparents, and other friends of St. Mark are encouraged to check with the school office, PTL officers, or a staff member to learn about specific service opportunities.

EXCEPTIONS OR MODIFICATIONS OF SCHOOL HANDBOOK POLICIES

In regard to any of the student handbook policies, the school administration reserves the right to make the final decision and will always do its best to make decisions on the basis of what is best for the entire student body