

# St. Mary Elementary Newsletter

August 2021

## St. Mary Elementary

2000 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Phone: 605-334-9881

Michelle Shields, Principal

Email: [mshields@ogknights.org](mailto:mshields@ogknights.org)

Julie Fischer, Secretary

Email: [jfischer@ogknights.org](mailto:jfischer@ogknights.org)

## Important Upcoming Dates

8/16: Open House 5:00-7:00 pm

8/19: First Day of School/  
Full Day

8/27: Knight Wear  
Dress Down Day

8/28: Dakota Bowl 7:30 pm

8/30: Picture Day (Grades 1-6)

8/31: Picture Day (PS, K)

9/6: No School/Labor Day

9/12: Fall Festival 12:00-3:00 pm

## FAITH

**Mass:** Wednesdays at 8:30 am

**Rosary:** Mondays at 8:15 am

Please join us in prayer these days!

\*Weekly updates will be emailed to families.

\*Important event dates are posted on our Google calendar at [sma.ogknights.org/parents/calendar](http://sma.ogknights.org/parents/calendar)

\*Follow us on Twitter  
@stmaryknights!

Dear Parents,

Last year our theme was "Family". This year we are expanding on that concept and building "Faith Families" within our school. Our primary focus will be developing positive relationships with near peers in order to see Christ working in our lives. The plan is still being developed, but we hope to have 12 families of students from mixed grades who meet every week to engage in faith activities together. We will practice various ways to pray, share witness stories, learn about virtues and saints, and more!

We will start the year meeting with 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders to prepare them for their role as leaders. More information will be sent throughout the year as we watch our families grow in their relationships with each other and Christ. Please pray for our students to open their hearts and to be good missionary disciples to one another!

Due to daily Mass being celebrated on Mondays at 8:00 am in the Church, we will pray the Rosary in the MPR at 8:15 am. This will eventually be our Faith Family time as well, alternating half of the students praying the Rosary and half of the students meeting in their small Faith Family groups.

Thank you for choosing St. Mary Elementary! We are honored that you would entrust your most precious gift to us and feel blessed to be able to partner with you as we educate the whole child: academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally, and socially. Our mission ***to form a community of faith and learning by promoting a Catholic way of life through Gospel values and academic excellence*** and our goal to create a safe learning environment to ensure quality education for all of our students will drive every decision we make.

Our first day of school is Thursday, August 19, with Open House on Monday, August 16! I am looking forward to seeing you all! Until then, may God abundantly bless you and your family!

*Blessings,  
Michelle Shields*

*"Stand up for what is right, even if it costs you your life.  
The Lord God will be fighting on your side." Sirach 4:28*

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August 2021

## Open House Monday, August 16

We hope to see you at Open House where you can meet the teachers, drop off school supplies, and visit with friends!

*In order for teachers to give more personal attention to each family, we are inviting families to attend during these times, if at all possible.*

**5:00 - 6:00 pm: Last name begins with M-Z**

**6:00 - 7:00 pm: Last name begins with A-L**

Visit the gym to purchase gently used uniforms and Knight Wear (may be worn on dress down days.)

\*If you purchased classroom supplies online, they will be waiting for you in the classroom! If not, you can bring them with you that night.

## School Family Organization (SFO)

Our SFO is a collaborative school and family organization that meets 3 times/year to inform parents about events, curriculum, fundraising, and school issues. Please consider joining us to learn more about our school. Meeting information will be sent out at a later date. If you have questions or suggestions, contact one of the Executive Board members below.

**Pastor: Fr. Paul Rutten**

**Principal: Michelle Shields**

**Officers: Paul Gourley,  
Alyson Kramer, Brad Rehfeldt**

**Teacher Representative: Katie Travis**

## Visitors

***We are so happy that we will be able to have parents volunteer in the building this year! Opportunities to volunteer at lunch, in the classroom, at events, and as room parents will be available. However, we would like to continue providing students with the opportunity for independence by continuing the practices below.***

- If students arrive after 8:00 am, they will need to sign in at the office. Students will be expected to enter the building and go to their classrooms on their own.
- If parents need to pick up a child during the school day, please inform the office ASAP, preferably the day before. When picking up a child during the school day, parents should park on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave and ring the bell at the door near the St. Mary statue. Your child will meet you at the door after they have signed out at the office or you may wait for them in the office.
- If parents need to drop off an item for their child during the school day, a table will be available at the St. Mary statue door on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Parents can ring the bell informing the office of the drop off and staff will retrieve the item for the student, or parents may bring the item to the office.  
*However, we give you our permission/blessing to not make the extra trip if they forgot something. Elementary school is a safe place to learn those life lessons!*

## Before and After School Care

- Before School Care begins August 19, 7:00-7:40 am.
- After School Care begins August 19, 3:00- 6:00 pm.

# St. Mary Elementary Newsletter

August 2021

## Drop Off/Pick Up

**During the first several weeks of school,  
staff will be assisting in directing traffic and helping families learn this process.**

### **General Information:**

- Our fifth and sixth grade students serve as crossing guards/patrols. Our patrols are trained to stay on the sidewalk when helping others cross. **Please help them do their jobs by not parking in/on/around crosswalks and by discussing safe practices with your family.**
- Students will be brought into the building at 7:55 am and will be released from the classroom at 3:00 pm. The school playground is supervised 15 minutes before and after school.
- Students arriving before 7:40 am will be brought to Before School Care and parents will be charged the \$15 drop in fee. Students not picked up by 3:15 pm will be brought to After School Care and parents will be charged the \$15 drop in fee.
- Families with PS children may drop off and pick up all of their children at the St. Mary statue door on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. door. Families with multiple children in grades K-6, may choose either the South lot or the Church lot for drop off and pick up.

### **Preschool:**

- Preschool drop-off and pick up parking will be in the cut-out areas along 4th Avenue.
- Staff will meet parents at the St. Mary statue door where parents will use a QR code to sign children in. (More details further in letter.)

### **Grades K-2:**

- The lower playground (south of school/4th Ave.) is designed for student drop-off and pick-up.
- Enter from the south on Oak St. (right turn into lot) and exit to the west onto 4<sup>th</sup> Ave (left turn out of lot to avoid crosswalks; you may also carefully proceed straight onto 29th St.)
- Only one direction traffic is allowed in this area.
- Teachers will assist your child in exiting/entering vehicle.
- Parking is NOT allowed anywhere in that drop-off area. Parents may use the side streets around the school to park and walk their child up to the building, if they prefer.

### **Grades 3-6:**

- The upper Church parking lot is designed for student drop off/pick up.
- Enter the parking lot through the northeast entrance on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- Only one direction traffic is allowed in this area.
- Pull forward as much as possible (creating a U shaped lane) before allowing your children to exit the vehicle.
- Vehicles should remain in line until the vehicle in front of them exits. Do not pull out of line to exit parking lot.
- Exit south onto 5th Ave (right turn only)
- Parents may use the side streets around the school to park and walk their child up to the building, if they prefer. **Please do not park in the Church parking lot.**

# St. Mary Elementary Newsletter

August 2021

## Snacks

Bishop O'Gorman Catholic Schools utilizes a controlled "**bring-your-own-snack**" program. The intent behind the program is for students to have a mid-morning snack in order for them to continue to learn at an optimal level throughout the school day. **Snacks brought to school must be individually packaged, sealed, in a snack-sized portion and labeled with a first and last name.**

**Snacks will be limited to the following options:**

- Fruit Snacks/Dried Fruit/Raisins (no candy)
- Crackers: Club, Cheeze Nips, Cheez-Its, Goldfish, Triscuits, Wheat Thins (no chips)
- Fruits & Vegetables
- Nutri-Grain Bars / Granola Bars
- Pretzels
- Graham Crackers: Teddy Grahams, Cinnamon Grahams, Honey Maid Grahams
- Beef Stick/Jerky

This list was formulated by physicians, parents, and educators. Many factors were considered in the formation of this list including nutritional value, cleanliness, not requiring refrigeration, etc. **Snacks that are free of peanuts, tree nuts, and eggs to protect students with allergies are encouraged;** thus this list is comprised of commonly available snacks free of those ingredients.

## Birthday Celebrations

As has been the policy for the last couple of years, **students will NOT bring treats to school for their birthday.** The school will celebrate the birthday child in a special way, eliminating the need for birthday treats. Here are some points of consideration that were used in making this policy:

**Safety:** With 1 in 13 children having food allergies, anyone serving food to children needs to be aware of the potential for a life-threatening allergic reaction. More than 15% of school-aged children with food allergies have an allergic reaction at school. These reactions range from mild to severe and sadly even fatal. The safety of all the students is our top priority.

**Inclusion:** Sending a birthday treat to school can exclude those children who have allergies, diabetes, celiac disease, and other dietary restrictions. It can also exclude children who come from families who are unable to afford to send items for the entire class.

**Loss of Instructional time:** While the St. Mary staff will continue to celebrate your child in ways that will make the student feel supported and special, it is important to protect instructional time. Cutting and serving treats, cleaning up, and handling hurt feelings regarding the treats can take a lot of time!

**Health:** Many parents have voiced a preference for a "no-food policy" in an effort to promote health, be sensitive to those with dietary restrictions, and to help combat childhood obesity. (Not to mention the emotional health benefit of alleviating stress on parents and students having to provide a treat!)

**Alternatively to treats, students will be celebrated in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:**

- On their actual birthday, students will receive special gifts from their peers and teachers, as well as be honored by their class.
- Each month, birthday students will be recognized over the intercom and our video screens.

**Thank you for your cooperation at St. Mary Elementary  
as we encourage physical, emotional, and social wellbeing!**

## St. Mary Elementary Newsletter

August 2021

### Preschool News

**Morning Drop off:** Staff will meet parents at the door on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. and then take the students to their classrooms. Parents will be given a QR code that they scan on their phone which will enable them to check in their child, choose their child's lunch and their pick up time.

**Lunch:** Only students who stay the entire day will eat lunch at school. Student may be picked up at 11:00 am, 3:00 pm or stay for After School Care.

**Mass:** Preschool students will attend Mass every other week starting on either September 22 (Helget and Cronin classes) or September 29 (Andress and Martin).

**Snacks:** Teachers will be sending additional information regarding snack needs.

### Fall Festival

**Sunday, September 12**

**12:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

We are excited for the return of the Fall Festival! Please look for the flyer that will be sent home at the beginning of the year. Our goal is to have a fantastic community building event, that can also raise some money for our school! We hope you all will attend!

- We will use the donation link on the website as the primary means of collecting donations.
- We will not have a raffle in the fall, but will participate in the Catholic United Financial Raffle again in the spring.
- With an early Fall Festival date, pumpkins and mums will be delivered after the event.
- If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Caity Lacey at [caitylacey3@gmail.com](mailto:caitylacey3@gmail.com).

### Lunch Room

Hot lunch begins on August 19. **Fast food, candy, soda and high energy drinks are not allowed in the lunchroom for students nor adults.**

School Lunch, including an all-you-can-eat fruit and vegetable bar, will be served every school day by our school lunch partner, Lunchtime Solutions. Information regarding our school lunch program has been sent via email from the Bishop O'Gorman Catholic School President's Office. If you have not received this email regarding the school lunch program, please contact our school office.

Sign up at [myschoolbucks.com](http://myschoolbucks.com) to get notifications and make payments when account runs low.

# St. Mary Elementary Newsletter

August 2021

## Lunch Volunteers

We would love to have at least two parents volunteering each day from 10:45 am- 1:00 pm! Your role will be to help with silverware, condiments, and the fruits and veggie bar. Younger students may also need help opening items and cleaning up their trays.

It is a wonderful way to see all of the children socially interact! A sign up genius link will be included in each weekly update!

## Picture Day

School pictures are scheduled for **Monday, August 30 for grades 1-6 and Tuesday, August 31 for Preschool and Kindergarten.** These are Dress Up Days for those getting their picture taken. Picture envelopes will be sent home with the back to school packet. Each child must have his/her own picture envelope with a separate payment in each. Remember to mark your package choice and include your child's name and class.

## Cell Phones and Wearable Devices

Cell phones and wearable devices (Fitbit, Smart Watch, Gizmo Gadget, etc.) may not be used in any area of the school or on the playground, including the After School Care Program. These devices can be distracting, can cause academic integrity issues, and have the potential to be dangerous in cases dealing with school emergencies. Cell phones and wearable devices may be stored in backpacks, but must be shut off.

## Immunization/Health Records

Every child entering Bishop O'Gorman Catholic Schools for the first time must provide a completed SD Certificate of Immunization. Those students entering **6th grade** are required to provide an updated SD Certificate of Immunization with the additional vaccinations required completed. Please have all records updated by the first day of school. See the link in the email for details of Kindergarten and 6<sup>th</sup> grade requirements.

## Lockers

Only book bags, books, coats, winter clothing, and boots will be allowed to be stored in lockers. No decorations or other personal items will be allowed. Students will be expected to bring all items in their locker home every day.

## Water bottles

Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school every day. Studies show that students who are hydrated are healthier, happier, and able to concentrate better. There are multiple water bottle filling stations around the school. If a student should forget their water bottle, they may use the water fountains now that they have been turned back on. We will no longer supply students with water bottles from the office.

# St. Mary Elementary Newsletter

August 2021

## **Bishop O'Gorman Catholic Schools PK-6 Uniform Changes** (see Handbook for entire policy)

**\*Effective since 2019-2020 School Year**

### **Pants (Boys/Girls):**

**Navy blue pants** (twill or Ponte) must be ankle length and worn at the natural waistline.

Pant guidelines: no royal blue color, decorations, prints, denim, jogging pants, or cargo/capri/carpenter styles.

Preschool - 2nd grade girls may wear navy blue stretch pants (ankle length).

Pants following these guidelines may be purchased from local vendors or Dennis Uniform Company.

### **Shirts:**

White shirts of any style and sleeve length with a collar or turtleneck may be worn, but must be tucked in. No decorations, logos, contrasting colors, t-shirts, undershirts or tank tops are allowed.

Preferred shirts: collared, cotton polos, turtlenecks, or mock-turtlenecks.

Shirts that conform to these guidelines may be purchased through local vendors or Dennis Uniform Company.

### **Sweaters/Sweatshirts/Fleece:**

Royal blue sweatshirts with logo are available for purchase through the school.

Navy blue pull-over or cardigan sweaters may be purchased from local vendors or Dennis Uniform Company. Collared shirts must be worn under sweaters and sweatshirts.

A navy blue fleece jacket with logo may be purchased through the school.

**\*\*Existing color sweatshirts may be worn during a transition time. By the fall of 2022 all uniform changes will be fully implemented.**

### **Shorts (Boys/Girls):**

**Navy blue** walking shorts just above the knee may be worn until October 31 and April 1 through May.

Styles should be the same as uniform pant and worn at the natural waistline.

Shorts may be purchased from Dennis Uniform Company OR from local vendors if the style conforms to uniform policy guidelines.

### **Skirts/Jumpers/Skorts:**

Optional uniform plaid skirts or jumpers in **royal blue plaid** are available **only** through Dennis Uniform Company. However, **navy blue skorts** may be purchased from Dennis Uniform Company OR from local vendors if the style conforms to uniform policy guidelines.

**Uniform skirts/jumpers/skorts must be no shorter in length than just above the knee.**

Solid colored black, white, or navy blue ankle length leggings may be worn with the skirt or jumper.

**\*\*Existing color skirts/jumpers/skorts may be worn during a transition time. By the fall of 2022 all uniform changes will be fully implemented.**

**Shoes: Due to the active schedule for students throughout the day, tennis shoes are recommended.**

**Flat soled shoes** that do not go above the ankle are acceptable. Clogs/fashion boots are NOT permitted.

### **Socks:**

Socks (no color restrictions) must be worn with all types of shoes or sandals with back straps.

White, black and navy tights or leggings may be worn with skirts.

# St. Mary Elementary Newsletter

August 2021

## 2021-2022 St. Mary Elementary Staff

<b>Pastor</b>	Fr. Paul Rutten	<b>Art</b>	Jenica Haraldson
<b>Principal</b>	Michelle Shields	<b>Band</b>	Sharla Larson
<b>Administrative Assistants:</b>		<b>Counselor</b>	Tali Paulson
	Julie Fischer	<b>Library</b>	Deb Picasso
	Derek Robey	<b>Orchestra</b>	Hannah Schmit
<b>Preschool:</b>		<b>PE</b>	Derek Robey
<b>3 year olds</b>	Mary Ann Andress, teacher Rachel Osterberg, EA	<b>Technology</b>	Jenny Quissell
<b>3-4 year olds</b>	Megan Helget , teacher Donna Matzen, EA	<b>Vocal Music</b>	Kevin Humke
<b>4-5 year olds</b>	Becca Martin, teacher Jill Chapman, EA	<b>Academic Services</b>	Amy Isaacson Jackie Prostrollo Michelle Estes, Sparks
<b>5 year olds</b>	Hallee Cronin, teacher Shelly Starr, EA	<b>Educational Assistants</b>	Cathy Bohms Sr. Barbara Kowalkowski Jackie Prostrollo Rose Smit Nicole Wardrip
<b>Kindergarten</b>	Amy Caba Jordan Osterberg	<b>Before/Aftercare</b>	Kira Stiles, Coordinator Mary Ann Andress Harris Barnes Jason Connelly Dublin Duffy Sr. Barbara Kowalkowski Kaci Kruger (before) Paige Labahn Rachel Osterberg Fern Rice Serena Scott Katie Travis (before)
<b>First grade</b>	Anita Hoffmann Rachael Vinzant		
<b>Second grade</b>	Grace Eisenberg/ Tiffany Walker- long term sub Mary T. Grogan		
<b>Third grade</b>	Sheila Diercks Leann Schlotterback		
<b>Fourth grade</b>	Krista Kreidt Matthew Viereck		
<b>Fifth grade</b>	Jen Mieras Katie Travis	<b>Custodians</b>	Morena Lemus Jim Volk
<b>Sixth grade</b>	Kaci Kruger Kira Stiles		