

Saint Mark's Academy



Student/Parent Handbook 2013-2104



The Reformed Episcopal Church

In our modern society that seeks change for the sake of change, it is important to remember that God does not change, and that the Way to God has not changed. Only through Jesus Christ can men ever find abiding hope, peace, forgiveness and the acceptable way to know and worship God. In “keeping the faith once for all delivered to the saints,” The Reformed Episcopal Church is:

BIBLICAL - holding a faith and practice governed by the whole, unchanging, infallible and inerrant Word of God.

LITURGICAL - reverently worshiping God by using the liturgical forms practiced by the early church, restored in the English Reformation of the 16th century, and preserved in the traditional Anglican Book of Common Prayer of 1662.

HISTORIC - holding to the historic doctrines of the Christian faith founded upon the Holy Scriptures and summarized in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.

Each person and all people need a place along their spiritual journey where they can know and sense the presence of God and truly worship Him, where they can receive spiritual strength and guidance for the week ahead, and where caring fellow Christians can encourage them along the way.

Rediscover the historic worship of the Christian faith —

Find out about the Reformed Episcopal Church!
Keeping the faith “once for all delivered to the saints”

St. Mark’s Reformed Episcopal Church

1162 Beverly Road, Rydal, Pa 19046
(215) 884-7660 ☎ www.stmarksrec.org
Sundays - 10:00 am

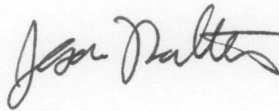
Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome you to Saint Mark's Classical Academy! We want you to know that we are here to promote each student's growth in "wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." We thank you, parents, for entrusting your children to us and for joining with us in our commitment to quality, Christ-centered education.

This school year will provide you, the student, with many opportunities, challenges, and decisions. The degree to which you will experience meaningful growth from them will be determined, in great measure, by your goals, work habits, and attitude. Remember that at this point in your life your calling before God is found primarily in your school life and your obedience to your parents. Faithfulness in fulfilling these responsibilities to the best of your ability will please God and bring His blessing.

This handbook is an outline of the objectives, principles, and rules of our school. I ask that you keep it in a convenient place so that you may use it for reference throughout the school year. I also ask that you read it before school begins. Familiarity with the contents will eliminate much uncertainty and answer most questions. We wish for each student a rewarding and successful school year.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jason S. S. Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Revered Jason S. S. Patterson
Head of School

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge..." Proverbs 1:7

An Overview

There is no more enduring gift that a parent can give a child than a sound Christian upbringing, including a Christian education. St. Mark's Academy endeavors to assist parents in this awesome calling, by providing an excellent educational foundation for children through utilizing the time-tested method of a classical education. Our ambition is to help parents build strong families, to the greater glory of God and the good of the students.

Our Academy is a co-educational classical Christian school providing rigorous academic training in the language arts, history, mathematics and sciences from kindergarten through 4th grade (progressively adding grades annually).

Our Mission

The mission of St. Mark's Classical Academy is to endow our children with the tools of learning, and the wisdom of the ages, by nourishing their souls with truth, goodness and beauty, so that they may serve God and their fellow man with virtue, dignity, and strength.

Our Goals

Our school is committed to providing the following to our students:

- A worshipping community in which spiritual formation may flourish
- Superb academics to prepare students to excel in future educational and vocational pursuits
- Continual emphasis on integrity and humility through opportunities to serve our community
- The experience of beauty in art and music to increase understanding of the world we share
- An environment that fosters mutual respect, good manners and self-discipline

Educational Philosophy

Parents and the School

In the Bible, God declares that parents have the primary responsibility of educating their children. For instance:

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

The church supports that role by encouraging and facilitating Christian nurture of a new generation in many ways. The church's aid in this endeavor proves successful only as parents assume their primary role. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate.

The Holy Scriptures

The particular standard by which Saint Mark's Classical Christian School seeks to structure and govern all that is done is the Bible, the written Word of God. The whole of Scripture provides the perspective from which our curriculum is taught, establishes the guidelines for the teaching methods we use, and is the basis for the discipline and environment maintained in the classroom.

A Holistic & Christian Approach

Saint Mark's School has as its goal the development of each student's potential by teaching him to use his God-given capacities to his fullest. This involves character development, meeting social needs through wholesome friendships, training in Christian values and perspectives, developing a love for learning, and above all, encouraging students to serve God and do all things to the glory of God.

Our motivation is our desire to see a generation trained that will love the Lord God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves. Christ is Himself the example of such self-sacrificing love. We intend for our students and parents to

witness this love in the life of our teachers and staff, and pray that each student will learn to love others enough to sacrifice himself for their welfare.

A Classical Approach

St. Mark's Academy, in following the model of classical education, progressively nurtures its students through the three fundamental stages of learning: Grammar (foundational and informational skills), Logic (thinking and reasoning skills), and Rhetoric (integration and communication skills). Our program is designed to help each child develop spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically. We are committed to the following principles:

The Classical View of Reality – Truth is objective and man is responsible to seek the Truth throughout his life.

The Nature of Man – A human being is a physical and spiritual unity, and education must reflect that truth.

The Wisdom of the Ages – Young scholars should be exposed to the finest minds in the history of the world and the great ideas that they discuss.

Because we recognize that the primary responsibility for the training of children belongs to parents, interwoven throughout the academic program are strong Christian family values of moral integrity, respect for self and others, and the cooperative effort of school and home. At St. Mark's our emphasis is not only on the three R's of Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic, but also the three R's of Respect for authority, Responsibility before God and man, and Resourcefulness in the execution of assigned tasks. The St. Mark's Academy motto is from Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge."

Our Faculty

St. Mark's Academy is committed to providing a high-caliber staff of educators who embrace the philosophy and principles of Christian education and who are committed to the full integration of faith and learning. We will maintain a low student-teacher ratio so as to provide an effective, personal learning environment. In this setting our teachers act not only as instructors but also as mentors and Christian role-models.

Statement of Faith

1. We believe the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible to be the only inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe in one God, infinitely perfect and eternally co-existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the full deity and humanity of Jesus Christ.
4. We believe in the real, historical fall of man in the Garden of Eden, resulting in mankind being under the wrath and curse of God. Hence, all men are born with a sinful nature, are spiritually dead and under judgment, and are in need of salvation.
5. We believe that justification before God comes by grace through faith in the substitutionary atonement of Christ apart from our own works.
6. We believe in the literal, physical resurrection of Christ in a glorified body and His ascension to the right hand of God the Father, from whence He rules the universe and intercedes for His people.

7. We believe in the Church's obligation to live under the lordship of Christ by obeying the Ten Commandments, upholding godliness as set forth in the Bible, and to evangelize and spread His kingdom by making obedient disciples of all nations.
8. We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers within the body of Christ.
9. We believe in the literal second coming of Christ, a final judgment of all men by God, and an actual, eternal heaven and hell.

Below are listed the two most famous of the Church's statements of faith. They summarize the basic teachings of the Bible and what the Church has called, following Jude's lead, the "faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3). These teachings are also commonly referred to in contemporary America as, the "basics of the faith."

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost: The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints: The Forgiveness of sins: The Resurrection of the body: And the Life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man: And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried: And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures: And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father: And he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets: And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

Almighty God, the Fountain of all wisdom, enlighten by thy Holy Spirit, those who teach and those who learn, that rejoicing in the knowledge of thy truth, we may worship thee and serve thee from generation to generation, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who livest and reignest with thee and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Lord, open our eyes to see what is beautiful, our minds to know what is true, and our hearts to love what is good; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Saint Mark's Classical Academy and Preschool 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 of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship, and financial assistance programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP & OVERSIGHT

Saint Mark's Academy and Nursery School is the education ministry of Saint Mark's Church, a parish of The Reformed Episcopal Church (REC). The REC was formed in 1873 to preserve and promote the orthodox witness of the Episcopal church, reflecting the English Reformation. The Reformed Episcopal Church upholds the Bible as the very Word of God and final authority in all matters of faith and life; it is adamant in declaring the Sanctity of Life and traditional Christian morality as rooted in the Ten Commandments and nurtured in the Sanctity of Christian marriage and family.

A board of Advisors has been appointed to assist the Rector in the organization of our new school. The Rector serves as the Head of School and is charged with the general oversight of the school. The Vestry of St. Mark's Church is responsible for the financial oversight of the School.

ASSOCIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

The year 2013 is the inaugural year of St. Mark's Classical Christian School. Our school is modeled after the classical Christian day schools of 4 other parishes in the Reformed Episcopal Church: Good Shepherd School (Tyler, TX), The Saint Timothy School (Dallas, Tx); Saint Stephen's Academy (Eldersburg, Md) and Christ Academy (Collingdale, Pa). In the next year we plan to apply to become members of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools (ACCS) and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). The ACSI has over 5000 member schools representing a total student enrollment of over 1,030,000. Both ACCS and ACSI are accrediting organizations.

SCHOOL DAY

Attendance-Related Policies

Daily Schedule

To obtain full benefits from the academic program, a student must have a pattern of regular attendance and must arrive on time. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness not only handicaps the individual student, but also has a negative effect on all those who make the effort to be present for school and for those who arrive on time.

It is the responsibility of parents to see that their child arrives for school on time. If a pattern of absenteeism or tardiness develops, the administration will notify the parent and assess a financial penalty.

Teachers make every effort to capture the attention of the students during the opening moments of class. When this opportunity is disrupted, the opportunity may be lost, and the teacher's plans thwarted.

Consider this: a student five minutes tardy can cost a teacher 45 minutes in lost instructional time when the effect on the class is taken into account. A student who is tardy 5 minutes every day, by the end of the year has lost nearly three days of instructional time (15 hours).

Parents are requested to make the effort to schedule doctor or dental appointments and other necessary activities after school hours.

Special recognition will be given at the end of the year to those students who have achieved perfect or nearly perfect attendance.

Planned Absences

Attendance at school provides students with a progressive and sequential classroom experience. It is generally impossible for an absent student to recover fully what he has missed. For this reason,

student absences should be kept to a minimum. Absenteeism correlates strongly with poor academic performance in some cases.

When a student will be out of school for another reason, and the time of the absence is known, it is the responsibility of the parents to contact the teacher, and secure the class assignments for that period of time. Please give teachers sufficient lead time to prepare these materials (2 weeks). All course work and homework assignments are due within one day of return to class. Makeup exams must be scheduled by the teacher within three (3) school days after the student returns.

Some absences—due to personal illness or to death in the family, for example— cannot be prepared for in advance. In such cases the student will be given as many days as he missed to make up his work.

Upon returning to school after an absence, the student is to bring a signed note from the parents detailing the cause of the absence.

Chapel

Education is about spiritual formation in all its disciplines. At the very heart of Christian education is the effort to direct our minds and hearts to our chief purpose in life: glorifying God. As a part of this concern, daily chapels are conducted in which the whole school offers worship to God.

In chapel, as in the Bible classes, the focus is on the basic teachings of historic and Biblical Christianity. As a summary of the faith, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds are used, while students learn the Grammar of traditional worship through praying the historic English Prayer services of Morning and Evening Prayer. They hear the Bible read, pray the Psalms and the Lord's Prayer, and learn Proverbs, the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and more.

Students will learn many of the historic hymns of the faith, and also develop a rich and varied musical repertoire, singing psalms and canticles. The calendar of the Christian Year is observed, teaching

students that God not only has created time, but that He owns it and uses it to sanctify His people. Together, these all mold and shape the souls of students.

Lunch/Snack Time

Children should bring a nutritious lunch from home. Neither refrigeration nor microwaves are available to students, so please pack accordingly. Students need food in order to study. Students therefore who do not have a lunch will be given a “lunchable” at the cost of \$5.00.

During lunchtime, the supervising teachers train students in considerate table manners. Quiet conversational tones are encouraged. Students remain seated unless excused by a teacher. Students are responsible for their own cleanup and, on a rotating basis, for general cleanup.

Students may not share each other’s lunches, and should not ask teachers to supply missing napkins, spoons, etc. from the school kitchen.

If a parent must bring a child’s lunch to the school, it should be left with the secretary so as not to disturb classes. Special lunches brought by parents should arrive promptly by (or before) the beginning of the student’s lunch period. Parents are welcome to join their children for lunch.

Students may bring a nutritious, low sugar snack for the mid-morning break. This should be individually wrapped, and should not require any preparation by the teacher.

POLICIES/MISCELLANEOUS

- GUM chewing is not allowed on campus anywhere, at any time.
- LOST AND FOUND items will be kept for a limited amount of time, and efforts will be made to identify the owners. Items will be disposed of thereafter.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Conduct & Discipline

Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to bring honor to the name of Christ. Respect and obedience to faculty and staff are the foundations of the disciplinary code.

Teachers are expected to maintain standards of student behavior that are based upon God's Word, conducive to learning, and consistent with school policies. The teacher's responsibility and authority extends to classroom and non-classroom activities, and includes any student in the school. The Head of School and teachers explain classroom and school standards at the beginning of the year and as needed.

Classroom rules are simple:

1. Obtain permission to speak.
2. Obtain permission to get up.
3. Give your attention to the teacher.

Saint Mark's believes that each student should overtly demonstrate self-discipline and responsibility through:

1. Cheerful obedience to authority (even when the authority figure is not present).
2. Responsibility in doing assigned and expected tasks.
3. Co-operation with others in play and work.
4. Courtesy and good manners.
5. Cleanliness in person and property.
6. Honesty.
7. Respect for the property of the school and of classmates.
8. Promptness in attendance and assignments.
9. Morally upright conduct.

Appearance & Dress

Saint Mark's Academy strives to set the highest possible standards in academic and moral conduct. An important aspect of achieving that goal is for students to view their educational duties as their calling before God. Uniforms are worn by all the students to foster a serious attitude toward their responsibilities.

Neatness and personal hygiene are encouraged at all times. Uniforms must be clean, tears mended, buttons replaced. Shoes should be clean and in good repair.

Contributions & Donations

The cost of education is high, but worth it, and civil nations, especially Christian ones, have always placed a high value upon it. Every tuition dollar you spend goes directly to the tuition of your child. Of course, there are more costs to operating the school: expenses related to occupancy, scholarships, or capital improvement. The additional funds needed for these come from donations, fundraising, or other sources. All donations to Saint Mark's Academy or Saint Mark's Church, a 501(c)3 organization, are tax-deductible. If you would be interested in making regular contributions to the Saint Mark's Academy Annual Fund, or to our Scholarship Fund, or designate a donation for a special project, we would be happy to speak with you and make the necessary arrangements.

Tax-Deductible Ways to Give to Saint Mark's Academy

Tax laws intentionally encourage charitable giving. Here are some of the ways families and individuals can make a gift to St. Mark's and enjoy tax benefits. Please remember, every person's tax situation is different and St. Mark's is not advocating a specific tax position. Please consult with your individual tax advisor to determine the deductibility of your contribution.

Gifts of Cash: Many families choose to write us a check. Such gifts are fully deductible, for federal income tax purposes. Please consider making a monthly commitment.

Gifts of Stock: Gifts of appreciated stock represent a two-fold savings opportunity. You avoid paying any capital gains tax on the increased value of the stock, and you receive a tax deduction for the full market value of the stock as of the day of the gift.

Bequests: These may be earmarked for a specific use or left to the discretion of the school trustees. A bequest of funds or property is exempt from federal estate tax and inheritance tax in most states.

Designated Gifts: Make a contribution to one of Saint Mark's funds:

- Annual Fund—Gifts to the Annual Fund are used to sustain and enrich the overall educational program, improve and expand facilities, and ensure the financial stability of the school.
- The Scholarship Fund—Saint Mark's is committed to helping any family that desires a classical and Christian education to overcome difficult financial obstacles.

Gifts-in-Kind: Contributions in the form of material goods or services for which the school would otherwise have to pay, help reduce the school's expenses and thereby strengthen the overall financial structure.

Matching Contributions: Many employers have a matching gift program in which they will match your contribution to an approved non-profit organization. It provides them with a tax benefit and "doubles" the significance of your gift.

Please check with your accountant, tax attorney, or tax advisor to discuss the gift method that best suits your situation.

Financial Assistance

Saint Mark's Academy desires that all parents who want a Christian education for their children might receive it regardless of family finances. The cost of private education is high, but we believe a Christian education is priceless. Therefore, St. Mark's endeavors to offer tuition assistance to those families who have had their children enrolled for one year and have a proven need. Financial aid may be awarded to new enrollees; preference, however, is given to returning families.

Requests for financial assistance are brought to the Head of School who will issue applications and an evaluation form.

Families on scholarship are expected to contribute in some form (time or work toward their child's education).

Contributions to the Scholarship Fund are tax-deductible. But more than that, they are an investment in the future. We are training the mind and building the character that will lead tomorrow's generation. One child can make a difference. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to the Scholarship Fund.

Tuition/Miscellaneous Payments

Monthly invoices are sent out around the 20th of each month. Invoices will include the next month's tuition charge, any past month's lunch charges, late stay charges, and any late payment or similar charges. Invoices do not reflect payments or previous balance due. Statements of the same are available but are normally sent only to accounts that have not been paid or have a credit showing. Students enrolling midyear may have their tuition prorated monthly or quarterly.

Please make payments in the tuition envelope included with your billing. Payments are late if they are received in our office after the 8th. The school office will not accept postdated checks, nor will it hold them so as to avoid a late charge. Alternative financial payment plans must be arranged with the Head of School.

Students cannot be enrolled in the following year's classes or have transcripts issued until financial obligations are fulfilled.

Annual Participation Contract & Financial Terms

A parent or guardian of the student(s) enrolled must sign the *Participation Contract* for each year of the student(s) enrollment at St. Mark's Academy.

Delinquent Account

Timely payment of tuition and school fees is vital to the operating budget of the school. Therefore:

1. If payment is not received by the 8th of the month (or the next business day), the account will be charged a late fee.
2. If a check is returned for insufficient funds, a returned check charge (\$50) will be applied in addition to any applicable late charge.
3. Dismissal for failure to pay the tuition will not relieve the parent or guardian from remaining tuition due. Saint Mark's Academy may withhold all grades and transcripts for any student until the delinquency on the student's account and penalties have been paid in full.

Full Year Obligation for Tuition

Saint Mark's Academy incurs expenses of a continuing nature, including year-long financial commitments to faculty, staff, vendors, facilities, maintenance, and others on behalf of students. Thus, in order for the school to plan and maintain these services over the entire academic year, it is essential that the total annual income from tuition and fees be ensured. For this reason, it is understood and agreed that the obligation to pay tuition and fees for the full academic year is unconditional and takes effect upon the date specified in the annual Participation Contract. No portion of any tuition and/or fees, paid or payable, for the above student(s) will be automatically refunded or canceled for any reason, other than for those exceptions listed below. The School shall have the right to legal action for collection of all school fees, and the parent/guardian agrees to be responsible for all costs of collection, including court expenses and reasonable attorney fees.

Exceptions for refunding or cancellation of this obligation are:

1. The student's permanent place of residence changes during the term of this agreement to a location that is more than 40 miles from the campus and is more distant than the student's place of residence on the date of this agreement, which change could not have been reasonably anticipated on the date of this agreement. Satisfactory evidence of such change may be required.

2. A change in the student's health necessitates withdrawal from the school for medical reasons. The school may require a written opinion from the student's attending physician stating that the student's withdrawal from the school is necessary for medical reasons.

Appeal for partial relief of this obligation due to extraordinary circumstances, may be submitted in written form for consideration to the School Board, understanding that such appeal carries no assurance that any relief will be granted, given the primary responsibility of the Board to guard the financial stability of the school.

School's Rights Reserved

All members of Saint Mark's Academy consent to the rules and regulations of the Academy as stated in the current handbook and published literature. It is further understood that the Academy reserves the right to insist upon immediate withdrawal of any student who in conduct, industry, or progress proves not to be in harmony with Saint Mark's Academy standards or policies.

Release of Liability

Saint Mark's Academy members agree to release and hold harmless the Academy, its agents and employees from all claims, damages, or other liabilities for injuries to his child which are not the result of gross negligence by this school, its agents, or employees. A Member of Saint Mark's Academy also agrees to indemnify the school for all damages caused by his child.

Inclement Weather

School closings due to bad weather will correspond to the decisions of the Abington School District. There is no need to call the Head of School or teachers for this information if it has been posted publicly.

Records

Please notify the office of any changes in address, phone number, place of employment, health status of your child (allergies etc.) or individuals approved for the pick-up of your child(ren). This notification should be submitted in writing to ensure its proper recording.

Health Policies

A health form, including up-to-date immunization record, must be admitted to the school upon admittance. If the parents have chosen for religious (or other) reasons not to comply with the Department of Health requirements, they must submit an affidavit (notarized statement) signed by the parent indicating the basis for noncompliance.

Children must not be sent to school if ill. We do not have the facilities nor the staff to care for them. Other school children must be protected from exposure to illness. Children should be fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

If a child becomes ill at school, a parent will be contacted immediately to come for the child. After an illness, a child may resume class attendance if readmission criteria for that illness have been met.

Please send children to school properly dressed according to weather. Noting the morning weather report, particularly in fall and early spring, should help you prepare your child adequately.

Medications

Medications should be administered to students by the parents at home. If the doctor's instructions for administration indicated that the medication must be given while the child is at school, the parent must bring the medication in the original container to the school office with the pharmacist's instructions intact. The appropriate forms must be completed at the office.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held regularly and recorded in the office.

ACADEMIC GOALS & CURRICULUM

Academic Disciplines and the Bible

Our goal is to give students the foundational, academic tools necessary to become independent, excellent, and productive citizens in society as well as life-long students of the Holy Scriptures and of God's created works. This necessarily includes instructing students in the knowledge and understanding of both the Holy Scriptures and of God's creation.

The Christian Faith—To teach students, by question and answer, the basic doctrines, patterns of worship, and practices of Christ's Church as established by the ministry of the Holy Spirit down through history. The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, as well as the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the Reformed Episcopal Church are the standards for teaching the Christian Faith. In addition, students will be trained to sing the Psalms and hymns of the historic Church.

Righteous Character—To cultivate in children the seed of faith, to demonstrate daily total dependence upon God for every blessing they have, and to encourage them to place their faith and hope entirely in Him.

This necessarily includes promoting children's love of God, which, by His definition, is the whole-hearted keeping of His commandments (Matthew 22:35–40; Deuteronomy 6:5–7; John 14:15).

Calling—To foster in children the desire, ability, and sense of responsibility for developing expertise in some field of God's creation in order to bring that field under the dominion of Christ through their life-long service to Him.

Glory to God—To bring glory to God alone in this small but important part of the building of His kingdom.

Rework

It is an obligation before God to produce excellent work and to do it well. While often not popular, rework is therefore at the heart of the pedagogy of a classical and Christian education. Rework holds students accountable, and teaches them to take pride in their work, and to pursue excellence by God's example. It also trains them to produce abiding work that has integrity. Grading can therefore never simply be an assessment; it is a call to improvement—which should then happen. Expect much of a student's work to pass through several levels.

Curriculum: Grammar, Logic, & Rhetoric

Proven teaching methods are used to produce academic excellence, self-discipline, and a sense of accomplishment in our students.

Saint Mark's uses the best available material from a number of different curriculum publishers. The Head of School and faculty at Saint Mark's strive to keep abreast of good, new materials being published, and continually work to improve what they are presently using.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of our students' education. All field trips are chosen for their instructional nature in addition to the enjoyment they bring to the students. Notification of a field trip is sent home by the teacher outlining the specifics of the trip. Uniforms are worn on local field trips. Students must cover all costs of the trips. However, it is not our intention that any student be prevented merely because of financial reasons. Be sure to notify the teacher ahead of time if finances are an obstacle, so that provision can be made.

Students are expected to exercise self-control, and respectful, obedient attitudes on all field trips as in any other school activity. Teacher or room mothers will contact drivers for transporting the class. All students will need seat belts.

Grading

Because Saint Mark's has relatively high academic standards for its students, it is important for parents and students to realize that while earning high grades may have been easy in a prior school experience, that may not be true for the student here. Inflated grading systems have become the norm in most schools; we have pledged ourselves not to raise grades simply to gain the favor of parents. This is in no one's best interests.

Saint Mark's grading scale (below) is identical to many other school systems' scales. Report cards will show the numerical assessment of the student's progress for that marking period. Where a number grade is not appropriate for satisfactory, S for satisfactory, I for incomplete, or U for unsatisfactory will be used. It should be remembered that the training is the important thing, and not the grade. Grades simply serve as indicators for improving the educational experience wherever needed.

In elementary grades, students receive grades as follows:

A	Superior	(93-100)
B	Well-done	(85-92)
C	Average	(75-84)
D	Needs Improvement	(70-74)
F	Failing	(Below 69)

The teachers share their observation with the parents periodically with written forms or conferences.

Homework Assignments

Homework is an essential part of the academic program at Saint Mark's. From first grade on, students should expect some form of homework most nights. The amount of time a child needs to complete homework varies from grade to grade and from child to child, but the following chart serves as a guideline for both teachers and students.

Lighter assignments are given on Wednesday nights and homework is generally light or not given over weekends. Apart from makeup work or remedial work, homework is not assigned over holidays.

Homework is collected daily by the teachers. Parents are not to fax or bring homework to school for students. Continued laxity in homework completion may result in a student's suspension or expulsion. Parents can check the progress of these assignments by reviewing the test packets. Missing assignments should be noted by teachers.

The lower grades will have assignment folders with each day's assignments recorded. Parents are asked to sign these folders nightly. Important notes for the teachers or school will often be placed in these folders as well.

Parents can be of great help by establishing a routine homework place and time free from distraction early in the evening.

Honor Rolls

Saint Mark's School maintains two honor rolls: the High Honor Roll which is achieved by all A's and the Honor Roll which is earned by having all A's and B's.

Progress Reports

Report cards are sent home at the end of each term. The grades recorded on them represent the student's objective performance record and the teacher's best judgment as to the achievement of each student for that particular marking period. Tests, classwork, participation, and homework performance comprise the basis for the grades.

At any time, of course, parents or teachers are free to arrange conferences to discuss the progress of a particular student.

Summer Reading

The Summer Reading Program is designed to encourage continued progress and use of reading skills through the summer. A recommended-book list is sent home with the final report card of the year. Outstanding performances in the Summer Reading Program is recognized in the early fall.

Tests

Tests are scheduled regularly in most subjects. As students advance through the grades, they are being trained to prepare and study for tests. The responsibility to be prepared becomes more and more the student's own. An assignment to study or read textbook material is every bit as important an assignment as written homework. Teachers will schedule major tests (ones for which students must study) so they do not pile up on any one day. Ordinarily, Monday is not used as a test day.

Graded tests are reviewed weekly by the Head of School and then sent home for parents to look over and sign. All tests are then to be returned to the teacher. In first through third grades, an assortment of weekly work and tests will be sent home in packets which should also be examined, signed, and returned to school.

Textbooks

Textbooks are the property of Saint Mark's, unless purchased by the student for specific classes, and should be cared for properly by the students. Lost or damaged books must be paid for by any student responsible for the mishap.

Tutoring

Should a child need additional tutoring after school, Saint Mark's teachers may be contacted for their availability. Times and duration of tutoring should be arranged with the teacher. If a tutor other than the teacher is used, work should be coordinated by the student's teacher initially. The fee for any tutoring provided at Saint Mark's is set by the school.

Uniforms

Students must wear the approved uniform.

PARENT/SCHOOL RELATIONS

Home & School Communication

A healthy parent and teacher relationship is vital for a wholesome, well-ordered school experience. Parents should watch for daily Homework sheets, which require a daily signature, test packs and other work which is sent home.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Open communication between parents and staff is vital for a positive, well ordered school experience. Saint Mark's encourages its families and teachers to share information whenever needed regarding a student's progress at all times of the year. To share information or ask questions about specific classes, tests, grades, or projects, parents are asked to use the following procedure:

1. Call the office and leave your name, number, and the name of the teacher with whom you wish to speak. The teacher will contact you within one day.
2. If a telephone conversation is not sufficient to discuss your concerns, the teacher will make an appointment with you at school.
3. If a further communication is necessary for the resolution of a problem, make an appointment with the Head of School and the teacher by calling the office.

Our teachers carefully plan each day's class activities. In order that they might educate our students in the most effective manner, the school asks that parents avoid dropping by their child's classroom to talk with the teacher immediately before, during, or after the school day. These seemingly minor interruptions can add up to a substantial reduction in class time. The interruption may also prevent our teachers from supervising students adequately at these times. Please use the communication system outlined above; you will find our teachers responsive and eager to help in every way.

Grievance Guidelines

If the occasion arises where a parent is unhappy about a particular situation or circumstance, proper steps shall be taken to clarify or correct the perceived problem. If the remedy is not satisfactory, under no circumstance may the parent conduct their own “friendly investigation” with other parents, unsettling the peace of the school community. Rather, the principles of Matthew 18 shall be followed in reporting their concern to the proper school officials first of all, using the procedure below.

The following biblical guidelines are to be followed for bringing resolution whenever there is a dispute or grievance concerning any aspect of Saint Mark’s Academy’s operations between any two parties connected in a direct way to the school. This includes students, parents, staff, volunteers, administration, and board.

Student or Classroom Concerns

1. All concerns about the student or classroom must first be presented to the teacher by the parents or, if the student is mature enough, by the student himself. If the student presents the concern, a respectful demeanor is required at all times.
2. If the problem is not resolved, the parents or student may then bring the concern to the Head of School.

Concerns over General Operation of the School

1. If the concern is about the general operation of the school, it should be brought to the Head of School directly.
2. If a satisfactory settlement of the matter is still not reached, a written summary of the complaint, signed by the Head of School and the aggrieved party, is submitted to the Board, who finding merit

to the matter, forward this document(s) to the designated Reformed Episcopal Bishop for final resolution. If the Board does not find sufficient merit in their review, the ruling of the Head of School shall stand.

Twenty Ways Parents Can Help:

1. Bring students to school on time.
2. See that students receive proper amounts of sleep on school nights.
3. Schedule some no-TV hours after school for homework completion and extracurricular reading.
4. Make reading your own habit. Encourage students to read by giving them books and trips to the library.
5. Do not discuss differences you have with teachers in front of your children (even at home). Nothing makes it harder for a child to give a teacher the respectful obedience the Lord requires of him than to overhear, or take part in, a dressing-down of his teacher. We are very careful at school not to speak of you, the parent, disrespectfully or to diminish your authority in the mind of your child. We ask that you return the courtesy for the sake of your child. Please talk to the teacher directly and privately.
6. Offer to be a room mother. Room mothers are invaluable aides by arranging field trips and classroom parties, and assisting the teacher in other ways as needed.
7. Send treats or beverages for scheduled class parties or celebrations. Room mothers will call you when this is desired.
8. Volunteer to help out in special events throughout the year.
9. Talk about Saint Mark's School to your friends. Word-of-mouth is our best advertisement.
10. Chat with your child about what he does at school.
11. Encourage politeness and good manners in your child. Teach him that this is merely being thoughtful of the other person.

12. Make tuition payments on time.

13. Sponsor another child to attend Saint Mark's School by making a contribution to the financial aid fund.

14. Attend PTF (Parent-Teacher Fellowship) meetings. Informed parents and teachers make better parents and teachers.

15. PRAY FOR US. This is God's work, and He is faithful in answering the prayers of His people as they seek to build His kingdom.

16. Cultivate a healthy marriage and attend church regularly with your child.

17. Understand that all children are sinful and will need corrections at times.

18. Help your children start the school day out right by resolving parent-child conflicts before bringing them to class.

19. Remember to thank and encourage your child's teacher for the work and care they invest in your child.

20. Look at Saint Mark's as assisting, not replacing, you and your responsibility to train your children.

