

# Parent/Student Handbook



**2024-2025**

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## SECTION 1: FOUNDATIONS OF OUR SCHOOL MINISTRY

### Mission Statement

The mission of St. Mark Lutheran School is to establish and cultivate students in the true knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ, through an excellent Christian education that equips them for a productive and virtuous life lived by faith in and for the glory of God.

### Core Values

As we work to carry out our mission, the following core values will serve as our fundamental working principles:

† **Christ-centered:** All education and true knowledge reveals and draws us toward our Lord who is the author of all life and knowledge. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

† **Biblical Authority:** God’s Word in Holy Scripture (Bible) is the sole standard and measurement of truth and frames our understanding of all that is. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” (2 Timothy 3:16)

† **Academic Excellence:** We praise and honor God for His gifts of knowledge and an intelligent mind through maintaining the highest standard of excellence in education and using our minds to the greatest of our ability. “An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.” (Proverbs 18:5)

† **Persistence in Virtue:** Knowledge serves to equip us for living a life that is good, beautiful, and virtuous. “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.” (2 Peter 1:3)

### Purpose

The purpose of St. Mark Lutheran School is to provide the highest level of excellence in Christian education to ensure our students grow in the true knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and that He would reveal His love and salvation for the world through the excellence of their lives lived in the faith, knowledge, and virtue of Christ.

Our Christian convictions necessitate that the purpose of education transcend the mere acquisition of knowledge and ascend to the goal of revealing God in Christ through the knowledge He has made available to us. This means that our academic standards for education are guided not only by state standards established by the [Nebraska Department of Education](#), but are ultimately created and judged by the highest and eternal standards of Christian virtue, morality, wisdom, goodness, and beauty according to God’s Word.

*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, **think about these things**. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—**practice these things**, and the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:8-9).*

## Philosophy

At St. Mark Lutheran School, we believe, teach, and confess that God, as the creator of all things, is the source of all knowledge and wisdom. Without God there would not only be no thing, but no knowledge to be known, learned, or understood. God created man and woman in His image, blessed them, and gave them dominion over His creation so that we would grow in our knowledge of His love, goodness, and beauty. *“For his [God’s] invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made”* (Romans 1:19-20).

We did not create ourselves, nor did knowledge create itself. Both the human mind that teaches and acquires knowledge and knowledge itself are from God. Therefore, a knowledge of God is the nature and goal of any education that aspires after truth.

We believe, teach, and confess that the fall of mankind into sin (Genesis 3:7), and the sinful nature we all have from birth (Psalm 51:5), has not only corrupted our hearts and minds but also the nature of God’s perfect creation (Romans 8:22). Because of this, we are not able to know God (Romans 3:11-12) or acquire true knowledge and understanding without God’s direct intercession and merciful help.

We believe, teach, and confess that Jesus Christ is the Savior of humanity from sin and death, and that only through faith in Him as the resurrected Lord can we acquire the knowledge of truth and eternal worth that our hearts and minds desire. *“Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”* (Colossians 1:15-17).

Whereas all things were created through and for Christ, and whereas God’s plan of salvation for all of creation is to “unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Ephesians 1:10), we ensure that all subjects of study and all activities at St. Mark Lutheran School teach Jesus Christ; for “Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24).

## Student Outcomes

The ministry of St. Mark Lutheran School has the honor and responsibility to equip students in many facets of life. While there are many outcomes of a quality, Christian education in a Lutheran school, we have narrowed student outcomes to three categories: Spiritual, Academic, and Character development. St. Mark Lutheran School works in a partnership with families, students, and teachers in order to accomplish the following outcomes for our students.

### Spiritual Development

Through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, the students at St. Mark Lutheran School will continuously:

- † Grow in their faith and reflect Christ in their daily lives.
- † Demonstrate Christian attitudes toward others.
- † Worship and pray faithfully.
- † Practice the stewardship of time, talents, and resources.
- † Serve and love God through Christian love and respect for their teachers and peers.

Upon graduation, students will be spiritually prepared to live faithfully to Christ as they proceed to the next level of education. Every student will:

- † Understand God’s love for them and His salvation given to them in Jesus Christ.
- † Be comfortable expressing their faith in different settings according to their gifts.
- † Express their faith in worship, prayer, and through the exercise of their God-given talents.
- † Grow in their study of God’s Word and learn to make this a daily discipline.
- † Be able to evaluate situations and respond, age-appropriately, from a Christian worldview.

### **Academic**

Upon graduation, students of St. Mark Lutheran School will be confident and academically prepared to pursue further education. Students will:

- † See how “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight” (Proverbs 9:10).
- † Think and solve problems using both creative and critical thinking skills.
- † Read, write, and speak the English language effectively for a wide range of purposes, including interpretation and analysis of literary and informational texts.
- † Know and apply mathematics to a level of competency that prepares them for middle school.
- † Discover basic principles and processes of science and how to apply these in a discovery approach as they study God’s Word.
- † Understand geography, social studies, and history and see how God works His sovereign rule and grace over, in, and through the world He created.
- † Understand and appreciate the basic concepts of fine, visual, and performing arts.
- † Understand, appreciate, and learn to properly care for the body God has given them.
- † Students will develop an appreciation of other world cultures including the study of another language (Latin in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade).
- † Understand and apply current and emerging technologies, at an age-appropriate level, to extend their personal abilities and productivity.
- † Attain academic achievement and develop essential skills and attributes necessary for continuous growth in learning.
- † Develop skills that help them become lifelong learners.

### **Character Development**

All children should strive to reach full potential in all aspects of their lives by developing a Christ-centered foundation of knowledge and basic skills for lifelong, active learning in an ever-changing and global society. These skills include:

- † Humility
- † Respectfulness
- † Accountability
- † Adaptability
- † Critical Thinking
- † Problem Solving
- † Perseverance
- † Punctuality
- † Teamwork
- † Organizational skills
- † Communication
- † Cultural Awareness
- † Physical Fitness

Students will be taught to apply these skills practically and according to a Christian worldview by learning to:

- † Rightly understand and control their thoughts and emotions.
- † Take responsibility for their desired outcomes.
- † Lead as a servant-leader for the benefit of others.
- † Cooperate with others to achieve a common goal.
- † Constructively and honestly self-evaluate.
- † Respond to situations in a moral and ethical way according to the Christian faith.
- † Understand their rights, roles, and responsibilities as Christian citizens.

### **Partnership with Parents**

The staff of St. Mark Lutheran School strives to offer an excellent Christian education to the students entrusted in our care. Each student receives support, encouragement, and instruction to live out the mission of our school. The educational program offers a balanced and comprehensive curriculum that strives to prepare students for success now and in the future. St. Mark provides a sensitive, relational, caring, and supportive Christian learning environment which supports students achieving academic excellence while establishing their confidence and worth in the grace of God and Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The home is and always will be the chief agency for the Christian upbringing of the child. Our school does not serve to relieve parents of their God-given responsibility and obligation to serve as the primary influence in the raising of their child; both in faith and knowledge. St. Mark Lutheran School exists to walk alongside parents in the journey to raise their child in a manner that pleases our Lord, Jesus Christ.

In the event that a child's family does not have a personal relationship with Jesus, it is our duty and obligation to provide an open, loving relationship and a Christian witness to the child and parents. The staff of St. Mark Lutheran Church and School are ready to assist families as they begin to take the first steps of meeting and walking with Jesus.

## SECTION 2: CURRICULUM

### Curriculum and Practice

St. Mark Lutheran School is a traditional school that teaches all fundamental subjects of education (grammar, math, science, social studies, etc.) while also including art and music as primary subjects that all students will participate in regularly. All subjects taught at St. Mark support the daily study of the Holy Scriptures along with age-appropriate catechetical instruction in the Lutheran tradition. We teach using a pedagogy and curriculum inspired by the Classical Christian educational system.

St. Mark values and uses methods of the traditional classroom learning approach as the foundation of our education. Our classrooms are teacher-led. This means the teacher decides the shape and pace of learning for the class while also utilizing elements of student-led educational models such as structured group learning and collaborative projects when appropriate and helpful.

In summary, all of the decisions on curriculum, textbooks, fieldtrips, and pedagogical approaches are made aspiring to deliver a God-honoring education in Christ, inspired by the words of St. Peter when he wrote to the church and said, *“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (2 Peter 1:3-8).

### Course of Study

The course of study for elementary school students at St. Mark Lutheran School complies with the standards of the Nebraska Department of Education and the Nebraska District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Our faith is actively integrated in each course of study at each grade level. The areas of learning are:

- † **Christian Living:** Bible study, memory work, Christian doctrine, stewardship, and worship.
- † **Language Arts:** Reading skills, literature, writing, grammar, spelling, and handwriting.
- † **Science:** General science as well as science enrichment and STEM.
- † **Social Studies and History:** Home, community, history (Nebraska and United States), world geography, and cultures.
- † **Latin (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades):** Basic vocabulary, grammar, and literacy.
- † **Mathematics:** General arithmetic in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- † **Fine Arts:** Music theory and instrument training, choir, and art.
- † **Physical and Health Education:** Dedicated bi-weekly classes that teach physical exercise and coordination, body awareness, nutrition, fine and gross motor skills, muscle development, basic games, and general knowledge of athletics.
- † **Technology (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade):** General computer skills and keyboarding, Microsoft Word and PowerPoint Presentation.



## Field Trips

There are times where elementary school students go offsite for experiential learning, such as to a museum, a farm, or an orchestra hall. The parent's permission to take children off the school grounds for an educational learning experience is required. Parents will complete the permission form online during enrollment.

## Grading Scale

St. Mark Lutheran School's academic calendar is structured into trimesters, and as such, teachers issue report cards three times a year. Grades are recorded differently for different grade levels. The grading system is as follows:

### Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grading Scale

- 1 = Need Improvement
- 2 = Approaching Grade Level
- 3 = At Grade Level
- 4 = Exceeding Grade Level

### 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grading Scale

- A = 100-90%
- B = 89-80%
- C = 79-75%
- D = 74-70%
- F = 69% and lower

## Report Cards

Report cards will be sent to parents electronically at the end of each trimester. Hard copies of report cards will not be provided unless specifically requested by the parent(s). Incidental grades, updates, and reports on a student's academic progress will also be delivered electronically unless otherwise requested by the parent(s).

## Standardized Tests

Standardized tests are administered annually beginning in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Results of the testing program help determine a possible modification in curriculum and instruction techniques as well as providing another tool to help better understand students' academic needs. St. Mark Lutheran School utilizes the *MAP Growth* assessment for our annual standardized testing.

## Accreditation

As St. Mark Lutheran School continues to grow as a new school that opened in the Fall of 2023, we will be working towards accreditation through the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA). NLSA evaluates not only our curriculum and programs, but also our administration and the religious dimensions of our school. In tandem with NLSA, we will also be pursuing accreditation from the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education.

## Homework

Homework is required when necessary for the child's academic progress. Homework may include writing reports or reading texts or current materials for information. We do not want a child to be overburdened with homework.

We believe each student should have free time outside of schoolwork. We encourage regular and quality family time and activities, active and frequent involvement in congregational life and ministry outside of weekend worship, recreational reading, plenty of free play, athletics, and other pursuits.

Our general guide for managing appropriate homework time commitments is:

Kindergarten: ≤ 10 minutes

1<sup>st</sup> Grade: ≤ 15 minutes

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: ≤ 20 minutes

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: ≤ 30 minutes

4<sup>th</sup> Grade: ≤ 40 minutes

5<sup>th</sup> Grade: ≤ 50 minutes

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-Teacher Conferences typically occur at the end of the first trimester and again toward the beginning of the third trimester. Schedules will be arranged for these conferences and parents will register for a time slot.

The objectives of these conferences are to:

1. Promote understanding in the home/school relationship.
2. Strengthen the mutual interest of the parent and teacher in the child's welfare.
3. Give the parent information about the child's progress.
4. Assist the parent and teacher in finding ways to work together for the good of the child.

## **Technology**

The utilization of technology in our classrooms and curriculum is necessary to prepare our students for the future. We live in an age of technology and our students must learn to utilize it in a healthy and God-honoring way. At the same time, the risks and harm that can come with the overuse or abuse of technology are also well documented and established. Technology does not always make teaching or learning easier or better. At St. Mark, children are taught to read from and enjoy a book, write well on paper, and how to make appropriate eye-contact in verbal and articulate conversation before they are taught to type, scroll, or swipe.

## **Library**

The St. Mark Lutheran School library offers a wide range of fiction, non-fiction, and reference materials for all grade levels. All materials have been reviewed by our pastoral and administrative staff to ensure the content of all books is educationally appropriate and in accordance with our Lutheran confessions of faith. Students have a scheduled time each week to visit the library, check out books, and learn library cataloging.

Students will be limited to checking out 2 books per week, with a maximum of 2 books checked out at a time. Late returns will incur a charge of \$1 per day. When a student has a fine, the student will not be allowed to check out a book until the fine is paid. Any lost book will result in a replacement cost fee.

## **Chapel**

Elementary school chapel is held daily. Chapels on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday will be a short, 15-minute, devotional chapel to help focus staff and students for the day ahead. Wednesday chapels will be a longer, 30-minute, worship service format. All chapels begin at 8:40<sub>a.m.</sub> All chapels and related content are created by, led by, or overseen and approved by the pastoral staff of St. Mark Lutheran Church.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Students desiring to be involved in extra-curricular activities must meet a minimum standard in terms of grades and conduct. An extra-curricular activity is defined as a St. Mark Lutheran School sponsored or endorsed/approved activity affiliated with St. Mark Lutheran School that has meetings outside of the 8:15 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. school day. Students who wish to participate must keep a 70% or higher average in all classes. If a student falls below this average, they will be eligible to resume participation in extracurricular activities only with the approval of the teacher (who gave the grade) and parent(s). Students currently under any kind of disciplinary procedure or action are not eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

### **Reading Intervention**

Students in K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade may be identified by their teacher as needing additional help in developing into a strong reader. St. Mark provides assistance for these students based on teacher recommendations. The number of students is limited to allow the students who need this help to receive adequate time with our reading interventionist.

### **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

It may become necessary for some students to receive an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). IEPs typically outline special modifications necessary to encourage and/or facilitate the successful progress of students. Our teachers work with local public school personnel or private educational psychologists to create and implement IEPs. IEP goals are monitored by classroom teachers and our specialized teacher in this field, and they are updated on a yearly basis. Not every student with an IEP can be serviced through St. Mark Lutheran School.

### **Section 504 Plan**

Section 504 Plans are awarded to some students who may have physical disabilities or a diagnosed learning disability. 504s are similar to IEPs in that individual modifications and goals are determined, implemented, and monitored. One major difference is that public school personnel are not involved with 504s. 504s are the sole responsibility of St. Mark's staff.

## SECTION 3: ADMINISTRATION

### Governance

Utilizing a policy-based governance model, the congregationally elected Parish Leadership Council (PLC) entrusts overall leadership and day-to-day operations of the ministries of St. Mark Lutheran Church and School to the Senior Pastor. He, in turn, implements the ministries through the staff of which the Head Teacher, teachers, aides, and all employees and volunteers of St. Mark Lutheran School are members. The Head Teacher of St. Mark Lutheran School works and functions as an extension of the Pastoral office and is therefore accountable to the leadership of the Senior Pastor for implementing the policies of St. Mark Lutheran Church and School in their oversight, supervision, and leadership of the teachers, student teachers, aides, volunteers, students, families, and staff entrusted to their care.

### Staff Qualifications

All teaching faculty at St. Mark Lutheran School are duly licensed and certified with the Nebraska State Department of Education. Certificates are maintained and ensured to be active and up to date by the Head Teacher.

### Enrollment

All application and enrollment procedures are executed through St. Mark Lutheran School's website – [www.stmarkomaha.org](http://www.stmarkomaha.org).

### Applying and Enrolling

Students may be enrolled by following the application and enrollment procedures found on the website (<https://stmarkomaha.org/k5-home-page/>). Parents of new and returning students must pay the complete enrollment fee (\$500) at the time of enrollment for their seat to be secured. Each child must have all required paperwork turned in and approved before enrollment is official and tuition agreement is sent out.

For Kindergarten, a child must be five (5) years old on or before August 1<sup>st</sup>. A child, whose sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) birthday occurs on or before August 1<sup>st</sup>, may enter Grade 1 provided the child has successfully passed Kindergarten.

### Continuous Enrollment

All St. Mark Lutheran School students will be automatically re-enrolled each year until graduation unless parents/guardians notify the school in writing that your student will not be attending the next academic year. Please note that your financial account must be current for re-enrollment.

Parents of all students, returning and new, must confirm enrollment online during the specified Enrollment Confirmation time window. Enrollment (Registration) fees are non-refundable and must be paid in full to guarantee a space for the coming school year.

### Enrollment Prioritization

St. Mark will offer priority enrollment to the following groups:

- **Frist Priority:** Members of St. Mark Lutheran Church who are *active* and in *good standing*.
- **Second Priority:** Families *currently* enrolled in our Preschool and Childcare Center.
- **Third Priority:** Open enrollment to the general public.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

Parents must inform St. Mark Lutheran School in writing if they desire to withdraw their child from school. Parents may be required to fill out a withdrawal form in the school office. The following is true for all withdrawal situations:

1. Any Enrollment and/or New Student fees are non-refundable. This is the case regardless of the time or reason for withdrawal.
2. Any student withdrawn after June 30<sup>th</sup> will be subject to the following 30-day notice policy for the following school year:
  - If at any time or for any reason you withdraw your child or your child is no longer eligible to attend St. Mark Lutheran School, a 30-day written notice will be required to stop tuition payments. You are responsible for paying tuition through the end of the month during which the notice's day #30 falls. *For example: if your child is withdrawn on August 10<sup>th</sup>, the 30<sup>th</sup> day following notice is September 9<sup>th</sup>. That means your family is responsible for paying tuition through the end of September.*
  - In the event the withdrawal notification is more than 30 days before the last day attending, tuition will be due for the month into which the last day attending falls. *For example: if you are moving and fill out the withdrawal form on October 25<sup>th</sup> with the last day of attendance being the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester (in December), you will be responsible for payments through December but not after.*
3. All tuition due prior to and up through the end of the 30-day notice policy (as listed above) is:
  - Due in full to St. Mark Lutheran School
  - Non-refundable
4. School records cannot be transferred to a new school until the following items have been completed:
  - All textbooks, library books, and other school property has been returned or fees/fines paid.
  - Any St. Mark Lutheran School/St. Mark Early Childhood financial accounts are paid in full.

## **Tuition**

Upon enrollment, a single tuition agreement will be sent to parents/guardians for each student enrolled. Families will be set up through *Procare* (a third-party web and mobile application) to automatically draft from the responsible payee's bank account or credit card (additional fees apply). Tuition may be divided into as few as one (1) or as many as ten (10) equal monthly payments occurring in July-January and March-May. There is no tuition charged in the month of February as it is the month that Registration Fees are paid for the next school year.

## **Annual Tuition**

Tuition for St. Mark Lutheran School is \$5,200.00. All tuition is assessed annually.

## **Enrollment Fee**

An annual, one-time, enrollment fee of \$500 is due upon registration for enrollment. The registration fee is non-refundable, without exception.

## **Discounts and Scholarships**

Parents/students must be enrolled in automatic bill e-pay to receive any discount or scholarship. St. Mark offers several different discounts and scholarships to make our education as affordable as possible. All discounts and scholarships are subject to change at any time and without notice.

## Discounts

There are two discount types: “need-based” and “payment” discounts.

*Need-Based Discounts* will be awarded based on a family’s verifiable financial need. All need-based discounts are determined by BeneFAQ, an outside and independent organization. It is the parents’ responsibility to begin and complete the *Need-Based* discount process. See “Financial Aid and Management” below.

*Payment Discounts* are applied to select tuition payment schedules.

Discount Description	Discount Amount
Need-based	TBD
Paid “in full” by July 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$100
Pay 50% by July 1 <sup>st</sup> Paid “in full” by January 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$50 per student
Automatic Tuition Payment <sup>†</sup>	\$100 per student

<sup>†</sup>Limited application. See *Limitations* below.

## Scholarships

Scholarships are funded by the congregation of St. Mark Lutheran Church, and are awarded based on the criteria outlined below. Please see the *Limitations* and *Scholarship Eligibility* descriptions following the list of available scholarships below. All scholarships are applied to the total annual tuition amount of \$5,200.00.

Scholarship Description	Scholarship Amount
St. Mark Member	\$400 per student
Preschool & Childcare Family	\$200 per student
LCMS Clergy <sup>†</sup> /Called Worker	\$300 per student
Multiple Enrollment	\$200 per student
Parent Volunteer Hours <sup>†</sup>	TBD

<sup>†</sup>Limited application. See *Scholarship Eligibility* below.

## Limitations

*Need-based* discounts cannot be combined with *Payment discounts* and can only be combined with the *Parent Volunteer Hours* scholarship.

Any *Scholarship* can only be combined with the *Parent Volunteer Hours* scholarship. Students will be awarded the single highest scholarship for which they are eligible, which will only be combined with the *Parent Volunteer Hours* scholarship if the parent is approved for volunteering. See *Scholarship Eligibility* descriptions below.

*St. Mark Member* scholarships are awarded based on the eligibility of the parent(s), grandparent(s), or legal guardian(s) of the students enrolled. Students will not be eligible for member discounts based on the membership of relatives other than parent(s), grandparent(s), or legal guardian(s) of the students enrolled.

*Payment* discounts (except *Automatic Tuition Payment* discount) will be combined with *Scholarship* awards.

The *Automatic Tuition Payment* discount will only be applied to families who do not qualify for a *Need-based discount* or any *Scholarship*.

### **Scholarship Eligibility**

† **St. Mark Member** scholarships are awarded to members of St. Mark Lutheran Church who meet and maintain the following criteria:

- Are the parent(s), grandparent(s), or legal guardian(s) of the student for which the scholarship will be awarded.
- Are “active” members who attend no less than 50% of all corporate worship services and volunteer in church ministry activities at least twice a year.
- Are “in good standing” as defined by active involvement, faithfulness in the tithes God commands us to bring, and no church disciplinary action within the past year. The Board of Elders determines and maintains a member’s standing in the church.
- Have been an “active” member(s) in “good standing” at St. Mark for no less than three months.

† **Preschool & Childcare Family** scholarships are awarded to students whose parent(s) or guardian(s) have another child actively enrolled in our preschool and childcare center.

† **LCMS Clergy/Called Worker** scholarships are afforded to pastors and rostered church workers who meet the following criteria: LCMS ordained or commissioned minister (active status). Pastors not affiliated with the LCMS may still receive a discount, but only if approved by the Senior Pastor of St. Mark. Clergy or workers from non-Christian faiths are not eligible for a discount or scholarship. Clergy or church workers affiliated with churches or church bodies that profess or practice doctrines not in agreement with the confessions of St. Mark Lutheran Church are not eligible for a discount.

† **Multiple Enrollment** scholarships will be awarded to parent(s) or guardian(s) who have more than one child enrolled at St. Mark Lutheran School at the same time.

† **Parent Volunteer Hours** are a way for parents to help further discount their tuition through volunteering at St. Mark Lutheran School. The amount of discount applied will be determined by the specific work being volunteered for and the number of hours volunteered. Criteria for these volunteer discount hours will be provided prior to the beginning of the school year.

### **Withholdings**

Final report cards, transfer of transcripts, or promotions will be withheld until tuition and fees are paid in full. Additionally, a student will not be enrolled for the following school year until outstanding balances for the family have been paid in full. Families with special financial circumstances are encouraged to speak with the administration.

### **Financial Aid (BeneFAQ)**

BeneFAQ is an independent third-party company that specializes in providing private schools an unbiased financial aid assessment for students. BeneFAQ also manages the application process for families desiring to apply for need-based financial aid. Please contact the school office for more information on how to begin the financial aid application process.

## **Tuition & Payments Management (Procure)**

Procure is an independent third-party software application that St. Mark Lutheran School utilizes for managing all tuition and payments. Upon completion of the enrollment process, all parents will be required to sign-up for a free account with Procure, if one has not already been set up for your student through their enrollment in our preschool/childcare.

## **Communications**

St. Mark Lutheran School is committed to keeping consistent, clear, and reliable communication with students and their families. We achieve this through several different mechanisms:

### **Website - <https://stmarkomaha.org/k5-home-page/>**

The St. Mark Lutheran School website homepage is located with the St. Mark Lutheran Church website. It is easily accessed by visiting [www.stmarkomaha.org](http://www.stmarkomaha.org) and clicking either “School” in the main menu or any of the many links/buttons on our homepage referencing our school. We encourage all families to bookmark/save the following URL as a direct link to the school’s homepage: <https://stmarkomaha.org/k5-home-page/>.

### **Procure**

The same Procure application that is used to manage student files, family profiles, tuition and attendance. All families must download and use the Procure application.

### **Call Dojo**

Is the primary mechanism used for regular communication with parents. Teachers and administrators will communicate primarily through Class Dojo, including daily school-wide notifications, individual family communications, closure notifications, event reminders, etc.

### **Email**

Email is St. Mark Lutheran School’s is also a primary mechanism for communicating with families on a regular basis. It is imperative that parents/guardians and the financially responsible parties provide accurate and functional email addresses upon enrollment. Families are also welcome to email the school directly at any time by emailing [school@stmarkomaha.org](mailto:school@stmarkomaha.org). Teachers will provide the parents and families in their class with their direct email; however, Class Dojo will be the teacher’s main method of communication.

### **Phone**

Speaking with administrative staff over the phone is also a good way to communicate, although it will not be possible to connect with a teacher by phone during school hours. Teachers do not have voicemail, so it is generally easier to contact the teacher via email. Phone calls during classroom teaching hours should be directed to the school office at 402-391-6148. Messages are typically returned within 24 hours unless the situation requires immediate attention.

### **Face-to-Face**

Much of the required communication can be easily handled through email, text message, or phone. However, there are times when parents and teachers may wish to engage in a deeper level of communication that requires a face-to-face conversation. All members of our staff are more than willing to speak with parents. Impromptu and unscheduled face-to-face meetings will always be more difficult to enact. Whenever possible, parents are encouraged to schedule face-to-face meetings with their desired staff member(s).



### **Social Media**

The official social media sites of St. Mark Lutheran School are found on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. They are located at the following addresses:

Facebook – TBA

Twitter – TBA

Instagram – TBA

Parents and friends of St. Mark Lutheran School are asked to respond to posted information on our social media sites in a way that represents the Christian faith and values of St. Mark Lutheran School. The school administration has the right to revoke, block, delete posts, or unfollow individuals from the school's social media sites who respond in an unchristian manner.

### **Change of Family Information**

Parents are asked to notify the school office immediately when a change of address, phone number, and/or email occurs. This allows our school administration and teachers to keep our roster and mailing list up to date. Also, parents/guardians are asked to notify the school office if there is a change of family relationship, health-related items, immunizations, sickness, etc.

### **Custody Notification**

Please inform the school office and teacher(s) concerning any special parental rights and privileges. For the benefit of the child, a copy of the court ordered Parenting Plan and any court ordered changes or modifications is to be given to the school office for placement in the child's records.

### **Behavior and Discipline Policies**

In keeping with our Christian faith, all disciplinary issues will be handled with grace and for the mutual encouragement and building up of all people in accordance with our Lord's words in Matthew 18:15-19. The goal of all disciplinary measures at St. Mark Lutheran Church is to honor our Lord Christ with our lives lived in His love for all people, especially in the Church, as is described in 1 Thessalonians 5:5-22.

Any school or classroom procedure not specifically discussed in this handbook shall be left to the discretion of the teachers and/or administration.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

St. Mark Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, nationality, 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 based on race, color, disability, nationality, age, sex, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, enrollment policies, athletic policies, and other school-administered programs.

### **Parent Conduct**

It is the responsibility of St. Mark Lutheran School parents and guardians to understand and support the rules and policies of St. Mark Lutheran School. The school will not tolerate profanity, obscenity in word or action, or any type of harassment from students or parents that are deemed disrespectful or harmful to St. Mark's staff or students. Parents who behave in this manner towards a student or a staff member will be asked to leave the campus and may be banned from the campus.

It is expected that parents expect their child(ren) to comply with school regulations. Parents will withdraw their child(ren) or accept the school's right to dismiss them if the parent is unable to support these policies, procedures, and rules.

### **Insurance**

St. Mark Lutheran School does not offer any accident insurance for students. It is advisable and beneficial for students to have some type of accident coverage. Most students are covered through a parent's home or occupational medical (or accident) insurance.

### **Student Behavioral Expectations**

At St. Mark Lutheran School, we do not think of the term "discipline" as meaning punishment, but rather as the teaching of self-control, Christian attitudes, orderliness, efficiency, and responsibility. Therefore, our teachers will deal with students in accordance with the morality of God as He has given to us in His Word, the Bible. The teachers will tolerate actions acceptable for certain areas of growth, redirect negative actions where necessary, and stop any unacceptable behaviors that interfere with the learning process of others. Students will be led to understand that for a healthy community it is necessary to love our Lord first, to love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, and to serve and respect one another's rights and privileges.

The teacher, guided by God's Word and the oversight of the Senior Pastor and Head Teacher, accomplishes the enforcement of discipline. Our teachers will take measures in the classroom to ensure that the atmosphere remains positive and educational. If the teacher cannot obtain acceptable conduct and cooperation from a student, then the teacher will report such disobedience to the parents of the student and administrative staff.

The most important outgrowth of a discipline plan is the understanding that both the parent and the teacher have a mutual interest – the success of the child. An ongoing communication link between the parent and teacher can help guide the student through a successful school year.

Scripture shapes and supports our disciplinary guidelines and actions. Below are Bible passages upon which these guidelines are built.

- **Colossians 3:12** – Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.
- **Hebrews 12:7-11** – Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as His children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined – and everyone undergoes discipline – then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at any time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained in it.
- **Romans 12:2** – Do not conform to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- **Philippians 4:8** – Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is a vital factor in any student’s academic progress. The responsibility for such attendance rests with the parent. Notification of absences are required to be in writing (including digital communication) or by a telephone call to the school office.

### **Absences**

School administration records student attendance patterns throughout the school year, noting full-day and partial day absences, as well as any late arrivals (tardy) or early departure. Such information will be recorded on students’ official attendance records.

School administration shall assume leadership for all matters relating to school attendance. As the school’s “attendance officer”, the Head Teacher is obligated to report on and follow-up on suspected cases of habitually absent, tardy, or truant students. Such administrative action will be based on the available evidence and facts for each individual case. A high absenteeism rate will result in administrative action through the school office.

Students must be in attendance at least 90% of the days each semester to receive credit for the school year. Less than 90% attendance may result in the student not being promoted to the next grade level. Parents may appeal this decision by following the Appeals Process that considers extenuating circumstances and whether the student completed missed work.

If a student arrives more than one (1) hour late or leaves for more than one (1) hour during either the morning or afternoon, he/she will be counted absent for one-half day. Exceptions will be granted by the discretion of the administration and only when a written letter (digitally or otherwise) is received from the parent(s).

### **Medical and Other Appointments**

If a doctor, dentist, or other necessary appointment is scheduled during the school day, we encourage parents to schedule it at the beginning or end of a school day. A note should be obtained from the doctor’s office and submitted to the school office upon the student’s return, or the following morning.

### **Tardiness**

Students are expected to be in their classrooms by 8:15 a.m. If a student arrives after the start of the school day, he/she will be counted tardy; or, if a student misses one (1) hour or less from any part of a school day, it will be counted as a tardy. For a student to receive a full day’s credit, he/she must be present the entire day.

- Five (5) tardies equal one (1) absence per nine (9) weeks.

A note must be sent with the student explaining why the student was late or the parent must sign the student into the office.

On severe weather day or days when there are serious traffic problems, as determined by the school administration, no students will be counted tardy.

If a student is chronically tardy despite the homeroom teacher's efforts at correction, the student will be reported to the administration who will confer with the parents to correct the matter. Every tardy will be recorded on a student's report card.

### **Truant or Unexcused Absences**

Students must have written or verbal permission of a parent or legal guardian to leave school. Accumulated unexcused absences or truancy will result in administrative action.

### **Vacations**

We understand that learning is not solely confined to the classroom. Absence from school for some types of vacation offers unique cultural advantages for the student. However, any extended absence from school may lead to academic loss to the absentee. This loss is much greater with some students than with others, so vacation absences must be treated with attention to the needs of the individual student. Families are encouraged to use the times St. Mark has scheduled days off from school for vacations. However, should extended vacations occur during the school year, parents must assume full responsibility for the academic progress of their children. The student must get all assignments they will miss on vacation and the assignments need to be turned in the day they return from the vacation.

### **Make-up Assignments and Tests**

A student who was absent will be allowed one day for each day absent plus one extra day to make up work and tests. Make-up work for pre-planned absences must ideally be requested at least one week in advance of the absence. Make-up work for pre-planned absences is due on the day the student returns to school.

### **Harassment**

The environment at St. Mark Lutheran School must be one in which all individuals are free to work, learn, and develop relationships in a Christian atmosphere without fear of intimidation and/or humiliation as a result of unwanted or unacceptable behavior from others. It is essential to the well-being of all that students, teachers, parents, and staff members treat each other with due respect for our God-given rights, individuality, and personal dignity.

Harassment includes any unwelcome verbal or physical conduct that belittles, shows hostility, seeks to intimidate, or ridicules an individual, thus interfering with a student or teacher's academic or professional performance. Harassment is defined as any unwelcome conduct against a protected class under the federal civil rights laws, which is severe, persistent, and creates a hostile environment. In order to meet the criteria for harassment, the conduct needs to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from activities, opportunities, or services at school.

Sexual Harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by a faculty member, staff member, student member, or volunteer of the school to any other member, adult, or student.

Bullying/Cyber-bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. It can include physical strength, popularity, or access to embarrassing information, among other factors. Bullying can happen in person or online (including social media, text

messages, email, etc.). To be considered bullying, the behavior needs to reoccur over time. Therefore, bullying is also differentiated from other forms of inappropriate or aggressive student behavior that are isolated incidents or don't involve a power imbalance.

The Nebraska Department of Education defines bullying as “any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or his or her designee, or at school-sponsored activities or school-sponsored athletic events.”

A charge of bullying/cyber-bullying shall not, in and of itself, create the presumption of wrongdoing. However, substantiated acts of bullying will result in disciplinary action being brought against the alleged bully.

### **Harassment Procedures**

Any individual who believes that he/she has been subjected to harassment or sexual harassment as prohibited by this policy may complain to any other adult teacher or employee of St. Mark Lutheran School with whom she/he feels comfortable discussing the matter. Parents may communicate complaints on behalf of their children to their child's teacher, the school principal, or the Senior Pastor, so long as that individual was not the alleged harasser.

Upon learning of a complaint, the administration of St. Mark Lutheran School will investigate the allegations. As deemed appropriate by St. Mark, the complainant, and, in the case of a student complainant, the parents of the complainant, will be consulted as to the facts of the allegations and his/her suggested remedy, and the alleged harasser may be provided an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

If St. Mark determines that a violation of the policy has occurred, appropriate remedial action will be taken in St. Mark's discretion.

The complainant and, in the case of a student complainant, the parents of the complainant, shall be notified at the conclusion of the investigation that appropriate remedial action has been taken. However, all documents generated during the investigation will be kept confidential by St. Mark's to protect the privacy rights of all involved, except as required by law or as deemed appropriate by St. Mark's Parish Leadership Council and Board of Elders.

Appropriate civil or criminal authorities may be notified of any substantiated charges.

### **Sanctions**

Individuals determined by St. Mark to have violated our harassment policies will be disciplined. Disciplinary action may include, but need not be limited to, suspension or termination of St. Mark teachers, employees, or agents and suspension or expulsion of St. Mark students, as deemed appropriate by St. Mark and its leadership.

Sexual harassment is illegal in many circumstances under both state and federal law, and violations of this policy may be reported to the appropriate civil or criminal authorities for prosecution of offenders.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation against any person who reports alleged harassment of any kind or assists with an investigation will not be tolerated. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisals, or harassment.

### **False Allegations**

False allegations intentionally levied against another individual will not be tolerated.

### **Solicit and Selling**

In the interest of eliminating what may become a school nuisance, no soliciting or selling of any kind of product is allowed during the school day unless previously approved by the Head Teacher.

### **Cafeteria Behavior Expectations**

Elementary school teachers will provide supervision for students eating in the cafeteria. Students are expected to:

1. Use normal conversation voices.
2. Keep conversations positive.
3. Appropriately use food and utensils.
4. Remain seated while eating.
5. Use good manners.
6. Throw away trash, recycle plastic and aluminum, place utensils in a container and tray on the shelf.
7. Maintain a clean area where students eat.

### **Cell Phone Use**

Cell phones are not to be used by students during school hours, including before and after school care. Violators of this policy will have their phones confiscated. They will be returned at the end of the next school day for a \$25 fee (donated to the monthly chapel offerings).

### **Damages and Vandalism**

All materials, equipment, facilities, etc., belong to the members of St. Mark Lutheran Church. Misuse or abuse of these facilities creates a greater expense in maintenance and upkeep for everyone. This expense is eventually passed along to the parents. It is our desire that a feeling of ownership would develop where all students would take a greater pride in their school and treat these facilities and materials with great respect and care. Any unnecessary hard usage or damage to books, tables, chairs, or any school property or equipment will not be tolerated. Replacement or repair of any item and the cost of labor applicable is the responsibility of the parent and/or child. The Head Teacher, in consultation with the teacher and Senior Pastor, will make judgment on all such matters. Failure to pay for damage may result in suspension from school.

### **Bathroom Behavior**

Bathroom behavior is closely monitored. Failure to follow appropriate bathroom conduct will result in disciplinary action.

### **Nuisance Items**

Items brought to school that are not part of the necessary or required school supplies or material may be considered a "nuisance" and may be confiscated by the teacher if used at inappropriate times. Students are strongly discouraged from bringing to school items of significant value.

## **Weapons**

Students possessing items which may pose a danger to students and staff (guns, knives, matches, fireworks, etc.) will be referred to administration. Consequences may include suspension or expulsion.

## **Disciplinary Interventions**

Because each student is unique, the best interventions for each discipline situation will vary.

Consequences may be given for such situations as:

- Student is repeatedly not on task.
- Student is repeatedly not following directions.
- Student is being rude and/or disrespectful.

Disciplinary interventions may result in some, but not limited to, the following actions being taken:

- Teacher prescribed behavioral reward and disciplinary measures that are progressive and seek for positive reinforcement. Examples include “prize boxes” and “behavioral charts.”
- Recess and school activity restrictions
- Referral to Head Teacher office

All disciplinary interventions will be promptly communicated with parents by the classroom teacher and/or Head Teacher.

## **Suspension and Expulsion**

If a disciplinary problem continues, or if a serious problem arises requiring immediate suspension from the school, a consultation with the student, parent(s), and school administrator(s) is required. The conditions of the student’s return to school will be determined by the consultation process. The conditions of the probationary return will be outlined by the administration and signed by the parents/guardians. If the problem continues, the principal may recommend the child be expelled from school and immediately contact the Senior Pastor who will, in turn, consult with the Board of Elders and Parish Leadership Council before further consultation with parents.

In the case of flagrant misbehavior, the administration may begin the process at any level, including recommendation of expulsion. Parents will have the right to the appeal process using the grievance policy stated below.

St. Mark Lutheran School will never use corporal punishment on a student for any misbehavior.

## **Grievance Policy**

Concerns originating from parents regarding a member of the faculty or staff shall be dealt with following the philosophy found in Matthew 18, as follows:

- Step 1: Voice the concern or grievance in person to the individual in question.
- Step 2: If after this personal conference, the person feels that the problem has not been resolved, he/she shall discuss the matter with the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher may, at their discretion, request that the concern or grievance be put in written format for further follow-up by the Head Teacher.
- Step 3: If this matter has not been resolved with principal, the principal shall forward the written complaint to the Senior Pastor, and the person may speak to the Senior Pastor.
- Step 4: If the matter is still not resolved, the written complaint shall be forwarded to the Parish Leadership Council and/or Board of Elders. A representative from either or both

governing bodies, along with the Senior Pastor, will meet with the person in a timely manner. The decision of the Parish Leadership Council and/or Board of Elders is final, and the matter is then closed.

### **Promotion**

Elementary students are promoted at the end of each school year. If promotion is in question, a special consultation will be held with teacher and parents to discuss the situation. In considering promotion, the teacher will always have in mind what is best for the child. We know that Christian principles and love will preside over this decision.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting**

Child abuse and neglect are complex problems and are not confined to any race, social, economic, or religious group. Various forms of abuse may occur: physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and neglect. Nebraska Law mandates that school staff report reasonable suspicion of physical or emotional abuse, emotional deprivation, physical neglect, inadequate supervision, or sexual abuse and exploitation. Procedures and guidelines will be followed, as able, to ensure prompt, professional treatment of the reported case.

If you suspect child abuse has occurred in our school, to one of our students, or to any child anywhere, call the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services hotline at (800) 652-1999.

### **Health Services**

St. Mark Lutheran School strives to guard the health of all students.

#### **Disease/Illness**

To help minimize the spreading of disease, a child showing signs of illness (sore throat, low grade fever, rash, etc.) should be kept home until the condition is corrected. The same applies to children with a severe cold or cough.

Children who do not feel well at home before school are requested to stay home for the entire school day. Students who vomit over the night or morning should not attend school. Students must be fever-free and without episodes of vomit or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.

If a child becomes ill at school, the child will be taken to the school nurse or medical "designee" for initial isolation and evaluation. Parents will be called to pick up their child for the following conditions: fever of 100.4 or greater, vomiting, diarrhea, chicken pox, pink eye, untreated head lice and ringworm, impetigo, and other suspected communicable disease as listed in the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services chart.

When returning to school from a contagious disease or illness, a doctor's permission to return to school is strongly encouraged.

#### **First Aid and Injury**

In compliance with our Rule 14 status in the state of Nebraska, St. Mark has appointed a staff designee(s) who is responsible for administering first aid in cases of minor injuries (cuts, scrapes, bruises) and administering parent-specified and school approved medications, ointments, or other treatments and detailed in writing from the parents. Students should never be in possession of their



own medication; prescribed or over the counter. The administration of any medications, prescription or otherwise, must follow these guidelines without exception:

1. Medication must be the original, labeled container.
2. A signed and dated note must be attached from the parent indicating the time and amount of medication that should be administered.
3. The amount administered cannot exceed the recommended dosage.

Non-aspirin, over-the-counter medication, such as Tylenol or Advil, can be given when needed, if permission is given by phone or with a written or electronic signature.

Serious or questionable injuries will be referred to the parent(s) immediately. In the event a student sustains an injury that the school administration and designee feel is a medical emergency, emergency personnel (9-1-1) will be contacted prior to the parents of the injured students. Parents are solely responsible for all medical bills, including transport, related to any injury their child sustains while attending school at St. Mark Lutheran School.

### **Immunization**

State law prescribes certain immunizations be given at various ages. When a child is enrolled at St. Mark, their parents must show that the child has been immunized or that a current medical or religious objection is on file. Parents are requested to provide the school with completed immunization records prior to the beginning of the school year.

### **Counseling**

God's Word teaches that He created us with both body and spirit, breathing into us our very soul (Genesis 2:7), and giving us personhood, self-awareness, and a mind to know God. Body, mind, and spirit God created together. As such, we believe that our spiritual well-being is just as important as our physical (body and mind) well-being.

St. Mark Lutheran Church and School has ensured that all our pastoral staff has been rightly trained, called, and ordained to serve as ministers to our members and families. Faculty, staff, students, and parents are invited to engage with our pastor for counseling and spiritual guidance. Our pastors, in addition to their work directly with our Head Teacher, serve as the primary counseling staff for St. Mark Lutheran School. Our staff recognizes our professional and educational limitations, and if our pastors recognize the need for more specialized counseling, a referral to a qualified and trusted third-party will be made.

Counseling questions should be directed to the Head Teacher and/or Senior Pastor.

## SECTION 4: OPERATIONS

### **School Hours**

Regular school days begin at 8:15am and end at 3:00pm.

### **Academic Calendar**

The academic calendar may be downloaded by going to our website homepage

<https://stmarkomaha.org/k5-home-page/>.

### **Cancellation or Delay**

St. Mark Lutheran School reserves the right to close in the event of inclement weather. As a general guide, we follow the weather-related delays and closures issued by the Omaha Public School District. We will make every effort to be open, keeping in mind the families we serve. We want to make safe decisions for your children in our care, their families, and our staff members. If we are closed or opening late, the decision will be sent as a message through Class Dojo, email, our [website](#), as well as our social media pages. Announcements will likely also be made on your local news channels, as we do submit our closure notifications to them. If the school needs to close early because of severe weather, parents will be notified by email and phone. No tuition adjustments are provided for inclement weather closings.

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

The following morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up procedures are mandatory and will be followed by all parents/guardians transporting students to and from St. Mark Lutheran School.

#### **Drop-off**

Students not enrolled in before-school care may be dropped off between 7:55am and 8:10am. Students must be dropped off using the drive-through lane outside of Door 9 in the south parking lot only. Students arriving after 8:10am must NOT use the drive-through lane. Instead, parents must park and escort their student to the front office. Students arriving to class after 8:15am will be marked as tardy. More specific procedures for drop-off will be shared with enrolled families via email and at Back to School Night.

#### **Pick-up**

Students not enrolled in our after-school care will be released to parents beginning at 3:00pm. Students must be picked-up using the drive-through lane outside of Door 9 in the south parking lot only. Students who are picked up after 3:10pm will have a \$.50 per minute late fee charged to their Procure account. More specific procedures for pick-up will be shared with enrolled families via email and at Back to School Night.

#### **Parking Lot Speed and Safety**

The safety of all students, staff, and visitors on our campus is a top priority. The maximum speed limit in our parking lot is always 10 mph. If you are running late or in a hurry, this is not an acceptable reason to speed and risk the safety of others. All traffic signs, including entrances, exits, one-way directional signs, specific and no parking signs, handicap signs, and the like must be followed without exception. Parents will be given one warning when traffic rules are not adhered to. After this warning a fee of \$50 will be automatically billed to your student's Procure account.

## **Before and After School Care**

We currently offer before and after school care for school-age (5-12) children who are enrolled in St. Mark Lutheran School. All before and after school care for school-age students is billed at a \$6 per hour rate. Childcare fees are paid one month in advance. Monthly payments reserve a time for each child. Refunds will not be given for underutilization of reserved time(s). All children enrolled in school-age after school childcare will receive a snack upon arrival.

### **Before School Care**

We offer one time allotment for our school-age before school care at the following levels of frequency per week:

- **7:00-8:00 am breakfast is included:**
  - o 2 days per week = \$51/month
  - o 3 days per week = \$77/month
  - o 5 days per week = \$128/month

### **After School Care**

We offer two dismissal time options and affiliated pricings for our school-age after school care at the following levels of frequency per week.

- **3:00pm - 4:00pm Dismissal/Pick-Up**
  - o 2 days per week = \$51/month
  - o 3 days per week = \$77/month
  - o 5 days per week = \$128/month
- **3:00pm - 5:30pm Dismissal/Pick-Up**
  - o 2 days per week = \$128/month
  - o 3 days per week = \$191/month
  - o 5 days per week = \$318/month

Parents desiring to utilize our Childcare Center for before and/or after school care are required to apply and enroll in our Childcare Center as a separate enrollment from our elementary school. Please visit <https://daycareomaha.org/after-school-care-for-school-age-children/> for more information or contact our Childcare Center Director, Julie Kyriss: [jkyriss@stmarkomaha.org](mailto:jkyriss@stmarkomaha.org).

## **Dress Code Guidelines**

St. Mark Lutheran School believes that a uniform dress code is desirable since the dress of students reflects what St. Mark Lutheran School believes and represents. Our emphasis is on modesty, neatness, good grooming, and a God-honoring presentation of self. Students are expected to avoid extremes that attract undue attention. Research has shown that appearance and good grooming improve a student's general behavior and study habits.

All required uniform clothing must be purchased through [DiGiorgio's School Uniforms](#) located locally at 14111 Q Street in Omaha, NE 6817. Students must be sized, fitted, and make initial purchases of their uniforms in-store. Please download the [St. Mark Lutheran School DiGiorgio's Catalog](#) for all approved uniform apparel and prices.

All students of St. Mark Lutheran School must dress in accordance with the following guidelines:

<b>Top Wear</b>	Polo Shirts	† All polos must have St. Mark logo from DiGiorgio's † Shirts must always be tucked in and be long enough to ensure shirt remains easily tucked in during physical play or activity. † Solid white, gray, or black long-sleeve t-shirts may be worn under a school polo.
<b>Warmer Top Wear</b>	Cardigans, Sweatshirts, Hoodies, & Winter Coats	† All warmer top wear (not heavy winter coat) must have a St. Mark logo, from DiGiorgio's, and may be worn inside the classroom over a school polo. † Heavy winter coats do not require St. Mark logo and do not have to be purchased from DiGiorgio's. Heavy coats are worn outside but not indoors.
<b>Bottom Wear</b>	Long pants, shorts, and skorts.	† Shorts and long pants are not required to be purchased from DiGiorgio's. † Plaid skorts for females <i>must be purchased from DiGiorgio's</i> . † Dresses, skirts, scooters, or jumpers <i>not permitted</i> . † Blue jeans are <i>not permitted</i> Monday through Thursday. Blue jeans are permitted on Fridays for free dress day. Jeans may not have holes, tears, or rips in the fabric. † <b>Male</b> students are to wear khaki shorts, black shorts, khaki long pants, or casual black long dress/uniform pants. Flat front or pleated. † <b>Female</b> students are to wear plaid skorts (DiGiorgio's provided only), khaki shorts, black shorts, khaki long pants, or casual black long dress/uniform pants. Flat front or pleated. † All bottom wear <b>MUST:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- solid color (black or khaki/tan) <i>basic</i> uniform/dress or casual pants.</li> <li>- "stay up" and be worn at the natural waistline.</li> </ul> † All bottom wear <b>CANNOT:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be yoga pants, skinny jeans, jogger pants, sweatpants, stretchy pants, cargo pants, etc.</li> <li>- have drawstrings.</li> <li>- have contrasting threads, stains, washes, i.e. "stone-washed" "pre-torn", "pre-worn", etc.</li> </ul> † Belts (tan/brown, black, or gray) are required for 1 <sup>st</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students when wearing clothing items with belt holes. We recommend elastic or other stretchy belts with easy clip fasteners. † All shorts must be no more than 5" (front & back) from floor when kneeling † Students may wear long underwear ("long johns") or other long bottom undergarments such as tights and leggings, but they must be worn underneath their long pants, shorts, or skorts, they must be full leg-length to the ankle, and be white, gray, tan, or black in color.
<b>Shoes &amp; Socks</b>		† Shoes must be closed-toe athletic shoes appropriate for indoor/outdoor play and physical education. † Students must be capable of tying their own laces.

		<p>† <u>No boots, heels, or sandals</u> of any kind permitted.</p> <p>† Students must wear socks at all times - solid color white, black, tan, or gray.</p> <p>† Sock length may range from ankle to knee-high. Socks must be visible at least to ankle. “No-see” or “invisible socks” are <u>NOT permitted</u>.</p>
<b>Accessories</b>		<p>† Hair Accessories may be worn as long as they are not a distraction and in good taste with school colors and overall appearance of uniforms. We strongly encourage all hair accessories to be solid school colors (red, black, white) or approved plaid bows and headwear from DiGiorgio’s. No oversized headbands, bows, tiaras, animal ears, cartoon characters, logos, etc. will be permitted on hair accessories.</p> <p>† Jewelry: For student safety, only small studs are permitted for earrings. Piercings will be limited to the ears. <u>No rings</u> permitted. <u>No bracelets</u> permitted. <u>No watches</u> permitted. Only small, close-fitting chains with or without small cross are permitted for necklaces. <u>No other charms</u> permitted.</p> <p>† No head or face covering of any type will be allowed in buildings, including but not limited to hats, caps, bandanas, hoodie/jacket hoods, and sunglasses.</p> <p>† Fingernail Polish may be worn on Free Dress Fridays only. Only female students may paint their nails. We strongly encourage all nail polish to be a single flat color and to avoid excessive fingernail decorations.</p>
<b>Body Art &amp; Hair</b>		<p>† Hair should be well groomed and kept out of eyes.</p> <p>† All hair color must be a natural color and not create a distraction.</p> <p>† Tattoos (including fake tattoos) and body branding is not permitted.</p>

**Free Dress Fridays**

Every Friday (unless otherwise announced) will be a Free Dress Friday. This is an opportunity for parents to teach and students to learn modest and God-honoring attire.

**FREE DRESS FRIDAY RESTRICTIONS AND GUIDELINES**

<b>Top Wear</b>	T-shirts, long-sleeve shirts, polo shirts, button down shirts.	<p>† Students are encouraged, but not required, to wear their St. Mark <i>Spirit Shirt</i>.</p> <p>† No tank tops, spaghetti straps, or similar top wear. Shoulders must be covered.</p> <p>† All shirts must be tucked in or long enough to completely cover stomach and torso while playing (i.e., hanging from monkey-bars).</p>
<b>Warmer Top Wear</b>	Cardigans, Sweatshirts, Hoodies, & Winter Coats	† On Free Dress Fridays, students may wear non-uniform warmer top wear inside.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Heavy winter coats do not require St. Mark logo and do not have to be purchased from DiGiorgio's. Heavy coats are worn outside but not indoors.</li> </ul>
<b>Bottom Wear</b>	Long pants, shorts, and skorts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Dresses, skirts, scooters, or jumpers <i>not</i> permitted.</li> <li>† Blue Jeans may not have holes, tears, or rips in the fabric.</li> <li>† All bottom wear must be worn at the natural waistline.</li> <li>† All bottom wear must "stay up" on their own.</li> <li>† All shorts and skorts must be no more than 5" (front &amp; back) from floor when kneeling</li> <li>† Students may wear long underwear ("long johns") or other long bottom undergarments such as tights and leggings, <i>but they must be worn underneath</i> short, pants, or skorts.</li> </ul>
<b>Shoes &amp; Socks</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Shoes must be closed-toe athletic shoes appropriate for indoor/outdoor play and physical education.</li> <li>† Students must be capable of tying their own laces.</li> <li>† <i>No boots, heels, or sandals</i> of any kind permitted.</li> <li>† Students must wear socks at all times - solid color white, black, tan, or gray.</li> <li>† Sock length may range from ankle to knee-high. Socks must be visible at least to ankle. "No-see" or "invisible socks" are <i>NOT permitted</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Accessories</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Hair Accessories may be worn as long as they are not a distraction. No oversized headbands, bows, tiaras, animal ears, will be permitted on hair accessories on Free Dress Friday.</li> <li>† Jewelry: For student safety, only small studs are permitted for earrings. Piercings will be limited to the ears. <i>No rings</i> permitted. <i>No bracelets</i> permitted. <i>No watches</i> permitted. Only small, close-fitting chains with or without small cross are permitted for necklaces. <i>No other charms</i> permitted.</li> <li>† No head or face covering of any type will be allowed in buildings, including but not limited to hats, caps, bandanas, hoodie/jacket hoods, and sunglasses.</li> <li>† Fingernail Polish may be worn on Free Dress Fridays only. Only female students may paint their nails. We strongly encourage all nail polish to be a single flat color and to avoid excessive fingernail decorations.</li> </ul>
<b>Body Art &amp; Hair</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Hair should be well groomed and kept out of eyes.</li> <li>† All hair color must be a natural color and not create a distraction.</li> <li>† Tattoos (including fake tattoos) and body branding is not permitted.</li> </ul>

### Logos, Imagery, and Content on Apparel

All student attire on Free Dress Friday should be reflective of our Christian faith. If St. Mark Lutheran School faculty determines that images, logos, print, or other designs found on a student's apparel either contradict our Christian faith or prove distracting or unsupportive of a positive learning environment, students will be given a school uniform to change into or parents may be contacted for help getting appropriate clothing to school.

### **Dress Code Violations**

When a student has a dress code violation, St. Mark Lutheran School faculty will guide them to solve the problem in a loving way before allowing them to return to their daily school schedule. Faculty may refer students to the office where students can change inappropriate clothing for a school uniform, or we may contact the parent for help getting appropriate clothing to school.

### **Food Services and Policies**

#### **Hot Lunch Program**

St. Mark Lutheran School students can enjoy the meals prepared by the Nebraska state and CACFP certified Midday Meals food production services that provides school lunches for private schools in the Greater Omaha Area. They offer many options and work with the school staff and administration to create balanced and healthy meal plans.

CACFP Certified: The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating childcare centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers. CACFP also provides reimbursements for meals served to children and youth participating in afterschool care programs, children residing in emergency shelters, and adults over the age of 60 or living with a disability and enrolled in day care facilities. CACFP contributes to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children and adults in the United States.

#### **Hot Lunch Ordering Procedure**

A monthly lunch menu will be sent out each month with the following month's lunches. Parents must place their order **a month in advance**. Meals cannot be ordered the day of or any later than the Wednesday of the week prior to the current week's offerings. Parents desiring to always provide a hot lunch for their child without having to order all meals month by month may do so by making a written request to the front office.

The cost for each lunch is \$3.50. The cost for lunches will be billed on a weekly basis through Procure. Parents will only be billed for the lunches they have ordered. There are no refunds for lunches cancelled or missed after they have been ordered.

#### **Home Lunch**

Students are welcome to bring their own lunch. Home Lunches must also adhere to the following guidelines:

- All lunch items must be contained within one lunch container.
- Lunch containers must be reasonably sized and able to be stored in the student's backpack.
- No student will be allowed to use the microwave, refrigerators, or freezers to store or prepare their Home Lunch.
- Students are not permitted to bring high-sugar beverages or caffeinated beverages.
  - o Sodas, energy drinks, high-sugar punches, and the like are prohibited.
- Students are not permitted to bring sugar-based dessert item (cookie, "fun-size" candy bar, fruit rollup, etc.)

All parents are highly encouraged to provide their student with a healthy Home Lunch that helps support a healthy body and successful education.

### **Missing Lunches and Parents Bringing Lunch During the School Day**

In the event a student forgets their lunch and the parent wishes to drop off food for the student, parents may drop the lunch at the school office. While the office will attempt to notify the teacher of a lunch being delivered, it is the responsibility of any student missing their lunch to first check the lunch cart in the cafeteria to see if their lunch has been delivered prior to requesting an un-ordered Hot Lunch or calling home. If a Home Lunch was not delivered, students are encouraged to call a parent prior to getting a Hot Lunch. If a student chooses to get a Hot Lunch without checking, or if a Home Lunch has not been dropped off and student(s) or staff are unable to reach parents, then the student may receive a Hot Lunch from the cafeteria at the expense of the parent. Parents will be charged \$5.00 for each un-ordered Hot Lunch provided to a student. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their students after checking in with the school office. Parents may bring food for themselves and/or their children from outside restaurants or food from home.

### **Snacks in the Classroom**

Students may bring a snack for a mid-morning break so long as it does not become a distraction to fellow students and/or teaching and learning taking place in the classroom. We encourage students to select healthy protein snacks, a granola/fruit bar, or fruit/vegetable items. High sugar snacks such as cookies, candy, or candy bars are ***not permitted*** for snack. Snack items must be able to fit in the single lunch container described above.

### **Water Bottles**

Students will be permitted to have one water bottle with them in the classroom. The water bottle must follow the following guidelines:

- Must have a fully sealed mouth/top.
- Must be spill-proof.
- Cannot have a “pull-top”.
- Must be “re-usable” and able to be easily refilled at the water fountain.
- No larger than 20oz. Recommended 12 oz.

### **Missing Lunches and Parent Lunch Drop-Off**

In the event a student forgets their lunch and the parent wishes to drop off food for the student, parents may drop the lunch at the school office. While the office will attempt to notify the teacher of a lunch being delivered, it is the responsibility of any student missing their lunch to first check the lunch cart in the cafeteria to see if their lunch has been delivered prior to getting a tray lunch or calling home. If a lunch was not delivered, students are encouraged to call a parent prior to getting a tray lunch. If a student chooses to get a tray lunch without checking, or if a lunch has not been dropped off and students or staff are unable to reach parents, then the student may receive a tray lunch from the cafeteria at the expense of the parent. Parents will be charged the walk-in rate. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their students after checking in with the school office. Parents may bring food for themselves and/or their children from outside restaurants or food from home.

### **Snacks in the Classroom**

Elementary school students may bring a snack for a mid-morning break so long as it does not become a distraction to fellow students and/or teaching and learning taking place in the classroom. We encourage students to select healthy protein snacks, a granola/fruit bar, or fruit/vegetable items.



## **Safety and Preparedness**

### **Closed/Locked Campus**

St. Mark Lutheran School is a closed/locked campus. This means that we have measures in place to ensure that only individuals or groups that have direct dealings or business with the ministry of St. Mark Lutheran Church, School, Preschool and Childcare Center are allowed to be on our campus or inside our facilities. No persons other than full-time staff and the elected officers of St. Mark Lutheran Church are given key-access to our building.

### **Entering Our Facility**

All persons, including parents and students of St. Mark Lutheran School, are required to clearly identify themselves through our audio/video doorbells. This includes stating your full name (first and last) and the reason you are requesting entrance into our facility. No one will be allowed to enter our facility until the designated safety staff of St. Mark Lutheran Church are confident of your identity and purpose. In some instances, this may require a brief waiting time and possibly an in-person visual verification process prior to permitting individuals to enter our facility. In order to ensure the safety of all on our campus as well as make the verification process as efficient as possible, please follow these guidelines:

- Ensure you are entering at the correct door for the purpose of your visit (this will be given in detail to all parents/guardians in an email and at Back to School Night). If you are requesting entry at the wrong door, you will not be permitted into our facility, but will instead be asked to report to the correct door and again request entry.
- Look directly at the video doorbell device when identifying yourself and your purpose.
- Speak clearly and slowly.
- Be patient as we take all necessary steps to ensure your safety and the safety of all on our campus.

### **Check-In and Check-Out**

All parents/guardians and visitors must check-in and check-out at the front office every time they enter or leave the facilities of St. Mark Lutheran Church and School during school hours.

### **Surveillance**

Our facilities are monitored, internally and externally, by video and audio surveillance 24 hours a day. Additionally, our campus is patrolled several times, at random times, every night by a privately contracted security firm.

### **Search and Seizure**

St. Mark Lutheran School may conduct reasonable searches that are motivated by reasonable suspicion. Such searches may be targeted toward a specific student or group of students. School officials may search desks or cubbies. School officials also reserve the right to search student clothing (on and off the body), backpacks, and all personal belongings if “reasonable suspicion” exists. Searches of students’ belongings or person will always be done with a witness and by a school official who is of the same biological gender as the student.

### **Emergency Drills – Fire, Tornado, and Lockdown**

Fire, tornado, and school lockdown drills are required by state law and are taken seriously. Students are expected to cooperate and follow teacher instructions. St. Mark Lutheran School follows all state requirements regarding the frequency of all safety drills.

**Section 5: Parent/Student Handbook Agreement**

**St. Mark Lutheran School  
2024-2025 School Year**

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of St. Mark Lutheran School's Parent/Student Handbook. I have read the Handbook, reviewed its contents with my student(s), and agree to comply with and support the policies stated within.

**Parent/Guardian 1 Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian 1 Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian 2 Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian 2 Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_