



SCHOOL



MONTHLY SCHOOL EVENT GUIDE

This guide for parents is just a snapshot of the many school activities and opportunities we offer here at St. Mary's. It is our hope that this guide will give our families a better understanding of our school events. Activities may vary from time to time depending on a variety of factors. We welcome and encourage all ideas to enhance our school community. Please forward suggestions and questions to the Development Committee via Carolyn Luick:

- Email: luick234@verizon.net
- Phone: 439-5227
- Note to the school office

Parent participation is vital in our school programs, and we are happy to assist you in joining our school community. Greater participation in our school activities will keep it vibrant as well as enrich our community spirit.

St. Mary's offers a comprehensive suite of extracurricular activities throughout the school year. From community service activities such as scouting and altar serving to course specific clubs such as Art Club and Future City, there is something for everyone. Please refer to announcements distributed by e-mail, monthly newsletter or take home handouts.

All volunteers who interact with children must participate in the Protecting God's Children Workshop through the Diocese of Buffalo. Please contact the school for details.

Thank you for your commitment to Catholic Education, St. Mary's School, and your children.

“Rich in Tradition...Strong in Faith”



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SEPTEMBER:

Booster Club (Fundraiser)

The largest annual fundraiser which benefits the school. Through the sale of \$50 tickets by Home School Association members and parishioners, the Booster Club provides at least \$5,500 and as much as \$7,500 to the school. Some of the items purchased are desks, computers, library books, consumable textbooks and gym floor refinishing. Ticketholders are included in \$50 weekly drawings, and additional prizes totaling \$4,500 are awarded at a casual dinner held in September to thank ticketholders for their support.

Back to School Dance (Social Opportunity)

A social opportunity for St. Mary's students in grades 6 – 8 as well as the previous graduating class (9th graders) to have some fun together. This event is usually held in September. Chaperones are needed to support this event. There may be additional dances throughout the year.

Meet the Teachers Night (Parent only event)

An event held at the end of the month where all school faculty are introduced to the parents in attendance. Parents also go to their student's classroom where the teacher discusses classroom guidelines and general curriculum expectations.

OCTOBER:

Blessing of the Pets (Spiritual Opportunity)

Since the Sisters of Saint Francis have been involved with the school since 1849, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi is recognized with a special tradition. School families and parishioners have the opportunity to bring their family pets for a blessing on the front lawn of school.

Pioneer Camp Retreat ("Fun" Raiser)

An overnight team building retreat held in Angola, New York for the 7th and 8th graders. Parent chaperones are asked to attend along with the 7th and 8th grade teachers. There is a nominal fee for the retreat and students work on self esteem and trust in themselves and others.

Picture Day

An opportunity to capture memories! Fall pictures involve both individual pictures as well as a class photo. Uniforms are worn for the class picture while Sunday best is appropriate for individual pictures. The individual snapshot is also submitted for inclusion in the school yearbook. Individual pictures are taken again in the spring with a more casual setting. Fall picture packages must be pre-ordered, while spring pictures can be purchased when the pre-set package comes home. Both purchases are optional and parent volunteers are needed to help students look their best.



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School Marathon (Fundraiser)

An event where the students raise money by obtaining pledges for laps walked around the school. This money is used to help offset the cost of buses for field trips, special events and competitions throughout the year. Parent volunteers are needed for checkpoints, or parents may walk with the children just for the exercise.

Oktoberfest (“Fun” Raiser)

A Home School Association sponsored German festival for adults only where everyone is German for a night! Beer, wine, and pop are provided and snacks may be brought in. Music and entertainment are provided by a German band. Many people reserve a table or two, and school families are given first opportunity to buy tickets.

Fall Fest (“Fun” Raiser)

Fall Fest is a fun family social event for Halloween—so please come in costume! The 8th grade students provide games and activities for all who attend. No scary costumes/masks are allowed. There is a minimal charge per family.

Pumpkin Carving (“Fun” Raiser)

An event sponsored by Spoth Farms and Dengler & Roberts Funeral Homes. Each student who attends can carve a pumpkin with their friends at the farm. Prizes are awarded in each grade for creativity. Donuts and cider are served while fun is had by all!

Halloween

The children in grades K through 2 bring their costumes to school for participation in a Halloween parade. The parade visits all of the other classrooms and many classes are provided with a sweet treat from the room parents.

NOVEMBER:

All Saints Day

A special celebration is held during the 9 a.m. Mass on All Saints Day. Prior to the celebration, each 3rd grade student chooses a saint about whom they are interested in learning more. At the Mass, each student is dressed to reflect the saint they chose. They also speak about one highlight of the saint’s life.

Catholic High School Entrance Exam

This date is on the calendar as a reminder to parents of students considering a Catholic High School. Applications for the entrance exam can be obtained at St. Mary’s. Financial aid and scholarships forms are available at Catholic High Schools and vary from school to school. Parents considering a Catholic High School are encouraged to attend Open Houses when a student enters 6th grade. This allows parents and students time to tour many schools before taking the placement test. Prep courses are also available at many high schools. Students are encouraged to take the test at their school of choice as many scholarships are awarded from this test.



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Parent Teacher Conferences (Parent only event)

An opportunity for parents and teachers to meet one-on-one at the end of first quarter. Report cards are available for pick-up in the library prior to your scheduled meeting time, and grades and any concerns can be discussed. This brief meeting (10 minutes or so) is scheduled in advance. Although this is a pre-set day for parent teacher conferences, a meeting can be set up with your child's teacher at any time during the year.

Thanksgiving Luncheon

On Wednesday of the week before Thanksgiving, there is a family style buffet held for all students and teachers. Parent volunteers serve this delicious dinner for the students and faculty. Older students buddy up with the younger children to help fill their plates with a turkey dinner.

Craft Show (Fundraiser)

An event sponsored by the Home School Association where local crafters rent tables in the gym to sell their wares. Food and beverages are also available. Many volunteers are required to make this event successful.

New York State 5th Grade Social Studies Assessment

This test serves as an early indicator of whether students are meeting the elementary-level New York State Learning Standards for social studies. The test is designed to measure student achievement of the content, concepts, and skills in the K through 4 social studies curriculum. Students should have a good night's rest and breakfast before the test.

DECEMBER:

Christmas Family

In early December, each grade adopts a needy family for Christmas. The students and parents purchase gifts to ensure a "Merry Christmas" morning for this adopted family.

Christmas Program

A Christmas concert performed by Pre-K (4 year olds) through 8th grade. The younger grades perform one week and the older students a different week. The school band also performs one week and the 8th grade students perform a short play. Room parents serve refreshments which are provided by each family (usually 2 dozen cookies). Concert attire is normally dark slacks/skirts and red, green, or white tops.

JANUARY:

Bunko Night (Parent only event)

A fun event following the Home School Association general meeting. Bunko is a dice game which requires quick reflexes. You can win prizes for your children such as a free homework pass, eat lunch with your teacher, or give a spelling test just to name a few. This is an adult only event and adult beverages are served.



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Ice Skating Party (“Fun” Raiser)

An event for all St. Mary’s students held at the Pepsi Center. Participating families pay a nominal fee (\$5) for 1 1/2 hours of ice time with their friends on a private rink. It is held on our half day Friday. Jeans Day Passes are also sold with profits going to charity.

Catholic Schools Week

A week long celebration of what makes Catholic education important. Fun events are planned throughout the week for the students including:

Bring a Guest to Lunch Day:

Each student may bring in a family member or friend to have lunch with them on their assigned day. The guest may bring in a brown bag lunch or purchase one from the school menu. Please do not bring any food from outside vendors (i.e. Subway, McDonald’s) as this violates our lunch program guidelines with the government.

Family Breakfast:

A celebration during Catholic Schools Week. School families attend the 9 a.m. Mass and then gather for a pancake breakfast in the school gym. While enjoying food and fun with friends, a 50/50 raffle is held with the proceeds going to charity.

Open House:

An opportunity for the students to showcase their classrooms/work to the parents as well as prospective families. There are gatherings by grade for demonstrations by the specials teachers and the students.

FEBRUARY:

St. Valentine’s Day

In celebration of Valentine’s Day, students are allowed to wear a red shirt with their uniform. Students in the lower grades also exchange cards, and all students may have a snack provided by room parents.

MARCH:

St. Patrick’s Day

In celebration of St. Patrick’s Day, students are allowed to wear a green shirt with their uniform.

Pray and Play (Spiritual Opportunity)

A re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross by the 5th grade students on the school stage. During the play, each Station of the Cross is presented with a special reflection for the parish. After we pray the stations, everyone is invited to play! The main events are an ice cream social and cake walk, which are the students’ way of fundraising for Catholic Charities. What is a cake walk you ask? The students play a version of musical chairs and the person seated in the “lucky” seat wins a cake to bring home. The creatively decorated cakes are provided by parent volunteers.



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APRIL:

Father-Daughter Dance (“Fun” Raiser)

An annual tradition where each girl invites her dad (or special adult man) to an evening out. The gym is beautifully transformed for the evening, and refreshments are provided and served by volunteer mothers. Many girls enjoy this opportunity to dress up and spend time with that special someone!

New York State ELA (English Language Arts) Assessment

This assessment measures each student’s performance with respect to the Learning Standards defined by the state. Students are prepared for the exam ahead of time in the classroom. The exam is given in grades 3 through 8. Students should have a good night’s rest and breakfast before the test.

MAY:

May Crowning (Spiritual Opportunity)

This Catholic tradition continues at St. Mary’s Parish. All families are welcome to submit their name to be selected to crown the statue of Mary located in the special garden outside the Church. This is a Parish event.

Spring Pictures

A spring photo opportunity. Students do not wear their uniforms and a more casual backdrop is provided. All purchases of photos are optional.

Mother-Son Bowling (“Fun” Raiser)

This is an opportunity for mothers and sons to go out and enjoy time with each other. A few hours on a weekend afternoon are spent bowling and enjoying pizza.

Mass of Hope

This all-school Mass is a special occasion for the 8th graders and their parents. The graduating class brings up the gifts, passes the offertory baskets, and does the readings. There is a brief social in the cafeteria after Mass for 8th graders and their parents. Seventh graders and their parents plan and serve a continental breakfast.

New York State Math Assessment

This assessment includes all students in grades 3 through 8. Students are prepared ahead of time in the classroom for this exam that covers mathematics Performance Indicators for each grade level. For all state assessments, students should have a good night’s rest and breakfast before the test.

New York State 4th and 8th Grade Science Assessment

This science test is scheduled at the end of May and early June. The test, which consists of written and performance tests, is designed to measure the content and skills covered in the science curriculum for grades K through 4 and grades 5 through 8.



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JUNE:

New York State 8th Grade Social Studies Assessment

This test serves as an indicator of whether students are meeting the intermediate-level New York State Learning Standards for social studies. The test is designed to measure student achievement of the content, concepts, and skills included in a chronologically organized study of United States and New York State history. Students should have a good night's rest and breakfast before the test.

8th Grade Retreat

Students are given the opportunity to make a group retreat both in fall and springtime of the year. Time is spent at St. Mary of the Angels to reflect on how they have grown individually and as a class. They also look to the future as each student now will enter on a new path into high school.

8th Grade Class Trip

This is one of the most memorable events at St. Mary's, the long awaited 8th grade trip. The 8th grade parents and students work to plan this trip and raise money for it. The money is used to offset the cost per student. In the past, there have been day trips and overnight trips.

8th Grade Dinner Dance (Social Opportunity)

A St. Mary's tradition where the 7th grade parents host a sit down dinner for the 8th graders and their parents. This enjoyable evening has a special theme which is reflected in the decorations and food. After the meal, the 6th and 7th grade students join the 8th graders for an evening of dancing.

Graduation

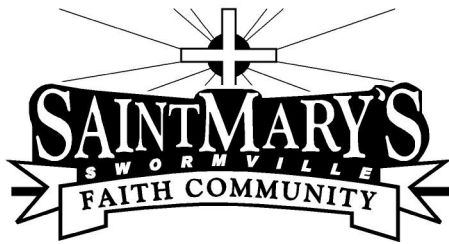
The formal conclusion to a student's time at St. Mary's School. This event is held in the church and the students wear suits or light-colored long gowns. All students receive Diocesan diplomas and are recognized individually for their accomplishments at St. Mary's.

Talent Show

St. Mary's students have an opportunity to demonstrate their many talents to the school and parents. Students' gifts have included playing the piano, dancing, singing, or doing other things just for fun. A student may present an act individually or as part of a group.

School Picnic

The whole school enjoys a picnic at the end of the year. Teams are arranged with students from every grade, and they encourage each other and compete in end of the year fun. Many parents are needed to organize this event and assist on the day of the picnic.



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ONGOING:

Specials

A grouping which refers to the following subjects: art, music, physical education, music, computer, Spanish and library.

8th Grade Fundraisers

The parents of the eighth grade class work together to plan and implement fundraisers for the 8th grade trip. Some ideas are a pancake breakfast at Applebees, donut sale, chocolate roses sold at the mall for Valentine's Day, snack bar at sporting events, and a chowder sale. Planning and fundraising should begin early to help ensure a successful outcome.

Home School Association

The parent/teacher organization at St. Mary's School. It is comprised of parent volunteers in the following positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Development, Publicity, Fundraising, Hospitality, Membership, Social Planner, Spiritual Life, and Volunteers. Every two years the 4 officer positions are elected, and the other committee positions are elected annually.

HSA General Meetings

The Home School Association hosts brief general meetings 3 times a year (September, January, and May). These meetings give every parent the opportunity to stay informed regarding Home School Association happenings and fiscal reports. The January meeting is followed by Bunko.

HSA Executive Committee Meetings

The Home School Association executive committee (4 officers and 8 committee chairs) meets monthly to review the status of the \$40,000 budget as well as discuss upcoming events and happenings. Meetings are open to all parents.

HSA Dues

The Home School Association collects annual dues. This money is used to provide a small token of appreciation to those who volunteer to monitor during lunch and recess. Monitors help ensure children's safety at lunchtime.

Lunch Monitoring

This is an opportunity for parents to supervise the students during lunch periods and recesses. It involves a commitment of time from 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., and monitors can sign-up for as little as once a month or as often as once a week. A monthly schedule is distributed for advance planning.

Room Parents

Each class has 3 room parents to assist the teachers throughout the school year. Responsibilities might include attending field trips, organizing holiday parties, or calling parents for refreshments for group gatherings. In the spring, parents are given the opportunity to volunteer their services for the upcoming school year.



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Volunteer Sheets

Twice a year there is a formal opportunity for parents to become involved. A sheet is sent home in the fall and in late winter which lists all of the opportunities where parent involvement is necessary. Each sheet has 3 categories and parents are asked to select a minimum of one opportunity in each category. Many activities at St. Mary's would not be possible without our parent volunteers!

SCRIP

A passive fundraising opportunity for the school. Gift cards for local merchants are purchased through the school representative. A certain percentage of the gift card purchase goes directly to the school.

Principal's Coffee Hour

An opportunity to gather with the Principal and other parents to share ideas and discuss happenings at St. Mary's. Coffee hour is usually scheduled for the last Monday of the month on the school calendar. Upcoming events and general questions are discussed.

Midterm Reports

These reports are sent home at the 5 week mark of each quarter to inform you how your child is progressing. The reports are usually mailed to the parents. If at any time you have a concern about how your child is doing, please contact the teacher for a meeting.

Awards Assembly

Each quarter an assembly is held to recognize students for special achievements. The assembly usually lasts about 90 minutes and is held in the morning or after lunch. Parents are encouraged to attend to support the achievements of their children. Teachers in grades K through 2 usually notify the parents if a student is receiving an award. Students in grades 3 through 8 are eligible for honor roll and special awards, but teachers do not notify parents.

Roller Skating Party ("Fun" Raiser)

A great opportunity to just hang out with friends! St. Mary's reserves Skateland in Lockport and there is a special price for admission of students. Parents are admitted free of charge. Jeans Day passes can be purchased for \$1, and all money is donated to a charity.

Jeans Day Passes

An opportunity provided by the Principal at various times throughout the year where students can wear jeans for a day. In exchange for \$1, jeans day passes are distributed for a specific day. The money collected is donated to a charity.

Student Reflection (SR)

A discipline policy which is enforced when rules are not followed. The goal of SR is to enforce consistent discipline and encourage positive behavior. During SR, students read and write about virtues designed to have them reflect upon their behavior.



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Yearbook

A collection of school year memories! Each year a 36-page color book is published which every student has the opportunity to purchase. All students in three-year-old pre-school through 8th grade are represented on class portrait pages as well as a collage page.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are special days and deserve a celebration! On your child's birthday, a small treat may be sent in to share with their classmates. Please notify the teacher in advance so that arrangements can be made to accommodate it into the classroom schedule.

100-day Celebration

Students in Kindergarten and 1st grade enjoy the countdown to the 100th day of school. When this milestone arrives, room parents usually coordinate with the teachers for a small celebration. It may be snacks which form the number 100 or making necklaces from 100 small items. Whatever the activity, it is always a fun celebration!

Accelerated Reader (AR)

A reading program used in grades 2 through 8 to encourage reading and monitor comprehension. Each grade is given goals as to how many points each student should achieve per month or quarter. Students read books of their choice and then take a quiz using the classroom computer equipped with the AR program. The student receives a score on the short quiz which reflects the level of understanding measured by the quiz. The scores are converted into points where are totaled and tracked towards the goal.

Future City Team (Extra-Curricular Opportunity)

An opportunity for 7th and 8th grade students to learn more about science and engineering while also working together as a team. Each year the students are given a theme and are asked to create their city of tomorrow based on the topic. In January, the students compete locally, and the opportunity to continue to the national competition in Washington DC. This program is sponsored by National Engineers Week.

Band (Extra-Curricular Opportunity)

An after school program which is available for students in grades 3 through 8. Small group band instruction is provided by an instructor based on experience and instruments. The fee associated with this program is determined by the company offering the lessons. The band performs at different school functions and diocesan events.

School Closing Information

St. Mary's follows the school closing announcements for the Williamsville School District. In addition, the Principal may close school due to site specific weather situations. These cancellations can be heard on WBEN 930 AM. Please note: If you do not live in the Williamsville School District, you are responsible for transportation on days when Williamsville is in session and your district is not. Your district only provides transportation on days that its schools are in session.



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Noon Dismissals

Noon dismissal days allow for faculty meetings on a regular basis. Normally these short days are scheduled for the second Friday of each month.

Student / Parent Handbook

Each family receives a student handbook. This book is a great reference for various policies and procedures at St. Mary's School. The handbook is also online to reference. A parent and pupil must sign and return a form that indicates the handbook has been received and read.

Parent Ambassador Program

Parent volunteers who assist in helping current, new or prospective parents with questions they may have about the school. Ambassadors will help ensure a smooth transition for families into life at SMS.

SPIRITUAL:

Weekly Mass

To further the spiritual development of students at St. Mary's School, each week the students attend 9 a.m. Mass. The entire school attends on the first Friday of each month, grades K through 4 attend on Wednesdays, and grades 5 through 8 attend on Fridays. Parents are encouraged to join the children at these Masses. Students in grades 7 and 8 are invited to join the choir led by Donna Allen.

First Penance

Students in 2nd grade are eligible to learn more about this sacrament. Students and parents work along with the Faith Formation staff at their respective parishes for sacramental preparations.

First Communion

Students who have completed 2nd grade are eligible to learn more about this sacrament. When the parents and Faith Formation staff feel the student is ready, they begin sacrament preparations. Once the preparations are complete, a date can be selected for the celebration of First Holy Communion. If a student is a parishioner of a parish other than St. Mary's Swormville, arrangements should be made with the student's home parish for sacramental preparation.

Prayer Partners

Each student receives the name of another student as a "prayer partner" for the school year. Children are encouraged to say a prayer for this student during school and prayer time at home.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass

This Mass is held in December on the feast day. The whole school attends. Much of the Mass is said in Spanish in honor of our Lady of Guadalupe.