

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Congratulations! You are one of the fortunate few who enjoy the privilege of having a student enrolled at St. Marcus Lutheran School. Visitors to St. Marcus are struck by the unusual joy and happiness which is the fabric of everyday life within our school community amidst the high academic and intense behavioral expectations. There are several key factors which make up this remarkable school community which we call St. Marcus:

We are a CHRISTIAN school.

We are a COLLEGE PREP school.

We are a school of CHOICE.

First and foremost, we are a Christian school, in the truest sense of the term. This manifests itself in our sincere gospel focus, which is reflected in our approach to student behavior and the simple happiness we model as Christian educators. God loved us enough to send his Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us; out of thankfulness, we in turn love one another as a reflection of God's love in us. Our gospel-motivated student behavioral program is very unique and is one of the most successful of its kind in the country. Many St. Marcus students, who had arrived at our school with a record of severe behavioral difficulties, have radically altered their behavior and are now on a positive path to solid Christian leadership within the school and within the larger community.

Secondly, our academic program is intensely focused on preparing students for college. We sincerely believe that students must pursue life in the long-term and push themselves academically to prepare for success beyond high school. Again, we are developing leaders – young people who seek to run the organization, not simply work within it.

Finally, it's crucial that you, as parents and guardians, understand the concept of choice. We are proud to be a Choice school because it requires significant parent and student commitment. While we have more fun than any school in the country, we also work harder. Students and parents must be committed to and ready for this level of intensity. A great deal of sacrifice is required both during and after school hours. NO EXCUSES. No shortcuts. Nothing in life comes easy, and we at St. Marcus are fully aware of the effort it takes to achieve greatness. The high-powered student program described above would not be successful were it not led by highly motivated, crazily selfless teachers. The St. Marcus staff is intensely committed to the success of each student and will literally do anything to ensure that students rise to meet the desired expectations. Our parents and students share this same commitment. Working together under God's guidance...there is nothing that we cannot achieve.

Stay with us as we continue this rigorous, challenging, exciting journey towards excellence in education.

Sincerely,

Mr. Henry Tyson
Principal

Mrs. Val Young
Dean of Students

St. Marcus Behavioral Standards:

“Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love each other, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.” (I John 4:11)

The behavioral standard at St. Marcus is based on a simple Law and Gospel equation. Our ultimate goal is for students to be pro-active in demonstrating positive behaviors based upon the Gospel and God’s love for us through Jesus Christ. Simply put, because God loved us enough to send his Son to die for us, we reflect the love of Jesus in our daily lives as we reflect God’s love in our interactions with others. All this we do as a “thank you” to our Heavenly Father in appreciation for what he has done for us.

Gospel Behaviors

As we teach students to be pro-active in their Christian behavior, we focus on some specific gospel behaviors. These include:

- _ Build Up
- _ Forgive
- _ Sacrifice
- _ Humility
- _ Self Control

In all of the above behaviors and attributes, students are taught to think and consider other people. This truly represents the gospel made manifest in that students learn to constantly put the needs of others before their own short terms wants and desires. Ultimately, students more fully understand what it means to reflect God’s love in their lives as a constant and joyful testimony to what Christ has done for all of us.

The Role of the Law

At times, students demonstrate behavior which is outside of the pro-active, gospel-motivated framework outlined above. During these unfortunate moments it becomes necessary to utilize the Law as a tool to show students that their actions are inappropriate and unacceptable. Essentially, students who have misbehaved must endure unpleasantness (consequence) in order to understand the fact that they’ve made a poor behavioral choice. In such situations, we work hard to avoid negatively charged teacher-to-student interactions. We instead believe in constantly and calmly emphasizing choices and consequences. Such an approach helps the student to maintain a focus on the specific behavior which was problematic rather than personalizing the disciplinary situation to the adult who is delivering the consequence.

When students fail to make positive choices, the St. Marcus administration reserves the right to determine necessary consequences to achieve appropriate changes in student behavior. That said, the following are examples of specific consequences typically utilized at St. Marcus:

1. Students sit or stand in an isolated location to think about behavior.
2. Students write documents focused on behavioral improvement.
3. Students work to complete community or school service projects.

At times, when a student’s behavior is particularly disruptive or disrespectful, it becomes necessary to remove students from the academic environment. Such removal is based upon our belief that behavioral and moral development is of primary importance and ultimately crucial for student growth and behavioral improvement. Therefore, we firmly believe in utilizing in-school suspensions (out-of-school suspensions reserved for particular disruptive behaviors and typically an indication that student is nearing expulsion

from the school program). Behaviors which may lead to an in-school suspension include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Saying “No” to any staff member when asked to something which is not illegal or immoral;
2. Non-verbal defiance;
3. Actions displaying blatant disrespect (rolling of eyes, tisking, etc.);
4. Verbally abusing other students or tearing other students down;
5. Repeated minor infractions accompanied by a refusal to repent;
6. Intentional academic dishonesty

In instances of extreme negative behaviors such as physical abuse, property damage, theft, gang-related activity or the possession of any illegal narcotic or weapon; an immediate out-of-school suspension or expulsion may occur.

Forgiveness in Word and Deed

In addition to emphasizing the Gospel in encouraging students to be proactive in positive behavior, the St. Marcus staff also strives to incorporate the Gospel through word, and more importantly action, as part of the conclusion of each disciplinary incident with students. The wonderful promise of God’s forgiveness drives all that we do and is an essential element to any interaction with students. This action is particularly crucial when a student has done wrong and has repented.

Parent / School Communication

St. Marcus School recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children. Communication between parents and teachers is an essential ingredient to success in school. Parents are strongly encouraged to:

- frequently initiate communication with their child’s teachers
- communicate questions or concerns before they turn into major issues
- avoid emotional responses to concerns before discussing the matter with school personnel

Our goal is to maintain an open, two-way, collaborative communication with parents. The school communicates with parents through phone calls, notes, letters, orientation meetings, a weekly newsletter, and the Parent Handbook.

Homework Policy:

Homework is a central aspect of the learning process. All successful people spend extra time working to improve themselves beyond the minimal requirements of a specific task. Thorough, neat, accurate, prompt, and carefully completed homework is the expectation.

Homework is assigned on a daily basis. Approximate time for completion will range as follows:

K4-2 nd grade	45-60 minutes
3 rd – 5 th grade	60-90 minutes
6 th – 8 th grade	90-120 minutes

We encourage parents or guardians to provide a quiet place for study so that students may learn good study habits and complete their homework with minimal interruption. Parents must be willing to commit time to checking homework, reviewing grades, and signing homework documents.

Failure to complete homework assignments thoroughly is taken extremely seriously. Consequences are assigned as follows, based on the number of missing assignments in each marking period:

1-3 missing assignments: Parents will receive a phone call from a teacher. Students will be required to attend an after-school study hall that day.

4th missing assignment: Parent will receive a phone call from an administrator.

5th missing assignment: Student will be placed on Academic Recovery. For all additional missed assignments, parents may be required to attend 1 Saturday School with their child or complete 2 observation hours in their child's classroom. Parents are given one week to fulfill this obligation. If this obligation is not met, the student may receive an indefinite in-school suspension.

Academic Recovery (AR)

AR is a non-punitive attempt to resolve on-going homework completion problems. Students on AR receive additional support from teachers, parents, and administrators.

Students on AR are required to attend after-school study hall or after-school classes until 5pm Monday through Thursday and Saturday School. During those times, students may receive tutoring and get homework checked by teachers and volunteer tutors.

Students remain on AR until they have successfully completed 15 consecutive school days without missing a homework assignment or submitting an incomplete assignment. If a student misses an assignment or submits an inadequate assignment while on AR (for example, after 10 days of being on AR), he or she must serve an additional fifteen days. If a student misses Saturday School while on AR their AR term is increased to 20 days and parents may be required to complete additional observation hours. Students who fail to complete AR obligations fully place their status as a student at St. Marcus in jeopardy and will receive further consequences.

Students remain on AR until their parents have been notified that they are no longer on AR. Parents should not assume their child is off AR unless they have been told that is the case by an administrator.

Once students are assigned to AR they will not be permitted to participate in athletics, after-school activities or return to previous activities unless they receive specific permission from their teacher, coach, and principal.

Attendance

The Wisconsin Board of Education requires all students enrolled at St. Marcus Lutheran School to attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the State. St. Marcus takes daily attendance very seriously, resulting in an **average 96% attendance rate last school year.**

Under Wisconsin's "Missing Child Law", parents or guardians must notify the school office any morning their child is not attending. **St. Marcus requires parents to contact the school office before 9am if their child is going to be absent from school. Failure to do so will result in the child being locked out of class until the parent meets with an administrator.** An excuse for absence from school may be approved for one or more of the following reasons or conditions:

Personal Illness

Parents or guardians must call the school each morning their child is home ill. When returning to school, the student must have an explanatory note from the parent/guardian. In some cases, the school may require a doctor's confirmation.

Death of a relative

Parents or guardians must contact the school office to explain the situation and estimated time of absence from school.

Professional appointment

We encourage parents to schedule medical, dental, legal, and other necessary appointments outside school hours whenever possible. If this is not possible, the parent/guardian must bring a note to the school office stating clearly the time the student is to be dismissed. Parents are to pick their child up in the school office. Parents need to sign out their child when they depart school and sign them in upon return. Parents must present an official note upon the child's return to school.

Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence does become part of a student's school record. Students will be marked for an unexcused absence if they:

- _ Fail to bring a written note within two school days following an absence,
- _ Leave school without signing out of school at the office,
- _ Are absent from school for any reason other than those listed as an excusable reason.

Students who are absent without a valid excuse will not be permitted to return to class until a parent has met with an administrator. Students will face major consequences for unexcused absences and will ultimately lose their seat at St. Marcus if the problem persists.

Make-up Work for Excused Absences

An absence from school, even for several days, does not excuse students from their responsibilities in the classroom on the day they return to school. With an excused absence, students will be given the same number of days they were absent to make up missed work.

When returning to school, students are expected to find out what work was missed and when the work needs to be completed. All make-up tests will be scheduled at a time designated by the teacher. **It is the student's responsibility to inquire about missed work and ensure that it is made up.**

Tardiness

Tardiness is unacceptable. It is the number one reason for employee termination in the United States.

Please remember that in order to be on time, students must be seated in their desks ready to begin work by 8:00 a.m. **Parents are strongly encouraged to consider 7:35am as the start of school so that their children understand the importance of being on time and are never tardy.** This is especially true for younger children who take 5-10 minutes to get situated, especially when wearing winter clothing.

Excused Tardiness

There are only two reasons for an excused tardy:

- a) The first three tardies during any marking period are excused. A good reason for the tardy is always appreciated but there is no distinction between a good reason and a bad reason. The first three tardies are excused.
- b) A regularly scheduled appointment that is pre-scheduled and the school is notified at least a day in advance.

Unexcused Tardiness

Every tardy after the third in each marking period is unexcused. It may be for a good reason, it may be for a bad reason but it is unexcused.

On the day of the fourth tardy and every subsequent tardy, students will not be permitted to enter class that day. The child will only be admitted to class the next day and any subsequent day if the parent has met with an administrator to discuss the problem. If the problem persists beyond a fourth tardy, the student will be required to be at school at 7am. If the child arrives after 7am, the parent will be required to complete two observation hours within the next seven days. Ultimately, students will be removed from the school if tardiness issues are not resolved.

Uniforms

Per the school covenant, parents are expected to ensure that their students arrive at school in clean, proper school uniforms. Students who are not dressed appropriately may not be permitted to participate in special school events. Additionally, students who arrive at school improperly dressed on three more occasions during a marking period will receive consequences. Parents of such students may also be required to attend a parent workshop or complete observation hours (two per occurrence).

Please note that boys are not permitted to wear ear rings, place objects in a recent piercing to keep it open, or cover a piercing with a band aid or similar covering.

The school uniform code is attached at the end of this document.

School Schedule/After Care/Early Drop-Off

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:45 p.m. for primary grades students and 3:55pm for middle school students. Students should be with their teacher prepared to enter the building at 7:40 a.m. The playground will be supervised beginning at 7:00 a.m. **Students will not be supervised on the playground before 7a.m.** Primary grade students should not be dropped off prior to this time. Students in 5th through 8th grade who need assistance from a teacher or who wish to study before school may do so under two conditions. Students must inform their teacher in person or by phone that they intend to come in early AND they must be in the building by 7:00a.m. ready and willing to work. Students who arrive between 7:00 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. will not be permitted to enter the building.

Students must be picked up after school promptly at the appropriate time. Any students who remain after school and are not enrolled in an official school activity will be placed in the aftercare program at 4:00 p.m. Parents who have not collected their children by 4:00 p.m. will be charged \$4.00 per day per child. Parents who have not collected their children by 5:15 p.m. will be charged \$5.00 for every fifteen minutes unless an alternative arrangement has been made with a teacher or an administrator.

For safety reasons, parents of students in K4-4 must walk to the church steps to collect their children. Students in K4-4 will not be released to walk across the road alone. Parents collecting children from after-care must enter the building to collect their children.

Parental Access to the Classroom

Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in daily activities at the school. Parents may also observe their children's classes provided that the observation is scheduled in advance or the parent has received permission from an administrator to observe the class. The school administration is committed to providing teachers with advanced notice of guests in the classroom. This is done not only as a courtesy to teachers but also to ensure that the educational process is not disrupted and as an added security measure. Parents must also sign in at the front office, receive and wear a guest pass before proceeding to the second or third floors.

Parents may be denied the opportunity to observe a class if the school administration has determined that the parents' presence has had, is having, or may have a negative impact on the educational process. This has only happened on a very occasional basis and is very rarely enforced. When parents are denied the opportunity to observe a class they may appeal to the St. Marcus School Board.

Breakfast

The school does provide an opportunity for students to eat breakfast upon arrival at school in the morning. Students must enter the building no later than 7:40am in order to take advantage of this opportunity.

Chaperones

Through the Discover America Program, St. Marcus School provides extensive opportunities for students to travel outside of the classroom. The school relies upon parents to provide transportation and leadership for these events. Parents should be aware of the following chaperone requirements:

- Vehicles transporting students must be in good repair with functioning seat belts.
- All students must be buckled in appropriately.
- Small children must be in the back seat according to state law.
- Speed limits and all traffic laws must be observed at all times.
- Loud or inappropriate music will not be played with students in the vehicle.
- Smoking at anytime during a field trip, including in a vehicle, is unacceptable.
- Younger siblings should not accompany parents unless approved by the teacher.
- Chaperones are expected to insist that their child stay with the rest of the group and not be given special treatment or conflicting expectations.
- Chaperones are expected to help the classroom teacher uphold St. Marcus expectations and stay with the group at all times. Chaperones do not accompany classes for their own personal benefit, but rather to enhance the experience for the students.
- Distributing candy, gum, or other treats must be done only with the teacher's approval at an appropriate time.
- Inappropriate behavior, conversations, or comments should be reported to a staff member immediately. Consequences should be administered only by a member of the St. Marcus staff.
- Parent drivers will be asked to provide proof of a valid driver's license and insurance.

Retentions

St. Marcus School takes its commitment to prepare students for success in college very seriously. Students who are not academically, behaviorally, or emotionally prepared for the next grade will be retained regardless of age or previous retentions. The most important reasons for this are:

- At St. Marcus, the common belief that retention damages self-esteem is a myth. Self-esteem improves as students discover much greater success and leadership skills during their year of retention.
- It is simply not fair to make students believe they are ready for the next grade when they are not.
- It is better for a student to graduate high school at 19 or 20 rather than not graduate at all. Students must be adequately prepared for high school and college.

Retentions must be viewed as an opportunity rather than a punishment. The school has had very positive results with students who have been retained one or more years. Students are likely to be retained for any of the following reasons:

- behavioral or emotional immaturity
- 15 or more days of absence throughout the school year (excused or unexcused)
- a single “F” on a report card during the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th marking periods
- one or more subjects at the “Minimal Proficiency” level on the Terra Nova standardized tests
- two or more subjects at the “Basic” or Minimal Proficiency” level on Terra Nova

School Closing

If the Milwaukee Public Schools is closed due to bad weather, St. Marcus School will also be closed.

Non-discrimination policy

St. Marcus Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, responsibilities, and activities made available to students at school. There is no discrimination in the administration of educational policies, scholarships, grading, athletic programs, or student disciplinary matters.

Expectations & Eligibility for Co-Curricular Activities

At St. Marcus Lutheran School all co-curricular activities are considered an integral part in the student’s overall education and learning process. Co-curricular activities include clubs & organizations, fine arts & music and athletics. St. Marcus sponsors many different activities throughout the school year. The following activities are offered: martial arts, chess club, forensics, spelling bee(s), music lessons, choirs and Milwaukee Sings. The following athletic teams are also organized during the school year: soccer, girls & boys basketball, cheerleading, wrestling, and girls & boys track & field.

St. Marcus administration, faculty, staff, advisors and coaches expect ALL students who participate to be outstanding ambassadors for his/her Savior and school, demonstrating exemplary Christian behavior at ALL times. We also expect each student to be positive and effective members of his/her team.

In an attempt to emphasize the importance of academics and to discourage “quitting” from co-curricular activities, the following rules are enforced:

- students must sign up for co-curricular activities at the beginning of the school year

-students on Academic Recovery may not participate in after-school co-curricular activities and are typically not permitted to resume a co-curricular during the same season that they were on Academic Recovery. Exceptions may be made with the permission of the student's teacher, coach, and principal.

-students may not switch from one co-curricular activity to another. Parents and students must be extremely committed for these programs to operate successfully. Parents are required to provide transportation to and from all practices and competition. Students must attend all meeting, practices and competitions. St. Marcus students who wish to be spectators at any co-curricular event, home or away must have a parent or parent designee with them.

It is very much a privilege to participate in any co-curricular activity. The men and women who coach/advise do so voluntarily. Therefore, the volunteers should be treated with complete respect. Listed below are the Guidelines for Disciplinary Action should parents and/or students not fulfill their expectations

Guidelines for Disciplinary Action

1. If a student cannot attend a practice he/she must personally excuse him/herself to the coach/advisor. If the student does not, a consequence will be given to that student by the coach/advisor.
2. If a student cannot attend a practice because of an appointment (i.e. doctor, dentist, etc.) the parent needs to send a written note with the student on the day of the appointment, to give to the coach/advisor.
3. If the student cannot attend practice because he/she needs to attend study hall, the student needs to excuse him/herself with the coach/advisor and then directly go to study hall. No further consequence will be given.
4. Students who miss a practice, arrive tardy, or improperly dressed may not be allowed to participate in games or competitions until they are in good standing as determined by the coach.
5. Any St. Marcus teacher or staff member can request that a student not participate in any game, competition or event if he/she does not meet that teacher's expectations in class. Students who receive in-school or at home suspensions are likely to be prohibited from representing St. Marcus for an extended period of time.
6. If a student misses a game and/or competition unexcused, a conference will be required between advisor/coach and student, and a consequence may be given. If it happens a second time, the student could risk suspension or dismissal from his/her activity.

Uniform Guidelines for Co-Curricular Activities

K4 – 4th Grades

All K4-4th grade students are encouraged to wear St. Marcus apparel. However, primary grade level students who attend games or competitions can wear casual clothing as long as his/her appearance is neat and tidy looking.

Exception: 3rd and 4th grade boys participating in a basketball game will be required to wear their school uniform before and after all basketball games on school days. They can wear casual clothing to games played on Saturday or Sunday.

5th – 8th Grade Students Athletes

All upper grade student athletes are required to wear their school uniforms before and after games played on school days. All students are encouraged to wear St. Marcus gear, but can wear casual clothing to a game played Saturday or Sunday, as long as his/her appearance is neat and tidy looking.

Soccer Exception: Athletes who travel to a game from school, where no changing facilities are provided, may wear their uniform to and from the game.

5th – 8th Grade Student Spectators

ALL UPPER GRADE LEVEL STUDENTS WHO ATTEND GAMES OR COMPETITIONS ON A SCHOOL DAY ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR THEIR SCHOOL UNIFORMS. ALL STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO WEAR ST. MARCUS GEAR, BUT CAN WEAR CASUAL CLOTHING TO A GAME ON THE WEEKEND, AS LONG AS HIS/HER APPEARANCE IS NEAT AND TIDY LOOKING.

ALL STUDENT SPECTATORS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR PARENT DESIGNEE.

Prohibited Materials

St. Marcus students are not allowed to have the following items at school:

gum candy soda walkman toys trading cards electronic games cell phones

“There is a choice you have to make, in everything you do. And you must always keep in mind the choice you make, makes you.”

-Anonymous