

# St. Mark Lutheran School Handbook





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# Mission Statement

**St. Mark Lutheran Elementary School strives, by God's grace and blessing, to assist parents in the Christian education of their children by providing a Christ centered quality education to prepare them for this life and eternity.**

**“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)**

## Philosophy

St. Mark Lutheran Elementary School is founded on the following eternal truths of the Holy Scriptures:

### ***God and His Word***

The Holy Scriptures are God's inspired and inerrant Word (II Peter 1: 21; John 17:17) and are supreme in all matters of faith and life (II Timothy 3:16-17). All truth is from God (James 1:17). Knowledge which contradicts the Scriptures is false (I Timothy 6:3-5). There is only one true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). He reveals Himself in the Holy Scriptures (Galatians 1:11-12).

### ***Responsibility for Training Children***

The Lord gave parents the primary responsibility for the Christian training of their children (Deuteronomy 6:7-9).

### ***The Church's Role in Education***

The Lord gave His Church, and hence each Christian congregation, a responsibility to train its children according to the Scriptures. This training is done to assist the parents to whom the Lord has given the primary responsibility of the Christian training of their children. God directs His Church to make disciples by nurturing the Christians within its membership and by reaching out to the unchurched (Matthew 28:19-20).

### ***The Learner***

God created human beings holy and righteous (Genesis 1:27; Ephesians 4:24). The fall into sin has corrupted the nature of every human being (Isaiah 2:22) and therefore every human being is deserving of damnation (Romans 5:12). God, through His grace, love, and mercy, sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer and die to save human beings from damnation (Ephesians 2:4-5; Romans 4:25).

The two main doctrines of Scripture are Law and Gospel. The Law curbs sin (I Timothy 1:9-10), makes the sinner conscious of his sin (Romans 3:20), and is a guide for Christian living (Psalm 119:9).

The Gospel “is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16), and motivates Christians to strive for holy living (II Corinthians 5:14-15). All who, through the work of the Holy Spirit, believe that Jesus is their Savior, receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation (Romans 8:1-2).

Christians have varying levels of sanctification (Romans 14:1-4), and the Lord expects them to use His Word to grow in their sanctified life (II Timothy 3:15-17). The Lord who has given varying gifts and talents to humans expects Christians to use those talents faithfully (Romans 12:6-8).

### ***The Teacher***

The Lord, through the congregation, extends divine calls to teaching ministers to assist parents with the Christian training of their children (Ephesians 4:11-12).

### ***Subject Matter***

The Lord directs that children are to be trained in His Word and are to receive that training daily, morning through evening (Deuteronomy 6:4). Children are to be taught the truths which they are able to understand (Hebrews 5:12).

## **Purpose**

The purpose of St. Mark Lutheran Elementary School is to teach students the fear of the Lord.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Proverbs 9:10)

“Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere Him.” (Psalm 33:8)

“Assemble the people before Me to hear My words so that they may learn to fear Me.” (Deuteronomy 4:10)

*(We define “fear” as awe, respect, and reverence.)*

## **Educational Objectives**

With the aforementioned Scriptural foundation, St. Mark Lutheran Elementary School endeavors:

- ✚ To help each child grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as his/her Savior from sin
- ✚ To train our children in their thinking, attitudes, and actions, so that by application of the Word they may willingly, out of love for their Savior, live their lives in conformity to the Word of God
- ✚ To diligently and systematically teach God's Word in its truth and purity
- ✚ To provide a complete elementary education of high quality
- ✚ To teach all subject matter from a Scriptural viewpoint
- ✚ To enable pupils to live in daily Christian fellowship
- ✚ To teach Christian citizenship, grounded in obedience to God's Word
- ✚ To strengthen the Christian home and congregation and the Church at large

## **Staff Qualifications**

Our classroom teachers have received, at a minimum, a Bachelor's degree in Education. This includes training from Martin Luther College (formerly Dr. Martin Luther College) in New Ulm, Minnesota.

## **Board of Education**

The congregation has elected a Board of Education to oversee all the programs and activities of our school. The Board of Education consists of four members elected to two-year terms and one representative from the Church Council. The pastor and the principal are ex officio members of the Board of Education.

## **Support**

Although families with children in our school benefit most directly from the blessings the Lord provides through it, the support of the school is the responsibility of all our members. The blessings which the Lord provides through the school are blessings that benefit the whole church. Therefore, by action of the voters, the school expenses are paid from the regular offerings to the church.

## **Fees**

A registration fee is required of all students each year. There is an early bird discount for those who pay in May, and a late fee added on for registrations paid after July unless other arrangements have been made with the Board of Education. The fee is set at the beginning of the calendar year for the upcoming school year. The fee includes, but is not limited to, the following: art supplies, science supplies, physical education equipment, library books, activities, field trips, copier paper and supplies, and other consumable items. In addition, each child in grades 4-8 needs his or her own copy of the Bible (New International Version). The students in confirmation instruction will need to purchase a catechism. These required books can be ordered through the school.

## **Lunch**

Bag lunches should be brought daily by the children. Each school family will also prepare and serve one meal each school year. A special hot lunch fee is charged to reimburse parents for the cost of preparing lunch and also to cover other lunch items that may come up during the year. Microwave ovens are available.

## **Special Services**

Bemidji Area Public Schools, Independent School District #31, makes available to our students speech therapy classes, Title I classes, sports programs, music programs, and other activities which may be beneficial for some students. Participation in the middle school sports programs requires enrollment in a middle school class for one quarter of the year.

## **Attendance**

All pupils are expected to attend regularly. Please make every effort to schedule appointments and family trips during non-school time out of consideration for the child, the classmates, and the teachers. If your child is absent due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, please call or email the school as soon as you know that he/she will be missing.

It is the responsibility of the child and the parents to find out what work has been missed and to complete it promptly upon return. The maximum time expected for work to be completed is two days for every school day missed. (Example: 3 school days missed would be 6 days to make it up – including weekends in the count)

Any absences without parental notice given to the school will be considered unexcused.

## **Anti-Discrimination Policy**

St. Mark Lutheran Elementary School admits students of any race, color, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic programs, and other school-administered programs.

## **Arrival and Departure**

The preferred drop-off time is between 8:15-8:30 a.m.

The preferred pick-up time is between 3:00-3:15 p.m. Any student not picked up by 3:15 p.m. will go to after school care.

If a situation arises in which the child must come early or stay late, please speak to the teacher in advance. There is a cost associated with before and after school care. Please ask for a current pay structure if you will be using this additional program. We ask that the program only be used when no other avenue of care is available.



## **Bussing and School Closing**

Bussing on public school transportation is available, free of charge, to all our students who live within the boundaries of Bemidji Public Schools, Independent School District #31. When the public schools are closed or start late because of weather conditions, our school will follow suit. Listen to any local radio station for these school-related announcements. There may be days added to our school calendar in which the buses are not operating. On these days parents will need to make plans to bring their children to school.

## **Medication**

All medication should be brought to the teacher by the parent. The teacher will see to it that the medicine is administered at the proper times and in the proper dosages at the direction of the parent. If the parent is unable to give the medicine directly to the teacher, the parent should call the teacher and make arrangements.

## **Immunizations**

All students should be up-to-date according to the state laws. Incoming kindergarteners and 7th graders usually need shots prior to the school year starting. Please ask the school what shots are required if you are unsure. If a child has not had any shots due to a medical exemption or conscientious exemption to immunizations, a form must be filled out, notarized, and on file at school.

## **Sunday School**

Our elementary school and our Sunday School each have their own special program, and we strongly encourage our elementary school children to attend Sunday School every week.

## **Singing in Worship Services**

The children will sing for worship services at St. Mark several times per year. All children are expected to be there to sing. Singing in church is considered an extension of work done in school and is part of the children's ministry to the whole congregation. Please notify the school as soon as possible when your child will not be able to sing in a service.

## **Phones: Calling or Texting**

Parents may call school during the school day. If at all possible, please call during recess or lunch breaks. Parents may need to leave a voicemail if the teacher is in class or out at recess. Emailing and texting the teachers may also be done. Email addresses and phone numbers can be requested from the teachers.

Students may make phone calls only when they have permission from the teacher. This includes the use of cell phones. Student cell phones should be silenced and kept in the student's backpack or locker during the school day.

## **Tuition**

The tuition for both member and non-member students is set by the Board of Education near the beginning of the calendar year for the upcoming school year. Annual tuition increases shall not exceed \$300 per year. Families receive a 5% discount when tuition is paid in full prior to the start of the school year. Tuition breaks will be given for the second and third children from one family; there is no tuition charged for the fourth and subsequent children. Tuition should be paid in full at the beginning of the school year. If this is not possible, arrangements can be made to pay on an installment basis. Contact the Board of Education before school starts if you wish to pay in installments. Requests concerning financial aid can be made to the Board of Education.

Students are required to attend all classes held in the school, including religion and catechism instruction. When the school children sing in church, all students are encouraged to take part. All rules of discipline apply to all students. In an effort to inform parents about the specific religious instruction in our school, non-member parents are required to discuss this matter fully with the pastor and principal prior to enrollment.

## **Conduct**

All students and teachers will, in all things, give praise and glory to their loving God who created and redeemed them, and who sanctifies them daily throughout their lives. All students and teachers will, at all times, act in loving concern for their Christian brothers and sisters, in the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the commands of God, by conducting themselves in a courteous, respectful, and polite manner.

## **Discipline**

In matters of discipline, Law and Gospel are used in proper balance according to the Word of God. Discipline in our school can best be described as firm and loving. In the event that all other forms of discipline prove ineffective, a child is subject to suspension. The teacher will inform the students of the discipline guidelines of the class and will enforce them fairly. Possible discipline steps could be loss of recess, detention, suspension, and expulsion.

## **Volunteer Program**

Our school makes use of volunteer helpers who assist with remedial work, correcting papers, oral reading, art, music, and other areas. If you are interested in helping, contact a teacher.

## **School Cleaning**

St. Mark School has no janitorial service. Parents are scheduled to clean the school periodically throughout the year. The schedule will be made by the beginning of the school year. If you cannot clean as scheduled, it is your responsibility to find a substitute and notify the principal.

## **Field Trips**

Trips are planned from time to time and are considered a privilege as well as a learning experience. Students' participation is contingent upon their work in school and their conduct. Some field trips will require parents to pay to cover costs of their children.

## **Damage to Equipment or Property**

Students who, through carelessness or malice, damage or break any equipment or property in or around the church or the school will be required to pay to replace or repair such items.

## **Care of Books**

New textbooks are designed to be used for a minimum of five years. Workbooks are designed to last from one to two years. The condition of all books will be noted when they are assigned to the children at the beginning of the school year. Any damage, beyond normal wear and tear, as judged by the teacher, will be charged to the child's family. In some cases, the child's family will be asked to pay to replace a badly damaged book.

## **Personal Possessions**

Children are not to bring valuable or fragile items to school, such as cameras, jewelry, money, electronic devices, etc. If children do bring something to school and it is damaged, the parents of the children involved will need to work it out among themselves. Objects that are potentially dangerous or hazardous (knives, lighters, matches, fire crackers, etc.) to the student or to other students are forbidden.

## **Appropriate Dress**

Our clothing has three purposes: protection, modesty, and adornment. We ask parents to use good Christian judgment in monitoring the appropriate nature of the clothes the children wear to school. Students wearing inappropriate clothing, as judged by the teacher, will be asked to cover it temporarily and will not be allowed to return to school wearing that piece of clothing. Also, the parents are responsible for being aware of the weather for the day and making sure their children have the appropriate clothing at school.

# Use of Photos & Videos

St. Mark Lutheran Church & School may use photographs and/or videos of students taken at St. Mark or other school-related functions (field trips, etc.) in publications, news releases, online, and in other communications related to the mission of St. Mark Lutheran Church & School. If you do *not* grant permission for St. Mark to make such photos and videos public, please speak to a teacher.

# Grading Scale

When percentage grades are given, the following scale is used as a guideline although a teacher may adapt the grade at their discretion. Also, depending on the percentage below passing, an F grade may carry more weighted value.

100-99% - A+	79-77% - C-
98-96% - A	76-75% - D+
95-93% - A-	74-72% - D
92-91% - B+	71-70% - D-
90-88% - B	69-0% - F
87-85% - B-	
84-83% - C+	
82-80% - C	

## Helping Your Child

1. See to it that your child is regular and prompt in attendance.
2. Encourage your child to eat three well-balanced meals each day.
3. Encourage sufficient hours of sleep each night.
4. Encourage your child to play games that are suitable for the age and skill that the child is.
5. Discourage your child from bringing distracting items to school.
6. Expose your child to many wholesome experiences.
7. Have your child wear suitable clothing in bad weather.
8. Refrain from being critical of school procedures or policies in the presence of your child.
9. Attend church regularly with your child.
10. Have regular family devotions and table prayers.
11. Let the Word of God be your guide in all phases of daily living.
12. Urge Christian conduct on the part of your child at work and at play.
13. Encourage your child to keep the school building, church, and playground clean and orderly.
14. Discuss daily assignments and other work, praising strengths, and encouraging better performance in areas of weakness.

## Helping Your School

1. Support your school and teachers in prayer.
2. Attend all activities of your school.
3. Stand behind the principal, the teachers, and the total program.
4. Take part in extra school projects.
5. Help your school financially with offerings, gifts, and memorials.
6. Tell others of the blessings God has given you and your family because of Christian Education.
7. Volunteer to help with projects in and for the school.

# Cooperation Between Home and School

Parents and teachers must join hands so that nothing may rob our children of the crown of glory laid up for them in heaven. As Christian parents and teachers, we must dedicate ourselves anew to ever greater study of God's Word so that we may become more proficient in carrying out our tasks in a God-pleasing manner.

"Where the Scriptures do not dominate, I certainly advise no one to send his child. For everything must degenerate that does not continually use the Word of God."

*Dr. Martin Luther on Education*

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