

August 10, 2009

Dear Parents,

Welcome back; I hope you had a wonderful summer! My name is Whitney Newsom and I teach Middle School Religion, 6th and 7th grade Math and 6th and 7th grade Science this year. I am looking forward to working with you and your child.

This is my third year teaching at St. Mary's Catholic School, where I have taught both First Grade and Middle School. I received my teaching certification from Austin Peay State University in 2002. I taught Middle School three years with the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System, and I subbed for one year. I am originally from Dickson, TN. My husband, Joel Newsom, is a Vanderbilt Police Officer. We have both lived in Clarksville since 1998, and have been married for three years. We just welcomed our 1st daughter, Annalisse, on April 11!

Students benefit from an environment of open communication between parents, teachers, and students. Your child will carry an agenda daily. Please use this to convey any questions or concerns you may have which do not require a conference. Feel free to call the school office, send a note with your child, or email me at wnewsom@stmaryscatholicschool.com to arrange a conference if you care to discuss your child's progress in person. I am unable to meet with you during the school hours I am teaching. This includes mornings and afternoons while we are preparing to begin and end our day. Scheduling a time will allow me to give my full attention to concerns without interrupting the busy school day. I also ask that students not be dismissed early unless absolutely necessary. We use the last ten minutes of each day to pray and go over homework assignments. Early dismissal creates disorganization, causing students to feel rushed and forget items. After 3:15, students are not allowed to return to the classroom for items they have forgotten.

Middle School is challenging and exciting. I will strive to provide your child with a warm, fun, and Christian learning environment. I insist students be independent thinkers and responsible individuals for themselves and society. There are many opportunities for your child to learn through investigative methods, trial and error, as well as traditional classroom instruction.

I will spend time during the first week of school discussing expectations and policies with my students. Please review and discuss the policies with your child.

I look forward to a great year!

Middle School Rules and Procedures

1. Use your time wisely.
2. Have all materials needed for your classes. You are not allowed to leave a classroom for materials left in another room. You are not allowed to call home for items left at home. Bring a book to class in case you finish assignments early.
3. Be respectful of others' feelings in speech and action. Listen while others are speaking. Do not touch other people's belongings without permission.
4. Raise your hand and wait to be called on before speaking.
5. Ask permission to leave the classroom.
6. All classwork and homework is to be completed in pencil. Sloppy, incomplete work will not be accepted.
7. Electronics are not allowed in school and will be confiscated if seen by St. Mary's staff.
8. Cellular phones are allowed under the following conditions:
 - Phones must remain turned off in backpacks while in school.
 - Students must bring a note from home giving permission to carry phones at school.
 - Phones are not allowed to be used during school hours. This includes calling home.
 - The privilege of having a phone in school is lost if any rules are ignored.
9. Write down all assignments and pack all necessary materials for homework.
10. You are not allowed to reenter the classroom after 3:15.
11. Follow the Golden Rule!

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!"

Additional rules may be added throughout the year as needed.

Playground Rules

1. Playground equipment must be used properly - no sitting on top of or hanging upside down from monkey bars.
2. No balls hit, thrown or kicked against the building.
3. No fighting - play-type or otherwise.
4. No handling of rocks, sticks, etc.
5. 1st whistle - STOP AND FREEZE
6. No student is allowed in the building without permission.

Consequences

Please review this list. If rules are not respected, the following steps will occur:

1. Verbal warning
2. Silent lunch and loss of recess.
3. Silent lunch and loss of recess, and parents notified.
4. Silent lunch, loss of recess, parents and principal notified for additional action.

Extreme or harmful behavior or disrespect will result in isolation and principal involvement.

Field Trips

Fields Trips are a fun (!) and educational part of the learning process. There are several possibilities for field trip experiences this year. A few of them are:

- *Roxy Theatre Plays
- *Public Library
- *Angel Tree Christmas Shopping
- *Dunbar Cave
- *Adventure Science Museum
- *Historic Collinsville
- *Fort Donelson

Grading Policy

Math grades are computed as follows:

- Participation/ Effort = 10%
- Homework = 20%
- Classwork/ Projects = 45%
- Quizzes/ Tests = 25%

Religion and Science grades are computed as follows:

- Participation/ Effort = 20% (Includes Mass participation for Religion classes)
- Homework = 25%
- Classwork = 25%
- Quizzes/ Tests/ Projects = 35%

Adjustments may be necessary during the year. I will notify you of any changes.

Occasional extra credit opportunities may be available during the year. Extra credit is optional. I will not assign extra credit to "bring up grades" for individual students. Any extra credit must be completed on time. No late extra credit assignments are accepted.

Homework Policy

Homework is a necessary part of the learning process. Students must have the opportunity to practice skills learned during school. Please start the year by providing your child with a space and time to complete their homework assignments. Please read carefully! The following rules are applied to homework grades:

- 1 Homework assignments must be complete before class begins. Late assignments will not be accepted unless previously discussed and agreed upon by teachers and parents. Homework is checked daily. Students will receive a grade of 100% or 0% for the day.
- 2 We will check all assignments for understanding; however, final homework grades are calculated based on completion, not accuracy.

Students are responsible for writing down all assignments, packing all materials needed for homework, and **are not** allowed to reenter classrooms after 3:15 to retrieve items. **Custodians and Aftercare teachers have been instructed not to unlock rooms for students or parents.** This rule is necessary to protect all involved in case of injury, damage, or missing items. Please understand there are **no exceptions.**

Makeup Assignments

Absences due to illness—Students have 2 days to complete missed classwork and homework assignments. Students are expected to complete missed tests after makeup work has been completed and reviewed. If a student misses a project due date, it is due on his/her first day back to school.

Absences due to scheduled appointments—When a student is absent during the school day for a scheduled appointment (doctor, dentist, etc.), it is the **student's** responsibility to obtain the homework and/or classwork assignments missed. These assignments, unless otherwise specified, are due the next day.

Absences due to vacation—If a student notifies the teachers of an impending vacation during the regular school year and receives assignments in advance, these assignments are due on the first day the student returns to school.

Please sign and return.

We have read the rules and policies for Middle School. We agree to respect and follow these rules.

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date