

2024-2025 Tuition Policy Frequently Asked Questions

Dear Parents:

This FAQ document is intended to be a quick reference into the tuition process. We are here to answer any questions that we have not addressed with this document. I can be reached at 414-425-2174 or email me at hansend@stmaryhc.org. As a parent of three St Mary kids. I can appreciate the blessings brought to my children by a St. Mary education. I'm delighted to work with you and your family on the tuition process.

*Dan Hansen
Director of Administrative Services, St Mary.*

What do I need to know about BlackBaud?

- In the past three years, we have brought the tuition payment process online using BlackBaud Tuition Management Systems. More efficient tuition collection saves money and time making more resources available for education with fewer dollars going to administrative paperwork. **We estimate that together we have achieved a positive impact of well over \$20,000 toward the school budget by using this process.** We're grateful to you as parents for your support and patience as we worked through this process.
- We will be assessing your tuition bill starting May 30, 2024. But, we cannot bill you for tuition until we know whether your family will be taking advantage of the parishioner discount. If you have not signed up as a Parishioner, please do so. One of the parents must be a Catholic in Good Standing. If you have questions about this, give us a call.
- We offer a tuition discount to **registered parishioners who make an annual stewardship pledge to support the Parish by May 30, 2024.** If you missed that deadline, call us or drop by the Parish Office.
- Families are encouraged to set up an ACH payment to the Parish on a monthly basis to save time and avoid having to write checks every month. We consider an ACH arrangement equivalent to making a pledge and once in place parents don't need to fill out a pledge form every year.

What if I just want to pay with a check? Do I still need to work with BlackBaud?

- Short answer is yes,
- You are always free to bring a check to the Parish Office, but you will still have a Blackbaud account because the Blackbaud system generates your tax statement and you will want to get credit for tuition paid in the 2024 tax year.

What is the easiest way to get the lower Parish Subsidized Tuition Rate?

The shortest answer is:

1. Be a registered member of the parish and
2. Support the parish with a monthly ACH payment from your bank account.

There are four expectations of every school family.

1. Enjoy and grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ and come together as a family once a week at Sunday Mass.
2. Grow in your relationships with other families by participating in the ministries of the parish and the educational, athletic and social activities of the parish and school. While this takes time, it is time well spent. We are a parish faith community with a Catholic school, not two separate communities. We want you to be a full part of the richness of our community life making memories and friendships as your children grow.
3. Register as members of the Parish which entitles you to the sacraments and support from the parish that brings you closer to one another and closer to Christ.
4. Invest in the parish, contribute and make St. Mary your parish.

In order for us to continue providing an amazing private school experience at an exceptional value, your community covers almost half of the cost of educating your children. This success depends on a strong and supportive parish community in which you play a part.

Why would I pledge by ACH?

ACH is the most economically effective way for families to make monthly contributions to the Parish Operating fund.

- ACH is an ongoing debit to your checking or savings account every month.
- ACH is quick and easy. You are not writing checks each month.
- As an ongoing commitment for a monthly transfer, an ACH is considered to be your monthly pledge amount until you cancel it.
- **With an ongoing ACH monthly commitment you do not have to fill out a pledge form every year.** We consider your active monthly ACH agreement to be your pledge for the year.

What am I expected to give?

We strongly encourage school families to meet or exceed the suggested minimum donation amount of \$1,000 per year per family. Years ago when my family started at St Mary School, the suggested minimum was \$750. Although the suggested minimum has increased a little bit over the years, it has been at the \$1,000 level for a number of years.

What if we can't afford \$1,000 per year?

First we encourage you to break that number down to a monthly contribution or a twice monthly contribution and be realistic about what is important in your budget. It comes to only \$83 per month or a little over \$41 on the 1st and 15th of the month. **We're essentially asking \$2.75 per day.** When we examine where our money goes, most folks can come up with \$20 per week for the things we care about. If, however, your family absolutely cannot afford \$2.75 per day to support your parish, then simply pledge according to your ability in good faith. We will accept all thoughtful pledges made in good faith.

What if I'm not a member of the Parish?

Well, first things first. We would absolutely love to welcome you into the Parish community. To join the parish one of the parents/guardians must be a baptized Catholic in good standing. Stop by the parish office and we will register your family.

What if we are new to the School, but we are not Catholic / not parishioners?

Welcome to St. Mary! If neither parent/guardian is Catholic, or you elect to remain at another Catholic parish and your children are here only for our wonderful private Catholic school experience, the non-parishioner rate would apply. This rate is set to be very competitive with what other Catholic schools charge their non-parishioners and it is based on the average rate of tuition and operating support our Parish member school families are paying. Your first child's tuition will be higher than the first child parishioner discounted rate. The rates for your second and third child are similar to the parishioner rates. You will still be paying far less than the cost of the education and you will not be expected to make a pledge to St Mary Parish. Most importantly, your child or children will have access to amazing educational opportunities and a meaningful chance to grow in faith as well.

What about Tuition Assistance?

If you are struggling with the cost of tuition there is support available to help you provide a Catholic education to your children. Tuition assistance is available to parishioners based on financial needs. This is intended to help parish families with children in 5k through 8th grade on a temporary basis, rather than for the full nine years your child is enrolled in these grades at St. Mary Parish School. Our community raises and allocates a pool of dollars based on need and the number of applications we receive. Often the amount of aid awarded declines over time as families get a stronger hold on their financial situation. The application will be due June 1, 2024 and tuition assistance will be awarded by June 15, 2024. Tuition is due in full on August 1, 2024.