

St. Matthew Parent Survival Guide 2011 - 2012

Uniforms

Information about uniforms can be found in the Student & Parent Handbook and Code of Conduct - available online also (www.stmattsgb.org).

There is a permanent used-uniform sale located in the lower level. You may participate by selling or buying. The rack of clothing is around the corner from the 4-K classroom. If you are selling, attach an envelope to the item with a dollar amount and your name. Hang it on the rack. The office will see that you get your money if the item sells. If you are buying, most items have an envelope attached to the item with a nominal dollar amount written on it and the seller's name. Simply put the amount of money in the envelope, turn the envelope into the office and take the item home!

* Please be sure to mark your child's clothing with his/her name in order to prevent losing items. *

There will be Spirit Shirt days scheduled throughout the year. These shirts will be available to purchase at the Open House.

We recommend your child leave a pair of gym shoes at school. Gym shoes should have a non-marking sole. The shoes left here need not be a new pair of shoes.

Open House

Each year there will be an open house shortly before the first day of school. This is a time for the children to reacquaint themselves with their teachers and the school layout. The children may bring their school supplies and leave them in the room with their teachers.

There will be an organized open house event for the parents in the Multi-Purpose Center (gym). This will be an opportunity for you to complete or turn in necessary forms, pay hot lunch or milk dues, order sweatshirts or t-shirts with the St. Matt's logo on them, etc.

First Day of School

All parents are invited to join their children and other parents before the students enter school on the first day. Parents are also invited to attend the prayer service to begin the first day of school. The prayer service is a way for the teachers and the student council to set the tone for the school year. It is a wonderful way to begin the school year. The prayer service takes place outside at the flag pole on the Webster Avenue side of the building (weather permitting).

Weekly Information from St. Matt's (the 'Brown Envelope')

Each Wednesday the youngest student in each family will bring home a Brown Envelope (yes, that is indeed the technical term) containing information from school. Your Brown Envelope will include a letter from the principal, pertinent information regarding fund raising and volunteer opportunities,

lunch menus, school schedules, meeting notices, scrip order forms, etc. Parents should review the information, sign the outside of the Brown Envelope and return it to school. We are working toward a system where most of this information will be available on our website or sent to you via your e-mail address.

Late Start and Early Release

Late starts and early releases are scheduled throughout the year. Late start days begin at 9:00 a.m. with playground supervision beginning at 8:45.

Lunch is served on early dismissal days. Students are released from school at 12:30 p.m.

Late start and early release days are times for the staff to get together for planning or enrichment purposes.

School Mass

School mass is scheduled most Thursday mornings at 8:15 a.m. and lasts approximately one hour. Mass schedules are included in the principal's weekly letter. Watch for it in the Brown Envelope.

Students in grades 1 - 8 attend each mass. Mrs. Stewart's Kindergarten class will attend mass every other week beginning in October. When kindergarten does attend mass, the children will be paired up and sit with a student from an upper class. This teaches the older children responsibility while the younger children learn to model appropriate behavior in church.

Families of all students are welcome to attend the masses at any time.

Lunch Dues

Hot lunch, with milk included, is available on a daily basis throughout the school year. Skim, 2 percent, and chocolate milk are available to those bringing cold lunch. A lunch menu is published and sent home at the beginning of each month. Hot lunch is K-4 \$2.10, 5-8 \$2.35 and milk is 30 cents. Your child(ren) may decide on a daily basis if they want hot lunch. The count is taken each morning. If you would like to join your child for lunch you are welcome to do so. If you are planning on having hot lunch you need to let the school office know in the morning. Your child may pay for your lunch with his or her lunch card if you like.

As mentioned above, you may make your first payment at the Open House event. If your child's account is in arrears during the school year, a statement will be sent home to remind you a payment is needed.

Specials

There are a few class subjects classroom teachers do not teach. We call these 'specials.' Each week your student will go one or two times to the computer lab, library, gym, music, and art room.

For Kindergarteners the music teacher will come to their classroom for class. The Spanish teacher will come to each classroom for Spanish class 2 to 3 times per week.

Snack

Students in the younger grades may have a morning snack. Each teacher will let you know if there will be a snack and how he or she plans to handle it.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays may be celebrated in the classroom. Parents will get information on how each teacher would like to celebrate birthdays.

Classroom Parties

Classes may celebrate Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day with a small party in the classroom. Parent volunteers may be asked to plan and facilitate these parties in the lower grades.

Student Council

Students are eligible to be part of student council in 6th - 8th grades.

Protecting Our Children - VIRTUS Training

The Diocese of Green Bay is committed to creating, providing and maintaining safe environments in all its parishes, schools, and other institutions so that all persons, especially children, youth and individuals at risk, will be protected as far as possible from all harm including physical and sexual abuse.

VIRTUS® is the brand name that identifies best practices' programs designed to help prevent wrongdoing and promote "right doing" within religious organizations. The National Catholic Risk Retention Group Inc. created VIRTUS to empower organizations and people to better control risk and improve the lives of all those who interact with the Church through a continuous process of training and information.

All priests, deacons, other ministers, and employees who may or may not have regular contact (defined below) with children, young people and individuals at risk and volunteers who have regular contact with children, young people and individuals at risk are required to complete the VIRTUS Adult Awareness Training Session.

All volunteers and employees at St. Matthew School must complete VIRTUS training. To sign-up for a VIRTUS training session, go the Green Bay Catholic Diocese website and click on the VIRTUS link.

St. Matthew Sports and Booster Club

St. Matthew students can participate in a number of athletic teams. All teams are coached by parent or community volunteers. All coaches must go through VIRTUS training.

Volleyball, Soccer, Basketball and Track generally begin in 5th grade with a few exceptions. If we do not have enough students to make our own team, we will combine with Resurrection and/or St. Thomas Moore.

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Parents with student athletes are encouraged to be members of the booster club. Our concession stand is often open during games and tournaments and staffed by parent volunteers. If you have an athlete, please volunteer to help staff the concession stand.

Band

Students are eligible to take band class in 5th - 8th grades. The 5th grade class forms their own band and performs as a group. In grades 6 - 8, the students may participate in concert and/or jazz band.

A long-standing tradition at St. Matt's is for the all band members (and a large contingent of volunteers) to go to Illinois in May for a band competition. The students compete on Friday afternoon, spend the night at a hotel, and spend Saturday at Six Flags. They remain at the amusement park until the awards ceremony is held in the Six Flags Amphitheater where they receive their results and awards. The group leaves the park grounds immediately following the ceremony and return home. Once again, all chaperones must be VIRTUS trained.

SCRIP

SCRIP is a form of fundraising or a third source of funding for non-profit organizations. Each St. Matt's family is encouraged to purchase scrip to help earn money for our school.

When you purchase scrip, you are purchasing negotiable gift certificates that are used just like cash. The scrip is issued by national and local retailers where many families already shop. Each retailer donates a percentage of the certificate's face value to St. Matthew. You pay the face value for the certificate and St. Matthew retains the percentage from the retailer. Scrip can be used to purchase everyday expenses like food, clothing, and other essentials, and with every purchase, you will earn revenue for St. Matt's. If you are good at planning ahead it can also be used for vacationing such as airline tickets, Disney, or restaurants at your destination. You can contact the Parish center or go to www.glscrip.com to get a full list of participating vendors.

There are three easy ways to obtain scrip at St. Matthew:

1. Stop by the Parish Center reception desk. They have order forms and scrip there and are happy to help you during regular business hours (9:00 -4:00).
2. Volunteers have scrip for sale after most weekend masses.
3. Watch the Brown Envelope for order forms. Fill out an order form and return it, along with a check for the correct amount, in the Brown Envelope and your request will be filled and returned to you.

Other Ways to Help Raise Money

Please save the following items: Box Tops for Education from General Mills products, Campbell's soup labels, as well as milk caps from half and full gallon containers. There are drop off containers near the school office. All of these are easy ways to help earn money for St. Matthew School.

GoodSearch.com is a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up! Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter St. Matthew School and Parish (Green Bay, WI) as the charity you want to support. And, be sure to spread the word!

GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 37 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, eBay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

The UPromise Schools Program is an exciting and powerful new fundraising program for UPromise members. Now, you can continue to save for college with UPromise—while you help raise money for St. Matthew School. Through the UPromise Schools Program, you can allocate some or all of the UPromise rewards you earn to support St. Matt's. In addition, family and friends can sign up and designate your children and our school as their reward recipients. Go online at UPromise.com for more details.

Visiting St. Matthew School

If you have a need to visit the school during the day, you are asked to enter through the doors leading to the Atrium. There you will find a window staffed by an office employee. Please sign the visitor sheet and take a lanyard with a 'visitor's pass.' Upon your departure, please designate on the registration sheet the time you are leaving and return the lanyard to the office.

Site Advisory Council

Rather than have a parent-teacher organization and a board of education, St. Matthew School has adopted the model of a Site Advisory Council (SAC). This council provides feedback, support and consultation for our principal, the GRACE System president and the Board of Trustees.

SAC has responsibility for fundraising, marketing of our school, promoting enrollment, parent and parish support as well as organizing events and coordinating volunteers.

Members are appointed to the Site Advisory Council on the Sunday of our parish picnic. Father Philip announces the new members after 10:30 mass. Committee members serve a 3 year commitment.

SAC meetings are held in the school office the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. There is an open forum on each agenda and people are invited to share their thoughts and concerns at that time. People interested in speaking during open forum should contact the SAC Chair in advance.

Events Which Make St. Matthew School MAGIC

St. Matt's school team name is Magic. Recently we came up with the phrase "We are MAGIC - we are Modeling All Goodness In Christ." This phrase is stated each day at the end of morning announcements. The student reading the announcement begins, "Remember, we are MAGIC" and the students throughout the school chime in "we are modeling all goodness in Christ."

The following is a listing of some special events :

- **Grandparents Day/Special Person Day - October**
This day begins in the classroom and school mass is held mid-morning. Each student is asked to invite their grandparent(s) or a special person to attend mass with them. This is the one and only mass parents are not encouraged to attend (unless they are the special guest). A box lunch is served in the cafeteria for the students and their guests. The student's lunch account is charged for the number of lunches served. The librarian has a fundraiser that morning. Butterfly Books brings books and the guests are invited to buy a book for the school library. To be clear, the student does not get to keep the book. The book will become part of the library catalog, however the book is purchased in that child's name and they will be the first student allowed to check out that book. This day is an early dismissal and the students are free to leave with their grandparent as long as the teacher is informed.
- **Doughnuts for Dads - October**
This event begins at 7:30 in the morning and goes until the start of the school day. It is a special morning of rolls, coffee, juice and fellowship. The kids love this social event.
- **School Auction - November**
This is our biggest fundraiser of the school year. Parents and community members are asked to donate items for the live and silent auctions. The auction is held off-site and dinner is served.
- **Christmas Program - December**
This event is held at 7:00 pm in the Multi-Purpose Center (gym). Students in kindergarten through 8th grade participate. The show typically begins with the kindergarten class performing and progresses through the grades. The final song incorporates all students and alumni. This is a long-standing St. Matt's tradition. Another tradition is for front row seats to be purchased at the school auction - this is typically done by purchasing raffle tickets
- **Catholic Schools Week - Begins January**
This is a week recognized by the National Catholic Education Association as a week to celebrate catholic education. We spend the week having special events for the students, teachers and staff. Each year brings something new and different, but the kids always look forward to the celebration.
- **CP Carnival - February**
The CP Center is a rehabilitation facility located south of St. Matthew on Webster Avenue. This is a facility run on donations. The middle school students at St. Matt's put together a

carnival with games and snacks for the younger students. All proceeds from this event are donated to the CP Center at their annual telethon.

- **Wild Game Feed - March**
This is not a school event, but a St. Matthew Parish Men's Club event. All members of the parish, school and community are invited to attend. The event is held in the evening, but the preparations begin early in the day. There is an overwhelming aroma of buffalo, elk, etc. wafting through the building. The smell tends to linger the next day, as well. This is a huge money maker for the men's club and they help fund a great deal of things at the school and parish.
- **Art and Book Fair - April**
Mrs. Ihlenfeldt is our amazing art teacher. She does great projects with the students throughout the year and saves them to display on this special evening. In addition, Butterfly Books brings in books for all ages. The **profits** of sold books are donated to the St. Matt's library (and these books go home with you!). This night also includes an ice cream social with free snacks for the children.
- **Volunteer Mass -April**
A mass is held in honor of you, the volunteers. A small social gathering follows.
- **Teacher Appreciation Week - May**
Our teachers are amazing, dedicated individuals and this is a week to praise them. Special meals and treats are planned throughout the week.
- **Muffins for Mom - May**
This event begins at 7:30 in the morning and goes until the start of the school day. It is a special morning of muffins, scones, coffee, juice and fellowship. The kids love this social event in honor of Mother's Day.
- **Kindergarten Round-up - May**
A day for the current kindergarten class to stay home and play! This is a day for the following year's incoming class to see what it is like to be in kindergarten and meet Mrs. Stewart.
- **Mini-Course Day - date to be determined**
A long-standing St. Matt's tradition fueled entirely by volunteers. This is a day with six short courses taught by visiting experts. Classes range from karate to rock wall climbing to cake decorating and much more. The kindergarten class is assigned courses while the older children get to tailor their day to their interests. The school is literally abuzz on this extraordinary day.
- **Talent Show - May**
Just as it sounds, students of all ages are invited to share their talents with their peers. We have seen pianists, dancers, actors and stand-up comics share their gifts. All acts are

approved by homeroom teachers prior to submission. This is purely for entertainment, no awards are given.

Last day of School

It is tradition at St. Matthew's for the last day of school to be a short day; the children receive their report cards, there is a short prayer service and the children are dismissed at 9:30.

Thank You

The teachers and staff recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children and we, as a school, are an extension of the learning that takes place in the home. Thank you for choosing St. Matthew School and entrusting us to build on your efforts to educate your children.

Please note: This booklet is not an official St. Matthew publication, rather a synopsis put together by experienced St. Matts parents and with suggestions from recent new families to help you better understand the MAGIC of St. Matthew School.