



Frequently Asked Questions For New Parents 2009-2010

This document is intended to answer some of the more immediate "day to day" questions that may arise in your first weeks as a St. Michael School parent. It has been designed to complement the more detailed student handbook which can be accessed through the school website under School Information/ Student Information.

What type of book bag or backpack should I buy for my child?

Any type of backpack or book bag style is acceptable, including backpacks with wheels.

Do I need to buy school supplies for my child?

Each grade level has a list of necessary school supplies which is posted on the school website and included in the new family packet you will receive in August. School supplies may be delivered to the classroom at the Ice Cream Social, or your child may carry them on the first school day.

How do I get the school uniform? What do most of the kids wear?

Detailed uniform information, including how to purchase items, requirements concerning shoes, socks, jewelry, and makeup, may be found in the school handbook too.

For new families trying to sort through the uniform pieces, a trip to Educational Outfitters (1331 Buck Jones Road, Raleigh, NC 27606, 919-804-5437) may be advisable to help you determine sizes. However, please be aware that there are some slight differences between the uniforms provided by Educational Outfitters and those ordered from Schoolbelles (www.schoolbelles.com), such as pleated vs. flat front pants/shorts, and materials used (polyester or a blend). Our student ID for Schoolbelles is 1641. Each company can provide you with more information. Sweatshirts/jackets are currently for purchase through the school office.

Used uniforms are available for sale in the school. You may go into the school to browse through these items during normal school hours. They are located near the large bathrooms on the office level of the school. They may be paid for in the front office.

As far as what most of the kids wear, the following generalities may be made:

- Students get more use out of short sleeved tops than those with long sleeves.
- Boys and girls in all grades tend to wear the school sweat jacket more than other types of school sweaters.
- Many girls wear PE/athletic shorts underneath the skirt or jumper.
- In Pre-k through 4th grades, girls may wear the jumper or skort. Girls may also wear the blue Bermuda shorts or long blue pants. In the past, the jumper was more popular for the younger girls. Recently the popularity has switched to the skort for the younger grades too.

- In grades 5-8, boys prefer the white shirts with the STMS insignia over the khaki shirt choice. In grades 5-8 girls prefer the khaki or navy skirts. The culotte also an option for girls.
- Socks must not include a logo or writing.
- Sperry shoes are very popular for both boys and girls, but only the dark brown style is permitted. The entire shoe must be a dark brown.
- Dress shoes should be one solid color - dark navy, black, or dark brown. No sandals, no open-back shoes, or any type of shoe which resembles a tennis shoe, no boots or hi-top shoes, no black and white saddle oxfords, no ballet slippers, and no shoes with a heel over 2 inches (measured from the back exterior of the shoe) are permitted.

The number of uniform separates you should buy really depends on your child and your laundry schedule.

Is there a different PE uniform?

Yes! Your child will have PE twice each week—the schedule for your class will be provided by your teacher or room parent. Please consult the handbook for specific information about this uniform. It is available for purchase at Educational Outfitters or www.schoolbelles.com . Athletic shoes with Velcro or other types of lacing are allowed.

- In Pre-K and Kindergarten, the students do not change from their uniform into their PE clothes at school. Therefore students would wear the regular uniform on three days and the PE uniform two days each week. Therefore it may be helpful to purchase two PE uniforms. Teachers will give you the PE schedule during the ice cream social.
- In grades 1-4, the teacher determines if the students will change for PE (in recent years, many teachers are allowing their students to wear their PE uniform to school on PE days and keep it on. Therefore it may be helpful to purchase two PE uniforms.
- In the upper grades students will bring their PE uniforms to school. You may purchase a STMS PE bag through the uniforms stores. Most students will use the STMS PE bag for transporting their PE clothes to and from school.

What do I need to know about carpool?

All cars must have a number clearly displayed in the front windshield on the driver's side of the car. Numbers are assigned by the school. The number cards are mailed from the school office prior to the start of school. Students will be called to the appropriate pick-up area by their number. It is important that students are aware of their carpool number.

There are two areas for morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up: the circle drive by the door on the Weatherstone side of the building, and the driveway by the Office door. Drivers will be assigned a pick-up and drop-off location prior to the start of school. Please use the assigned areas throughout the year unless approval for switching has been obtained from the principal. Parents are asked to remain in their cars and to proceed through the regular carpool process.

Students are not allowed to walk to a parked car without a teacher or administrator escort. Parents are asked to pay close attention during the carpool process. It is recommended that cell phones not be used at this time. Please follow the traffic directions given by the teachers on duty. It is Homeroom teachers should be advised in writing if a child is to go home in a different car pool or by a different means on a given day.

A carpool demonstration video is available at the school office.

Teachers, administrators, and older students (safety patrol volunteers) are always present to help facilitate carpool. Pre-K and Kindergarten students may be escorted to their classroom by parents

for the first few days of school only, unless a special circumstance warrants having an exception made. PLEASE exercise great caution when walking through the parking lot during carpool times!!!

The time at which cars begin to line up for afternoon pick-up will vary, but the first cars have generally arrived by 2:30. Please be aware that the time spent in carpool may differ from day to day, especially early in the year. If this is your first year, it may be a good idea to plan to arrive at school for pick up after 2:45pm on the first day of school so that you may more easily follow the flow of traffic that will already be lined up.

If you must make a last minute change affecting your afternoon pick-up, please notify the front office as soon as possible by calling 468-6150.

Please review the following carpool map:

http://school.stmcary.org/Carpool%20Map0708_files/slide0001.htm

What do most children do for lunch? Is there lunch provided by the school?

Saint Michael School offers a hot lunch program daily. Meals are prepared in the Parish Center or through the services of outside vendors. We strive to provide healthy options daily. Students may purchase a Debit Card for \$70.00. More information on the debit card and the opportunity to sign up will be included in the packet of information you will receive in August. The cost of each meal will be deducted from the Debit Card. Notice will be sent to parents when additional funds are needed to renew the Debit Card. Students must use the Debit Card to pay for their lunch unless otherwise directed on special days. Students may choose to bring their lunch each day. Students should not bring glass bottles, soft drinks or excessive amounts of candy. Parents should not bring lunches or drinks from carry-out restaurants.

Hot lunch service usually begins shortly after the start of school. A monthly hot lunch menu can be found by following the "school information" link on the school website. Lunch orders are counted by teachers on a daily basis each morning.

Most children who bring lunch carry a soft lunchbox of their choice. Please see the handbook for lunch food guidelines.

Milk, juice, and water are available for purchase at the start of each semester through the sign-up form in the packet you will receive in August. This form must be returned the first week of school. If you decide to purchase a beverage it will be brought to your child's homeroom each day for the entire semester, usually beginning the first week of school. Some children bring juice boxes or water bottles for their beverage. Polycarbonate bottles with the St. Michael School insignia may be purchased in the school office.

How will I know about what is happening at school?

Every Wednesday, each child will bring a folder home with his/her schoolwork of the past week, along with any other forms from the school. Dr. Wannemuehler writes a letter to parents each Wednesday, sent via email. The school website is an invaluable source of information and should be checked regularly. Room parents and most teachers use email as their primary means of communicating classroom information. Finally, we hope that you will attend the meetings of our PTO (Parent Teacher Organization).

How do I get involved as a volunteer at school?

All families are asked to complete a volunteer form, available on the school website. Descriptions of volunteer positions may be viewed in the volunteer handbook on the school website. If you would like to run for a position on the PTO, elections will be held in the spring.

We have many fun social and fundraising events throughout the year. Some examples of past events are: Book Fair, Bingo Night, the Auction at Prestonwood Country Club, Jolly Elf Trail Run, and Poinsettia Sales.

I've heard other parents talk about lunch duty. What is involved?

Only parents of Pre-K and Kindergarten students will be required to perform lunch duty approximately 14 times per year. Pre-K and Kindergarten students eat lunch in their classrooms. Lunch duty sign-ups take place at the Ice Cream Social, so please bring your calendars to this function!

If you have been unable to sign up for lunch duty or need to change your schedule, contact one of your class room parents as soon as possible. If for some reason you are not able to come for one of your lunch duty dates it is your responsibility to find another parent to cover for you.

When you enter the school for lunch duty, please sign in at the front desk in the office and obtain a volunteer badge. Lunch duty volunteers may be asked to help students open food containers, read to the class, sanitize desks, play games, and assist with recess supervision.

Students in 1st through 8th grade will eat in the lunch room on the ground floor of the school. Teachers will monitor grades 1-8 during their lunch period; therefore parent lunch duty will not be necessary.

What is Angel Bucks?

Angel Bucks is our "scrip" program. Scrip is a term that means "substitute money". When you purchase Angel Bucks, you are purchasing gift cards that are used just like cash. They're the same gift card that you buy at the store. Over 800 retailers participate in our program including Lowes Foods, Wal-mart, The Gap, Dicks Sporting Goods, Bed, Bath and Beyond, Pizza Hut, TJ Maxx, J Crew, Starbucks and many, many others.

How do these stores help us?

Angel Bucks' participating retailers agree to sell gift cards to our school at a discount. You buy the certificates for full face value and redeem them for full face value, and St. Michael School keeps the difference as revenue. Everybody wins!

You can use Angel Bucks to purchase everyday expenses like food, clothing, and other essentials, and with every purchase, you can earn revenue for St. Michael School. Angel Buck gift cards are available for almost every major retailer.

How does it work?

You will receive an enrollment form in your first Wednesday folder after school begins. You may also print an enrollment form off the Angel Bucks section of the school website. To place an order, you should complete the order form and return it with your payment in your folder by 9 am the next day (Thursday). You will receive your Angel Bucks cards the following Wednesday along with a new blank order form.

Many Angel Buck gift cards are also available anytime in the school office for our most popular retailers including, but not limited to: Lowe's Food, Kroger, Gap, Old Navy, TJ Maxx, Panera Bread, Chili's, Shell, BP, Exxon, CVS and many others.

I still have more question about STMS....what should I do?

Prior to the start of school you will be contacted by a current family who will help answer any additional questions you may have. The school office, your room parents and teachers, and the board members of the PTO are all available to answer your questions. Please do not hesitate to call on these resources throughout the year—we are all here to help!

Welcome to the St. Michael School community!