

## **FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)**

### **When and why was St. Mark's Episcopal School founded?**

The School was founded in 1979 by St. Mark's Episcopal Church as a program of Christian outreach. The clergy and parishioners believed that offering a preschool program which emphasized a loving and nurturing Christian foundation was important. As a result, the mission of the School was developed: "to provide an academically enriched program in a nurturing Christian environment." Over the years the School has evolved and now is made up of students from grades PK2 through eight. The enrollment capacity is 553 students.

### **Who owns St. Mark's School?**

St. Mark's Episcopal Church owns the School. The ultimate control and legal responsibility for the operation of both the Church and the School rests with the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry of the Church. The Vestry charges the School Advisory Board with the responsibility of establishing policies for the School. These policies and beliefs are reinforced by the clergy, administration, faculty, staff, parents, and students.

### **Does the Church subsidize the School?**

No, the School budget is separate from the Church budget. The Church and School share the expenses of the facility.

### **Is St. Mark's School accredited?**

Yes, St. Mark's is accredited by the following professional educational associations that evaluate and accredit independent schools throughout Florida in order to establish and maintain high standards for non-public schools:

Florida Council of Independent Schools

Florida Kindergarten Council

The School is a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools and the National Association of Independent Schools.

### **What are the qualifications of the teachers?**

All teachers have, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree and a Florida teaching certificate or qualify as candidates for Florida certification.

### **What safety measures are in place?**

The School is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors. To this end, the School has created a detailed security plan that includes several key initiatives:

- Camera surveillance
- Campus security system
- Safe drop-off and pick-up
- Rules for on-campus activities
- Comprehensive emergency procedures

- Cooperation of local law enforcement

### What is the admission procedure for a new student?

- APPLICATION - Applications are accepted throughout the year when accompanied by a non-refundable \$50.00 application fee.
- PRE-QUALIFY - Prior to testing, the following, if applicable, are required for preliminary qualification:
  - Current report card (entering 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>)
  - Most recent standardized test scores (entering 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>)
  - Teacher Referral Form – available from the Admission Office
- TEST - Testing appropriate for the entry grade (PK3-8<sup>th</sup>) will be scheduled January through March. A \$50.00 fee is due at testing.
- ACCEPTANCE - The Admission Office, in conjunction with the Head of School and the Head of Lower or Middle School, reviews the applicant's packet and makes a recommendation regarding acceptance.
- WAIT POOL – If spaces are limited, all qualified applicants will remain in a Wait Pool until an opening occurs. Applicants will be considered in accordance with the best interest of the child and the School and offered admittance in the following order:
  - Siblings of currently enrolled students who register for the next year
  - Grandchildren of parents of current students and children of St. Mark's alumni
  - Former students who left in good standing
  - Children of active pledging parishioners of St. Mark's Episcopal Church
  - Children of active pledging parishioners of other Episcopal parishes
  - Children currently enrolled in other Episcopal schools
  - Children/grandchildren of St. Mark's School staff members
  - All others in application date order
- Applications will remain on file for two consecutive years unless otherwise requested by the parent.
- All inactive applications will remain in storage and are available for reactivation upon request by the parent.

Admission is open to academically qualified students without regard to race, creed, gender, or national origin.

### What is the student/teacher ratio?

- PK2 – 3 half days – approximately 10 students/1 teacher/1 teacher assistant
- PK3 – 3 or 5 half days or full days – approximately 14 students/1 teacher/1 teacher assistant
- PK4 half day and full day – approximately 18 students/1 teacher/

### How is information communicated to parents and students?

- *MY ST. MARK'S* - a web site for school families which contains frequently updated information about the School, including documents, news, photos, calendars, and informative, interactive applications.
- *THE LIONSHARE* - a weekly newsletter available on the "My St. Mark's" web site each Friday. It is an informative planner featuring a calendar and descriptions of upcoming school and church events.
- *EDLINE* - a secure web site for reporting class information (PK2-3<sup>rd</sup>), homework (2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>), and weekly grade reports (4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>).
- EMAIL - Parents receive periodic emails from St. Mark's including a monthly email from the Head of Middle School to convey important information or breaking news about the School.

Please take the time to visit the St. Mark's web site at [www.stmarkspb.org](http://www.stmarkspb.org) to gain a better understanding of what St. Mark's offers.

### Does the School have a Student/Parent Handbook?

Yes, each family is given a Student/Parent Handbook. The handbook contains the following: general information about the School, general policies, academics, and code of behavior.

### Where do students attend high school after graduating from St. Mark's?

Cardinal Newman; The Benjamin School; The King's Academy; Oxbridge Academy; Jupiter Christian School; St. Andrew's School; The Pine School; and the magnet programs at Suncoast High School, Dreyfoos School of the Arts, Palm Beach Gardens High School, W. T. Dwyer High School, and Jupiter High School.

### Can high school credit be obtained for any classes at St. Mark's?

Yes, those students who qualify for and successfully complete Spanish I or French I, Algebra I or Algebra I Honors, and Geometry Honors will earn high school credit. Geometry Honors is offered for those students who qualify to begin Pre-Algebra in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Accelerated Reader is a computer based supplemental reading program for students in 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade that is designed to encourage independent reading and improve comprehension. Students take a reading placement test to determine their reading level. After reading a book on their level, students take comprehension tests on the computer where their score is given immediately. With each test passed, the points earned allow students an opportunity to earn various incentives.

#### **Are computers available in each classroom?**

Yes. In PK4 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, there are five computers per classroom. A mobile laptop lab is located in each grade level for 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### **Does the School have a computer lab?**

Yes. A fully equipped lab is located in the Media Center. Students in PK4 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade visit the lab once per week for computer instruction (3<sup>rd</sup> grade attends twice a week); 6<sup>th</sup> grade -once a week for a semester; 7<sup>th</sup> may choose graphic art as an elective; 8<sup>th</sup> grade may choose web design as an elective.

#### **Are all computers networked?**

Yes. The buildings and all computers are connected via a high-speed, fiber optic backbone.

#### **Do students have access to the Internet on all school computers?**

Yes. All students have access to the internet via our high-speed T-1 connection. SurfControl filtering software is used to block inappropriate content from reaching the school's network. The Technology Coordinator, the computer teacher, and the classroom teachers closely monitor all student computer use. All students, parents and staff members must sign an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) at the beginning of each school year.

#### **What additional technology is available?**

- 5 wireless mobile laptop labs – 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Ceiling-mounted LCD projectors– PK4-8<sup>th</sup>
- Wireless microphones with ceiling-mounted speakers – PK4-8<sup>th</sup>
- Technology desk that houses the teacher's computer, a document camera and printer and assorted peripherals
- Televisions and VCR/DVD players in all classrooms
- Premium instructional software featuring Microsoft Office Professional and Adobe Creative Suite
- Subscriptions to premium online resources including Edline, Discovery Video, EBSCO, Study Island, BrainPop, and Accelerated Reader
- Television studio featuring closed-circuit classroom broadcasts
- Video editing/DVD production workstation

1 teacher assistant

- K-1<sup>st</sup> - approximately 20 students/1 teacher/1 teacher assistant
- 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> – approximately 20 students/1 teacher/1 teacher assistant for each grade level
- 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> – approximately 25 students/1 teacher assistant for all grades

#### **What are the School hours?**

- PK2 - PK4 half day 8:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
- PK3 (full day) - 5<sup>th</sup> 8:15 a.m.-2:45 p.m.
- 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 8:20 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

#### **Does the School offer bus service?**

No, parents are responsible for transportation arrangements. The School will publish names of families interested in forming carpools.

#### **Is extended care available?**

Yes, morning care is available from 7:15 a.m. and afternoon care for full day students until 4:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. for an additional charge.

#### **What extracurricular programs are available?**

##### **LOWER SCHOOL**

##### *School Sponsored:*

Art – 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

Book Club – 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

Chimes – 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

Chorus – 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

Intramural sports –

- 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> - flag football, basketball, soccer, running club
- 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> – swimming-spring

Safety Patrol – 5<sup>th</sup>

##### *Outside Vendors:*

Art Van Go – K-1<sup>st</sup>

Fun Chefs Cooking – 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

Golf – K-5<sup>th</sup>

Mad Science – 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

Mind Lab – K-4<sup>th</sup>

Tae Kwon Do – 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

##### **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Athletics – Boys: flag football, soccer, basketball, lacrosse, golf, tennis

Girls: volleyball, basketball, soccer, lacrosse, golf, tennis, cheerleading

Clubs and Organizations – Art Club, acolyte(Eucharist service), Jazz Band,

Literary Lions newspaper, literary magazine, National Junior Honor Society, Paw Prints(yearbook), Student Council, TV Production Team, Youth Group(Church)

**Is there an additional fee for textbooks?**

No, textbooks are included in tuition.

**Are there fees in addition to tuition?**

Yes, the cost of uniforms, lunches, and class trips (4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) are the responsibility of the parent.

**Where are uniforms purchased?**

Uniforms are available at Harris Uniform Shop located on Blue Heron Boulevard west of I-95 or online through Lands' End.

**Is there a cafeteria?**

No, students may bring their lunch from home or order special lunches from outside restaurants that are served each day of the week – Joseph's Market, Wholesome Tummies, Chick-fil-A, Moe's, and C.R. Chicks. Parents purchase lunches for a semester at a time. The profits benefit the Parents' Association or the middle school grades. Parent volunteers are needed to assist with each special lunch. Lunch is currently eaten on picnic tables with umbrellas under a canopy of large oak trees on the east playground (K-8<sup>th</sup>).

**Does St. Mark's allow parent participation in school life?**

Yes, parents are encouraged to serve as volunteers in the School. St. Mark's has an active Parents' Association that provides many services to the School. Volunteer opportunities are available for the annual auction event, Book Fair, special lunches, Fine Arts Week, special sales, media center, class musical productions, kindergarten Grandparent/Special Friend Day, class projects, Colonial Day/International Day, Middle School Parent Committee, room parents, and parent ambassadors to name a few.

**What is the St. Mark's curriculum?**

St. Mark's provides an enriched curriculum in a traditional classroom setting. Instruction at all grade levels includes reading/literature, language arts/English, spelling/vocabulary, phonics, mathematics, science (with science lab-K-8<sup>th</sup>), social studies, handwriting, writing, computer lab (PK4-8<sup>th</sup>), physical education, music (PK2-4<sup>th</sup>), band (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>), art (K-8<sup>th</sup>), and Spanish or French (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>). Textbooks for the core curriculum subjects are reviewed by the teachers and administration approximately every five years for adoption based on state and national standards.

**Are there field trips?**

Yes, field trips to local areas of interest are scheduled throughout the year to enhance the curriculum. The cost of field trips is included in tuition.

**What class trips are taken?**

Class trips planned in conjunction with the curriculum are as follows:

- Fourth grade –AH-THA-THI-KI Museum
- Fifth grade – St. Augustine - two days
- Sixth grade – Epcot - two days
- Seventh grade – Newfound Harbor Marine Institute on Big Pine Key - three days
- Eighth grade – Washington, D.C. - three days

Funds raised from special lunches are used to offset a portion of the cost of class trips. Parents are notified in advance of the cost of each trip.

**Do students take a standardized test each year?**

Yes, students in kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade are assessed quarterly using the Children's Progress Academic Assessment (CPAA), and students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade take the CTP 4 (ERB) each spring. PK4 students are administered the DIAL-3(Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning-Third Edition).

**How do students cross Gardens East Drive to the athletic field for physical education class?**

Students in kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> are transported on the St. Mark's bus. Students in 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades walk to Robb Field with the PE teachers.

**How is Christian education treated at St. Mark's?**

Students in 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade participate in a weekly chapel service, as well as a weekly celebration of the Eucharist (Holy Communion) led by the School Chaplain. Receiving communion is optional. Kindergarten students participates in chapel each week and Eucharist or Christian education on a rotating cycle. Christian education is taught weekly in the classroom by the Chaplain in PK2 and 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade. In middle school the students study world religions in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the Bible in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and ethics in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. PK3 and PK4 students attend their own chapel service each week led by the Chaplain. Basic Christian values are emphasized in all aspects of Christian education.

**Does St. Mark's have a library?**

Yes, the Library Media Center is the location of the book collection for all grade levels, a computer lab, and a television production studio. Classes attend a scheduled library visit each week. Students may also come at any time to exchange books, engage in research, or take an Accelerated Reader test (see next question). The TV Production Studio, located in the media center, is the location of morning announcements that are broadcast into the classrooms via closed circuit television each day.

**What is Accelerated Reader?**