



## Ease of Transferring Schools

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### Transfer Hesitations

Transferring schools is not a decision any family takes lightly. For Aggie and Dennis Raynor, this was a decision they were faced with this Fall for their three children (grades 7<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>). “Naturally, we had some hesitation about a mid-year transfer, wondering how our kids would be able to jump in to classes mid-year, whether they would adapt socially, whether it was “worth it” to leave the comfort of a known routine,” says Aggie. “But several friends encouraged us to check out St. Mary Parish School, and we are so glad that we did.”

### Solidifying the Decision

St. Mary offers tours to new and transferring families on a regular basis. “I set up a tour and was immediately impressed with the environment at the school,” says Aggie. “From the moment I stepped in the door at St. Mary, I could tell that it was a very special place. During my initial tour, the principal, office staff, teachers and even the students in the classrooms made me feel welcome and gave me the sense of the strong community at St. Mary. Perhaps most significantly, I was impressed by the fact that so many staff members have been there for years and send (or sent) their own children to St. Mary — I saw this as an especially compelling testament to the school.”

The Raynor children shadowed at St. Mary and had the same experience as their mother did on her tour. “I will never forget picking my kids up from shadow day and having one of them run up to me and say, “I want to go here!” says Aggie. They made the decision to transfer mid-year.

### Academic Transition

A common concern parents have with transferring students is how it will affect their academics. “Teachers worked with our family to ensure a smooth academic transition, patiently providing a period of “no pressure” time to allow assessment of where our kids stood in each class and what was needed to get them up to speed,” says Aggie. “The school holds its students to high academic standards and expectations, and teachers engage students in the learning process. We love having our kids tell us that St. Mary makes learning fun!”

Parents have a high level of visibility into what their students are doing at St. Mary. “We could not be happier with the level of communication from all the teachers: from emails, to class websites/calendars, to the real-time updating of grades in PowerSchool (parent portal),” says Aggie. “We feel like we know what is going on with our kids in each class (something we were concerned about moving to a bigger school with more teachers). In our brief time with St. Mary, we have seen first-hand the teacher’s commitment to academic excellence and student support and enrichment, from offering before-school opportunities for academic help to fostering further growth (such as writing club).”

### Welcoming Community

The motto at St. Mary is “Belong, Believe, Achieve” and the “belong” portion of the motto is often what transfer students often feel as they join the community. “The student body at St. Mary students helped our middle schoolers with “little things” that made a big difference: helping with locker combinations (new for my middle schoolers) and classroom schedules,” says Aggie. “Students welcomed our kids and immediately made them feel like they were part of the community. They never felt like “outsiders” or “the new kid.”

“Parents in the community reached out and worked with us to make sure our boys could participate in winter sports, invited us to worship with them at Mass and to participate in service opportunities; welcomed us at basketball games; arranged for our kids to borrow spirit wear for an out-of-uniform day before our spirit wear order arrived; checked in to see how things were going, to make sure that we were receiving notices/information, just to name a few!



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### **Finding a Home at St. Mary**

“Most importantly, my children feel “at home” at St. Mary. In our short time here, we have witnessed classmates supporting each other academically and socially: studying for tests together and discussing assignments; cheering each other on and encouraging each other at basketball games,” says Aggie. “It is heartwarming to hear our kids say that their classmates are genuinely KIND to one another – I do not believe that this happens on accident, but is the product of holding students to high behavioral standards and establishing and focusing on the faith-centered learning environment.”

“Our daughter loves to tell us about how her class prays together and shares personal prayer requests,” says Aggie. “Not only has it strengthened her own prayerfulness, but it has also instilled the importance of praying for each other. St. Mary fosters values of respect and faithfulness and we are looking forward to our family’s further growth with the St. Mary community!”