



St. Mary's Academy

ST. ALBANS, VERMONT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are you opening this school?

We wish to offer children a high-quality education in a safe, Christ-centered atmosphere that respects Christian values and honors the role of parents as the primary educators of their children. Further, we hope that by helping educate a new generation of Christians to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16), we will strengthen our parishes and help rebuild Christian culture in the larger community. We have been greatly encouraged by the response to our Winter 2023 survey, which indicates a very solid base of families in our community who are eager for such a school.

What is the Mission of St. Mary's Academy?

We believe that "the soul of education is the education of the soul" (Pope Pius XI).

Our goal is to educate children in the truest and fullest sense by giving them tools of learning needed to read, write, speak and think well, and by fostering wonder and love for all that is genuinely true, good, and beautiful, so that they might understand themselves and their world in the light of the truth and acquire the character to live happy and integrated lives in the service of God and others.

What kind of curriculum will be offered?

We will use a classical curriculum, based on the traditional concept of a liberal arts education.

What is a Classical Curriculum?

Classical education depends on a three-part process of training the mind known as the "trivium," a time-honored model which makes use of the developmental stages of the child. In this model, teachers help children to see all subjects as part of the human story, from language to mathematics, history to science. The focus is not simply on conveying information, but also on cultivating each child's intellectual faculties, including the ability to observe, to listen, to remember, to make connections, to speculate, to calculate, to persuade and to love that which is worthy of loving.

Our core curriculum will include language arts, history, science, math, Latin, and religion. Our enrichment curriculum will include art, choral music, instrumental music, P.E. and French.

Where else is this model being used in education?

There is a renewal of the classical model sweeping schools across the country, with many existing schools switching to it every year. The [Institute for Catholic Liberal Education](#), which offers support to schools, reports that their membership doubled in the last year. In addition to seeking guidance from the ICLE for staff development and curriculum design, we are using as a model other schools that have successfully adopted the classical approach, such as [St. Jerome Academy](#) and [Holy Family Classical School](#)

When will the school open?

Our current target opening is Fall, 2023.

Where will the school be?

In cooperation with Immaculate Conception Parish we are working to update the St. Mary's Parish Center on Fairfield Street in St. Albans for our use.

How many grades will you have?

We will start with Grades K-6 and add a grade each successive year until we are a full K-8 school.

What is your expected enrollment?

Our target is to start the first year with between 40 and 60 children in grades K-6. Our recent survey indicates this is a realistic target.

When will you begin enrolling students?

Our admissions application is being finalized now, and we expect to start accepting applications and enrollment deposits soon.

What will tuition be?

Tuition is currently proposed at \$7800/yr/pupil.

Will there be fundraising needed?

We will use grants, fundraising and other resources to supplement tuition income in order to meet our budget until we can become self-sustaining.

Will there be discounts, scholarships and financial aid?

We expect to use a third-party system to determine financial aid eligibility. We are still fine-tuning guidelines for multi-child family discounts and scholarships. Our long term goal is to create a tuition assistance and scholarship fund that will allow us to maintain the financial sustainability of the school while also striving to ensure St. Mary's Academy is within reach for all those eligible students and families who embrace our classical, Catholic mission and model.

Will children wear uniforms?

Yes.

What will the schedule be?

The school day will start at 8:20 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m. Drop-offs will begin at 8 a.m. Details are still being worked out.

Will there be before/after school daycare?

This is not currently being considered. However, we are open to working with parents to make the building available for an earlier drop-off time in the morning to help accommodate parents' work schedules if a workable parent co-op plan is proposed. At this time such a plan would be at the initiative of parents and the discretion of the school administration.

What about special-needs students?

Having a mild learning difference does not automatically disqualify a student from attending St. Mary's Academy. However our school is not currently equipped to support children who need IEPs for highly specialized academic or behavioral management needs. Questions about who might or might not fall under this umbrella will be dealt with sensitively and thoughtfully during the admissions process.

Will you accept non-Catholics?

Yes. We wouldn't be a Catholic school if we didn't open our doors to people of all faiths or even no faith. The Catholic faith is central to the identity of the school and all students must attend weekly rosary and Mass, as well as participate in daily prayer moments and the theology curriculum. However, our philosophy is one of exposure to the faith, rather than one of imposition of the faith.

I am interested in a teaching position. Are you hiring?

We expect to initiate a formal staff search in early Spring, but feel free to [reach out to us](#) for more information.

Who is behind this effort?

The St. Mary's Academy Steering Committee includes people from all walks of life who care about the future of our community and want to help strengthen families and support parents in educating their children.

St. Mary's Academy Steering Committee: Fr. Christopher Micale, Pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish; Caroline Leahy, Chair; Frank Calano; Tom Dowhan; Heather Garceau; Carrie Handy; Paula Johnson; Heather Smith, Sharon Trani. We have been grateful for support and assistance from Diocesan staff, including David Young, Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

How can I help?

We need volunteers! Please email us at forthechildrenstalbens@gmail.com and we'll share a list of volunteer opportunities!

You can check out our website, <https://stmarysacademyvt.org/> too! It is being updated regularly and will contain links to important documents as soon as they are finalized.

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