

**EDUCATION GUIDE**

# Avoid back injuries by choosing the right backpack

Finding the right backpack is an essential component of back-to-school shopping. Children may have their own ideas of what's in style, but parents should look for backpacks that are functional before factoring in style. Marrying form and function together can be challenging, but it's necessary to prevent students from developing back problems. But parents must give consideration to more than just the size of their children's backpacks.

Depending on school schedules, students may be carrying backpacks for up to 10 hours per day, five days per week. Backpacks may be filled with several pounds of stuff, such as textbooks, binders, laptops and other supplies, potentially leading to injury. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, at least 14,000 children are treated for backpack-related injuries every year. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons says

that the weight of a backpack should not exceed 10 to 15 percent of a child's body weight. But many students pack their bags with much more weight than that. Improperly sized, worn and overstuffed backpacks can injure joints and lead to neck, back and shoulder injuries. They also may affect children's posture. Choose a streamlined model. Select a backpack that will get the job done without much added bulk. Many backpacks have been designed to

hold technological devices as more and more schools integrate technology into the classroom. A less bulky bag might be lighter and easy to carry. Consider shopping at a sporting goods store. Employees at camping and sporting goods retailers understand how to fit backpacks for hikers and outdoor adventurers. They can help measure a student and find a pack that will fit his or her body frame. Also, these retailers may have a wider selection of backpacks than some other stores,

increasing the chances of finding the right fit. Select a pack with a waist strap. According to the American Chiropractic Association, the body is not designed to carry items hanging from shoulders. By using the waist strap in conjunction with taut shoulder straps, students can distribute the weight in their backpacks over their hip bones instead of the shoulders. The padded and adjustable shoulder straps should be at least 2 inches wide. All straps should be used each

time the pack is worn. Backpacks should be loaded properly. Heavy items should be near the center bottom to distribute the load, rather than placed on top. Students should only carry what is necessary, visiting lockers or desks as needed to lighten their packs. Backpack fit and functionality is something parents should take seriously when shopping for school supplies. *Article courtesy of MetroCreative*



**St. Teresa of Calcutta Education Center**  
 256 Swamp Pike Schwenksville, PA 19473 Limerick Township  
[www.stcschool.com](http://www.stcschool.com)

Facing the Challenges of the 21st Century Together as Faith-Filled Learners

Enrolling for Grades K-8<sup>th</sup>  
Call Principal  
Ms. Anita M. Dixon  
610-287-2500 ext. 3003

Enrolling for Pre-School & Child Care Programs  
Call Director  
Jackie Stiles  
610-287-2500 ext. 3006

~ 2017 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence ~

**Strong Spiritual Life**  
Middle States Association of Colleges & Accreditation  
State of the Art Science Lab/Wireless Campus  
Fine Arts/Musical Productions/Band Lessons  
Small Student to Teacher Ratio PA Certified Educators  
Google Platform Classrooms Student Chromebooks  
Student Government Foreign Language Program Full Day Kindergarten

**Proudly Educating the Whole Child**

Join us for our Open House on Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM

**St. Teresa of Calcutta School named Blue Ribbon School of Excellence 2017**  
St. Teresa of Calcutta Education Center started its legacy of learners nine years ago when it first opened its doors in Limerick Township. This past year it was awarded the National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, one of the youngest schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to receive such an honor.

At St. Teresa of Calcutta Education Center you'll find more than just a beautiful campus. We provide our students with a safe and loving learning environment. Our caring faculty and staff connect with students in a way that goes beyond the books. We are committed to bringing every student to their fullest potential academically, socially and emotionally. Our state of the art information center provides Google Platform Classrooms and Chromebooks across all grade levels, assuring academic growth and excellence. As a testament of this academic excellence 30% of our current eighth grade class received scholarship money towards the high school of their choice.

Come take a tour of our Blue Ribbon School and meet our dedicated faculty and staff on Sunday, January 28th at 1 PM at our Open House. We are located at 256 Swamp Pike, Schwenksville. We would love you to join our family!

**Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow  
Saint Mary Catholic School**

A child's elementary school years are the most crucial part of their education. These years are the foundation upon which all future understanding is based. At **Saint Mary Catholic School**, we offer a challenging program of instruction, providing children with a strong academic background in their formative years, which influences them well into adulthood. We seek to constantly partner with parents through spiritual, moral, social, and academic instruction.

Our 'Middle States accredited' school is committed to maintaining a highly trained staff, skilled and knowledgeable in their individual disciplines. Teachers at **Saint Mary Catholic School** are PA certified and possess either a Bachelor's or Master's degree. We have two learning support instructors who assist in addressing the needs of students with learning differences.

We're proud of our 56-year history and reputation of academic excellence. At **Saint Mary Catholic School** and **Agnus Dei Academy**, we educate nearly 300 students in grades PreK-3 through eighth grade. Our student population is drawn from 5 parishes, six school districts, and is comprised of a diverse mix of social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. We believe that a quality Catholic education provides students with the intellectual and spiritual foundation needed to become lifelong learners and Christian leaders. Catholic values and truths in Faith, Knowledge, and Service are the pillars of beliefs to help build a stable, unshakable foundation for a lifetime.

We are blessed to be an integral part of each student's life. At **Saint Mary Catholic School** each child can write their own story. We help them do this by providing learning opportunities which motivate students to achieve their greatest potential. We're committed to providing instruction, learning support, and enrichment which engages students in active learning, allowing them to discover their unique God-given gifts through a wide variety of opportunities. Encouraging and stimulating students to be courageous risk takers and dreamers, we offer programs in Honors Math; Languages such as Spanish and Ecclesiastical Latin; Art; Music; Performing Arts with a Spring Musical; Technology; Science Fairs; School yearbook; Grade projects; and much more. Students excelling in Science, Technology, and Math showcase their talents at the yearly Science Fair, preparing as the next generation of scientists who will be changing the world. All of these opportunities foster self-esteem, promote enthusiasm, and help the children more confidently seek out and discover their talents. But most of all, our students learn to show respect for each other's individual gifts and talents. Additionally, Student Council organize school dances, fundraisers, and charity events. Currently, Saint Mary School is conducting a community service project, "Shoes for a Cause", collecting gently used (or new) shoes that will be sent to developing nations around the globe to aid them in creating their own economic opportunities!

Academic excellence is high on our list of priorities for our students. Over the last several years Saint Mary School students have achieved a total score, 26.3 points above the national average in Terra Nova testing. Of course, as proud as we are of our students' achievements, we seek more than only their academic success. Our goal is to have each child realize their life potential. We want to help our students understand and recognize how they can each use their talents to help accomplish our Lord's mission on earth. We strive to enable each person in our school community to come to know, love, and serve God through their daily interactions.

Come tour **Saint Mary Catholic School** and **Agnus Dei Academy** and you'll recognize that we focus our daily teaching, words and actions to inspire higher order thinking on intellectual, moral, and spiritual levels. It will become evident when you see the excitement emanating from the children in our new pre-school, **Agnus Dei Academy of Saint Mary Catholic School**. You'll hear the laughter and feel the fervor grow as you walk down the halls past each grade and listen to the faculty encouraged children using their imaginations, not afraid to make mistakes. That is how we become lifelong learners!

**Learning today, leading tomorrow** – **Saint Mary Catholic School** promotes our Catholic identity through the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. Our faculty and staff empower each child to become who God created them to be and to hold their relationship with Jesus Christ, our Savior, as the foundation of their life.

We invite you to learn more about **Saint Mary Catholic School** and **Agnus Dei Academy**. To arrange a private tour contact **Suzette Moyer** at [smoyer@smsk-8.org](mailto:smoyer@smsk-8.org) or call **610.287.7757 extension 244**. We are located at 40 Spring Mount Road in Schwenksville. **COME SEE US!**

**YOU ARE INVITED!!**

**SAINT MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**OPEN HOUSE**

**Sunday, January 28th from 11am - 2pm**

**Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow.**

**Saint Mary School students have achieved a total score, 26.3 points above the national average in Terra Nova testing**

**The Class of 2017 was awarded \$153,900 in scholarships to private and Archdiocesan High Schools**

**Come in and visit Agnus Dei Academy - Pre-School for 3 and 4 yr. olds**  
**Coming this Fall - After School CARES for Agnus Dei Academy!**

**Affordable Tuition • Challenging Academic Curriculum**  
**Introduction to Ecclesiastical Latin in our upper grades**  
**Spanish • Student Learning Support and Enrichment**  
**Science Fair • Technology Integration Across Curriculum**  
**Outstanding Art and Music Programs • Drama Club**  
**Before and After School CARES**

**COME SEE US! • PRE-K to GRADE 8**

**NOW ENROLLING FOR THE 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR**

**40 Spring Mount Road, Schwenksville, PA 19473**  
**[www.smsk-8.org](http://www.smsk-8.org) • 610.287.7787**

**Call Suzette at ext 244 for a personal tour today!!!**



*“You are one decision away from a totally different life.”*

MARK BATTERSON



*Learn more at one of our open house events!*

**Kindergarten Open House**  
Wednesday, February 7 • 9:00-11:00 AM

**Evening Open House**  
Thursday, March 22 • 7:00-8:00 PM

**Welcome Wednesday**  
Wednesday, February 21 • 9:00-11:00 AM

**Welcome Wednesday**  
Wednesday, April 18 • 9:00-11:00 AM

**Register for our open house or schedule a personal tour at [west-mont.org/register](http://west-mont.org/register)**

Enter Code: “Mercury Ad” and your application fees will be waived (\$100 per student).

**Now Enrolling Grades K-12**

873 South Hanover Street • Pottstown, PA 19465

**Contact Us!**

610-326-7690 • [www.west-mont.org](http://www.west-mont.org)



## West-Mont Christian Academy’s Mentor Program Thriving

By: Christie Werkheiser

Last year at West-Mont, a Mentor Group Program was created. The goal was to form a strong bond between the staff and students, thereby facilitating a trusting environment in which to thrive and pursue character development. One purpose of the mentor program is to shepherd the students in character development by coming alongside them in their daily lives, guiding their understanding of their thinking and human nature, habit formation, as well as coaching the students about the culture and world in which they live.

A primary goal is to support our scholars through their transition from elementary to middle and high school, asking such questions as, “What does it look like when young people are allied

to mature adults who demonstrate the character traits that we strive to develop in the next generation?” When students authentically challenge themselves by asking who they want to be, they are forced to sincerely examine both what they need to do to develop as a young person, and how to get there. Through asking these fundamental questions, they must confront the answers with honesty, and humility, and therefore honorably make changes.

This is the pursuit of integrity that we wish to promote through our mentor groups. This gut-level honesty reinforces the idea that we “become” over a period of time, who we purposed to be. It is the individual who decides if they will take the necessary steps to “become,” not in response to outward

legalism, but an inner will. Will our scholars embrace honesty with themselves and others about their choices, the intentions of their hearts, and their imaginations? This is for each individual to determine and respond.

Now in 2018, we see that West-Mont’s mentor groups are producing change! Through the tearing down of pretense, communicating authentically with one another, and self-reflection, we can love God and live more genuinely in a community that supports the process of character development. We continue to strive to inspire our students toward good habit formation, that they might master their impulses instead of being mastered by them; thereby becoming more like our Creator. The heart of our mentor groups is securing a safe place for students to explore the questions of who they are, where they are going, and how they will get there in a way that is true to who they are as individuals seeking God’s truth.



West-Mont Christian Academy offers Mentor Groups for grades 6-12, where staff members take time to listen to students and can help guide their character and life choices.



**Bringing God’s Truth and Purpose Into the Lives of Our Students**