

Saint Margaret Mary School

Dear St. Margaret Mary School families,

A prominent theme for the upcoming school year will be “school community.” School community can be defined as various individuals, groups, businesses, and institutions that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a school and its community—i.e., the neighborhoods and municipalities served by the school. It also encompasses the school administrators, teachers, and staff members who work in a school; the students who attend the school and their parents and families; and local residents and organizations that have a stake in the school’s success, such as school-board members and city representatives. At Saint Margaret Mary School it also means more specifically, the sense of “community” experienced by those working, teaching, and learning in our school—i.e., the administrators, faculty, staff, and students. As principal of this great school, I believe that the ‘ingredients’ to a successful school is strong leadership, inspired teachers, state-of-the-art curriculum, and **parent involvement**. At the start of the new school year, the faculty and staff will encourage and welcome all SMMS school parents to volunteer their talents to our school. A great part of a school’s success stems from cooperation and help from parents. Now is your chance to become involved! If you’ve never been a parent volunteer before, please join us! There really is something for everyone. Whether you enjoy working with large groups of children, reading to individual students, coaching an athletic team, helping with our hot lunch program, watching our children play at yard duty, organizing classroom parties, chaperoning field trips or becoming a member of our newly formed ‘Mother’s Club,’ we need you!! The rewards of volunteering are numerous for you and the children.

Now, as a Catholic School within the Los Angeles Archdiocese, we must comply with the mandated policies in their ‘Safeguard the Children Handbook.’ The purpose of the Safeguard the Children Parish Committee Handbook is to provide guidance and resources to the Safeguard the Children Committee for understanding and fulfilling the objectives of the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Sections A & B of the Handbook contain the “mandated” requirements that all Archdiocese of Los Angeles parish schools must adhere to.

To put the requirements in a nutshell, the mandated policy states:

1. If as a school volunteer, you will come in contact with SMMS children, you **MUST** attend a VIRTUS TRAINING COURSE. If you do not, then you will be prohibited from volunteering. This mandated policy extends to all persons on campus. No exceptions.
2. If you are coaching a SMMS team, you must not only attend a VIRTUS TRAINING COURSE, but you also must :
 - a. Register with the Catholic Youth Organization as a current CYO COACH
 - b. CPR/FIRST AID Certified
 - c. Fingerprinting / Live scan
 - d. Current T.B test on file.

*These requirements are not optional.

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Last week, I contacted the Los Angeles Archdiocese Department of ‘Safeguard the Children’ so that they may come to our school to conduct VIRTUS TRAINING for all our volunteers. They have not responded. My recommendation would be to click on www.virtus.org. Once on the website, you will need to click on *Touching Safety Program* to begin. When you have done that, you will then have to click on **REGISTRATION**. That page will provide a list of organizations. Then, click on **Los Angeles Archdiocese -San Pedro Region**. You will see all the local schools offering VIRTUS TRAINING. If you plan on volunteering for SMMS, please sign up for a training course that is most convenient for you. Upon completion of this two hour course, please submit a copy of your certificate to the school office.

For those of you who are interested in coaching one of our sports teams, please go to www.cyola.org to register. You must have a valid registration card and satisfy all requirements to participate as a SMMS COACH.

Again, the above guidelines must be met for any school parent can volunteer or coach at SMMS. It might seem a bit complicated, but it is really quite easy. I was notified by the Los Angeles Archdiocese three times last week that our school sports program will not only be prohibited from participating in team sports but sanctioned as well, if we do not follow the guidelines. Ouch!

Next week, our WEB PAGE Coordinator, Sandra Traversa and I will upload and make available SMMS first school web-page. As a SMMS parent, you will be able to retrieve current and informative news about the school happenings. This site will also have a PARENT VOLUNTEER FORM. Please take a few moments of your valuable time to review, fill out and print the Parent Volunteer Form. Indicate your area(s) of interest, and preferred day(s) and time(s) and return it to the school office or email it to me at elisafzimm1@cox.net by August 30.

Brief orientation meeting will be held in the Fall and at this meeting, a description of the needs of the teachers will be available. I will also discuss how the parent volunteer program works. Remember that no matter how small a job may seem to you, it’s a big help to our school. Please feel free to contact me at 310-326-9494 if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions regarding SMMS Parent Volunteer Program.

I will keep you posted on information as I receive it. If you have any comments, questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 310 251-5645(text only) or elisafzimm1@cox.net

Thank you,

Mrs. Z