

St. Mary's Catholic School
Volunteer Handbook
2015 -2016



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Longview, TX 75605

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www.stmaryslgv.org

St. Mary's Catholic School

*is committed to partnering with families
in forming children to be disciples of Jesus
who actively participate in the Kingdom of God,
by forming faith, scholarship, leadership and service.*

Revised 6/2015

St. Mary's Catholic School Volunteer Handbook

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NOTE: There are many ways you can help out at St. Mary's Catholic School. Please complete the enclosed forms and return to the school office.

Important Phone Numbers

School Office 903/756-1657

Church Office 903/757-5855

DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a source of information for parent and community volunteers of St. Mary's Catholic School. St. Mary's Catholic School Administration reserves the right to alter, amend, modify, change or terminate any of the policies in this handbook.

We all work together for the benefit of our children. . . .

School volunteers are a vital asset to St. Mary's school for they represent those citizens who translate their concern for children into action. We depend on volunteers to minister to our children by assisting teachers and staff in the daily life of the school. Volunteers provide numerous benefits including:

1. Enriching school experiences of individual children. As a volunteer you will use your special talents to support a nurturing educational environment which can help increase a child's interest and motivation for learning.
2. Providing enrichment experiences that the educational budget does not allow at this time. Volunteers bring many talents and gifts to the school community. We welcome you and thank you for sharing those gifts.
3. Enabling teaching staff to devote more quality time to the duties of classroom teaching.
4. Helping the community to better understand that Catholic education is a ministry of the church, and that our children are precious gifts from God, to be nurtured and cared for by all members of the Church.
5. Showing our children that we care about their education and lives, by becoming involved in the school for their benefit.
6. Keeping costs down! By providing your time and talent, you are allowing us to spend money directly on the classroom instruction rather than lawn service and general maintenance.

It is volunteers who make the difference between an average school and an excellent one. Thanks for your support!

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteer Rights

1. You have a right to be treated as a member of our school community, being made aware of rules and regulations, as well as safety procedures, while acting as a volunteer at St. Mary's Catholic School.
2. You have the right to be treated with respect due any adult staff member.
3. You have the right to worship with us.
4. You have a right to the tools and information necessary to perform assigned tasks.
5. You have the right to ask questions.

Volunteer Responsibilities

1. The volunteer arrives on time, checks in at the school office, wears a volunteer name tag, and performs the assigned tasks. If you are going to be late for an assigned task, please contact the office immediately. We are counting on you!
2. The volunteer respects and enforces the school rules, and works in a manner which keeps the safety, education, and rights of the students as a focus.
3. The volunteer is obligated to undergo Ethics and Integrity training as required by the Diocese of Tyler and any other school training necessary for the safety and well-being of all our students.
4. The volunteer remembers that the school exists for the benefit of the students, and treats all students the way Jesus would treat them, if He were the volunteer.
5. The volunteer asks for instructions and assistance, when needed.
6. The volunteer must sign out at the school office.
7. Volunteers must follow the dress code for staff when working in the office or classroom.
8. Volunteers should turn off cell phones while assisting in the office or classroom.
9. Families are always welcome. Volunteers should provide adequate supervision for their children at all times.
10. Ethics and Integrity rules apply to all children on our campus. Do not leave your children without adult supervision.

Volunteer Confidentiality

In the course of your volunteer work at St. Mary's, you may hear or see confidential information about students or teachers. As a member of the Christian community here at St. Mary's, you have a responsibility to keep this information confidential in any setting inside or outside the school. At the same time, volunteers must understand that there are also times when student confidences cannot be kept. For example, if a student confides a desire to hurt himself or others to a volunteer, that confidence must

be reported to a teacher, the principal, or to a priest, who bears the responsibility of communicating with the student's parents, if appropriate. The guideline is: "Any information which, if shared with faculty or administrators, may save someone from harm, must be shared."

Volunteer Safety Reminders

Child Abuse and Neglect

All SUSPECTED instances of child abuse or neglect will be reported as required by state law. We are all morally and legally responsible for protecting those who are unable to protect themselves. In keeping with that obligation, it is required by the Diocese of Tyler that every volunteer undergo Ethics and Integrity Training and a criminal background check. If you need help or know someone who does, please ask for help. It is our desire as a Christian community to reach out to help other members of our community family. We are all morally responsible for protecting those who are unable to protect themselves.

Safe Environment Policy

St. Mary's Catholic School cooperates with the diocesan safe environment program beginning with a 3 hour Ethics and Integrity Training for all adults who work in direct supervision of youth or vulnerable adults and a 30 minute Awareness Training for those that aid in supervising children or the vulnerable. Those trained include parents, ministers, educators, church personnel, volunteers and others in supervisory positions such as scout leaders, etc. This training establishes acceptable behavior that is legal, professional and responsible and includes standards of conduct with regard to sexual abuse and harassment. Written copies are provided to each employee/volunteer who acknowledges in writing that they understand and must abide by it. Background investigations of trainees are conducted. Such investigations are conducted by a reputable professional agency, law enforcement or social service agency. Background investigations include criminal history checks of the employee/volunteer and references are also checked. Supervisory personnel evaluates the results of the background investigation.

The training program for adults includes the following:

What **constitutes** child abuse, **including** sexual abuse?

What actions, procedures and policies are used to **prevent** child abuse in any form?

How does an adult **identify** instances of abuse of a child, including sexual abuse?

What signs should an adult look for in a child who may be abused?

What signs should an adult look for in a person who may be abusing a child in any way?

What **actions** should an adult take when they believe that child abuse, to include sexual abuse, may be occurring? What are the laws and policies regarding the **reporting** of abuse, to include sexual abuse, of children?

The training/teaching program for *children and young people* includes age appropriate materials pertaining to personal safety through our guidance and character education program. This includes information about improper touching and relationships. Children are not expected to be fully knowledgeable about child abuse or of the laws governing care of children but they need to know when they should seek assistance from a trusted adult.

Emergency Procedures

As adults, it is our responsibility to do our best to protect our children from harm. One way we do this is by conducting safety drills periodically. In light of our current world situation, we have a comprehensive emergency plan, covering a number of possible situations which may be drilled, in addition to fire and tornado drills.

In the classroom, following a drill and at other times that are appropriate, the teacher or adult in charge will review the performance of the class and explain the purpose of the drills, emphasizing the importance of following the safety procedures and stressing the need to follow teacher instructions carefully and quickly.

Fire Drills are conducted periodically at different times during the day so that students and teachers will be adequately prepared if a need for evacuation occurs. This allows for students and teachers to be aware of procedures in any building or area of the campus.

Disaster (tornado) drills are held periodically with simulated conditions resembling a realistic situation. If we must implement this procedure, please remember that the school building is one of the safest places for our students. The students safety is our primary concern in these situations. Appropriate inclement weather education and information is shared with students of all ages, in order to alleviate any unreasonable fears; however, it is necessary for students to have an age-appropriate view of the dangers involved in a bad-weather situation.

EVACUATION – CODE RED:

FIRE - 3 bells or fire alarms, march out of the building

RETURN - 2 bells, march back into the building

HALT – 1 bell, stop at attention – don't move

CODE YELLOW:

DANGER/DISASTER – 5 bells or announcement to go to assigned area

CODE BLUE:

DANGER/INTRUDER – Safety Alert – lock-down procedures

Teacher/supervising adult instructions always take precedence over bells.

If you are in the building during a drill, please model for our students appropriate and timely

evacuation procedures.

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School Safety Procedures

Drug-Free School Zone/Gun-Free School Zone

On November 29, 1990, the President signed the Crime Control Act of 1990. Included in this comprehensive legislation is the “Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990”. This law makes it a Federal offense for a private individual to knowingly possess a firearm in a school zone. The term “school zone” means the grounds of a public, parochial or private school, or within 1,000 feet from such grounds. A violation of this statute subjects one to imprisonment of up to five years (which must run consecutively to any other violation of law), a fine up to \$250,000, or both imprisonment and fine.

Additionally, the Crime Control Act of 1990 instituted amendments to supplement the Drug-Free Schools and Communities amongst young people. Congress has enacted legislation making it a Federal offense to possess controlled substances with the intent to distribute them on school property. Severe penalties of imprisonment and fines are applicable to such offenses.

Anyone violating the provisions of the Gun-Free School Zones Act or the Drug-Free School Zones Act or the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act will be investigated by the appropriate Federal agency and prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office in the Federal court.

Name Tags

We ask that all families be understanding of our responsibility to protect our students in every way possible. Therefore we have a system of monitoring the presence of visitors to our campus. **Parents, visitors and volunteers must obtain permission to enter classroom and playground areas of the facility, by signing in at the school office during the school day. A volunteer name tag or visitor name tag will be issued and signed by office staff and must be worn at all times while on campus.** Please refrain from standing in the classroom hallways or outside the classroom doors and office. This can be distracting to the school routine.

**PLEASE REMEMBER:
ALL VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS ARE REQUIRED
TO SIGN IN AND TO WEAR A
NAME TAG WHILE ON CAMPUS.**

Tips for Working in the Classroom

We hope you will find these tips helpful when you volunteer in the classroom.

1. Treat all children fairly and equally.
2. Allow each child to work at his or her own pace.
3. Learn to use the “how” word. Ask “how can I help you?”
4. Encourage children to ask questions and make responses.
5. Listen with interest to what children have to tell you.
6. Be sensitive and responsive to the feelings of the children and adults. **DO NOT** discuss classroom incidents with others.
7. Remember, you are there to assist **ALL** the children in the classroom, not just your own child.
8. Ask the teacher for help if you can't handle a problem.
9. In the event of an emergency, stay calm and the children will follow your example.
10. Allow students the time, space and opportunity to do a task independently before offering assistance.

Social Networking

When you are serving as a volunteer in the school or at school sponsored events, you are not to take pictures of the students to send by email, facebook etc. unless requested to do so by the teacher.

Some of our parents have requested that no pictures be taken of their children, no names and

addresses published, so please remember to abide by this policy.

Volunteer Drivers and Chaperons

Volunteer Drivers must have a valid Acceptance Certificate for Service (ACS), a valid driver's license, and be 25 years or older to drive students on any school field trips or activities. Additional reminders of information received during Ethics Training to remember as responsible chaperons and drivers:

1. You must follow all traffic laws, especially speed limits and all current safety restraints (check for current car seat requirements for smaller children).
2. No adult volunteer should ever be left to supervise children alone. Therefore, when driving children, two adults must be in the vehicle (at least one must have a valid ACS). The only exception to the 2 adult rule would be if the adults and children are traveling in a caravan situation. This would allow the Ethics trained adults to work together to ensure the safety of all.
3. Children are expected to comply with all school rules and regulations while traveling.
4. Drivers should not be using their cell phones to make or receive calls or text or read text messages while driving.
5. **Only drivers transporting SMS students in addition to their own child(ren) will receive credit for service hours as a driver.**
6. **Chaperons for Field Trips: You only receive credit for service hours on field trips if the teacher has requested that you serve as a chaperone and you have had Ethics and Integrity training.**
7. **Chaperons for Class Parties: You only receive credit for service hours for class parties if the room parent has requested your presence at the party.**

VOLUNTEER/SERVICE ASSIGNMENTS

*REQUIRES ETHICS TRAINING & A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

- Copy Person** Make copies for the teachers or school. Time commitment varies.
- Room Parent*** Parents who coordinate parties, field trip transportation & chaperons, and help with classroom projects throughout the year. Work with a team of class parents to assist under the teacher's direction. Duties last for one full school year. Upper El parents coordinate fund raisers for class trips.
- Lunchroom Duty*/
Playground Duty*** Assist the teachers on duty to monitor students during meal time and recess. Requires approximately 1.5 hours for 1-3 days per week.
- Cafeteria Duty*** Serve or prepare food in the kitchen for lunch from 10:30 AM – 1 PM. Sign up 1-3 days per week.
- Library Aide*** Assist in the library checking out/in books, shelving books, processing new or donated books and with Book Fairs. Time commitment varies.
- After School Care*** Assist during one Wednesday monthly staff meeting from 3:30 – 5:00 PM.
- Hospitality** Serve on a committee to provide refreshments for parent/school meetings.
- Class Volunteer*** Serve in the classroom when the teacher needs assistance. Assignments vary.
- Athletics*** Assist with uniforms, coaching, game day volunteers, transportation, time keeping, etc. under the direction of the athletic staff.
- Sales/Fund Raisers** Assist with distribution of one of the product sales: poinsettias, spring flowers.
- Concession Stands*** Concession sales volunteers for basketball, volleyball, soccer games, track meets and relays. The commitment is 2-3 hours per event and volunteers can work one event, one season or all year.
- Wunderfall** Various volunteer assignments to assist the event coordinator with prep work or working at the event. *All school families are required to commit 5 or more of their service hours to this event.*
- Home & School** Projects other than Wunderfall include Trunk or Treat, Stampede, Spring Barbecue and Teacher Appreciation Dinner. See the Home & School Officers to volunteer for chair or committees.

