

SAINT MARGARET MARY SCHOOL

STUDENT

-

PARENT HANDBOOK

2015-2016



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Web Site  
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Let it be known to all who enter here  
That Christ is the reason for this school  
The unseen, but ever-present  
Teacher in its classes  
The Model of its faculty,  
The Inspiration of its students



## FOREWARD

This handbook has been designed to state the philosophy, curriculum, and procedures of St. Margaret Mary Alococque School. The success of the education plan of a school is greatly enhanced and accomplished when all members of its community understand and share in that school's mission. It is essential that the educational and social formation of our students is, and must be, a joint responsibility and cooperative effort of both the child's home and school. Nothing contained in this handbook is intended to, or shall be construed to, create any contractual obligations, express or implied, on the part of the Diocese of Los Angeles, or St. Margaret Mary School. It is hoped that as you and your student read this handbook, that you will acquaint yourself thoroughly with its contents. This guide should be kept readily available to use as a resource for the vital information it contains.

## RIGHT TO AMEND

The School Administration, in consultation with the Pastor and the Board of Education of Saint Margaret Mary School, reserves the right to amend this handbook when circumstances warrant such adjustment. Parents and students will be promptly notified, in writing, of any such amendment.



## SAINT MARGARET MARY SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Saint Margaret Mary School provides a complete Catholic educational experience in a faith-filled, safe and happy environment. While instilling a love for God, for self and for others, the administration, faculty, and staff strive to promote peacemaking, self-discipline and learning through a variety of experiences. The ideal outcome of this vocation will lead to well-rounded individuals who will become future leaders in our church and in the world. Core Values and Beliefs of Saint Margaret Mary School We believe... We must provide an excellent religious and academic education in a Catholic environment.

We must help each child grow in faith, knowledge, and sense of service to the community within and outside the school. Self-esteem, self-discipline, a spirit of cooperation and a desire to learn are values which we must encourage and incorporate into our curriculum and foster in our multicultural school community. In this humbling mission, teachers are partners with our parents: the primary educators of the children entrusted to them. Evangelization is part of our mission to both Catholic and non-Catholic members of the St. Margaret Mary community. St. Margaret Mary School is a family-oriented school guided by caring, qualified teachers.

### FACULTY AND STAFF

The faculty is comprised of lay teachers who are dedicated to providing students with quality Catholic education in accordance with the Office of Catholic Education, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Department of Education regulations. Faculty members have obtained teacher certification and many possess master's degrees in related fields.

### ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

To ensure the safety of every child, parents are required to notify the school office before 8:30 A.M. on the day of an absence. It is mandatory for a parent to send a note reporting an absence. On the first day that a student returns to school after an absence, the student is required to present his/her teacher with an absentee note properly completed and signed by their parent/guardian. If the child is absent for three or more consecutive days, a medical excuse from the doctor treating their sickness is required with the absentee note. Unnecessary absenteeism is strongly discouraged and should be avoided in order to help students stay current with their progress in school work. No student is permitted to leave the school after arrival in the morning or at any time during the regular school day, except in case of a doctor's appointment, sickness or similar emergency. In such cases, the student is permitted to wait at the school office until the parent or person authorized by the parent, arrives. No student will be permitted to wait outside the building or leave with an individual other than the adult designated by a signed note or through a phone call made by the parent. Parents are encouraged to make doctor and dental

appointments after 3 o'clock to avoid interruption of the school day. A student will not be dismissed early for reasons other than sickness unless the homeroom teacher and the school office receive a written statement from the parent explaining the reasons (e.g., Doctor's appt.) for the early dismissal request. Upon arrival at the school, the parent must sign the student out in a book provided for this purpose. If a student is going to be absent from school for more than two days because of a personal reason such as a funeral, a special request in writing must be submitted to the principal for approval. Schoolwork that is missed due to absence must be completed upon return to school. Students should complete missing assignments in a timely manner. For example, if a student is absent for two days, they should have the assignments missed completed within two days of their return. If a child is absent from school, and their parent wishes to obtain the assignments for that day, a call to the school office with this request must be made no later than noon, so that assignments can be gathered and ready for pick up after 2:30 P.M. on the day of the absence. In the case of a prolonged absence, special arrangements need to be made between the teacher and parent. Parents are requested not to plan vacations during the school term, as this is disruptive to the class as well as the student. Saint Margaret Mary School does not concede to parents the right to alter the school calendar for personal convenience; including participation in Take Your Child to Work Day. Students may attend 'Take Your Child to Work Day' with prior permission from the principal. Any change in transportation arrangements must be accomplished with a written note from a parent to the child's teacher. Should an emergency develop, parents may notify the office by telephone. In this circumstance, such a call should be placed as early in the day as possible and only in an emergency situation.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The Office for Catholic Education of the Diocese of Los Angeles establishes the guidelines for all curriculum the school. The total development of a child depends upon his/her ability to learn as well as he/she can with attention, comprehension, and enjoyment. To attain these goals, a multi-level range of curriculum is employed in our school. These objectives are listed as follows:

### Religion

1. To provide the essentials of Catholic doctrine and the principals of morality
2. To teach the Catholic Liturgy with the Mass as its center
3. To familiarize the student with the Scriptures
4. To expose the students to the historical development of the Church
5. To teach truths that illuminate our understanding of life
6. To teach reverence for God and for all creatures
7. To prepare students for first reception of the Sacraments



The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has approved guidelines for programs in Human Sexuality and Formation in Christian Chastity for diocesan parochial schools. Saint Margaret Mary School integrates both programs into the religion curriculum. Students in grades one through eight are guided in identifying life, as a gift from God, to be explored as such. Emphasis is placed on awareness and simple appreciation of creation in all forms: plants, animals, family, and self. In addition, students are encouraged to become more aware of their personal attitudes toward life and their dignity as persons, along with their normal physical and emotional development. Students are encouraged to explore the wonders of life through sound theological materials and under the tutelage of parents, church and faculty. In essence, students are presented with the idea that “what they are is God’s gift to them and what they become is their gift to God.”

#### Language Arts

- To develop and practice correct grammar
- To improve oral and written communication skills
- To achieve a competent level in writing in accordance with acceptable English usage
- To master logical organization of ideas in both written and spoken forms
- To develop skill in reading and comprehension of literature
- To acquaint students with literary classics

#### Mathematics

- To develop mathematical skills for application
- To teach quantitative concepts
- To teach mathematical computations
- To teach concepts and operations in practical applications
- To develop the ability to prove geometrical relationships and use of units of measurement
- To encourage sound reasoning and logical thinking
- To emphasize problem solving
- To involve the students in math competitions and math

#### Science

- To utilize a hands - on approach in teaching science curriculum
- To impart for each student a working knowledge of terminology, laws, theories, methods of investigation, and scientific process skills
- To expose students to relative laboratory experiences and techniques
- To initiate student participation in science competitions, i.e. California Science Fair
- To teach scientific achievement in historical context

#### Social Studies

- To present the different geological areas of the world
- To emphasize cultures, industries, and natural resources
- To chronically trace the development of civilization throughout the world



- To familiarize the student with the United States Constitution, the democratic political process, and the structure of the American government
- To expose the student to significant contemporary world events and evaluate them in relation to past events that constitute our American heritage
- To initiate student participation in National History Day

#### Music

- To develop music appreciation through theory and practice
- To familiarize students with liturgical music
- To provide the opportunity for optional after school instrumental music lessons

#### Art

- To expose students to various art forms and styles
- To familiarize the students with many artists and to help them appreciate beauty in all forms of art throughout history
- To allow for creativity in student's own expression of art
- To involve students in art competitions

#### Physical Education/Health

- To teach the student basic calisthenics and physical fitness
- To teach the basics in hygiene and provide factual information regarding the danger of drugs and alcohol

#### Spanish

- To expose students to the language and culture of Spanish speaking countries
- To learn basic grammar, conversation, idioms and vocabulary of the Spanish language

#### Technology

- To teach basic computer terminology
- To teach students to collect, graph and analyze data
- To encourage students to explore a variety of simulations and applications
- To reinforce basic computer literacy to include keyboarding and word processing
- To instruct students on Internet safety and proper Internet behavior

#### ACCEPTANCE

Families of Saint Margaret Mary Parish who desire an educational experience founded on the Catholic philosophy of education have equal eligibility for admission to our School. The request for admission of students will be carefully reviewed in regard to the family's parish registration, coupled with the commitment in church attendance, faithful parish support and stewardship. After accommodating the families of these characteristics, Saint Margaret Mary School may



provide space for other families including children of other Catholic parishes and children not of the Catholic faith.

#### ADMISSION

Regarding the admission of students, Saint Margaret Mary School will not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin or religion. Enrollment shall not exceed 35 students in any class except when approved by the principal and the pastor. For admission to grade one, a child shall be six years of age by September 1 of the school year in question. Children who reach the age of five by September 1 of the school year in question may be admitted to kindergarten. Screening is done for incoming Kindergarten students during the month of May. This screening evaluates the child's vision, hearing, physical development, ability to listen and follow directions and fine motor skills. The following must be presented upon registration:

1. Birth Certificate and Baptismal Certificate
2. Child's Social Security Number
3. Verification of Immunization
4. Proof of custody where applicable
5. Academic records from previous school (transfer students). All transfer students are accepted on a trial basis, and admission is reviewed after the first quarter.

#### ACCIDENTS

In minor cases, authorized school personnel will give first aid. In the event of an emergency requiring professional medical assistance, every effort will be made to contact the student's parents. If a parent is not available, an authorized local contact person designated by the parents on that student's emergency card will be contacted. If none of the authorized persons on the form can be reached, the school will seek additional care as indicated. Parents will be responsible for any expenses incurred by such care. If an emergency exists, the student will be taken to the nearest hospital by ambulance or by car while efforts to contact a parent continue. For this reason, it is important that the emergency card information is kept current.

#### ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

In October, students in grades 1 through 8 participate in standardized testing, which measures achievement and ability. Test results are sent home to parents after they are received and reviewed by the school. All students are required to be in school during the week of testing barring serious illness or extenuating circumstances.

#### ADDRESS CHANGE

All changes of address, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses occurring during the year must be reported promptly to the office, to the homeroom teacher and to the nurse. Be certain that the





school has an auxiliary telephone number to be used when a main contact number does not establish contact with a parent.

#### ALTAR SERVERS

Boys and girls entering the fourth grade who have a desire to serve at Holy Mass are invited to become altar servers. Appropriate training will be administered before these students may begin to serve. It is important that these children be punctual, neat, reliable, accurate in following the schedule, dependable in finding a substitute and attentive while learning the proper server protocol.

#### ANNUAL FUNDRAISERS

Various important fundraisers take place during the school year. Each student benefits from these endeavors; therefore, it is required that each parent fully participate and support them.

#### ASSEMBLIES AND PEP RALLIES

Assembly programs are held intermittently throughout the school year. Parents are cordially invited to attend these events. Advance notification of assemblies, listing dates, and times will be distributed to students and is also available on the school Web site.

#### BULLYING POLICY

St. Margaret Mary School adheres to an anti-bullying policy that is based on our Catholic faith. In the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Jesus tells us “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.” We continually work with our students to help them gain a complete understanding of this aspect of faith and to practice living this “golden” rule in all aspects of their lives. Because they are a work in progress, we feel that this is a necessary tool to help students who bully others gain a positive perspective to aid in their making better and compassionate personal decisions of behavior. Bullying, as defined in our school community, is when someone is repeatedly being hurt on purpose physically, verbally, by written word, including electronic correspondence, or by exclusion of a group or individual student. The consequences for bullying are as follows:

First Offense – Bullying incident report will be filed. The students named as bullies in the report will make amends to the victim. The teacher involved will verify that this was done. Parents will be called by the teacher and/or the principal to discuss the incident.

Second Offense – A meeting will take place with the parents, teacher, principal, student, and school counselor.

Third Offense - Detention

Fourth Offense – Suspension/ expulsion from school



Because each situation is unique, and there is a wide age range of students at St. Margaret Mary School, the school has the right to adjust these consequences as is appropriate.

In addition, appropriate anti – bullying posters are prominently displayed throughout the corridors in the school. Teachers review these rules and procedures at the beginning of each year and periodically during the school year. Videos and role playing activities are integrated into religion classes regarding bullying as well. We put great emphasis on the duty of each student to be a responsible reporter in the event that they see bullying occur. Bullying occurs most often when an adult is not present. Because of this, we train students in responsible reporting and encourage them to seek out a trusted adult when there is a bullying issue. The name of students who report bullying is always kept confidential.

#### CARE OF BOOKS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY

Each student is responsible for the proper care of his or her and is required to have a book bag to transport text books to and from school. All textbooks must be fitted with book covers at all times. Writing in hard - covered books is not permitted. If a book is lost, the student/parent will be responsible for reimbursing the school for the cost of the book.

#### CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

It is the policy of Saint Margaret Mary School, as well as all of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Los Angeles, to take reasonable action to prevent and reduce incidents of child abuse and neglect. The school will cooperate with law enforcement officials in cases of child abuse or neglect.

#### CHRISTIAN LIFE

The whole atmosphere of Saint Margaret Mary School reflects the spirit of Christian life and learning. The building of a faith community in which students can experience the living of the Gospel is paramount.

The rite and ritual of worship permeates each child's life. Attendance at Mass allows students the opportunity to listen to God's Word in Scripture and to strengthen their personal lives through the reception of the Eucharist. Children delight in joining their parish community at Mass, as well as take pride in participating as a lector, altar server, gift bearer or choir member. Students have the opportunity to experience the Father's love and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which is scheduled twice a year. Prayer is a daily experience as students develop their understanding of prayer. Non - Catholic students participate in all aspects of the religious education program with the exception of sacrament preparation.



### *Sacramental Preparation*

The sacramental preparation of the students is enhanced by the direct involvement and tutelage of the student's parents. In the second grade, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Eucharist are celebrated. Confirmation is celebrated by students in the ninth grade. At the high school level, candidates receive two years of instruction, combining their heightened sense of knowledge of their faith with service, as they continue to grow in the life of the Church.

### CLASS PARTIES

Ordinarily, parties are scheduled during the school year celebrating Halloween, Christmas, etc. Teachers and homeroom parents are responsible for the planning and celebration of parties. Any other celebration must have the prior approval of the school principal. Students are not permitted to distribute personal party invitations in the classroom unless the entire class is invited or if either all boys or all girls in the class are invited. Students may bring in a healthy snack to celebrate their birthday if they wish. These treats may be brought into school by the students or may be dropped off at the school office by parents. These birthday treats will be shared with the class during recess snack time or at lunch.

### CLUBS/ACTIVITIES

Many opportunities for service, social interaction, and growth are available at St. Margaret Mary School. The Student Council provides the students in grade Kindergarten through 8 the opportunity to plan special events such as socials and community outreach programs. An elected position on Student Council gives opportunities for practical experience in leadership and responsibility.

- Brownies, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts are available for interested students.
- CYO Sports is offered for both boys and girls.
- The Cheerleading Program - supports all our teams, and it includes grades first through eighth.–
- The Academic Decathlon Team involves students in grades 6 through 8.

### DISCIPLINE

We believe that Saint Margaret Mary School provides a Christian atmosphere of love, trust, acceptance, and mutual respect. Parents of students must model Christian living, since they are their children's first teachers and have the greatest influence on their children. In continuity with this foundation, the faculty acts as a model of Gospel values inherent in our faith through their actions and teaching.

We realize that our students are still forming their own personalities and behaviors, and as they grow and mature, they need to be guided toward self-discipline. A Christian, positive and consistent approach to discipline will lead our students to make responsible choices. As they mature, they will reflect Gospel living and learn to look beyond themselves to principled living



as exemplified by Jesus. Ultimately, our goal is that students, intellectually and spiritually, will become productive members of society who will give service God.

#### Application-

The principal and faculty are dedicated to fostering creative thinking. At the same time, they expect students to conform to school regulations. There are times, however, when correction is necessary, such as when students' behavior is disruptive or interferes with learning. Students learn self-discipline and responsibility through cooperation in class by: obeying the school and the teacher's regulations, demonstrating respect for themselves, for others, school property and the property of others. The school has an obligation to provide a safe and orderly school environment that will enable the individual student to progress at a rate commensurate with his or her own ability. The rights of each individual must be carefully considered and individual expression encouraged for the successful completion of this stage of their own maturation. When such expression interferes directly or indirectly with the rights of another, appropriate steps must be taken to insure that the rights and privileges of all members of the school community are not compromised. Communications between teachers and parents will take place in order to inform parents about behavior problems as they occur. A reprimand, in the form of a detention for willful and/or repeated violation of school regulations, will be the responsibility of the classroom teacher. Additional reprimands which may result from continued or more serious offenses will involve parents and the principal. The principal determines the specific disciplinary action. When a parent feels that an issue or circumstance has developed which is interfering with their child's ability to profit from the educational experience at SMMS, the parent is asked to first consult with the teacher, before contacting the principal. Parents may contact the teacher and request an appointment via the main office telephone, teacher email or written note. If the problem cannot be resolved with the teacher, the opportunity for the principal to discuss the issue may be requested.

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

To maintain a Christian academic atmosphere as a student of Saint Margaret Mary School, I will:

1. Respect my teachers, volunteers, school personnel and fellow students.
2. Obey the rules of my school, home and community.
3. Strive to be honest with others and myself.
4. Avoid the use of obscene language and gestures.
5. Develop good study habits and work to the best of my ability.
6. Maintain good sportsmanship.
7. Take proper care of personal, school, and classmates' property.
8. Observe the dress code.
9. Refrain from bringing cell phones or other electronic equipment to school.



10. Refrain from fighting.
11. Refrain from cheating.
12. Refrain from smoking, using alcohol, drugs, and narcotics.
13. Refrain from leaving school without permission.
14. Treat others as Jesus would treat me.
15. Maintain orderly and quiet behavior in the hallways.
16. Not carry or use a weapon, which could cause bodily harm

Regarding classroom manners:

I will:

1. Be on time.
2. Upon entering the classroom, go directly and quietly to my seat and prepare for the school day.
3. Perform assignments completely and on time.
4. Comply with the teacher's directives.
5. Use my time wisely for my own growth and that of others.
6. Obtain the owner's permission before borrowing anything.
7. Be courteous at all times.
8. Share the responsibility for keeping my classroom clean.
9. Cooperate with my teacher in making the learning experience a creative and pleasant one.
10. Be prepared with necessary covered books and materials for class.

#### St. Margaret Mary School Internet and Computer Use Policy

St. Margaret Mary School allows students the use of computers and the Internet at school. This document gives the guidelines and rules for use of computers and other electronic tools in the school. Even though the guidelines state "computer" and "computer system" in these pages, what is stated applies to all school owned computers and other electronic equipment (such as TVs, DVD.VCRs, Digital Cameras, Smart Boards, and telephones.) These rules also apply to any information and software programs, not just the actual equipment. The Internet system at school is for school activities only. There may be uses for the Internet and computer at home that are inappropriate in school. Computer use at school must connect with what is being taught in the classroom. St. Margaret Mary School dictates what is allowed and what is not allowed concerning computer use in school. The rules of the school are necessary to keep the students safe, and to insure that the computers and the Internet are used in the right manner. The computers and the Internet can only be used at school with the permission of parents, the principal, and teachers.

Following are the rules for Internet and computer use in our school:

**Safety:** A student will not tell other people on the Internet where he or any other student lives, or how anyone can be found. Pictures of self or any other students may not be sent to other people



on the Internet Pictures of students attending events at St. Margaret Mary School may not be posted online without the permission of the school administration.

### Legal Matters

All school computers may only be used with the permission of a teacher. All passwords are to be kept confidential. Students will not do anything on purpose to the computers at school that would make them stop working or make them damage any information that is kept on the computers. Students will not change anything on the school's computers without permission - including computer and software settings. The school's computers will not be used to do anything that is against the law.

### Computer Usage

If computers are not working properly or are damaged in any way, it should be reported to the teacher immediately. Nothing is to be downloaded or copied from another computer or from the Internet without the teacher's permission. No programs or software should be added to the school's computer without the permission of the computer teacher.

### Appropriate Language

Anytime students use the computers or Internet, they will remember they are students in a Catholic school. They will use only appropriate language, and will never use words that someone might think are disrespectful. The computers or the Internet may not be used to bully another person. Students will not send or post information that puts someone else in danger or insults or attacks someone else. This also includes text messages or pictures sent via a cell phone. Students will not harass other people online. If someone asks a student to stop doing something online that they find annoying or that makes them upset, the student will stop doing it immediately.

### Respect for Privacy

If an adult or anyone else met online asks you to keep something secret or private, see a teacher immediately. Students will not give private information about themselves or others. The computers at school are only for educational and career development activities.

The rights of others are to be respected by not using the system for longer than the time prescribed by your teacher or system administrator.

A teacher must be present at all times a computer is in use. No messages are to be sent in school. No personal e-mail accounts may be accessed from a school computer.

Students may NEVER use communication tools of the Internet (e-mail, instant messaging, and other similar things.)



## Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

Students will not copy words or ideas found on the Internet and present them as their own. Doing so will result in detention and a zero for that assignment. The assignment in question will have to be completed properly by the student. All copyright laws are to be respected. No images or music may be copied from the Internet without express permission. All images and information obtained on the Internet should be properly cited. Inappropriate Access to Materials: The school's computers shall not be used to access material that is profane, obscene or that advocates illegal acts, violence, or discrimination toward other people.

## Miscellaneous

If the police or any other government officials need to look at information on the school computers to investigate a crime or something against the law, the school will help them. Any misuse of a computer or the Internet will result in disciplinary action. All information retrieved at school should be kept in a file at school. Be sure to check with a teacher to ensure all web sites on the Internet are safe and appropriate. Parents are responsible for all costs due to damage caused to a school computer. The Internet is a public forum with unrestricted access. For this reason, the school restricts permission for the posting of information related to the school, our staff, and our students on the Internet. No person is permitted to use the image of the school, the school logo or seal, school staff or students in any form on the Internet, or in any form of electronic communication without specific written permission from the administration. The posting of any such information on any Web site, bulletin board, chat room, e-mail, or other messaging system without permission, or the posting or transmission of images or information in any form related to the school, staff, or students that are defamatory or which could be construed as threatening or damaging the character of another person is prohibited. Any person involved in the posting or transmission of such material is subject to disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the administration at the school and/or by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.