

Volunteer Screening for Parents

The Diocese of Richmond and Saint Mary's School are dedicated to keeping our students safe from sexual abuse. In order to meet the mandates of the Diocese a number of steps must be taken before a parent is permitted to volunteer to work with or accompany students. While these requirements may at first appear burdensome, the experts in the field of abuse prevention report that taking these steps will reduce the probability of a child experiencing sexual abuse. Although no system is "foolproof", the opportunity to protect students at a minimal investment of time and money MUST be taken.

Volunteers make the educational experience at Saint Mary's an enriched and inviting experience for all students. This commitment to our youth is greatly appreciated and valued. In order to meet the screening requirements, a volunteer is asked to:

1. Submit a Volunteer Application for screening every five (5) years. The ScreeningONE organization will search appropriate databases for reports of criminal child abuse incidents.
2. Attend a "Protecting God's Children" awareness session offered by the Diocese at many parishes throughout the year. Attendance at a 3-4 hour session is required only once, although there are on-line continuing education activities that must be kept up to date. This awareness training is often referred to as Virtus training. You must sign up in advance. Please go to the website listed below to sign up.
3. Read and sign the Acknowledgement Form for the Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations enclosed.

The Volunteer Application ScreeningOne Form and the Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations Booklet and Acknowledgement Form are included. Information about the Virtus training can be found on the Diocesan web site at <http://www.richmonddiocese.org/safe-environment>. You must register on the website to attend one of these sessions (it doesn't need to be before the event for which you are volunteering but you do need to *sign* up prior to the event).

Parents who wish to volunteer to drive on field trips must complete the above requirements and must also submit the Volunteer Driver Information Sheet and submit a proof of insurance card to the office.

Please note that the above screenings often take a number of weeks to complete. Please plan ahead to insure compliance before engaging in volunteer activities.

Parents who fail to meet the above requirements MAY NOT be present with Saint Mary's school children. While parents may always drive their own child(ren) to school activities, it is the school's responsibility to prohibit unscreened individuals from having contact with other students, even in public places. If parents have any questions regarding the above requirements, they should contact the Principal for further explanation.

For those who volunteer to enrich the lives of Saint Mary's students, Thank You!