



ST. MARY'S
ACADEMY

Professional Conduct and Appropriate Boundaries

A Handbook for All Members of the St. Mary's Academy Community

The safety of St. Mary's Academy students is our highest priority. We are a community that fosters strong, independent young women, and our students must be able to learn and thrive in an environment in which they are safe and supported. Our students have a right to a life and educational environment free of abuse, misconduct, and harassment and in which appropriate adult-student boundaries are respected and maintained.

This handbook sets forth the rights and expectations for all St. Mary's students, “employees” (faculty, staff, and coaches), families, and volunteers regarding the important issues of child abuse, sexual misconduct, and appropriate boundaries. Specifically, this handbook sets out the expectations regarding each of these issues, establishes how members of the St. Mary's Academy community should report concerns, describes how St. Mary's Academy will follow-up on any concerns, and provides information about where members of the community can go with questions or for additional support. This handbook remains in effect during periods of distance learning.

St. Mary's Academy prohibits and will not tolerate child abuse, sexual misconduct, or sexual harassment, and requires that all adults affiliated in any way with St. Mary's Academy maintain appropriate adult-student boundaries with St. Mary's Academy students.

For Students: As stated above, you have a right to an environment free of child abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment and in which appropriate boundaries are respected and maintained. We want to give you the support and knowledge you need to protect this right, both as a St. Mary's Academy student and throughout your life. This handbook provides important information and resources, and you can and should turn to trusted adults for support. Any questions you may have should be addressed to the Dean of Students or the Principal. Please read this handbook in its entirety and pay special attention to the sections specifically for **students** (highlighted in blue).

For Parents: The safety of your child is our highest priority. We want to work with you as partners to educate your child and provide a safe and supportive environment. We count on you to report any concerns in accordance with this handbook. Any questions you may have should be addressed to the Dean of Students or the Principal.

For Employees: As adults who work with students, each of us is responsible for helping to ensure the safety of students by maintaining appropriate conduct with students and immediately reporting when there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, sexual misconduct, or inappropriate boundaries. This handbook provides important information about legal requirements related to child abuse, sexual misconduct, and appropriate boundaries. Every St. Mary's Academy employee and volunteer is required to read and be familiar with this handbook and to comply with its policies. In addition, St. Mary's Academy will provide regular, required training to employees about these important issues.

Questions should be addressed to the Human Resources Director, the Principal, or the President.

For Volunteers: Volunteers are a key part of the St. Mary's Academy community and share responsibility for the safety of our students. In accordance with this handbook, volunteers are responsible for ensuring the safety of students by maintaining appropriate conduct with students and immediately reporting when there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, sexual misconduct, or an issue with inappropriate boundaries. This handbook provides important information about legal requirements related to child abuse, sexual misconduct, and appropriate boundaries. Every St. Mary's Academy volunteer is required to read and be familiar with this handbook. Questions should be addressed to the Human Resources Director, the Principal, or the President.

How does this handbook apply during periods of distance learning?

This handbook remains in effect during periods of distance learning. Conduct that could constitute child abuse, sexual misconduct, and inappropriate boundaries can occur entirely online and through video, telephone, or electronic communications. All St. Mary's Academy employees and volunteers continue to be responsible for helping to ensure the safety of students by maintaining appropriate conduct with students and immediately reporting when there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, sexual misconduct, or inappropriate boundaries. This handbook provides important information about conduct that could arise during distance learning in online environments. Employees and volunteers are required to read and be familiar with this handbook, and students and parents are strongly encouraged to read this handbook. Questions should be addressed to the Human Resources Director, the Principal, or the President.

CHILD ABUSE

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is a crime under Oregon law. The law establishes several categories of child abuse. These include:

- Physical abuse
- Mental injury
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual exploitation, including (1) sexually explicit digital images or recordings, and (2) prostitution
- Neglect
- Threatened harm
- Buying or selling a child
- Allowing a child to be present in an area where methamphetamines are being manufactured
- Allowing a child to be exposed to a controlled substance in a manner that subjects a child to a substantial risk or harm to the child's health or safety

Child abuse can include written or electronic communications or digital images, even when no physical or in-person contact has occurred.

For Students: What should I do if I believe I am a victim of child abuse?

If you believe you are a victim of child abuse, you should report and seek help immediately. Students can report child abuse themselves at numbers listed below. Students can also seek out a trusted St. Mary's Academy employee or other adult and request help in making a report. Other than reporting the information to Child Protective Services (CPS) or local law enforcement, St. Mary's Academy will keep the information confidential to the greatest extent permitted by the law. We are here to help and support you.

To report abuse yourself:

CPS Multnomah County: (503) 731-3100/(800) 509-5439

After hours or on the weekends: (855) 503- SAFE (7233)

For additional support:

Visit the website for the National Center for Victims of Crime: <http://victimsofcrime.org/>

What should I do if I suspect child abuse has occurred or is occurring?

All St. Mary's Academy employees, regardless of employee classification, are mandatory child abuse reporters. Under Oregon law, this means that any St. Mary's Academy employee having reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom the employee comes in contact has suffered abuse or that any person with whom the employee comes in contact has abused a child must immediately report the abuse. "Contact" with such child or person includes electronic communications. Employees should be aware that this obligation applies 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. If an employee becomes aware of child abuse in his or her private time, the employee is required to report.

Any student, parent, or volunteer who has reasonable suspicion to believe that child abuse has occurred or is occurring should report that information immediately to the appropriate authorities as described below.

If any employee, student, parent, or volunteer thinks a child is hurt or in danger, call 911 immediately to report the information to local law enforcement. Make the other reports required by this policy and law after calling 911.

What is "reasonable cause to believe" that child abuse has occurred?

Mandatory reporters do not have to – and must not – wait to make "certain" that child abuse occurred before making a report. "Reasonable cause" is not defined in the law, but is generally considered to be equivalent to "reasonable suspicion." If you have a suspicion or reason to believe that child abuse may have occurred, you must report it. You should not conduct additional "investigation" on your own before reporting your concern.

If you are not sure whether you should report, you can call CPS, describe the situation, and ask them if you should report. They will assist with next steps, if necessary. When in doubt, always err on the side of reporting.

How should mandatory reporters evaluate child abuse during distance learning?

Mandatory reporters are required to report child abuse even during distance learning, and St. Mary's Academy employees and volunteers continue to be responsible for helping to ensure the safety of

students by maintaining appropriate conduct with students and immediately reporting when there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse.

In addition to the traditional methods for evaluating whether you have suspicion or reason to believe that child abuse may have occurred, the Oregon Department of Human Services prepared the following guide for educators to reference when communicating with caregivers and students to evaluate students' well-being during distance learning:

<https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/CHILDREN/Documents/FamilyWellbeingAssessment.pdf>

How do I report child abuse?

Anyone can call Child Protective Services or local law enforcement to report suspected child abuse.

Mandatory reporters (including St. Mary's Academy employees) are required to call Child Protective Services or local law enforcement immediately to report child abuse.

CPS Multnomah County: (503) 731-3100/ (800) 509-5439

After hours or on the weekends: (855) 503- SAFE

When making a child abuse reporting call, the following information should be provided to the extent you have that information: the names and addresses of the child and the parents of the child or other persons responsible for care of the child, the child's age, the nature and extent of the abuse, including any evidence of previous abuse, the explanation given for the abuse and any other information that the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the abuse and the identity of the perpetrator.

Reports to CPS must be made no later than the end of the school day (or by 5:00pm) on the day when the employee or volunteer developed a reasonable cause to believe abuse occurred. If an employee or volunteer is in the middle of duties that involve the supervision of students and needs to make a report, he/she should work with his/her supervisor or the front office to arrange for coverage in order to make the report. An employee or volunteer should be accompanied by a counselor, the Dean of Students, or the Principal while making the report, but the employee or volunteer is required to make the report directly to ensure accurate information is provided to CPS or local law enforcement.

If an employee or volunteer makes a report of child abuse involving a St. Mary's Academy student, the employee or volunteer is required to submit a written, detailed account of the call to the Dean of Students who keeps a log of such calls. The Dean of Students will notify the Principal immediately when a CPS call is made. The Dean of Students will provide the Principal a written and an electronic copy of the call log at the end of each school year for school records.

Once a report is made, the reporter should not discuss it with anyone except the Dean of Students and/or the Principal. Employees are not permitted to disclose to the student's parents or the person suspected of abuse that you made a report.

Employees must comply with the policies set forth in this handbook; violations of this handbook will result in discipline, up to and including termination. Volunteers and parents are not considered mandatory reporters under Oregon law; however, St. Mary's Academy requires all volunteers to comply with this handbook, and failure to report will result in a loss of volunteer privileges.

Can I get in trouble for making a report?

St. Mary's Academy strictly prohibits any retaliation against anyone making a child abuse report, and will follow up immediately on any concerns about retaliation.

If an employee or volunteer knowingly makes a false report of child abuse, that person will be subject to discipline up to and including termination or loss of volunteer privileges. Please note that a child abuse report is not considered “false” simply because the child abuse is not proven.

For Students: Can I get in trouble for making a report?

St. Mary's Academy strictly prohibits any retaliation against anyone making a report of child abuse, and will follow up immediately on any concerns of retaliation.

If a student knowingly makes a false report of child abuse, that student will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Please note that a report of child abuse is not considered “false” simply because the allegation is not proven.

More Information

The following manual from Child Protective Services provides guidance and answers many questions about child abuse reporting: <https://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/de9061.pdf>

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

What is sexual misconduct?

Oregon law prohibits sexual conduct between school employees and students, and violations of this law can constitute criminal child abuse. Sexual misconduct can occur between people of the same or different sexes or gender identities. Oregon law defined “sexual conduct” as any conduct with a student which includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when directed toward a student or when such conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's educational performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment
- Verbal or physical conduct which has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's educational performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment
- Sexual advances or requests for sexual favors directed towards a student
- The intentional touching of the breast or other intimate parts of a student
- Causing, encouraging, or permitting a student to touch the breast or other intimate parts of the educator

Sexual conduct can include written or electronic communications, even when no physical or in-person contact has occurred.

What are the expectations of St. Mary's Academy employees and volunteers regarding sexual misconduct?

St. Mary's Academy employees and volunteers are strictly prohibited from engaging in any sexual conduct at any time with St. Mary's Academy students or former St. Mary's Academy students who are under the age of 19, or who left St. Mary's or graduated within 90 days prior to the sexual conduct, whichever is later.

St. Mary's Academy takes allegations of sexual misconduct with students extremely seriously and will investigate any allegations of sexual misconduct. Violations of this handbook will result in discipline, up to and including termination or loss of volunteer privileges. St. Mary's Academy will also report concerns about sexual conduct to authorities as appropriate, including law enforcement, Child Protective Services, and/or the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission ("TSPC"). All St. Mary's Academy employees and volunteers should avoid any conduct that could create even the perception of sexual misconduct.

What should I do if I have a concern about or have heard a rumor of sexual misconduct between a St. Mary's Academy employee/volunteer and a student?

All St. Mary's Academy employees must immediately report concerns about or rumors of sexual misconduct to the President, the Principal, or the Human Resources Director. If the conduct rises to the level of child abuse, the employee is also required to report to Child Protective Services.

Any student, parent, or volunteer with a concern about sexual conduct between a St. Mary's Academy employee and a student should immediately report the concern to the President, the Principal, or the Human Resources Director. St. Mary's Academy takes all such reports extremely seriously and will investigate the concern. This applies to "rumors" as well; rumors of sexual misconduct should be reported so that St. Mary's Academy can initiate an investigation through an outside investigative body.

For Students: What should I do if I believe I am a victim of sexual misconduct?

If you believe you are a victim of sexual misconduct, you should report and seek help immediately. Students can make a report to the Principal, the Dean of Students, the counselors, or any trusted adult in the building. Even if you suspect but don't know if you were a victim of sexual misconduct, don't suffer in silence. St. Mary's Academy will keep the information confidential to the greatest extent permitted by the law. We are here to help and support you.

Can I get in trouble for making a report?

St. Mary's Academy strictly prohibits any retaliation against anyone making a report or sexual misconduct, and will follow up immediately on any concerns of retaliation.

If an employee or volunteer knowingly makes a false report of sexual misconduct, that person will be subject to discipline up to and including termination or loss of volunteer privileges. Please note that a report of sexual misconduct is not considered "false" simply because the misconduct is not proven.

For Students: Can I get in trouble for making a report?

St. Mary's Academy strictly prohibits any retaliation against anyone making a report of sexual misconduct and will follow up immediately on any concerns of retaliation.

If a student knowingly makes a false report of sexual misconduct, that student will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Please note that a report of sexual misconduct is not considered “false” simply because the allegation is not proven.

SAFE AND HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

The strong and supportive relationships between St. Mary's Academy staff and students are a hallmark of a St. Mary's Academy education. St. Mary's Academy employees and volunteers provide invaluable mentorship and support to our students, and these relationships establish a strong foundation for our students as they grow into young adults.

At the same time, it is never acceptable for these relationships to cross a boundary into one of an overly familiar, personal, romantic, or sexual nature. Employees and volunteers are required to exercise sound professional judgment with regards to boundaries at all times and to err on the side of protecting boundaries and student safety.

All St. Mary's Academy employees and volunteers are expected to maintain safe and healthy boundaries with all students. St. Mary's Academy takes this requirement very seriously, and requires employees and volunteers to avoid any interaction that could create even the perception of a boundary violation or inappropriate contact with a student.

These expectations are in effect and remain especially important during all periods of distance learning. St. Mary's Academy employees and volunteers are expected to continue to maintain safe and healthy boundaries with students during online instruction and electronic communications.

If an employee or a volunteer has any questions about appropriate boundaries, the employee should contact the Dean of Students, the Principal, or Human Resources Director for guidance. Violations of the policies outlined in this handbook may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or loss of volunteer privileges. St. Mary's Academy will report issues of inappropriate boundaries to authorities as appropriate, including law enforcement, Child Protective Services, and/or the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission (“TSPC”).

What are examples of conduct that create inappropriate boundaries?

The following are examples of inappropriate behavior and conduct in interactions with students:

- Invading the personal space of a student
- Engaging in, participating in, or condoning in any way the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or illegal drugs by students
- Engaging in sexual, romantic, or overly familiar communications with students directly in person or indirectly through the use of email, social media, telephone, St. Mary's Academy Web Portal applications, or other electronic communications

- Forming online relationships with students on personal social media sites, through text messaging, St. Mary's Academy Web Portal applications, or other electronic communications
- Having excessive electronic communications with students that could give the perception of a personal relationship
- Using a personal email address or personal text message not via the Remind or Team Snap apps to communicate with students
- Conversing with students in an overly familiar manner about details of your personal life not related to the educational experience
- Revealing details of your own sexual lives or romantic relationships to students, or in any way making a student your “confidant”
- Engaging in gossip or making derogatory comments about St. Mary’s Academy and members of its community
- Disclosing any information concerning a student to any person not authorized to receive such information. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning educational assessments, test scores, grades, behavior, mental or physical health, and family background or finances
- Commenting on students’ bodies or appearance in a familiar, sexual manner or sexually suggestive manner
- Spending time with students outside of school or family activities, including spending one-on-one time with a student off campus or through a video, phone, or electronic messaging meetings or discussions using other electronic communications.
- Giving inappropriate attention on a particular student, including the exchange of romantic communication or giving inappropriate gifts
- Engaging in overly familiar banter or gossip with students
- Engaging in any type of behavior that might have the appearance of impropriety if observed by others
- Spending time with students that could be perceived as an inappropriate adult/student relationship
- Initiating or participating in secretive behavior with a student or students
- Acting as a personal counselor to a student (teachers should direct students with personal concerns to the appropriate St. Mary’s counselor)
- Sending a personal image or video of yourself to a student or soliciting a personal image or video of a student using e-mail, text message, social media, or other electronic communications

The following are additional examples of inappropriate behavior and conduct in interactions with students that pertain specifically to distance learning:

- Communicating with a student electronically at times outside of a normal school day, such as late at night or on weekends
- Communicating with a student using personal devices or accounts for e-mail or social media sites
- Conducting one-on-one meetings or discussions with students using video, phone, or other electronic messaging for a non-school purpose or that includes discussion unrelated to the educational experience
- Conducting video instruction or meetings with students in an unprofessional setting, such as a bedroom or other intimate place

- Wearing no clothing or unprofessional clothing during video instruction or meetings with students, including intimate clothing, sleepwear, bathrobes, and similar clothing
- Conducting video instruction or meetings with students with inappropriate images, objects, or other people visible in the background

If a student initiates contact or shows behavior that may cross a boundary, the employee or volunteer should kindly but firmly reject the contact and model appropriate professional behavior. In such a circumstance, the employee or volunteer must notify an administrator no later than the end of the school day in which the situation occurred.

What are some best practices for maintaining appropriate boundaries?

The following are examples of required appropriate practices in order to maintain appropriate boundaries:

- Ensure that all one-on-one meetings between an employee/volunteer and a student occurs in a public place or in an office with the door fully open or a classroom in view of the window/door.
- Avoid paying special attention to any specific student, including providing gifts or other favors.
- Avoid discussions with students of a sexual nature, including discussing the details of the student's or the employee's sexual or romantic lives. There are limited exceptions for trained counselors or staff who may be providing guidance to a student for educational or safety related reasons. In such circumstances, the counselor or staff who engages in such a conversation with a student should inform the Dean of Students or the Principal.
- Do not engage in physical contact with students. In limited occasions, a pat on the shoulder or back may be appropriate but should never include contact with the student's private areas. If a student initiates contact with a staff person, such as a hug, the employee can respond with a pat on the shoulder or back as described above, but should not allow further contact.
- Avoid spending time with students outside of school or school-sponsored activities, and do not develop independent "friendships" with students. We understand that St. Mary's Academy is a small community, and an employee or volunteer may be personal friends with families that include St. Mary's Academy students. In such circumstances, the employee or volunteer is still obligated to maintain appropriate boundaries at all times and should consult with a school administrator if questions arise.

The following are required practices in order to maintain appropriate boundaries during online instruction:

- Maintain a consistent and appropriate timeframe of availability for students and parents that closely resembles a normal school day. Carefully consider any communications outside of normal school day hours.
- Use St. Mary's Academy-provided devices and e-mail accounts to communicate with students and parents.
- Do not conduct one-on-one meetings or discussions using video, phone, or electronic messaging with students unless it is related to the educational experience.
- Always wear appropriate and professional clothing when you are visible on video during instruction or meetings with students, parents, and other members of the St. Mary's Academy community. Dress as you would for working or volunteering in person.

- Do not conduct video instruction or calls from a bed or any other intimate setting. If you must conduct your video instruction or calls from a bedroom, ensure that the bed is not visible.
- Ensure that your background appears professional. Take steps to remove any personal photographs, wall art, signs, or other visible images that could infringe on inappropriate boundaries. Take steps to ensure that no inappropriate items are visible, such as intimate articles of clothing.
- Take steps to ensure that other persons or sounds that may be visible or audible in your setting do not disrupt learning and will not infringe on appropriate boundaries.

Again, these are only examples of appropriate practices, and all employees and volunteers must avoid even the appearance of a boundary violation or inappropriate contact with a student whether in person or during periods of distance learning.

What should I do if I have a concern about or have heard a rumor of inappropriate boundaries between a St. Mary's Academy employee/volunteer and a student?

Any employee, parent, or volunteer with a concern about inappropriate boundaries between a St. Mary's Academy employee/volunteer and a student should immediately report the concern to the President, the Principal, or Human Resources Director. St. Mary's Academy takes all such reports extremely seriously and may initiate an investigation. This applies to “rumors” as well; rumors of inappropriate boundaries should be reported so that St. Mary's Academy can initiate an investigation.

All St. Mary's Academy employees and volunteers must immediately report concerns about or rumors of inappropriate boundaries to the President, the Principal, or Human Resources Director. If the conduct rises to the level of child abuse, the employee is also required to report in accordance with the Child Abuse Reporter requirements.

For Students: What should I do if I believe that I am a victim of inappropriate boundaries or have a concern about inappropriate boundaries between a St. Mary's Academy employee/volunteer and a student?

If you believe you are a victim of inappropriate boundaries or have a concern about inappropriate boundaries between a St. Mary's employee/volunteer and a student, you should report and seek help immediately. Students should report to the Principal, the Dean of Students, the counselors, or a trusted adult in the building. St. Mary's Academy will keep the information confidential to the greatest extent permitted by the law. We are here to help and support you.

Can I get in trouble for making a report?

St. Mary's Academy strictly prohibits any retaliation against anyone making a report of inappropriate boundaries, and will follow up immediately on any concerns of retaliation.

If an employee or volunteer knowingly makes a false report of inappropriate boundaries, that person will be subject to discipline up to and including termination or loss of volunteer privileges. Please note that a report of inappropriate boundaries is not considered “false” simply because the allegation is not proven.

For Students: Can I get in trouble for making a report?

St. Mary's Academy strictly prohibits any retaliation against anyone making a report of inappropriate boundaries, and will follow up immediately on any concerns of retaliation.

If a student knowingly makes a false report of inappropriate boundaries, that student will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Please note that a report of inappropriate boundaries is not considered “false” simply because the allegation is not proven.

More Information

All St. Mary's Academy employees who are licensed through TSPC are required to read and be familiar with the TSPC guidance on the Ethical Educator. This two-page overview includes expectations about maintaining appropriate boundaries with students:

https://www.oregon.gov/tspc/Documents/Ethical_Educator_Brochure.pdf

RESOURCES

CPS Multnomah County: (503) 731-3100/(800) 509-5439

After hours or on the weekends: (855) 503- SAFE

CPS Guide on Child Abuse Reporting: <https://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/de9061.pdf>

The National Center for Victims of Crime: <http://victimsofcrime.org/>

The Ethical Educator: https://www.oregon.gov/tspc/Documents/Ethical_Educator_Brochure.pdf

Oregon Department of Health and Human Services' Family Wellbeing Assessment:

<https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/CHILDREN/Documents/FamilyWellbeingAssessment.pdf>

The TSPC's Ethical Guidance for Distance Learning:

https://www.oregon.gov/tspc/Documents/Ethical_Guidance_for_Distance_Learning.pdf

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