



Stella Maris Family Association Framework

The purpose of the Stella Maris Family Association (SMFA) is to support and advance the school's mission:

Commissioned by the Catholic Church, the Stella Maris Academy community prepares lifelong learners who lead, love, and serve as Jesus taught - transforming our world one student at a time.

Belief

“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children” (CCC 2223). Living the teaching of the Catholic faith, we believe that it is essential that home, parish, and school work together in a spirit of harmony to develop, promote, and live out the mission of Stella Maris Academy (SMA).

We work together in our common responsibility as parents, and so seek to fulfill our duty as Christian parents. We believe “Parents’ respect and affection are expressed by the care and attention they devote to bringing up their young children and *providing for their physical and spiritual needs*. As the children grow up, the same respect and devotion lead parents to educate them in the right use of their reason and freedom” (CCC 2228).

Objectives

The SMFA supports the school's mission through Catholic faith formation, volunteering, fundraising, classroom support and in other activities. It builds bonds within the SMA community and promotes the school throughout the region. It welcomes new parents, acts as a school community connection point, and creates educational and faith opportunities to help parents nurture their children's development “in the right use of their reason and freedom” (CCC 2228). It provides a forum for parents to discuss ideas about the life of the school and communicates with the campus community and school leadership. All SMA families are members of the SMFA by virtue of their child’s enrollment in our school.

With the guidance and approval of the President's Leadership Team, the SMFA undertakes the following mission-aligned efforts:

1. To provide parental support for our children's education and formation through educational, spiritual, co-curricular and social activities.
2. To support SMA by organizing and providing volunteers for school needs and extracurricular activities.

Objectives continued...

3. To provide recognition and moral support to staff and faculty for their efforts and innovation in providing a well-rounded Catholic education and formation to our students.
4. To help develop and maintain good public relations between the school, parishes, and the communities it serves.
5. To develop and nurture a spirit of cooperation and good communication between parents and staff so as to promote a healthy Catholic environment, the respect of individual differences and an understanding of our mutual responsibilities in the formation of our children in faith and reason according to the Catholic tradition.
6. To assist in providing for the material needs of Stella Maris Academy in a manner consistent with stewardship.
7. To encourage and support faith formation of the families through Scripture, Sacraments, and the Catholic moral life.

Structure

The structure of the SMFA at each campus consists of a Campus Lead who leads the campus SMFA meetings and organizes a group of SMFA volunteers for that campus (such as the Room Parent Coordinator). The Campus Lead is chosen by the campus Principal for a one-year term from school parents that have expressed interest in serving in this role. The Principal may renew the Campus Lead appointment for an additional year before selecting a new Lead. The Campus Lead and the Principal maintain positive, mutual, and open communication regarding all activities and interaction of the SMFA with the school.

At the Academy level, the SMFA Campus Leads serve together as a SMFA Leadership Team. This Team works to provide unity among the campuses, set the tone for SMFA work, establish a calendar of activities and meetings, and identify SMFA resource needs for the school year. This Team determines how they can best carry out necessary functions such as leading the meetings, recording meeting minutes, communicating information further, and maintaining a sense of prayer and faith in all activities.

Activities

The SMFA Leadership Team works with the President's Leadership Team (President, campus Principals, and other SMA staff as determined by the President) to facilitate Academy-wide SMFA efforts. The FA Leadership Team is also responsible to provide a brief written report to the Governing Board prior to scheduled public Board meetings. One of the Campus Leads may attend the meeting to answer questions or discuss the report with the Board.

The President's Leadership Team will meet with the SMFA Leadership Team prior to the school year and at least once each trimester to discuss campus-wide needs, coordinate events and activities, and nurture a spirit of cooperation and good communication between parents and the staff of the school. The President's Leadership Team must approve all school-wide SMFA activities.

The campus Principal will meet with their SMFA Campus Lead to discuss the most important campus needs and ways that the SMFA could assist in meeting them. The SMFA Campus Leads will energize and coordinate the efforts of families on that campus to carry out these functions. The Principal may ask the SMFA to work with other campuses or SMA staff on specific projects or events. The Principal must approve all SMFA activities on his/her campus. The SMFA and SMA staff will work collaboratively to provide community-building, faith experiences and educational opportunities for parents to assist them in the total formation of their children.

Communication

Supporting good communication is one of the primary purposes of the SMFA. This includes communication between parents and SMA staff, among parents, and to the wider community. The SMFA is especially important in welcoming new families and helping them learn about the resources, policies, and opportunities for involvement with Stella Maris Academy. Similarly, the President's Leadership Team will collaborate with the SMFA to gather input for decision-making and to communicate about the school's achievements, goals, and needs.

Communication in the name of Stella Maris Academy can be made only by faculty, staff, board members and administration, as authorized by the President's Leadership Team for their particular role. Campus Leads will have access to SMA e-mail accounts to help facilitate their work, with an additional account being designated as a generic "Family Association" account to provide an easy way for parents to communicate with the SMFA. The Campus Leads will be required to read, sign, and abide by SMA Responsible Use Forms regarding the use of these e-mail accounts. Any communication being sent out to one or more campuses from these accounts needs to be approved by an appropriate administrator prior to being sent.

Stewardship

The cost of education at Stella Maris Academy is not fully covered by tuition. Therefore, the school's budget depends on the success of fundraising and other development activities. While the SMFA is not responsible for major fund-raising campaigns, it will help parents understand that fundraising is the shared responsibility of all registered families and the community at large for the common good. The SMFA raises funds through its activities and efforts, which may be used for reasons including, but not limited to, family social and faith experiences and extra-curricular activities, for the enhancement and needs of each campus, and for tuition assistance. Allocation of these funds will be made collaboratively by the SMFA, Principal, and President's Leadership Team. The SMFA also contributes to the financial well-being of the school by volunteering to assist with chores, maintenance, and other needs that may offset operational costs.

All funds raised at SMFA activities will be received, recorded and deposited by the Stella Maris Academy business manager. The business manager will direct the necessary processes for the SMFA to follow to ensure proper accounting of financial resources. All financial disbursements (for purchases, activity fees and costs, service contracts, etc.) will be made by the business manager with advance authorization from the appropriate member of the President's Leadership Team.