



# Newsletter

September 11th, 2025

## A Message from Mrs. Thompson

It was wonderful to see our school families at Back to School Night yesterday! We are looking forward to a productive, faithfilled, partnership with you to ensure our children can achieve their highest potential. We recognize that in order to be successful in school, our children need support from both the home and the school. We know a strong partnership with you will make a great difference in your child's education.

I want to take a moment to address something that is shaping our children in powerful ways: technology. Technology itself is not evil; it can be an amazing tool for learning, communication, and even evangelization. But like any tool, when misused, it can do great harm. I want to be frank: giving children a smartphone too early is like giving them a tool they are not yet strong enough to carry. Before 8<sup>th</sup> grade, children simply do not have the maturity or self-control to handle the temptation and pressures that come with constant connectivity.

We strongly encourage families to wait until 8<sup>th</sup> grade to give their children a smartphone. If you feel your child truly needs a phone for safety or communication, we recommend alternatives such as a TracFone or a Gabb phone which allow calling and texting without exposing children to the dangers of the internet and social media.

One of the most overlooked dangers is group chats. What starts as a friendly text thread can quickly become a place of gossip, exclusion, bullying, or inappropriate content. Children are easily swept into conversation they cannot handle, and once something is said, it cannot be unsaid. Monitoring your child's group texts and setting boundaries around them is one of the most powerful ways you can protect their hearts and their friendships.

As parents and educators, we are guardians of innocence. We must ensure that our children have time for prayer, family meals, service, sports, reading, and the rest- those human experiences that truly form saints.

Grace and Peace,  
Mrs. Jennifer Thompson, [principale@olsss.org](mailto:principale@olsss.org)

# Upcoming Events

## September

- Sat. Sept. 13 - Chipotle Spirit Night 4-8pm
- Sat. Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> - Crab Fest at Vera's 2:00-5:00pm
- Fri. Sept 26<sup>th</sup> - 12:30 Dismissal (Fair Day)

## October

- Sun. Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> - Parish & School Picnic
- Fri. Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> - Grandparents Day & 12:30 Dismissal
- Mon. Oct 13<sup>th</sup> - No School (Columbus Day; Indigenous Peoples' Day)
- Tues. Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> - Legacy Studio Portrait Retake
- Thurs. Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup> - End of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter
- Fri. Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> - No School (Collaboration Day) and Trunk or Treat 5:00pm-7:00pm

## Seahawk Spotlight

Congratulations to our Student Council Officers for the 2025-2026 school year!



Stella B.  
President



Nate M.  
Vice President



Isabelle M.  
Secretary



Monroe B.  
Treasurer

# News & Reminders

**Basketball Registration-** Students in grades 5-8 in good academic standing may join the OLSS Basketball teams. Registration and payment are due Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Gladys Nehf at 4nehf@comcast.net with any questions.

**Lunch-** Orders for lunch must be placed and prepaid through the FACTS parent portal. Orders are available the week prior. To order click on "STUDENT," then "LUNCH." In the top left corner, next to your student's name, you will see "+CREATE WEB ORDER."

**Volunteer Opportunities-** You can sign up and keep track of volunteer opportunities in Track It Forward. Please do not sign up to volunteer for in-school events unless you have completed the VIRTUS Program, and your fingerprints results are posted in your VIRTUS account. Please let the school office know if you signed up for a volunteer opportunity and aren't able to make it.

**Volunteers Needed-** Volunteers are needed to sell Lucky Ducks after Mass this weekend. Volunteers are also needed for the Crab Feast at Vera's September 20<sup>th</sup>. VIRTUS training is NOT REQUIRED for this volunteer opportunity. Please sign up on Track it Forward to volunteer.

**Grandparents Day-** Friday Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> is Grandparents Day! It is also a 12:30 dismissal. RSVPs are required if Grandparents will be attending. Due to limited space, a maximum of 4 grandparents per family may attend. Please RSVP HERE.

**Dismissal-** Dismissal begins at 3:00p.m. and the parking lot will open at 2:45p.m. Please plan accordingly if you are picking up in the car line.

**Car Line Safety-** For the safety of our students, staff, and families, at afternoon pick up please follow the direction of the OLSSS staff. Cars may not leave the parking lot until all students in that group are safely loaded in their cars. You must also wait until a staff member is directing traffic before you pull out of the parking lot.

**Mr. Dickerson-** Mr. Dickerson will not be continuing with us this school year. We wish him well in his future endeavors!

**Chipotle Spirit Night Saturday!** Please join us for a Spirit Night from 4-8pm on Saturday Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> at the Chipotle in California, MD. Show the flyer sent with today's newsletter when ordering or use the code LT7GWKR when ordering online.

**Varsity Girls Basketball Coach Needed-** We are in need of a Varsity Girls Basketball coach for this season. Volunteers must have completed the VIRTUS program. Having a student on the team is not a requirement for coaching. Anyone who is interested, please contact Gladys Nehf at 4nehf@comcast.net.

**Annunciation School Donation-** Our tag day raised \$525 for Annunciation School!

**Flu Clinic-** We will hold our flu clinic on October 17th. Sign up information will be available soon.

**Cross Country-** Please see the letter attached to today's newsletter for details on Cross Country for this year.

# News From



## St. Mary's Ryken

### **College Planning Workshop**

Tuesday, October 28 at 5:00 p.m.

St. Mary's Ryken Campus

St. Mary's Ryken invites students and parents to a free workshop focused on two topics:

5:00 p.m. – Navigating the College Athlete Recruiting Process

Led by SMR's Athletic Director, Jon Lombardo and special guest Coach Patrick Tracy, this session will guide aspiring student-athletes and their families through the ins and outs of college recruiting, including timelines, expectations, and strategies.

6:00 p.m. – Making College Affordable

Chris Gruber, Vice President and Dean of Admissions at Davidson College, will share expert insights on financial aid and scholarships—offering practical tips to help families manage the cost of college.

To learning more and register, visit:

<https://www.smrhs.org/academics/collegeplanningworkshop>

### **The St. Mary's Ryken Application for the Class of 2030 is Now Open!**

It's an exciting time to begin your high school journey as a St. Mary's Ryken Knight! Our Admissions Team is excited to partner with your family, guide you through the process, and show you why SMR is the ideal choice for your student's future.

Apply by October 31, 2025 to receive a \$25 discount on the application fee.

To learn more and start your application today, visit [www.smrhs.org/apply](http://www.smrhs.org/apply).



WE CAN DO THIS!!! FOOD WITH INTEGRITY  
COMMUNITY STARTS HERE  
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GENEROUS  
HELPING  
TASTES  
MAD  
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THING  
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ULTIMATE  
ESTABLISHED

# DO GOOD WITH CHIPOTLE



CHIPOTLE FUNDRAISER FOR  
**OUR LADY STAR OF THE  
SEA SCHOOL**

25% OF EVENT SALES GET DONATED TO THE CAUSE

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH | 4-8PM**  
**23368 THREE NOTCH RD, CALIFORNIA, MD, 20619**

ORDER ONLINE FOR PICKUP USING CODE **LT7GWKR**  
OR SHOW THIS FLYER IN RESTAURANT



For online orders to count towards the fundraiser, they must be placed for pickup only from the restaurant location of, and during the hours of, the fundraiser. Delivery orders and gift cards do not qualify. \$150 minimum event sales required to receive any donation.

Dear Parents,

I wanted to update on the status of Cross Country for this season. We were unable to coordinate a head coach this season and enough consistent coverage for students to practice safely as a team this year. We are already working on a plan to get the team practicing again together next year.

We do have some great news! Our students will still have an opportunity to participate in the meets as individuals if interested. Students who would like to train on their own and participate in meets will be able to sign up through the AthleticAPP or [athletic.net](http://athletic.net). Parents will need to pre-register students before the meet and the fee is \$5 per meet. The meets are open now for registration. Parents can locate the meet by date/location on [athletic.net](http://athletic.net); register their child(ren) using OLSSS team code; and Seth Deaton (meet coordinator) will have a race number for them on race day and include them in the results. Attached is the team code needed to register. A hard copy will also be handed out to students if they are interested.

I will continue to be the Cross Country Coordinator and assist families with any troubles or questions with registration prior to meet days. If your student plans to train and attend meets, please let me know. I will send out the OLSS roster for each meet to the meet director in case of any technology issues with the athletic app. I can also send you some information to assist in training. After the meets, I will be able to access meet results and send updates. If you have any questions or need assistance, please let me know.

Please remember that parents will be solely responsible for their student at the meets. There will be no coaches or OLSS staff on duty. While students are competing individually, they are still representing OLSS. **Students should wear their OLSS PE uniform to meets.** Students should be reminded that they are expected to behave according to school rules, showing respect, good listening skills, and following the directions of the meet directors. If behaviors are not in alignment with OLSS Handbook expectations, students will no longer be able to participate as individuals.

There are currently 2 meets scheduled for Cross Country this season with the possibility of more to be added. I will reach out with more information as I receive updates. The meet schedule is as follows:

**KCA Invitational #2 October 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**KCA Invitational #3 October 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Meet Schedule:**

4:00- Recommended arrival time to stretch, Check-in, and get number for the race

4:15 - Coaches meeting/race number pick-up if needed

4:30 - Race start (simultaneous for 1-mile, 2-mile, and 5-kilometer)

**Location: King's Christian Academy: 20738 Point Lookout Rd., Callaway, MD 20620**

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any assistance with Cross Country information. You can reach me at [schoolnurse@olsss.org](mailto:schoolnurse@olsss.org)

Thank you,

Brandi Hutchins

# Raising Faith-Filled Children in a Digital Age

As Catholic parents and educators, we share the responsibility of forming children not only academically, but spiritually and emotionally. Technology can be a gift, but when overused or misused, it becomes a threat to their mental health, relationships, and innocence. This handout summarizes key points from our Back-to-School Night conversation and provides resources for protecting your child in today's digital world.

## Why Technology Matters

- Technology can be a valuable tool for learning, communication, and even evangelization.
- However, smartphones and social media—especially introduced too early—have been linked to rising levels of anxiety, depression, and loneliness among young people.
- Jonathan Haidt, in his book *The Anxious Generation*, shows that teen depression has doubled and suicidal ideation among teen girls has risen nearly 150% since 2010 (the rise of smartphones and social media).

## Recommendations for Parents

- Delay giving children a smartphone until at least **8th grade**.
- If a phone is necessary, choose safer alternatives like a **TracFone** or **Gabb phone**.
- Require all devices to be turned off and signed out of by **8:00 PM nightly**.
- Monitor **group chats and text threads**, which can foster gossip, exclusion, and bullying.
- Model healthy digital habits as parents—limit your own screen time and prioritize family connection.

## Catholic Perspective

- Our children's minds and bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). What they consume shapes their souls.
- Romans 12:2 reminds us: 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.'
- True formation comes from prayer, family meals, rest, service, and play—not endless scrolling.
- As parents, we are called to courageously guard innocence and guide our children toward holiness.

Together, let us give our children the gift of a childhood anchored in faith, not in screens. We can form saints, not just students, by protecting their joy, their peace, and their mental health. Thank you for your partnership and trust in Catholic education.

# THE \_\_\_\_\_ FAMILY SCREEN TIME CONTRACT

This contract is not a punishment but a way to set healthy screen time boundaries for everyone in our family, including parents. Screen time devices include smartphones, computers, laptops, televisions and all game systems.

## 1. School Nights & Weeknights

Our family shuts down all our devices at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock. The devices remain off until the next morning. Devices will not be turned back on until everyone has finished breakfast, and is dressed and ready to leave.

## 2. Weekends & Holidays

Our family limits screen time on weekends and holidays to \_\_\_\_\_ hours/minutes per day.

## 3. Travel Vacations

After arriving at our destination, everyone in our family limits screen time to \_\_\_\_\_ minutes in the morning and \_\_\_\_\_ minutes in the evening. We leave our devices in our hotel/vacation homes. We don't take them on activities, like hiking, going to the beach, cycling, etc. One device may be used for directions, photos, or emergency calls.

## 4. Screen Time Blackouts

Our family does not use our devices when we have: (check all that apply)

- Meals together       To walk or drive       Sleepovers  
 Family gatherings       Playdates       Friends visiting

Our personal family guidelines here: \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Device Storage & Charging

Our family does not store or charge tech devices in our bedrooms or playrooms. Instead, we keep our devices in a communal space, which is \_\_\_\_\_.

## 6. Screen Time Privilege

Devices aren't available after school until homework and chores are completed.

- Making beds       Tidying up rooms       Doing dishes       Taking care of pets  
 Helping prepare dinner      Our additional family chores: \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Alternatives to Screen Time

Our family recognizes that too much screen time is unhealthy. As a family, we each have weekly physical and creative activities such as (check at least three):

Exercise       Reading for Pleasure       Dance  
 Sports       Musical Instruments       Art

Our own special activities here: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Web Use and Passwords

To protect our children from inappropriate material and frightening images, members of our family under \_\_\_\_\_ years old are not allowed to surf the web unsupervised. Parents also keep records of all passwords, including social media passwords, and don't allow secret accounts.

## 9. Social Media Behavior

Our children agree never to use social media to be hurtful or mean to others.

## 10. When the Contract Is Broken

Our family recognizes that screen time is a privilege not a right. If someone in our family repeatedly breaks the family contract, devices will be taken away. Parents will decide for how long.

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURES:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Healthy Structure Is the Key to Screen-Time Management

Parenting is full of challenges, but one thing is certain: Technology is here to stay. Structuring screen time helps to limit parent/child battles by setting clear guidelines for everyone. Remember, technology is a tool, not a way of life. Help your kids manage screen time better, and enrich their lives with quality bonding time and greater self-mastery.

## **Saint Carlo Acutis Prayer Before Posting**

St. Carlo, Patron of the Internet,

As I post, I come to you.

Help me not just chase likes, but to share light.

With my every post keep me focused on:

Christ over clout

Virtue over virality

Souls over followers

Authenticity over algorithms.

Pray for me so:

where there beeth may I sow love

where there is rage bait, memes

where there is doomscrolling, joy

that I may not just scroll, but seek

not just create, but connect.

Pray for me now and when I log off.

**AMEN**



## 2025-2026 OLSS BASKETBALL PROGRAM REGISTRATION For OLSS students in grades 5-8

Your permission as a parent or guardian is required for your child to be allowed to participate in our basketball program. While we do not require your child to have a physical examination in order to participate, we strongly suggest that he/she have one. Your child will be required to wear proper athletic shoes and clothing during practice. School uniforms and dress shoes are not permitted.

I hereby give my consent for (*child's name*) \_\_\_\_\_  
to participate in the 2025-26 basketball program at OLSS.

I authorize OLSS to obtain, through a physician of its own choice, any emergency medical care that may be reasonable and necessary for my child during the course of such activities.

I also understand that my child must be: (a) covered by a family medical insurance policy, or (b) if no medical insurance policy is listed, would also consent by signature below to pay in full, the dollar amount of any such emergency care as described above and not hold any individual or organization associated with OLSS or its basketball program financially responsible for such care.

Student's Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Current grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Father/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies/Medical Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The registration fee is **\$100 per child** and may be paid with a check made out to OLSS, or through the online school store at: <http://olssschoo.corecommerce.com/>

**REGISTRATION FORMS & PAYMENTS ARE DUE BY SEPTEMBER 24, 2025.**

Please contact Gladys Nehf, Athletic Program Director at [4nehf@comcast.net](mailto:4nehf@comcast.net) with any questions.