

HEAD OF SCHOOL FALL UPDATE



November 6, 2025

Dear Master's Academy Families,

As the cooler temperatures arrive and we settle into a new school year, I'm delighted to share our Fall Update with you. This season brings exciting news and important enhancements that reflect our ongoing commitment to providing a safe, Christ-centered learning environment where every student can grow, thrive, and experience the fullness of life at Master's Academy. As such, I am pleased to share with you three significant changes that you will want to note.

1) FULL-TIME SCHOOL RESOURCE DEPUTY (SRD):

Our recent parent survey affirmed what we already know—the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and families remain our highest priority. After reviewing parent feedback and the Indian River County Sheriff's Office's (IRCSO) security assessment, we're excited to announce enhancements that strengthen protection at both the main campus and the Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC).

Through the gracious support of external donors, we are able to move forward with these upgrades at no additional cost to our families. These initiatives reinforce our commitment to a secure, nurturing environment for Christian education.

What's Changing:

Full-Time School Resource Deputy (SRD)

Deputy Chris Vasquez, a trained law enforcement professional, will be stationed exclusively at the main campus beginning January 2026. Deputy Vasquez brings with him extensive expertise in school security, as well as experience as a SWAT Team Member and K-9 Officer, all with the IRSCO. He will oversee drop-off and dismissal, patrol campus grounds, and lead age-appropriate sessions on topics such as internet safety and conflict resolution. Research shows that schools with full-time SRDs experience up to **70–80% fewer on-campus incidents** compared to those without.

Mr. Harris's Continued Leadership

Mr. Harris will remain actively engaged in safety oversight for both campuses. His federal background in threat assessment and crisis response will continue to guide security planning, coordinate with Deputy Vasquez, and oversee new technologies such as upgraded cameras and controlled access systems. Over the next several weeks, Deputy Vasquez will occasionally join Mr. Harris on school patrols, familiarizing himself with our campus and students. I encourage you to become acquainted with him, say "hi" and extend a warm welcome from the Patriot community!

This partnership with the IRSCO creates a layered and proactive approach—personnel, technology, and training—all working together to maintain a safe and peaceful environment for learning.

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2) UPDATED CELL PHONE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Beginning **January 6, 2026**, students will be required to **turn in their cell phones each morning during homeroom**, where they'll be placed in a secure lockbox for the duration of the school day. Phones will be returned at dismissal. Students who need to contact their parents during the day may do so by placing a call from the Upper School office.

This change reflects our growing awareness—supported by educational research and emphasized during Master's last C3 Seminar on keeping kids safe online—of how significantly smartphones can disrupt student focus and emotional well-being. According to studies by Common Sense Media and the National Institutes of Health, students check their phones an average of **100–150 times per day**, leading to measurable decreases in concentration, sleep quality, and face-to-face interaction. Schools that have implemented phone-free policies report **increased academic performance, improved classroom engagement, and a stronger sense of community** among students.

This new policy expands on, and reflects alignment with, recent Florida legislation and pilot programs restricting cell phone use by high school students on campus. As noted by **Governor Ron DeSantis**, research shows that banning phones in schools improves test scores and classroom behavior, helps attract new teachers, and reduces the negative effects of social media on children.

At Master's Academy, we want our students to be fully present—to learn deeply, build meaningful relationships, and develop habits that foster lifelong growth. Removing this daily distraction supports those goals while also creating a safer, more attentive learning environment.

3) LAUNCH OF NEW MASTER'S ACADEMY WEBSITE

We're thrilled to announce the launch of our **brand-new Master's Academy website**, coming **mid-November 2025**! The updated site reflects the vibrant life of our school community, with improved navigation, beautiful visuals, and expanded information for current and prospective families.

This new digital home at www.mastersvb.org will make it easier than ever to explore what makes Master's Academy unique. We invite you to visit and celebrate this exciting milestone with us as we continue to share what God is doing.

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Grounded in Truth · Rising in Strength

Finally, as we reflect on this past year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks for your generous support of Master's Academy's Annual Fund. Because of your faithful giving, we were able to raise **\$60,000** during our Spring fundraising emphasis.

YOUR GIFTS HAVE ALREADY MADE A MEANINGFUL IMPACT ACROSS CAMPUS.

Funding **enhanced security measures** has ensured the safety of our students and staff, and supporting an **expanded STEM program** has continued to inspire innovation, curiosity, and problem-solving in our classrooms.

WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR OUR DONORS.

Without your partnership, we could not do all that we do for our students each day. **Tuition alone does not cover the full cost of providing a Christ-centered education**, and it is your generosity that helps bridge that gap, allowing us to pursue excellence in every area.



Middle School STEM | Robotics



HS STEM | Projectile Motion Lab



3rd Grade STEM | Programming



HS STEM | Rockets

At Master's Academy, we count it a blessing to teach, train, and mentor students to impact their world for Christ. Thank you for standing with us in this mission and for investing in the lives of the next generation of Patriots.

With Deep Gratitude,

Rick

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