



August 2019

## OLQA School Safety Committee Message

### **Back to School Safety for Parents, Students, and Staff**

Submitted by Mr. Robert Gerard, Safety Chairperson

After a hopefully fun and active summer for all our OLQA families, the joy of the new school year brings us new and returning students, faculty, and staff members onto campus. Until the last several years, we have all come to view school (especially a faith-based school like OLQA, in a wonderful community like ours) to be a place of safety from the realities of the outside World. However, it only takes a casual perusal of the news to know that, although statistically unlikely, even a bubble like ours can be burst in an instant. The new school year is an exciting time for all and we do not want to take away from that excitement, and we certainly do not want to overwhelm (or scare) our beloved students. That having been said, it is a great opportunity for all of us to "adjust" ourselves out of the summer mindset and remind ourselves about the priority of maintaining a safe campus.

The OLQA Safety Committee is here to help us all maintain an appropriate level of awareness (not paranoia, but awareness) and help the administration implement appropriate policies, systems, responsive protocols, and training for our entire school community. The committee also advises the administration as to the purchase of safety equipment and signage.

The committee includes not only Ms. Tipton and Ms. Ismerio, but also Father Steve, two faculty representatives, and several parents (including some dedicated parents whose children have graduated from OLQA, but who continue to serve on the Committee). One of the committee members is a Local Fire Chief, two are retired ranking officers from local Fire Departments, and one is a former NBPD police officer.

The Mission Statement of the Safety Committee states:

"Our objective as the OLQA School Safety Committee is to carefully examine the OLQA campus and policies/procedures and determine the key actions necessary to enhance the security of the students, faculty, and staff at the school."

Insofar as accomplishing our Mission, we on the committee ask ourselves lots of questions, and we urge our entire community (including Students at appropriate age/grade levels) to ask the similar questions. Quick examples of the types of things we address are:



- What are our standard operating procedures in the event of various types of incidents?
- Who are our first responders and are we appropriately interfacing with them re training and response planning?
- When and how should we call NBPD/NBFD? What is the response time?
- What are we doing to ensure traffic safety during pick up/drop off?
- What is our designated response/protocol to any active threats?
- Are we conducting an appropriate number of emergency drills for our students and are we including appropriate scenarios?
- What additional training should we be doing with our administration/faculty/staff, our students, and perhaps even our parents?

In upcoming Weekly Bulletins, we will address some of the answers to these and other questions so that our community is aware of what the Safety Committee is up to and also can weigh in with thoughts and suggestions. Any parent is always welcome to provide input to the Safety Committee via email or telephone call to Ms. Tipton, Ms. Ismerio, or Mr. Gerard.

AND AS ALWAYS, IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.