

STUDENT SUICIDE AWARENESS AND RESPONSE PROGRAMMING  
ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL / FALL 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

At St. Michael the Archangel it is our goal to provide students a safe and inclusive experience where they can discover who God created them to be. In a world where young adult depression, anxiety and rates of suicide are on the rise, we need courageous, resilient and virtuous young adults to face the world. We also need brave young people who are capable of recognizing signs of depression/suicide and knowing how to ask for help.

So often, I hear students expressing that they do not want to “snitch” on their friends who are struggling and would rather offer peer-to-peer support. We need to empower our students to tell an adult when they themselves or a friend are struggling in this way. Therefore, this fall we are partnering with SOS, a program used by thousands of high schools across the country to help students/faculty understand the signs of suicide and know how to properly respond. Here is what you need to know:

The goals of SOS are:

- To provide an educational opportunity for students, faculty and parents to better understand depression and suicide and to be able to communicate with one another using a common language.
- To help explain that suicide is preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression.
- To provide students, parents and faculty training on how to identify series depression and potential suicide risk in themselves or a friend.
- To impress on youth that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a trusted adult about their concerns.

\*\*Listed on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's national Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, the SOS program has shown a reduction in self reported suicide attempts by 40-64% in randomized control studies (Aseltine et al., 2007; Schilling et al., 2016).

The SOS program will be implemented at SMA as follows:

- A parent information and training seminar has also been recorded and sent today. While we would like every parent to watch the video, please know we expect at least one parent for each family to watch.
- Presentations to students will be made the week of September 14. Designated grade levels will report to school at 8:30 A.M for the SOS program and report to the theology wing. Other grades will report to school and go to their seminar classroom.
  - Seniors/September 14 at 8:30 A.M.
  - Juniors/September 15 at 8:30 A.M.
  - Sophomores/September 16 at 8:30 A.M.
  - Freshmen/September 17 at 8:30 A.M.
- Counselors will make parent/guardian contact if they meet with your student.

If you do not wish for your student to participate in the SOS Program presented at SMA, please checkmark/sign the information below and return it to Kim Berry in the front office by September 11. If we do not hear from you, we will understand that your child has your permission to participate in this program.

       I do not want my student participating in this program.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature