

SVMS New Families “Cliff Notes” 2023-2024



An Insider's Guide to St. Vincent Martyr School

Created by SVMS parents to help ease
new families' transition into the school

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SCHOOL CONTACTS

St. Vincent Martyr School

26 Green Village Road / Madison, NJ 07940 / 973-377-1104

School Website: www.svmsnj.org

Principal: Sister Noreen Holly, SC

Vice Principal: Miss Anne Marie Gisoldi

Uniform Stores

Flynn and O'Hara Uniform Store

Sells SVMS summer, winter, and gym uniforms for all grades.

130 Baldwin Road/ Parsippany, New Jersey 07054 / 973-882-0833

Order online at: www.flynnohara.com

Alfred's Sport Shop

Sells SVMS gym uniforms (only) for all grades.

32 Main Street / Madison, New Jersey 07940 / 973-377-0051

Order online at: <https://svmsgymuniform2023.itemorder.com>

New Families Committee

New Families Welcome Committee Chairpersons

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AUGUST: Important Preparations Before School Begins

Forms – It is best to get all required forms to the school office before September, especially the required medical forms. Once school begins, there are many more forms and paperwork to complete. All forms are available on the school’s website (www.svmsnj.org, under Admissions) or from Mary McGuire in the school’s front office at mmcguire@svmsnj.org. If your child has food allergies, please talk with the school nurse Ellen Romain (973-377-1104 Ext. #211) about school policies and procedures regarding food allergies.

School Phone Number - 973-377-1104. Please enter this number into your cell phone, work phone, etc. Circumstances will arise when you will need to have this number handy. We have all found ourselves running late from an appointment, dialing this number. Be assured that if it happens to you, the office will notify your child and keep him/her safe until you arrive.

Website - www.svmsnj.org Familiarize yourself with the school website. Summer assignments, school calendar, medical forms, uniform code, school policies, school closings, extra-curricular information, archived eNews items, and many other things are available at your convenience. It is **extremely important that you set your notification preferences** on the school website to get the most important announcements, eNewsletter or eBlasts, and emergency notifications: Go to the Tools (gear icon) and choose “My Account”, then “Subscriptions”, “Manage”, and “Other Areas”. **Select your Child’s Grade**, “SVMS Features”, “Weekly News”, and click the green “I’M DONE” button (this last step is important, as it saves your settings).

Summer Reading Requirements - Summer reading lists and book report forms for all grade levels are available on the school website, under “Students”. All book reports are due the First Day of School and upper grades are tested within the first month of school.

School Calendar – The calendar is posted on the school website. Be sure to transfer all school events to your home calendar prior to the start of the school year. Noting all sports, school breaks, holidays, and activities makes planning ahead much easier. You can also download the iCalendar from the school’s website calendar. This will post the calendar onto your phone or device and update all revisions/additions/deletions throughout the year.

AUGUST (continued)

New Families Ice Cream Social: Thursday, August 17th at 3pm

Come meet other school families for ice cream in the school parking lot and melt away those new school jitters! Bring a topping to share.

Pre-School Playdate: Thursday, August 24th Morning Sessions -

Incoming pre-school students are invited come play with other Pre-K students on the school playground behind the Parish Ministry Center (the building next to the school on Green Village Road). This is a great way for your child to make friends before school begins.

Uniform Details –The official Uniform Policy is listed on the school website under “Parents”, then “Services & Vendors”. Students wear the Summer Uniform until October 13th and then again from April 15th - June, though students may opt to wear the Winter Uniform year-round if they prefer and that is acceptable. The Summer Uniform for K-5 students is navy walking shorts, white SVMS short sleeve golf shirt, no-logo white or navy crew socks (not quarter length, though girls may wear knee-highs). The Middle School Summer Uniform only differs in that the boys wear khaki shorts and girls wear navy skirts. Middle School students may wear the SVMS crewneck sweatshirt in place of a sweater/vest. Shoes must be brown, navy, or black. Current trends: boys wear Sperry Boat Shoes or Merrell Jungle Moc slip-ons and girls wear Sperry’s or Steve Madden slip-ons. Suburban Shoes in Madison has a list of the approved SVMS student’s shoes. On gym days, all students wear the navy SVMS gym t-shirt, navy SVMS gym shorts, socks, and sneakers. There is a different Winter Uniform for October 16th to April 12th.

Uniform Purchase - School uniforms can be purchased at Flynn & O’Hara in Parsippany, or you can order online at www.flynnohara.com. The gym uniform for all grades is also available at Alfred’s Sport Shop on Main Street in Madison or you can order online at <https://svmsgymuniform2023.itemorder.com> from July 1 - August 13. Alfred’s can personalize Middle School sweatshirts with the student’s last name, which is a very popular option. Before making a purchase at either, visit the school’s Uniform Closet located behind the stage in the school gym. There are many gently used uniforms (shirts, shorts, pants, gym shorts, jumpers, skirts, sweaters, sweatpants and sweatshirts) available at no cost. The summer Uniform Closet shopping hours will be announced through the SVMS eNewsletter.

AUGUST (continued)

Classroom Supplies – Teachers purchase the classroom supplies for Grades K-3 and they will be distributed on the first day of school. This is very helpful to us parents! A bill will be sent home for the amount you owe. Grades 4-8 have a very specific, per-subject school supplies list, created by the teachers, that you must purchase on your own and bring on the first day of school. Students in 4th – 8th grades have lockers, so you must buy a lock. You should practice the combination with your child. Students in all grades should stock up on several rolls of clear contact paper and jumbo-sized fabric “book socks” before the textbooks start coming home to be covered the first week of school, as stores sell out quickly!

Locker Ladders - All 4th Grade students and new students in Grades 5-8 will be given a Locker Ladder on the First Day of School. The specific brand SVMS uses fits our narrow locker dimensions. While Locker Ladders are mandatory for 4th Grade, they are a very helpful organization aid for all students. Older students (not new) can purchase a replacement Locker Ladder through the school.

Chromebooks - Students in Grades 4-8 **must purchase their own** Chromebook or Laptop with a sturdy protective case. Many students have the Acer or Lenovo brand. The mandatory Chromebook provisioning sessions are offered at school on a few August evenings before school begins. All new Chromebooks must be provisioned to accept school-approved filters on one of these dates.

K-8 Morning Drop-Off and Dismissal – The school has a very specific procedure for morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, which has proven to be the safest and most efficient system. Please refer to the School Handbook for details. Of the utmost importance is to not park in the School/Church parking lot and always cross the street(s) at the crossing guards. No student is ever allowed to exit a car in the parking lot. Parents who have school business, must first drop off their child in the car line and then circle around to enter the parking lot alone. Please take the time to read and understand the drop-off/pick-up procedure and discuss it with your child(ren) to minimize their confusion on the first day of school. If you have any questions, please call your New Family “Welcome Buddy” or the front office and they will gladly help you.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL for Kindergarten – 8th Grade:
Wednesday, September 6th at 8:15am

First Day Arrival for 1st - 8th Grade -On the first day of school, drop-off your child in the coned-off car drop-off line. All cars must enter on Wilmer Street (one way street). The 8th grade students will be holding signs in the front lobby to direct all students to their classes. **The School and Church parking lot is off limits due to the safety of the children.** Faculty may park in the lot, as they arrive well before the children. Wilmer Street is also a no-parking zone because parishioners park there for 8:30am daily mass. **Please be careful to never block any driveway entrances, whether they are for the school, church, or the Presbyterian Church next door** (we are not authorized to use or cut-through their parking lot). Please be especially respectful of our neighbors. If your child walks to school (either with you or alone), please refer to the detailed instructions on the school website under “Parents”, choose “Handbook & Policies”, and select “Arrival & Dismissal Procedures”. **It could be very dangerous if these procedures are not followed.**

Kindergarten First Day Orientation, Wednesday, September 6th -
To help our Kindergarteners with those first day jitters, the parents of Kindergarten students will accompany their children on the First Day of School for Kindergarten Orientation. You will be asked to go directly to your child’s classroom at your assigned time.

Kindergarten Dismissal – Parents must pick-up Kindergarten students after school at the Main Doors of the school (parking lot side) by the SVMS Eagle statue. On half-days, Kindergarten students are dismissed at 12:10pm and on full-days, they are dismissed at 2:40pm. (Kindergarten is always dismissed 10 minutes before the rest of the school).

1st - 8th Grade Dismissal Line Assignment - Make sure you have discussed the school’s dismissal procedure with your child and have filled out the Dismissal Form selecting your dismissal line preference (your options are: Wilmer Street, Green Village Road, or “Walker”). You can find this form on the website under “Parents”/ “Forms”.

Half-Days to Start the School Year – Grades 1-8 will be dismissed at 12:20pm September 6th-8th. Kindergarten will be dismissed at 12:10pm on these days. Full days for Kindergarten - 8th Grade begin on Monday, September 11th.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL (continued)

Backpack–All students need a full-sized backpack on the first day of school to carry in their summer book reports, math workbooks (for grades that use them), and any other assignments. Grades 4-8 will also bring in all of their school supplies and locker locks. The backpacks for Grades 4-8 must be large and sturdy enough to hold their Chromebook, along with several heavy textbooks and supplies.

School Snack – There is a schoolwide snack-time every morning, so you will need to send in a nut-free snack and a drink. Talk with your child about snack time. Some children eat lunch very early and may not need a big snack, while others eat later and may need something more substantial. PLEASE REMEMBER: FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN, ALL CLASSROOMS ARE COMPLETELY NUT-FREE.

After Care (begins September 11th) - Students who are registered in after school care may stay until 6pm, where they will be supervised by faculty members for homework and playtime. You pay for this program per semester, not day-to-day, though there are part-time options. Your child can still participate in after-school activities (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Enrichment Programs, Clubs) if they go to After Care, but it is extremely important that you notify the moderators ahead of time and let them know that they should expect your child later in the afternoon. Please contact the school office for more information.

Playdates – If your child is going home with another child, you must send a note to the teacher that day. A note is needed anytime someone other than yourself (grandparent, relative, babysitter, friend, etc.) is taking your child home.

PRE-SCHOOL: START OF PRE-K SCHOOL YEAR

Pre-K 3 & Pre-K 4 Parents Meetings: Thursday, September 7th – If you have a child entering PK3 or PK4, you will be expected to attend this mandatory parents meeting in the teacher’s classroom. Parents only are to attend this meeting. The teachers request that you not bring your pre-schooler or other children (with the exception of small infants). The Pre-K3 meeting is at 9:30am and the Pre-K4 meeting is at 10:30am. Parent tip: you should try to arrange your babysitter well in advance, as this is a difficult day to find childcare during the first week of school.

PRE-SCHOOL: START OF PRE-K SCHOOL YEAR (continued)

Pre-K Students First Day of School: Friday, September 8th – On Friday, September 8th all pre-school students, both Pre-K3 and Pre-K4, will attend school in their classroom from 8:30am – 11:30am.

Pre-School First Week: September 11th – 15th – The school year for pre-school students begins as a Transitional Week. Parents have the option to phase-in the length of the day for their child during the week. For example, if a child is scheduled to stay until 1:30pm or 2:40pm, parents may choose to have their child gradually increase the length of the school day and have him/her dismissed at 11:30am (just one example). A teacher may also inform a parent that, in the best interest of their child, a shortened transitional week is recommended. Communication with your child’s teacher is key during this Transitional Week.

Pre-School Regular Sessions Begin: September 18th – After the first Transitional Week, the regular pre-school sessions begin on Monday, September 18th. The teachers will distribute a carefully detailed calendar with specific dismissal times at the Parents Meeting on September 7th. Please note that the Pre-K calendar does not always coincide with the K-8 calendar. If you have children in the upper grades, one may have a school closing, a delayed start, or early dismissal when the Pre-K does not.

Pre-School Drop-off – Doors open at 8:30am. Pre-schoolers enter through the doors in the alcove entrance on Green Village Road, where the teachers will greet the students and walk them to the classroom. If you miss the drop-off, go directly to the school lobby front doors and a staff member will bring your child to his/her classroom.

Pre-School Supplies– Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 students need a full-sized backpack. They also need to bring in an extra set of clothes (in a bag labeled with the child’s name) on the first day of school. All other school supplies will be provided by the teacher. You must pack a snack and drink for your child every day. **PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL CLASSROOMS ARE COMPLETELY NUT-FREE** (the teachers check labels and will send home any questionable foods).

SEPTEMBER

Welcome Back to School Mass: Sunday, September 10th –

The 9am mass on Sunday, September 10th is dedicated to the SVMS community. The students wear their school uniforms for this special celebration.

Back to School Nights: September 12th and September 14th -

These adults-only nights are for parents to meet teachers and receive information about classroom procedures and expectations. Parents of children in 6th - 8th Grade will come on September 12th and the parents of children in Grades 1 - 5 will come on September 14th. The evenings are broken into “periods” so you can visit more than one classroom if you have multiple children in the school. Since 6th-8th grade change classrooms for each subject, parents will have time to go to every class and meet each teacher briefly.

Classroom Dues – Your registration contract for this school year included the HSA Class Dues you owe for each child’s class. The fees paid cover five teacher gifts during the year and any buy-out costs for programs you choose to not participate in (Raise Right or HSA Volunteering). It should be noted that all teachers’ gifts are included in this payment. The teachers receive gifts from the SVMS parent-funded Home & School Association (HSA): at the beginning of the school year for classroom preparations, at Christmas, on Teacher Appreciation Day, on his/her birthday, and at the end of the school year. Your family may choose to give the teacher an additional gift, but please realize you have already contributed toward the class gift.

Virtus Training – All parents who want to volunteer at school at any time throughout the year are required to participate in one “Protecting God’s Children” workshop. To learn more, go to www.svmsnj.org and select “Parents”, choose “Virtus Training”, and then register at www.virtusonline.org. For all parents, both new and returning, Virtus Certification compliance standards were revised in 2023 – if you believe you are certified, please confirm that your status is not lapsed. New parents should send their Virtus certificates to Vice Principal Miss Gisoldi, who keeps these records.

NWEA MAP Testing – The NWEA assessments are called Measures of Academic Progress (MAPs) and track a student’s academic growth over a year. The standardized test identifies gaps and directs the curriculum for the teachers. It is administered three times throughout the year: September, February, and May.

SEPTEMBER (continued)

Math Website - In addition to being the summer math program for students in 2nd - 8th grade, IXL at www.ixl.com/signin/Paterson, is a web-based instruction and assessment resource where math teachers may assign homework. All students will be issued a username and password to participate. Please make a note of your log-on information. You may also download the free IXL app.

Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts – SVMS is fortunate to have very active Scouts program. Cub Scouts is for boys in Kindergarten - 5th Grade and then they advance to Boy Scouts. Girls begin with Daisies in Kindergarten, followed by Brownies for 2nd-3rd Grade, and then Girl Scouts begins in 4th. If your son/daughter is interested in joining Scouts, please ask in the front office for your troop leader's contact information to register. Any parent interested in helping with leadership or chaperoning trips must complete the Virtus Training Workshop.

Fall Sports – Registration invitations for all of the Fall Sports will come to you via the SVMS Sunday eNewsletter (update your SVMS website personal settings to receive these important notifications – see Page 4) and they are also available on the school website, under Athletics.

- **Cross-Country** – Open to both boys and girls in grades 3-8. (Track and Field is a spring sport.)
- **Volleyball** – Open to both boys and girls in grades 5-8.

School Fundraiser Opportunities – In the first month of school, you will receive many notices about the fundraising opportunities at SVMS. The main fundraisers for the school are: the March Spring Fundraiser and the Raise Right program (explained in the “OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION” section). In addition to these big fundraisers, enrollment in Minted, the Target REDcard “Take Charge of Education Program”, and the Stop & Shop “A+ Program”. When you register for any of these programs (you must re-register each year), SVMS earns a percentage of the purchase each time you check-out. At Stop & Shop, you must use your keycard upon check-out.

OCTOBER

Picture Days in October - These are the days when your child and his/her class will take individual and class pictures. You will be provided with details via the SVMS Weekly eNewsletter as to when this will occur and what uniform or dress clothes your child should wear. Sibling photos opportunities are also offered. Make-up photos will be announced and will take place in the photographer's studio.

School Closed: October 6th - 9th - All SVMS teachers will attend a Teachers Workshop on Friday, October 6th and Monday, October 9th is Columbus Day. School is closed on Friday and Monday, so we enjoy a long weekend. Classes resume on Tuesday, October 10th.

SVMS Men's Night—This is a great night out for our St. Vincent's dads! Date and details will come home through the school eNewsletter, so be sure to reserve Dad's spot at the guys' favorite SVMS event.

NOVEMBER

Open House: November 7th – 8th - For two days, SVMS opens its doors to welcome prospective families who are considering enrollment in SVMS. It does not affect the school day, but it's a nice way for parents to get involved.

High School Placement Test: November 10th – This standardized diocesan test is administered to all 8th grade students. All diocesan high schools require these test scores as part of the application process. Other high schools have additional admission/placement tests, which differ per school. There is a very informative 8th Grade Parents Meeting early in the school year to explain everything.

Pre-K Parent-Teacher Conferences: November 16th – 17th – Parents of Pre-K students will have a special opportunity to meet with their child's teacher to discuss their progress to date, as well as any concerns or issues, to ensure a successful year. You will be assigned an afternoon time on either November 16th (early dismissal at 11:30am) or daytime on November 17th (no school for PK). Plan your childcare in advance. Children may not attend the conference.

NOVEMBER (continued)

Ski Club – The SVMS Family Ski & Snowboard Club begins in January, with registration taking place in November. The 5-session club meets weekly on Sundays and is available to all school-aged children and their parents. The club is not limited to SVMS families. Parents are responsible for transportation to and from Shawnee Mountain in the Poconos, approximately an hour from Madison.

Thanksgiving Holiday - The Wednesday before Thanksgiving is a half-day. All grades have an early dismissal.

Day-After-Thanksgiving Parade: Friday, November 24th - Madison hosts a spectacular Friday night parade as we gear-up for the next big holiday: Christmas! Some students march alongside Sister Noreen on the SVMS float, representing our wonderful school. Be sure to stick around for the Christmas Tree Lighting after the parade. For families new to the Madison area, this is a “not to be missed” town event. Plan to go and enjoy a fun night!

Parent-Teacher Conferences: November 28th –30th -This is a time for you to meet one-on-one with your child’s teacher(s) and discuss his/her progress to date, as well as any issues, to ensure your child has a successful year. Teachers of grades K-8 will send home a link to the Sign-Up Genius website to select your conference time. An email from school will explain how to do this. Please do not bring your school-aged children to the conferences; small infants are an exception. The students in Grades K-8 have an early dismissal on conference days (12:10pm for Kindergarten / 12:20pm for 1st -8th).

DECEMBER

SVMS Christmas Shop: December 6th - 7th - Santa’s Helpers set up a fantastic shop so the children can go Christmas shopping for their family members. Each child can select gifts for up to 10 people. Every item in the shop is \$3! The children will shop during school hours with their teachers. This is a student-only shop.

Breakfast with Santa: Saturday, December 9th - Bring the whole family to enjoy the Christmas festivities in the gym. Breakfast and delicious treats are served, along with a live Christmas band, and fun activities for all. Pictures with Santa are provided for a small fee. Older students can volunteer to help at the craft stations.

DECEMBER (continued)

Christmas Concert: Thursday, December 14th (snowdate 12/20) - All children in Kindergarten - 5th Grade are required to participate in this event. It is a wonderfully festive night of singing by our children's beautiful voices. All children must wear their "Sunday best". Girls wear holiday dresses or skirts and most boys wear ties and navy sport coats (Madison's Kids Consignment on Lincoln Place has an abundance of gently worn sport coats in most sizes). The children gather in their homerooms about 20 minutes before the show; they are also dismissed after the show from their homerooms.

Basketball - An SVMS favorite! Most children participate. The intramural practices and games take place on Saturdays, except for some weekdays during Christmas Break. Kindergarteners start in January with boys and girls playing together. All other grades are separated by gender and grade (1st-2nd, 3rd-4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th). All parents are required to work at the concession stand or monitor the hallway at least once during the season. There are many coaching or assistant coaching opportunities if you have the skills!

Travel Basketball - 3rd-8th graders can join the travel teams. The number of games increases respectively with the grade. Games take place on weeknights and weekends against surrounding area Catholic schools (they will not conflict with the intramural games). 3rd and 4th graders who wish to play on the travel team must also play on the intramural team. Parents are required to help at the concession stand or be a hall monitor during one game each season.

JANUARY

School Resumes: Tuesday, January 2nd - Christmas Break is over! Time to go back to school on January 2nd.

Exams - It's time for 3rd - 8th graders to start preparing for mid-term exams. The teachers provide study packets for the students. It may seem like a lot for younger grades, but it teaches them good study habits and gets them ready for future test-taking. Be sure that your child gets plenty of rest and eats a good breakfast!

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday - School is closed January 15th.

JANUARY (continued)

Catholic Schools Week - This week coincides with the national celebration of Catholic Schools Week and opens with the weekend Masses on January 27th - 28th. Students are encouraged to attend mass wearing their school uniform to show their Catholic school pride! There are many special events and treats for the children throughout the week, including a school-wide “Day of Service” and a “Family Night”. Parents are welcome to attend events during the week and volunteer to help in the classrooms, as needed. As always, the SVMS Weekly eNewsletter will be full of information.

Annual Ladies Night –Please be on the look-out for information about this fun night for our St. Vincent’s moms. You can bring a friend to share the fun (neighbor, parishioner, non-school mom – all are welcome). There will be wine, food, and great conversation.

FEBRUARY

First Reconciliation - The majority of 2nd graders celebrate this sacrament, although they are not required to do so at this time. The Parish Ministry Center will send out information about Reconciliation, as they handle all sacramental preparations. Please refer to these correspondences for details. If your child is older and has not yet received his/her First Reconciliation, please speak with Sister Noreen to make arrangements.

Ash Wednesday: February 14th – SVMS will have a **delayed start at 9:45am** to allow for the 8:30am Ash Wednesday mass traffic to exit the Church parking lot.

MARCH

Pre-K Parent-Teacher Conferences: March 7th - 8th – These are the same as the conferences in November. You can meet with your child’s teacher on either March 7th (early dismissal at 11:30am) or on March 8th (no school for PK). Children are not permitted to attend.

Spring Sports – Many spring sports will be starting up in March. Information about all sports teams will be sent home via the weekly eNewsletter.

MARCH (continued)

Spring Fundraiser: Weekend of March 22-23 - This is a HUGE EVENT and the biggest money-maker for the school. The Spring Fundraiser includes an adults-only theme party with auctions, raffles, food, cocktails, and music. Everyone is asked to volunteer in some aspect. There are many opportunities for every talent and schedule: decorations, food, ticket sales, auction preparations, publicity, etc. It takes months of work, but is worth it for the funds raised and the fun enjoyed that night! The Fundraiser consists of a Silent Auction (items donated by local merchants and school families) and Chance Auction (buy tickets, drop them in a bag, and hope your winning ticket is drawn). The second segment of the Spring Fundraiser is a Family Fun Day. You will get word about this event early in the Fall and you should try to attend a meeting. It's a great opportunity to get involved and meet people. Refer to the Weekly eNews or website for details.

Living Stations: March 26th - This is a beautiful display of the Stations of the Cross, presented by a few students from each grade. The assembly takes place during the school day and parents are invited to attend. You might consider leaving younger children home with a babysitter, as it is a very quiet and solemn event.

Easter Break and Spring Break: March 28th - April 7th - Easter Break and Spring Break coincide this year, beginning with a half-day early dismissal on Holy Thursday, March 28th and running through April 7th. The school is closed for Holy Week. Classes resume on Monday, April 8th.

APRIL

First Holy Communion - Calling all 2nd graders! The Parish Center handles all communication regarding dates and preparations for the First Holy Communions. The sacraments take place in April and May, on assigned dates. Your child will receive an information packet with complete details early in the school year. There will be a special SVMS Communion Mass and Reception for our school's 2nd Grade students and their families to celebrate together. Parents, grandparents, and siblings are welcome to attend.

APRIL (continued)

School Play: April 25th and April 26th- The school play is a great opportunity for the children to show their talent in front of an audience (or stay behind the scenes on Stage Crew). There are many ways parents can help out. It is not a big budget production, so most props and costumes are hand-made.

May Pole Dance: April 27th - First Grade students can voluntarily participate in the May Pole Dance in front of Madison Town Hall (Hartley Dodge Building), which is also Madison Green & Clean Day, when residents clean-up Madison. 1st Grade Parents can volunteer to chair the May Pole Dance and practice with the children during school recess (no experience required).

Parent-Teacher Conferences: April 30th - May 1st - These are the same as the parent-teacher conferences earlier in the year. It is a time to discuss your child's progress and voice any concerns. They are scheduled the same way as the Fall Conferences. Please do not bring your school-age children to the conferences; small infants are an exception. The students in Grades K-8 have an early dismissal.

MAY

Spring Concert: May 16th – This is a special evening of song, when we get to enjoy our children's beautiful voices. Students in K – 5th grade participate. The children must wear their "Sunday best", so a detailed explanation of attire will come in Sister Noreen's weekly letter in the eNews. After the concert, the children go back to their classrooms where parents pick them up. Grandparents are welcome to come, or they can see the concert a few days later (with added treats) on Grandparents Day!

Grandparents Day: May 22nd - SVMS welcomes grandparents for a very special morning to visit their grandchildren at school and enjoy refreshments. At the end of the morning, they are treated to a special performance of the Spring Concert. Grandparents of children in PreK - 3rd Grade go directly to their grandchild's classroom in the morning. Grandparents of older students in grades 4th - 8th are invited down to the school gym later in the morning for a Grandparent-Grandchild Reception. Complete details will be sent home as the date nears. Parent volunteers are always needed to provide baked goods for this event.

MAY (continued)

Field Day – A fun-filled morning of games at Dodge Field in late spring. Field Day for grades K-4 takes place on one day, grades 5–8 on another. The grades participating in Field Day will go to school in the morning and walk as a group to Dodge Field on Central Avenue. Parents will pick-up their children at Dodge Field at 12noon, though you are welcome to go earlier if you want to watch some of the events. If it rains, all activities take place in the school gym with an early dismissal only for those children who participated in Field Day. **THE STUDENTS IN GRADES NOT PARTICIPATING IN FIELD DAY WILL HAVE A REGULAR FULL DAY.** Parent volunteers (Virtus certification required) are always needed for Field Day.

Instrumental Music Concert: May 30th –This event showcases the SVMS instrumental musicians. The students perform musical scores they have learned and practiced throughout the school year.

JUNE

Kindergarten Screening – Throughout the spring months, the Kindergarten teachers meet individually with children applying to Kindergarten to make sure they will be comfortable with the curriculum. Children attending SVMS pre-school will be screened during their class time (parents do not need to be there). Children who attend other pre-schools will be scheduled an appointment time to come to the school.

SVMS Book Swap – In the last few weeks of school, the HSA provides the opportunity to donate and later “shop” the collection of books from other school families. There is no charge for the books. This is especially helpful for us parents to get those required Summer Reading List books. There are plenty of other titles to satisfy your child’s leisure reading interests as well.

8th Grade Graduation – The 8th Grade Graduation is a two-part event. The graduates and their families come together for the Baccalaureate Mass on June 6th and then celebrate again the next day at the Graduation Ceremony on June 7th. A committee of parents, in conjunction with the school guidelines, plans and organizes the events and activities that make up this special time for our graduates. Plenty of information will come home about the 8th grade events.

IUNE (continued)

Kindergarten Graduation – This is an exciting morning for the Kindergarteners and their proud parents, grandparents, and siblings (those in the school are allowed to attend the festivities).

Kindergarten Graduation is complete with all the pomp you would expect: caps, diplomas, speeches (Principal and Pastor), and joyful songs by the children. The graduation is followed by a reception. Teachers will send home information as the big day nears.

Library Books - Please return any library books in early June. You will save the librarian a lot of time preparing delinquency notices. Replacement fees will be charged if library books are not returned.

Last Day of School – The school year eases into summer with half-days the last few days of the year and the Last Day of School ends with an early dismissal. This is a day of great celebration! Parents are encouraged to come and join the Last Day of School Assembly, which includes the exciting “Countdown to Summer”.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

SVMS Weekly eNewsletter – Every Sunday night, you will receive an email from school. It will include: a letter from either Principal Sister Noreen or Vice-Principal Miss Gisoldi, events taking place during the week, important announcements, and school/parish/community news. All past eNewsletters are also available in the school website archives if you ever need to search for a specific news item or flyer from earlier weeks. Parents may submit Publication Requests to post committee meetings, announcements, and other local events in the eNews. **Notify the school right away if you believe you are not receiving these very important emails, so your notification settings can be corrected.**

Homework Folders –Students in grades K-3, will have a daily homework folder, in which all homework and some teacher correspondence will be placed. On one side is information to be kept at home and the other side is homework and/or papers to be signed and returned.

Test Folder - Each Tuesday, your child will bring home a test folder. This folder contains all of your child's tests for the week, as well as a parent signature log. You need to sign the log AND INITIAL EACH TEST. Most teachers require that the students make corrections on the tests also. Please return the folder the next day.

Wednesday Mass - Every Wednesday morning, a few grades attend the 8:30am daily Mass. The schedule of students attending mass changes weekly to give all grades a few opportunities each month. If a Holy Day of Obligation falls during the week, School Mass will change to that day.

School Closings/Delayed Openings - You will receive notification from Alert Solutions if school is closed/delayed. You will need to enroll in the system early in the school year. You should appoint several different devices (in the event of power outages) where you would like to receive messages from the school (home phone, cell phone, email, etc.). School closings are always posted on the school's website as well.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION (continued)

School Security - SVMS school security is handled with the utmost seriousness. There are many safety measures already in place and we are continually studying any areas where improvement is possible. Sister Noreen attends two Safety and Security Workshops at the Morris County Police Academy each year, which help create and continually improve our Emergency Operations Plan. SVMS shares a close collaboration with the Madison Police Department (MPD). We have a police liaison officer who often visits our school to provide a comfortable and familiar police presence. MPD collaborated with SVMS to complete a Critical Incident Mapping to give the MPD instant live viewing of our school. Several building enhancements have been installed in recent years, such as: impact reinforcements to all doors and windows, a two-door vestibule at the entrance, a large bollard to block the school's front doors, interior and exterior security and surveillance cameras, and fortified doors in the gym. Additionally, policies are in place to limit visitors and other non-staff access to the building.

Snack Time - There is a school-wide snack time from 9:50am until 10am every day in the classrooms. You must pack a NUT-FREE snack and a drink for your child(ren) every day. As previously noted, talk with your child about snack time. Some children eat lunch very early and may not need a big snack, while others eat later and may need something more substantial.

Lunch Program - SVMS provides a lunch program for the students, which is offered through an online ordering site. There are many meal options and add-ons, so you can select a satisfying and nutritious meal for your child. There are options for children with allergies and food intolerances. You will receive instructions for ordering (and canceling) early in the school year through the SVMS Sunday eNewsletter.

Class Parents - Every class has two parents who volunteer to assist the teacher with class parties and help maintain teacher-parent communication during the school year. You should introduce yourself to your class parents. They will be a great resource to you! If you are interested in being a Class Parent, email your child's teacher after you receive your Class List in September.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION (continued)

After School Activities - There are many after-school activities and enrichment programs that take place throughout the year. Please be aware of the exact pick-up time and location, as they do vary. If your child is in After Care, he/she can still participate in any other after-school activities, but it is very important that the moderator of After Care knows to expect them after their activity. Likewise, please notify the after-school activity moderator, so they know to take your child to After Care when the activity ends.

Enrichment Programs – There are three terms of after school Enrichment Programs at SVMS – Fall, Winter, and Spring. A wide variety of programs are offered to satisfy all interests (Art, Brain Teasers, Chess, Computer Coding, Dance, Electricity, Legos, Sewing, Sports, Stock Investing, etc.) The 8-session programs are offered after school for one-hour (most on Tuesday). The sign-up spots are limited to a certain number of participants, so read through the registration instructions when they are posted in the eNewsletter and be ready to sign-up at the exact time the site opens.

Transitional Years - Kindergarten, 3rd Grade and 4th Grade are years of big transition. **Kindergarten** is a full-day program, filled with learning and special classes, resulting in very tired children at the end of the day. You may want to limit after-school activities in the beginning of the school year to avoid problems. **3rd graders** realize what homework really is! They are gaining more responsibilities and expected to perform. The summer before 3rd grade is a good time to give your child more responsibility to prepare them for the upcoming school year. **4th graders** begin switching classrooms for different subjects and it can be very stressful for them. They pack up their books for the morning and then pack again for the afternoon. Practice makes perfect! You can help them practice, but if they are really struggling, you can request some help. After the first few weeks of school, they are expected to have everything, or they will be given Disciplinary Referrals (see the official Family Handbook). Thankfully, for all of us, most teachers post homework assignments on their Google Classroom pages. This is especially helpful if your child forgets to write down an assignment. Keep in mind, all of the children are feeling the same pressure in the beginning -- don't worry, they do get it eventually!

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION (continued)

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd –The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a segment of the Pre-K and Kindergarten students’ Religion curriculum. It is founded in scriptural and liturgical study, framed by Maria Montessori’s principles of education. This program allows children to understand the Gospel through the use of sensorial rich materials. The children are free to work with these materials that represent essential proclamations of the Christian message.

STREAM Program – STREAM was introduced at SVMS in 2011. STREAM brings together Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts and Math in an integrated program for PK3 through 8th grade.

Raise Right Gift Card Program - All families in SVMS are obligated by contract to participate in the school’s Raise Right program or pay the “buy-out” fee. Raise Right allows SVMS families to purchase gift cards from over 300 retailers. When you do your regular shopping, SVMS will earn between 2% and 15% at NO EXTRA COST TO YOU. You will get instructions for how to download the app and enroll early in the school year. Orders must be placed online by midnight on SUNDAY. The school’s website calendar lists the entire order/delivery schedule. SVMS encourages families to make as many of their regular purchases as possible by using Raise Right cards with a minimum requirement of \$2500 per year per family. You may “buy-out” of the program by paying \$250 to the SVMS HSA in your school contract. Any family who does not fulfill either option will be charged the \$250 “buy-out” with an additional \$50 fee. If this is not paid, the fee will be added to the family’s tuition the following year.

Instrumental Music Lessons – SVMS offers musical instruction after school through an outsourced music company. A variety of lessons are offered to students in Grades 1-8. Information will come home early in the school year, so be on the lookout if your child has an interest.

Field Trips - Every grade has field trips. Please sign the Permission Slip when it comes home and return it promptly, with payment if necessary. Teachers will ask for parents to chaperone the trip (you must be Virtus certified). Please understand that as a chaperone, you cannot bring any other children; your focus needs to be on the students in that class.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION (continued)

Birthdays - On your child's birthday, he/she gets a free Tag Day, meaning they can dress in regular clothes. They can also bring in a nut-free treat to share with the class, which should be scheduled in advance with the teacher. Please use the Class Group Email to notify all parents of the ingredients a few days ahead, in case there is a food allergy concern. Regarding party invitations, you may only send invitations home through the school if you are inviting the whole class, or all boys, or all girls. If only selecting a few children from the class, invitations should be sent from home.

Book Fair - The Book Fair takes place in the Library. You can send in money with your child to purchase books by themselves (they will have opportunities during the school day), or you may set-up an eWallet account, or you can go together before or after school if they need your assistance. Teachers have Wish Lists so you can donate a book to the classroom or the Library.

Parish Activities - There are many opportunities for the young people in our parish. Children ages 3-5 are invited to participate in the "Get Ready" program in the School Building during the 9am Mass. "Get Ready" is a hands-on approach to learning Catholicism based on the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program, which includes the Gospel readings, parables, and stories about the Saints. The Children's Choir is made up of students in 3rd - 8th grade and sings weekly at the 9am Mass during the school year. Boys and girls in 4th grade and above can be Altar Servers and 6th grade and above can be Lectors (with a parent).

Community Service Programs- The Community Service Committee provides opportunities for students to serve the needs of our community and parish. There are after-school opportunities, as well as projects that can be done at home. You will receive information through the Weekly eNewsletter and must sign-up in advance for most of the projects. Parents are always needed to help on this Committee and chaperone the projects.

School Store – SVMS has a wonderful School Store where you can purchase SVMS gear, spirit wear, and all sorts of fun supplies. Announcements will be posted in the Sunday eNews with order information and the dates of a few pop-up shops during the year.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION (continued)

School Library - The Library is always looking for volunteers to help repair and shelve books. Volunteers are especially needed during the second half of the school year. Please contact the librarian if you are interested. Donating a book to the School Library to commemorate your child's birthday is a great idea; ask the librarian for help with some suggestions.

Stewardship Gifts - This is an opportunity for parents and families to invest in SVMS by making a tax-deductible gift, which will cover the difference between school tuition and the actual cost of educating a student. The opportunity to make this tax-deductible gift is offered when you sign your tuition contract. Your gift can also be matched by your company's corporate educational gift matching program. If you missed this opportunity, there are forms in the school's front office.

GLOSSARY

After Care – Supervised care of students after school until 6pm; this service is provided for a fee.

Community Room – Large room on the school's lower level, where the children eat lunch and some parish and school parent meetings take place.

eNewsletter – Important weekly email sent every Sunday to all school families. The eNewsletter includes: a letter from either Sister Noreen or Miss Gisoldi, announcements, news, and upcoming events. Be sure to set your notification preferences on the school website to get the most important announcements and emergency eBlasts.

Family Handbook – The official SVMS handbook, containing detailed explanations of all of the school's rules, policies and procedures. It is required reading for each family. You can refer to the Family Handbook for detailed answers to all your questions. You can find it on the school website under the Parents tab.

Field Day – A fun-filled morning of games and activities, which takes place at Dodge Field (SVMS gym if inclement weather).

Half Days/Early Dismissal – On half-days, Kindergarten is dismissed at 12:10pm and 1st- 8th grades at 12:20pm. The Pre-School teachers will give parents a detailed calendar at the Pre-School Parents Meeting on September 7th. A half-day for K-8 does not necessarily mean a half-day for Pre-School and vice versa.

Lost and Found – Located in the front lobby under a table near the trophy case, where you can look for lost items. After a time, unclaimed items will be donated to local charities. **Please write your child's name on all clothing, especially uniform sweatshirts, and coats** so your things can be easily returned to you.

NWEA "MAP" Testing (Measures of Academic Progress) – A standardized test administered three times during the school year, which tracks each student's academic growth. It identifies gaps and directs the curriculum for the teachers.

GLOSSARY (continued)

Raise Right Program – Gift cards you purchase for use in retail and grocery stores which earn money for our school.

SVMS - Abbreviation for St. Vincent Martyr School.

SVMS HSA - Abbreviation for St. Vincent Martyr School Home and School Association. This is how you will make out most checks to participate in events and activities at school.

Tag Day – A special day when students are allowed to wear their choice of clothing to school (not the regular school uniform), within the guidelines in the Family Handbook. Usually, a Tag Day will cost \$1 and the funds collected go to a selected charity. Your child will also enjoy a free Tag Day on his/her birthday.

Uniform Closet– A closet behind the Stage where gently used uniforms are available to anyone **at no charge**. Uniform Closet “shop times” will be available on designated dates and times that will be announced. You can also donate your gently used uniforms to the Uniform Closet.

Virtus Training – A mandatory diocesan requirement for parent volunteers, which ensures a safe environment for the students. Parents must complete a one-time “Protecting God’s Children” workshop (they are offered throughout the year). Any parents who wishes to interact with students, either as a classroom volunteer, an event/trip chaperone, or a coach, must submit their Virtus completion certificate to the school. Workshop registration is at www.virtusonline.org

NOTES: