



Mater Dei High School
1202 West Edinger Avenue
Santa Ana, California 92707-2191
714 / 754-7711

October 8, 2007

Dear Mater Dei Alumni,

As you are most likely aware from media coverage over this past weekend, the Diocese of Orange has settled four civil lawsuits (two of which involved former Mater Dei employees from the 1990's). As Bishop Tod Brown stated in remarks pertaining to these cases, "The settlement of these cases represents the moral obligation for the Church for such behavior by adults in position of responsibility. By settling these cases I sincerely hope that it will enable the women who brought these actions to begin the process of healing and reconciliation." We ask the entire Mater Dei community to pray for these victims and all victims of abuse, especially children.

The evidence in these two cases from the 1990's involving the former Mater Dei High School employees clearly indicates that the MDHS Administration at the time informed and cooperated with the legal authorities in an appropriate manner. Bishop Brown concluded his remarks on these settled cases by stating, "While we cannot change the events of the past - we must do all we can to reduce the likelihood of such occurrences in the future. Since the time of these cases, the Diocese has implemented the Safe Environment Program in all of our schools and parishes. I am particularly pleased to note that Mater Dei High School, thanks to the dedication of its staff, was given a very positive audit as a result of its compliance with the Program, by the nationally recognized independent Gavin Group, earlier this year."

Our Administrative Team as well as our MDHS Faculty and Staff, as our ongoing commitment to Bishop Brown's Diocese of Orange Safe Environment Program, continues the implementation of the following policies, procedures and programs in the hiring and employment of all school personnel. These policies, procedures and programs are reviewed on a regular basis and amended as necessary.

1. All full-time and part-time employees are fingerprinted by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and FBI. This program was expanded a few years ago to include all volunteers and event chaperones. In addition, all full and part-time employees, as well as all volunteers, receive specific Safe Environment training through the Diocese of Orange.
2. Prior to hiring, all employees (full and part-time) are subject to a complete background check by the MD Personnel Office.
3. All Mater Dei High School employees and volunteers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and as such must sign a form stating that they are obligated under State law to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse that they may encounter.
4. Creation of the Safe School Management Team which includes MD Administrative Board members, Diocesan legal and personnel staff and appropriate law enforcement and medical staff (as needed). This Team meets to evaluate situations pertaining to student safety and make decisions when necessary.
5. Creation of a clear and open chain of command/communication structure within the school (see page 7 of the MDHS Parent-Student Handbook) and the advancement of voice-mail, e-mail, Ed-Line and web page technology to improve school overall communication systems.

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6. Expansion and enhancement of the MDHS Support Systems for students and parents so that school administration, faculty and staff now include three Deans of Students, seven Academic Counselors, two Outreach Concern Personal Counselors, five Campus Ministry Staff (for spiritual and pastoral counseling), a Health Services Coordinator and two Learning Specialists all available on a daily basis for our students and parents.
7. Over the course of the past decade, we have conducted numerous in-service training sessions with our administration, faculty and staff regarding the creation and maintenance of a caring, positive and safe learning environment for Mater Dei students. The topics of these in-service sessions have included school law, appropriate teacher-student communication, Safe Schools environment, addressing harassment issues, multi-cultural communication, appropriate adult - child relationships and many others of a similar nature.
8. In conjunction with the Diocese of Orange, MDHS has incorporated the Safe Schools Program into the School curriculum. This educational program models the new Safe Schools Program proposed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at their historic June 2002 meeting in Dallas, Texas. This program is taught across the curriculum at Mater Dei, and in particular in the Religious Studies classes.
9. In conjunction with the Diocese and the County of Orange, Mater Dei continues to implement the Family Violence Project's *Save the Date* program into the Religious Studies curriculum at the sophomore level.
10. In conjunction with the Diocese, Mater Dei continues to implement the program, *Breaking the Silence* through the Religious Studies curriculum at freshman level.

As a school administration, we take the issue of student safety very seriously. We continue to abide by our policy of promptly reporting these matters to the appropriate law enforcement and/or civil authorities. In cases where it has and/or will become necessary to remove an administrator, faculty or staff member from our school due to inappropriate conduct we will do so in a timely manner, following a full and complete investigation, and a due process hearing for the employee.

The physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well being of our students is important to us. You can be assured that the entire Administrative Team, Faculty and Staff of Mater Dei High School will concentrate our efforts to ensure a caring, positive and safe school learning environment for all of our current and future students at MDHS. If you would like to communicate with us on this topic, please e-mail us (Frances Clare @ fclare@materdei.org or Patrick Murphy, at pmurphy@materdei.org) or contact us by phone (Frances Clare – 714-850-9500 or Patrick Murphy – 714-850-9522).

May God continue to bless, guide and protect you, your family, and the Mater Dei Community.

Sincerely in Mater Dei,



Patrick Murphy
President



Frances Clare
Principal

FC/PM/gz