

METRO SCHOOLS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What are the Metro Schools?

The Metro Schools are seven schools in the Catholic Diocese of Arlington that serve students who reside in the urban centers of Northern Virginia adjacent to Washington, DC: **St. Agnes School** in Arlington, **St. Ann School** in Arlington, **St. Charles School** in Arlington, **St. Thomas More Cathedral School** in Arlington, **Corpus Christi School** in Falls Church, **Queen of Apostles School** in Alexandria, and **St. Rita School** in Alexandria. The schools also serve the children of parents who commute daily into these urban centers and the District of Columbia.

2. If, as a parent, I work in the District of Colombia or one of the urban centers of Northern Virginia, how easy would it be for me to bring my child to one of the Metro Schools?

The schools are convenient to Old Town Alexandria, Crystal City, Pentagon City, Rosslyn, Court House, Clarendon, Ballston, Seven Corners, Landmark, Mark Center and they are located in proximity to main thoroughfares that run in and out of the District of Columbia.

They are in the neighborhoods of some of the areas' largest local employers: **DOD, the State Department, DEA, NSF, Virginia Hospital Center, Verizon, TSA, SAIC, Marriott International**, and the **EPA**. The schools are also convenient to the **Pentagon, Ft. Myer**, and **Ft. Henderson**.

Bus transportation from some of the military bases, including **Bolling Air Force Base**, is provided to St. Charles School, St. Rita School and St. Thomas More Cathedral School. All of the schools are accessible to public transportation and St. Charles School is within a short walking distance of the Clarendon Station on the Orange Line of the Metrorail System.

3. Is financial aid available?

The Diocesan Tuition Grant Program will provide over **\$2 million dollars** in financial assistance to families in need this school year. A large share of this money will be awarded to students attending the Metro schools. The program eligibility requirements call for students in grades Kindergarten through grade 12 (Pre-K is not eligible) to fulfill all of the following criteria:

- Student attends or is accepted by a Diocesan Catholic school;
- Student is a baptized Catholic or convert officially received into the Church;
- Family resides within the boundaries of the Diocese of Arlington;
- Family is a registered and active member of a parish in the Diocese of Arlington or a military base parish.

Individual schools make final decisions regarding the actual distribution of awards for that academic year. Parents are encouraged to contact the individual Metro schools about completing the student aid application process.

4. Do I or my child need to be Catholic in order to attend a Metro School?

The Metro Schools warmly welcome students regardless of parish or religious faith. Our schools are communities rich with religious backgrounds and practices. Students in the Catholic schools of the Arlington diocese study the Scriptures and the Tradition of the Catholic faith, participate in Catholic liturgies and, if Catholic, are prepared to receive the Sacraments.

Non-Catholic students are expected to participate in liturgies, religious functions, and religion classes that are part of the academic curriculum. While non-Catholic student are expected to be knowledgeable about Catholic teachings and practices, they are not expected to give their assent to the faith.

5. Ours is a bi-racial and multi-ethnic family that does not speak English at home. How well will my daughter fit into a Metro School?

The Metro Schools are the most racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse schools in the Arlington Catholic Diocese. They are also socio-economically diverse. This diversity is a reflection of the local Catholic Church and the current demographics of Northern Virginia.

Because the Metro Schools draw the children of commuter parents from across the Washington metropolitan region, the Metro Schools are typically more diverse than public schools in the same locations.

This diversity has prompted some of the Metro Schools to refer to themselves as a “United Nation” of students. The Metro Schools complement this diversity by welcoming children of foreign nationals working at foreign embassies, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, and other international organizations in the nation’s capital. The Metro Schools are increasingly working to meet the language needs of students whose first language is not English.

6. We are a military family. Can we transfer mid-year?

The Metro Schools regularly receive children of military and Foreign Service families. They come from across the country and from around the globe. The schools strive to be accessible to these children throughout the school year and to make the child’s transition (and the parents’) to his or her new school as smooth and as welcoming as possible. Because most Catholic schools, regardless of location, follow similar curricula, placements are easily accommodated. Because our Metro Schools provide individual attention to each student’s needs, it is possible to place an incoming student in enrichment programs, on sports teams, and in clubs and activities that might otherwise be closed to new arrivals at other schools.

7. Do the Metro Schools have before-school care and after-school care?

Yes, all of the schools provide AM and PM extended day programs to meet the needs of working parents. Contact the individual Metro Schools for more information about each school’s program.

8. Do the Metro Schools have extra-curricular activities?

In addition to the nationally recognized strength of the Arlington diocesan school’s academic curriculum, the Metro Schools abound with extracurricular activities. These include athletics, band, choir, foreign and classical language instruction, art programs, scouting, Junior Great Books, science and technology programs, chess clubs, talent shows, yearbook, and more. The many extracurricular activities and programs can be found on each Metro School’s Web site.

9. What can you tell me about how safe the Metro Schools are; my son has been bullied at previous schools?

The Metro Schools are known to be safe, friendly communities for all students, where caring for others comes first. The schools provide spiritual and educational environments that value the development, growth and dignity of each child. Bullying or any other behavior that threatens the healthy development, the spiritual, emotional or intellectual growth, or the God given dignity of any student is not tolerated. Informed by the Gospels and the theological and moral virtues, the Metro Schools always strive for disciplined environments where students flourish in an atmosphere of self-responsibility, self-control, and respect for oneself and others.

10. Do the Metro Schools have pre-schools?

Corpus Christi School, St. Agnes School, St. Ann School, St. Charles School, and St. Thomas More Cathedral School have pre-school programs. Visit each school’s Web site or contact the individual schools for more information.

11. Are the Metro Schools accredited?

The Virginia Catholic Education Association accredits each Metro School and every teacher meets the VCEA or Commonwealth of Virginia certification requirements.

12. How does the Catholic school curriculum compare with the state curriculum? Do students take the SOLs (Standards of Learning) or any other standardized tests?

The curriculum used in the Metro Schools is highly regarded for its rigor and comprehensiveness. It is a solid, traditional curriculum build on foundational courses in

math, science, language arts, social studies and religion. It is also designed with relevancy to 21st century learning with courses in technology, health, world languages and an emphasis on content mastery and critical thinking skills.

Students in the Metro Schools take the Terra Nova, a national standardized test, not the Virginia State SOLs. Curriculum guidelines are posted under the parent's portal of the diocesan Web site pages on education. Students in the Metro Schools have consistently demonstrated exceptional performance on the Terra Nova Test. Scores are located on the schools' Web sites or are available by contacting the principals of the schools.