

Service and Social Justice

Service is an integral part of our lives as Christians. Scripture tells us, “as each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace,” 1 Peter 4:10. Pope Francis reminded us that we **“must open [our] arms to protect all of God’s people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick.”** As proud stakeholders of Villa Maria Academy High School, we need only look to our mission statement which proclaims in part that the Villa community, through the charism of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, “empowers young women to lead lives of spiritual growth, intellectual inquiry and Christian service.” Villa Maria invites our students to journey with the two feet of a Christian: service and social justice. Service and social justice should be a journey with our brothers and sisters in need. As one enters into this journey with people whose life experiences differ from our own, the participants are transformed as is society. Service and social justice are internalized and become a mission. Villa Maria encourages our students to undertake this journey joyfully and, in doing so, to reach the following objectives:

- to discover and use their God-given gifts and to share these gifts with others,
- to connect the academic curriculum with an educated, meaningful response to the needs of the community so that they use their academic and social abilities to improve the community,
- to reflect on issues of social justice and respond to them in accordance with Catholic social teaching
- to develop as leaders, problem solvers, and women of God, and as such, to remember the words of St. Alphonsus Liguori: “He who trusts himself is lost. He who trusts in God can do all things.”
- to serve as Jesus did with and for those who are socially or economically disadvantaged and marginalized including service to the poor, the homeless, people who are differently abled, the sick, and the elderly.

Service Hours Requirements

As of the 2026 – 2027 school year, Villa Maria has modified its service requirements. These service requirements listed herein, are in effect as of June 5, 2026.

The service hour requirements for students are set forth hereafter in two charts, Total Service Hours Based on Grade Level for 2026 – 2027 and Minimum Service Hours Based on Grade Level.

Service Hours Charts 2026-2027

Total Service Hours Based on Grade Level for 2026-2027

Class Year	Total Service Hours due 11/30/26	Total Service Hours due 3/31/27
Class of 2027	60	70 (graduation requirement)

Class Year	Total Service Hours due 12/2/26	Total Service Hours due 4/2/27
Class of 2028	35	45
Class of 2029	18	25
Class of 2030	5	10

Service Hours are due on or before 7:55 a.m. on the date indicated in the above chart.

Minimum Service Hours

Based on Grade Level

(unless service hours requirements have previously been met based on grade level)

Class Year	Hours Required	Minimum Service Hours due 11/30/26	Minimum Service Hours due 3/31/27
Class of 2027	25	13	12

Class Year	Hours Required	Minimum Service Hours due 12/2/26	Minimum Service ,Hours due 4/2/27
Class of 2028	20	10	10
Class of 2029	15	8	7
Class of 2030	10	5	5

Service Hours are due on or before 7:55 a.m. on the date indicated in the above chart.

Types of Service Accepted At Villa Maria Towards Service Hours Requirement

- Gospel Service –Direct and Indirect Service
 - Direct Service – serving marginalized groups directly such as serving food at a food pantry
 - Indirect Service – serving at organizations that directly serve people from marginalized groups such as sorting food and stocking shelves in a food pantry
- Hurricane Hours (Service to the School) (**a maximum of 5 hours per school year may count towards service to the school**).

Gospel Service

Service at Villa Maria is primarily Gospel Service – to serve as Jesus did. It provides an opportunity for students to serve and be in relationship with people who are socially or economically disadvantaged and marginalized including the poor, the homeless, people who are differently-abled, the sick, the elderly, and the unborn and/or expectant mothers.

Types of Service Which Fulfill Gospel Service Requirements:

- Service opportunities sponsored and approved by Mission and Ministry
- Service offered during Days of Service through Mission and Ministry
- Service offered during the DEIB Social Justice Day at Villa Maria
- Service to a church or other place of worship including ushering, altar serving or teaching religious education classes
- Other service experiences (which have been given prior approval by the Director of Service and Social Justice) which provide an opportunity for students to assist people who are socially or economically disadvantaged and marginalized including the poor, the homeless, people who are differently-abled, the sick, and the elderly. **Service must be completed through a nonprofit organization.**

Types of Activities Which Do NOT Fulfill Gospel Service Requirements:

- Work which is monetarily rewarded including but not limited to stipends, gift cards, salaries, and tips
- Service which is required as a responsibility of membership or leadership in a Villa Maria organization, club, team, or activity
- Travel time
- Service provided to family, friends, neighbors (service must be performed through a nonprofit organization)
- Work at a for-profit organization or entity even if the work is for a pro-bono project or a charity event or collection/drive
- Virtual or online service opportunities, creating cards or crafts, fundraising, baking treats, shopping for, buying gifts or supplies, wrapping gifts for individuals, families, or organizations, · facilitating collections or drives for any organization or entity

Service should NOT be something that a student would ordinarily do such as a part-time job or club activity. Therefore, programs such as helping relatives, refereeing, or record keeping for

CYO teams and/or other athletic leagues, teaching dance classes, or other similar activities will not be accepted.

Hurricane Hours (Service to the School)*

Students may perform a **maximum of 5 hours of service to the school per school year for Hurricane Hours.**

Hurricane hours include service opportunities sponsored through the following:

- Admissions
- Marketing & Communications
- Advancement
- Academic Departments
- Villa Arts events such as Dance, Fine Arts, Music, and Theater
- Villa clubs and organizations
- Villa athletic teams and sports camps and service sponsored by Villa athletic teams and sports camps.

***Any Villa adult offering Hurricane Hours must complete the Mission & Ministry Hurricane Hours form prior to offering the service opportunity.**

Students are encouraged to volunteer their time to Villa Maria above and beyond the maximum of 5 hours of Hurricane Hours.

Fulfillment of Service Hours Requirement

Fulfillment of the service hours requirement requires the following:

- Student timely logs hours onto MobileServe
- Student ensures that hours are verified by appropriate supervisor
- Approval of hours by Director of Service and Social Justice

School Related Activities Ineligibility List for Service Hours

Students who have NOT fulfilled the required minimum service hours on the dates indicated in the service hours charts will be placed on the School Related Activities Ineligibility List.

Once on the list, students will be considered ineligible for extra-curricular participation in any school-related activity. Activities include -- but are not limited to -- dances; field trips; athletic practices, competitions and tryouts; musical performances; club meetings.

For the incoming freshmen class, fulfillment of service hours may begin after the first day of school on August 26, 2026. For the other classes, fulfillment of service hours may begin for the next school year once the hours for the current school year have been completed and submitted.

Service Hours -- Graduation Requirements

The completion of service hours is a graduation requirement.

Service Hours – Grading and Submission

Each student will receive a PASS, INCOMPLETE, or FAIL for Service Learning on her semester one report card and this will be included in PowerSchool. Each student will receive a PASS or FAIL for Service Learning on her final report card and transcript and this will be included in PowerSchool.

Transfer Students

Service hours for transfer students will be prorated.

MobileServe and Verification of Service

Villa Maria uses the Mobile Serve platform for the submission and recording of service opportunities. Students are responsible for submitting their own service hours to MobileServe and ensuring that their service hours are verified by their service supervisor according to the above-listed due dates. Students must submit service hours to Mobile Serve within one week from the date of service.

Verification of service hours may only be done by the direct supervisor of the service opportunity. The preferred method of verification is to have the supervisor sign the MobileService App on the student's device or the Villa Maria hard copy service verification form before they leave the service site.

Parents should not serve as the supervisor verifying service hours. In the rare case in which a Villa parent acts as a direct supervisor of a service opportunity, preapproval by the Director of Service and Social Justice is required.

Failure to Honor Service Commitment

Once a student commits to a service opportunity, she is expected to honor that commitment. Any student who fails to honor a service hour commitment must meet with the Director of Service and Social Justice and further disciplinary action may be required.

Communication

Students are encouraged to meet with the Director of Service and Social Justice if they have any questions or concerns. If a student is unsure if a service opportunity meets the service requirements, she must meet with the Director of Service and Social Justice **before** she performs the service. Students assume the risk for all service opportunities which are not approved as the hours completed may not be counted toward the service hours requirement.

NHS Service Hours

Service Hours for National Honors Society (NHS) are separate and apart from the Villa Maria Service Hours.