

# **PARENT POLICY HANDBOOK 2010-2011**

## **ST. PAUL PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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Westerville, Ohio 43082  
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Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. – Monday-Thursday  
Closed June 15 – August 16

**Parish Web Site**  
[www.stpaulcatholicchurch.org](http://www.stpaulcatholicchurch.org)

### **Director of Religious Education**

Janet Brewer  
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### **Administrative Assistant**

Kris Erwin

### **Curriculum Coordinator Grades 1 – 8**

Mindy Hemmelgarn

### **Sunday Preschool Coordinator**

Amy Moonis

## **Welcome to St. Paul Religious Education Program**

Parents are the primary religious educators of their children. Our formal classes are here to support you in your ministry. It is our privilege to partner with you and your family along your faith journey.

In order to provide you with formal religious education classes each volunteer must have been fingerprinted and have attended a Protecting God's Children session. This session provides each volunteer the knowledge and awareness to protect children against any potential sexual abuser. It is also a policy of our parish and diocese to have a minimum of 2 adults in each classroom. We strive to provide the safest possible environment for each of the children and youth participating in classes and activities at our parish.

Class availability is affected directly by the number of volunteers who complete the above requirements. Our Home School program is offered for grades 1-3-4-5-6-7 when we lack the appropriate number of volunteers to provide adequate coverage for our religion classes. It is also available for those with scheduling difficulties.

This handbook will provide you with the policies and guidelines you need to follow so that we can accomplish our goals of providing a safe environment, quality religious education experiences, service opportunities, community expression of faith, as well as the necessary practices used to keep our weekly catechetical classes running smoothly.

With the commitment of parents, volunteers and staff, we will work together to provide the children and youth of St. Paul Parish an enriching environment for growth in the Catholic faith.

## **POLICIES FOR ALL PROGRAMS**

### **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance is important! As with any activity, students experience greater benefit with consistent participation. Each lesson, just as each year, builds upon the previous one. Regular attendance enables the student to benefit fully while promoting a sense of belonging to the parish life community.

### **CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER, Grades 1 - 8**

If Westerville schools have cancelled school for the day, RELIGION classes will also be cancelled. Should a late day storm arrive and schools dismiss early PSR classes are cancelled.

Parents and /or students have two options for checking on the status of classes. They can call the Religious Education office at 882-5045 or they can email us at [stpaulreligiouseducation@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulreligiouseducation@gmail.com) to receive an outgoing message.

Please do not count on announcements on TV or radio stations. They are called but do not always post the information given.

### **SUNDAY PRESCHOOL EMERGENCY CLOSING POLICY**

Sunday Preschool classes will be held unless there is a level two snow emergency or a tornado warning. If classes are not cancelled but sufficient staff is not present to run the program, parents will be asked to take children to Mass with them.

### **CLASSROOM SNACKS AND PARTIES**

Food is not permitted in our classrooms at any time. There are many students in the program who have life threatening allergies. For this reason we ask you NOT to bring in treats and snacks.

**There are times that a treat is sent home with your student and in the upper grades (6-7-8) food may be served to reinforce a lesson.**

## **CLASSROOM SNACKS AND PARTIES CON'T**

If your student has special dietary needs or restrictions please indicate these on your student registration form AND notify the teacher.

## **CLASSROOM VISITORS**

Any visitors must register with the PSR office prior to class time in order to tour our program. While in the building they must be accompanied by a staff member. Please contact us at 882-5045.

## **DISCIPLINE / DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

Disrespect toward teachers, aides, other students, property, or any **inappropriate behavior or language** will not be tolerated. Incidents will be recorded in the student's file and parents will be contacted. If incidents are continuous parents will be required to attend class with their student.

## **HOME SCHOOL for Grades 1-3-4-5-6-7**

The Home School program is available for those families who wish to work with their children at home rather than place them in a weekly religion class. When registering for PSR you should indicate that you want your child placed in Home School. Regular PSR fees apply to this program. In late September/early October you will be given the expectations, materials and requirements you will need to complete the program. This option is not offered for those students preparing for sacraments in grades 2 & 8.

## **SACRAMENTAL PARENT MEETINGS**

Parents of children preparing for a sacrament are required to attend sacramental parent meetings. A schedule of parent meetings is distributed with the calendar in September. First Eucharist and First Reconciliation are normally celebrated in the second grade. Confirmation is celebrated in the eighth grade. However, students in upper grade levels, who have never attended religion classes, are prepared to receive sacraments through the RCIA program.

## **2 YEAR SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

It is the policy of St. Paul's Parish that no child will be able to receive a sacrament unless he/she has been registered in and regularly attending the PSR program for at least two years prior to the reception of a sacrament.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

We strive to offer appropriate catechesis for all children and youth regardless of their abilities or needs. The U.S. Catholic bishops stated in 1995 "By reason of their baptism, all Catholics are equal in dignity in the sight of God and have the same divine calling." We work with families to place all students in our classes.

## **RCIA FOR CHILDREN**

Children who are 4<sup>th</sup> grade and older and have not participated in religious education classes will be included in the Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) process. Each child will participate in their grade level religion class plus attend another session to help them gain a better understanding about their Catholic faith. They will also attend Sunday dismissals with our adult RCIA members.

This program includes children who have been baptized as well as those who have not received the Sacrament of Baptism. We work with the entire family so that each student is prepared appropriately.

## **SUNDAY PRESCHOOL**

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. or  
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Preschool – Ages 3 and 4 or 5/Kindergarten

The Sunday Preschool Program is a religious readiness program designed to support the family in bringing the child closer to love and knowledge of God and Church. There is a strong emphasis on self-worth and the child's relationship to God, creation, family and the Church community. Classes at all levels provide numerous opportunities for the child to learn through discovery and experience in an atmosphere of love and fun.

The importance of the parental role in the development of Christian attitudes is also emphasized. Parents are also given suggestions for ways to nurture faith in the home.

Children must be 3 years old by September 30 of the current year and potty trained.

## **ATTENDANCE**

In the event of an absence, lesson materials from the missed class will be sent home the following Sunday.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Please bring your child 5-10 minutes before the scheduled class time. Parents must sign their children in and notify the teacher where they will be attending Mass. Do not leave a child in the classroom unless a teacher or aide is in the room. Parents must remain on church property for the duration of preschool. Please wait in the hallway until the teacher opens the door. Children will only be released to their parents or an authorized adult.

Please be aware that if sufficient staff is not available for some reason, (illness, etc.) parents will be told to take their children to Mass with them.

## **ELEMENTARY (grades 1-5)**

You have the choice on Mondays of two class times:

Monday Early 4:30 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.

Monday Late 6:15 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

The Elementary Program is a religious education program centered on the powerful and essential message of the gospel and the very elements of our Catholic faith. The seven major themes of our curriculum are; The Kingdom of God, Sacraments, Morality, The Church, Jesus Christ, Trinity and Revelation. We are committed to partner with parents and guardians to develop households in which the faith is shared and lived with vigor. Our goal is to provide a place in which our students learn to live their faith as well as to understand it, where they can experience their Catholic identity, integrate their Catholic values, and express their Catholic beliefs.

Classes are to begin promptly. All students are expected to come to class with all necessary books, folders, pens/pencils and completed assignments. Homework can be a part of each grade's program in order to review and reinforce the material presented during the brief formal class time. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to miss class only when there is a serious reason.

**If a student is absent for any scheduled class a parent or guardian must call the Religious Education Office to advise us of the date and reason for the absence.**

Absences are to be made up by completing the work covered in class and homework assignments with the guidance of a parent or guardian. Each student is given a syllabus at the beginning of the school year so that they can complete missing assignments at home. These assignments should be given to the teacher or PSR office as soon as possible.

The cost to replace a textbook is \$20.00 for all grade levels.

## **ELEMENTARY SPECIFIC**

### **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

Over the next few years our parish grounds will be under construction. Due to the nature of this project our entrances and exits from the school building for our religion classes will be adjusted for the safest possible situations for our students. Please read over this carefully and follow our procedures.

### **ENTRANCES and EXITS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING**

- The front door (by the flag pole)
- The doors in the glass hallway between Miller Hall and the school building
- The doors in the bus loop leading to the Activity Center.

### **ARRIVAL to CLASS**

Students may enter through the above listed doors. Please check in with the hall monitors and the PSR office if you enter during a class session.

### **DISMISSAL from CLASS**

All students must be picked up from their assigned classrooms by a parent or another authorized adult. We realize that this requires you to park your car and enter the school building. You may enter through the doors listed above.

Teachers and aides will be monitoring when each student leaves his or her classroom. Each student must have an authorized adult sign them out after every class. Authorized adults are listed on the Transportation Information (see below).

### **TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION**

Included with registration materials you will find the Transportation Information area for each student in grades 1 - 5. We encourage carpooling due to the limited parking space for our religion classes. Please include anyone who has your authorization to pick up your student from class. Teachers and aides will keep track of who picks up each student each week. This information will be kept in the PSR office.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Early dismissal is permitted for emergencies (i.e. medical). Remember to enter through the front doors of the school and report to the table in the center hallway in front of the library if an emergency occurs and early pick up is necessary. *Releasing students from religion class for other activities such as soccer practice or games is extremely disruptive. We are asking you to make the decision to let your student attend class or participate in their extra curricular activity.* Please cover the material listed on the syllabus if your child needs to miss a class.

## **PARKING**

Parking lots available to you are across the street from the school, on Moss Road, the lower lot off of State Street, by the Mary statue, and the lot by Miller Hall in front of the parish office. Be advised that with the building and growth of our parish these lots may change during the course of the school year.

**Please note where there is assigned handicapped parking only.** Please do not park in these designated spots! Be aware that fire regulations state that no one should park in either drive in front of the school.

## **PSR FOR GRADES 6-7-8**

Wednesday nights from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Using the current PSR curriculum, these sessions incorporate a youth ministry style that promotes hands-on learning that include, community-building activities, service opportunities, guest speakers and more. Seven major themes of our curriculum are; The Kingdom of God, Sacraments, Morality, The Church, Jesus Christ, Trinity and Revelation. We are committed to partner with parents and guardians to develop households in which the faith is shared and lived with vigor. Our goal is to provide a place in which our students learn to live their faith as well as to understand it, where they can experience their Catholic identity, integrate their Catholic values, and express their Catholic beliefs.

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## **ACTIVITIES CENTER DOORS, GYM AND MPR DOORS WILL NOT BE USED ON WEDNESDAY.**

## **ENTRANCES and EXITS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING**

- The front door (by the flag pole)
- The doors in the glass hallway between Miller Hall and the school building
- The west door of the school by the rectory.
- The doors leading from the bus loop into the school.

These doors will be open 15 minutes prior to the start of your student's session.

## **ARRIVAL to CLASS**

Students may enter through the above listed doors. Please check in with the center table if you enter during a class session.

## **DISMISSAL - PARENT CHOICE FOR INSIDE PICK UP**

We encourage you to come inside and pick up your student from their classroom. If this is your choice, you will need to complete a Transportation Form found in the PSR office. This would provide a great opportunity to meet your student's teacher, find out how they are doing, and how you can assist at home. Another plus is that it would relieve congestion in our pick up areas.

## **DISMISSAL from CLASS – if you choose to pick up outside no written notification is necessary**

Students who do not have written notification for inside pick up will be released from class at 8:30 p.m. and will exit the building through the same doors they entered. We ask everyone to please wait for his or her student in a designated area.

Plan ahead and arrange with them which parking lot or area you will be waiting. **Students are NOT to cross Moss Rd. to get into a car.** Please understand that it is not safe for your student to cross in front of cars in the front drive over to the road.

No one should double park in the drive in front of the school or in front of the Mary statue. While cars can wait curbside (always with the driver inside the car) the second lane should keep moving. The front drive needs to be ready to clear for fire or emergency vehicles at all times.

The lower lot (by the Mary statue) also needs to keep cars moving in a circular pattern. For this reason, the students must wait at the bottom of the steps for a parent to meet them or their ride to pull up.

## **PARKING**

You will find a parking lot across the street from the school on Moss Rd and another on the west entrance of the school by the rectory. Please note that there is handicapped parking only immediately in front of the school. You must look for the signs.

Thank you for your support of these policies. This does require patience when picking up students on Wednesday evenings. We encourage you to carpool. If you have concerns with the outside pick up then please arrange to come into the building at the end of class and meet your student in their room.

## **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

In collaboration with the Diocese of Columbus' commitment to provide a 'Safe Environment' for the children in our care, St. Paul requires every volunteer, (18 and older), who has contact with children:

- To be fingerprinted so that a criminal background check can be made
- To attend a 'Protecting God's Children' training session.

Both must be done before a volunteer can be assigned any position in our Religious Education Program.

Any parishioner, who has the desire to work with the youth of our parish and has met the above requirements, is welcome to participate in our program. Instruction in teaching methods and principles of faith is available through diocesan certification classes. Full tuition is waived for teachers/co-teachers, other volunteers are charged ½ tuition.

Positions available:

### **Teachers**

- Must be confirmed practicing Catholics
- Attend meetings as scheduled
- Teach the prepared curriculum
- Communicate with parents

### **Aides**

- Assist teacher
- Attend meetings as scheduled
- Help maintain discipline

### **Student Helpers (ages 13 – 17)**

Assist teacher/aides with various crafts for students.

### **Child Care Workers (only during Monday Classes)**

Provide babysitting for children of teachers/aides during class time.

### **Office Aides (during class times)**

Be present during class time to answer phones, record attendance, supervise all persons entering and exiting the building and perform general office duties.

### **Hall Monitors (during class times)**

Be present 10 minutes before, during and after class to monitor the hallways. Acquire information from adults as they enter the school and direct them to the appropriate area. Assist our students as they travel the hallways.

## **HARASSMENT POLICY FOR THE COLUMBUS DIOCESE**

1. Harassment can take many forms. Harassment can occur at any parish activity, and/or can take place in classrooms, halls, cafeterias, gymnasiums, or even at programs sponsored by the parish at other locations. It does not include compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that embarrasses, denigrates, or shows hostility toward a person because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age or disability or other protected characteristics.
2. It is the policy of the Diocese of Columbus to maintain a spiritually enriching environment in all programs and activities, free of all forms of harassment and intimidation. No participant, volunteer adult leader, or parish staff member – male or female – should be subject to unlawful harassment in any form, and specifically not to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical.
3. Conduct which constitutes sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Offensive sexual flirtations, advances, propositions;
  - Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual or gender-based nature;
  - Explicit or degrading sexual or gender-based comments about another individual or his or her appearance;
  - The display or circulation of sexually explicit or suggestive writing, pictures or objects;
  - Any offensive or physical conduct which shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of gender or sex;
  - Graffiti of a sexual nature;
  - Fondling oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in front of others;
  - Spreading rumors about or categorizing others as to sexual activity.

Sex harassment is not limited to conduct that is sexual in nature – it also includes harassment that is based on gender. Gender-based harassment, which is also prohibited, is conduct that would not occur except for the sex of the person involved. An example would be referring to a woman by or as a female body part, or a demeaning sex-based term, or treating people differently because of their gender. The same prohibitions apply with regard to inflammatory or offensive comments or behaviors which are based upon race, color, age, religion, disability, or national origin. In short, working

relationships between employees and volunteers must be based on mutual respect.

Sexual harassment also includes the taking of, or refusal to take, any personnel or other action on the basis of a person's submission to or refusal of sexual overtures. No person should so much as imply that an individual's "cooperation" or submission to unwelcome sexual activity will have any effect on the individual's employment, assignment, compensation, advancement, development, program evaluation, participation in parish programs or activities, or any other condition of employment or achievement.

Not all physical conduct is necessarily considered sexual in nature. (For example, a coach hugging a student after an accomplishment, a youth minister consoling an adolescent with an injury or physical conduct during athletic events would not be considered sexual conduct.) However, peer-based sexual harassment is a form of prohibited conduct where the harassing conduct creates a hostile environment.

4. A sexually hostile environment can be created by a parish employee, volunteer, youth participant, or visitor to the parish activity.
5. Any person who believes that he/she is subject to unlawful harassment or intimidation must contact the (a) program administrator (b) pastor, or (c) diocesan director of religious education. A complaint must be filed in writing. In the event that an individual alleges harassment by a director of religious education, or a pastor, the individual may file the complaint with the diocesan director of religious education. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and the person initiating the complaint will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.
6. Where it is determined that harassment has occurred, the appropriate authority will take immediate disciplinary action against any program administrator, volunteer, or staff engaging in harassment. The response shall take into account the individuals and circumstances. Such action may include, depending on the circumstances, disciplinary measures up to and including termination of services.
7. No retaliation against anyone who reports harassment will be tolerated. The Diocese prohibits such retaliation and will take appropriate responsive action if retaliation occurs.

**Parent's Pledge**

*As we enroll our child/children in the St. Paul PSR Program, we pledge our power as parents to assist them in their growth as Catholic Christians in today's world by:*

*Surrounding them with Christian values, love, and forgiveness,*

*Praying together at home and worshipping together with St. Paul Parish families during our weekend liturgies,*

*Listening and discussing with them what happened during religious education classes,*

*Participating when asked in the activities of the PSR Program.*

**St. Paul Staff Pledge**

*We the priests, and staff make the following promise to the St. Paul PSR community.*

*We promise to:*

*Be a strong support by being a faith-filled parish with many prayer and worship opportunities,*

*Accept the privilege and promise to provide enriching religious education programs for your children,*

*Provide a caring community ready to serve others,*

*Nurture an atmosphere that will help our students experience Christian community,*

*Present a religious education program based on scripture and the traditions of our Church,*

*Provide activities that will lead our children to develop a relationship with Jesus, a life of prayer,*

*And a life of service to others.*