

# **PSR PARENT HANDBOOK**



**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE  
ST. PATRICK PARISH  
313 NORTH DEPEYSTER  
KENT, OHIO 44240  
330-673-5849  
[stpatkentreligious@gmail.com](mailto:stpatkentreligious@gmail.com)**

# 2021/2022 PSR Catechists

Kindergarten – Mr. Jim & Mrs. Beth Kitchen

Grade 1 – Mrs. Kathy DeCrane

Grade 2 – Mrs. Carol Sabol

Grade 3 – Ms. Christina McFarland & Mrs. Charlotte McFarland

Grade 4 – Mrs. Lynne Fuller

Grade 5 – Mr. Michael & Mrs. Debbie Baruffa

Grade 6 – Ms. Jacqueline Lovelace

Grade 7 – Mr. Dan Stanley

Grade 8 – Mrs. Nancy Marhofer & Mr. Elek Kitchen

To “be” catechists!  
Not to “work” as catechists.  
Catechesis is a vocation:  
“being a catechist”,  
this is the vocation,  
not “working” as a catechist.

Pope Francis,  
Congress on Catechesis



# Policies & Procedures

*St. Patrick Parish asks that all correspondence either be mailed to the church address at 313 N. Depeyster Street, Kent, Ohio 44240 or dropped off during PSR in the school building. You can also call or email our Director of Religious Education at any time. Please allow 24 hours for a response unless it is an emergency, a response will be received as soon as possible upon notification. **You can reach the Religious Education office directly at 330-673-5849.***

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- Our classes are held in St. Patrick Parish School Building.
- Radios, toys, snacks, candies, and general reading materials are not to be brought in to class.
- Damage to another person's property will not be tolerated. Eating, drinking, or gum chewing are not allowed in the school building. If there are medical conditions that require snacks or beverages they **MUST** be documented on the medical forms in the registration packet.
- Any behavior or articles brought into the classroom that hinder instruction will not be tolerated.
- Parents and visitors are not permitted in the building without the knowledge of the Religious Education Office. If you would like to visit your child's class, arrangements should be made through the Religious Education Office by the Friday before class.
- **Electrical Devices (including CELL PHONES) are to be kept out of sight (unless documented medical reasons are provided) and turned off during class time. Students violating this provision will have the device confiscated. Confiscated items may be picked up by the parent/guardian after class.**

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

- **Mass Attendance:** An integral part of our Religious Education Program is that our students attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and participate fully is an essential part of the sacramental life of the Church. Learning in class can be truly effective only when one meets the Lord sacramentally at the altar. All students are required to hand in a weekly Mass assignment.
- **Homework:** Homework is an important part of classroom instruction; it reinforces the material presented to the student and provides an opportunity for family involvement. It is the parents' responsibility to see that children are prepared for class and have completed projects and/or assignments. Students should come prepared each week with textbook, pen, pencils, and whatever the catechist has requested of the class.

**Communication:** When a parent experiences a problem with his/her child in the classroom experience, we ask that the parent call the religious education office immediately to remedy the situation. Frequently parents can become concerned over a child/catechist relationship, a statement made by the catechist in the classroom about Church teaching, or a disciplinary action which has taken place. Please call the Director of Religious Education at the Parish Offices at any time, even if you feel you are presenting a problem situation. We sincerely ask you to call and discuss any concern with us

**It is ESSENTIAL that EVERY parent complete and return a Medical Emergency Form EACH YEAR this form can be found on the reverse side of the paper registration form. Please be sure to notify the Religious Education Office of any change in emergency contact person or phone numbers throughout the year.**

#### **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS**

**Religious Education Classes should take top priority over all other programs and activities as these classes are integral to your child's growth in faith. *Please note that no student will proceed to the next grade level if he or she is absent for more than five class sessions***

**For your child's safety, it is essential that he/she is not dropped off more than ten minutes before and picked up no later than ten minutes after scheduled class time. The parish cannot guarantee supervision beyond these times.**

**Absenteeism:** Weekly attendance in the program is a must if proper instruction and learning is to take place. If a child is absent, a note which explains the reason for the absence is to be brought to the classroom catechist the following week. This note must carry the ***date of*** and the ***reason for*** the absence, and the ***parent's signature***. The note is to be written on note paper and enclosed in an envelope. It is expected that all homework and assignments will be made up when a child is absent.

**Please note:** If a child has been absent for an excessive number of times, the parent will be called to discuss the problem.

**Tardiness:** Every time a child enters a classroom late, he/she interrupts the lesson which the catechist has planned. We ask that you exert every effort possible to have your child in class on time. The catechist will keep a record of tardiness. If a student is repeatedly tardy, the parent will be called to discuss the problem.

**Procedure for walkers and carpooling:** If your child will be walking down from Mass or in a carpool during this school year, a note indicating such (including drivers' names) must be sent to the catechist at the first class. This note will be kept on file for the entire year. A note is also required any time your child will be picked up by anyone other than the person who normally holds this responsibility. ***No student will be dismissed to anyone other than his/her parent unless permission to do so has been given in writing.***

### **COMMUNICATION/WEATHER CANCELLATIONS**

Our PSR program utilizes *Flocknote* to notify parents of important information, cancellations, or emergency situations. You are automatically signed up to receive email and text alerts from this system when you register your child/children for our program. If you wish to opt out of this system, please notify us.

In the event of an emergency situation during a PSR session this is also the same system that will be used to notify parents and will be updated, as the situation requires. All parents will be notified this way if there is a situation where you need to meet up with your child/children at another location.

**Please note:** *This system is designed for parents/guardians of children currently enrolled in the St. Patrick Parish PSR or sacramental preparation programs **ONLY!** There is no extra cost for this service. Depending on your plan standard data and messaging rates may apply.*

In the case of inclement weather, parents need to determine for themselves if coming to class is safe. We support you in your decision. You will receive a text or email alert if classes are cancelled and you can also check the parish FACEBOOK page.

### **SPORTS/Other Organizations**

St. Patrick Parish P.S.R. students are encouraged to participate in the various athletic programs available to them. Under the supervision of coaches, they learn good sportsmanship, self-discipline and cooperation with others. If your child/children participate in CYO sports they are expected to be in attendance at PSR/Junior High program. For those who participate in other sports leagues/teams or organizations please take into consideration the importance of the role of faith in the life of your family. We understand the tough decisions that you need to make, however, studies show children who grow up with both sports/other organizations and faith as priorities in their life are more successful, better well rounded, and will keep close to their faith as they mature.

### **SACRAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS**

For families that wish to have their child/children make their First Sacraments (First Reconciliation & First Eucharist) it is a requirement of the Youngstown Diocese that the child/children have 2 years of being enrolled in Religious Education at St. Patrick Parish. Consult the parish website, for specific sacrament information under the Sacraments tab or contact the Religious Education Office for more information.

Confirmation of teens is offered for those young adults, grades 8 and up, wishing to complete their Initiation into the Catholic Church. Traditionally, Confirmation is celebrated during their 8th Grade Year. These parishioners (both from St. Patrick Parish School and St. Patrick Parish Junior High) take part in a parish-based preparation process for the reception of this sacrament and regular attendance is a requirement during the preparation process and attendance at each session is tracked and recorded. Contact the Religious Education Office for more information.

### **DRESS CODE**

Our dress code is similar to that of the Kent City School District. **There are to be no sport**

**shoes or sport cleats worn in the school building!** For sacramental celebrations we will notify you of the dress code policy pertaining to that specific sacrament.

### **CODE OF BEHAVIOR POLICY**

The pastor/administrator, parish administration and staff of St. Patrick Parish School of Religion believe that all employees, volunteers and students are entitled to work and study in environments that are Christ centered and free of harassment. Our PSR/Junior High program will not tolerate harassment of any type. If harassment occurs, the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Disciplinary action may include suspension or expulsion.

We feel an atmosphere of respect and appropriate behavior is essential for the best climate to be present in our classrooms and hallways. If a student is disruptive in class or on school premises, we feel the parent/guardian should be informed so that we may work together to help the student benefit from our program.

In light of our goal of having the best possible program for our students, we consider these kinds of behavior inappropriate:

- Not being present in the room at the beginning of the session
- Disrespect shown to a supervisory adult, such as a hall monitor, a catechist or any other person, etc.
- Leaving the room or building without permission
- Disruptive behavior or language
- Violation of the program discipline policy

If a student demonstrates any of the listed inappropriate behaviors, this sequence of responses will be followed:

#### **FIRST OFFENSE:**     *Talk with Student*

A conversation between the student, catechist or one of the PSR/Junior High administrators will take place. It is our hope that this conversation will clear up any misunderstandings or the student's part of his/her expected behavior and responsibility. Our hope is that this discussion will be sufficient to correct the situation.

#### **SECOND OFFENSE:**    *Phone Call to Parent/Guardian*

We will contact the parent/guardian to help generate some possible options to improve the situation.

#### **THIRD OFFENSE:**     *In-Person Conference*

A conference will be initiated, including the student, the parent/guardian, the PSR/Junior High administrator, and any other significant person such as a catechist, pastor, hall monitor, etc. This conference hopefully will result in a clear understanding

of the difficulty, and the possible options to correct the situation. A written summary of the agreed upon solution will be prepared and given to each of the people involved in the decision and a copy will be kept in the students file. We are hopeful that a solution can be found that will benefit the student, adult involved, and the entire program.

If, at any point in this process, the parent/guardian feels that they would like to meet with the PSR/Junior High administrator, catechist, etc. they are welcome to do so. Please contact the Religious Education Office and we will assist in gathering the appropriate parties together. We hope that with good communication and trust in one another, our children will benefit, and that our people will carry on our Catholic traditions and spirit of Christian commitment.

### **STUDENT THREATS POLICY**

What constitutes a THREAT?

*Whenever an individual believes that his/her personal safety has been put in jeopardy or challenged, a threat has occurred. It may be verbal, written, or done through use of technology.*

The following steps will also be followed when "Cyber-bullying" has occurred.

Procedures for expulsion as the result of a student threat:

- A. The police shall be notified immediately of the threat.
- B. The parent/guardian of the student who has made the threat shall be notified immediately.
- C. Any adult or the parent/guardian of any students who have been verbally mentioned as potential victims or listed in writing as potential victims shall be notified immediately.
- D. Counseling shall be made available to children who are victims of the threatening behavior or who observed the threatening behavior if it is determined that counseling is needed and parental permission is granted.

### **WEAPONS POLICY**

In furtherance of the overall philosophy, goals and objectives of the Catholic educational experience, St. Patrick's policy expressly prohibits the use, possession, sale, or discharge of any weapons or explosive devices in the school, at the parish, on school or parish grounds, or at school or parish sponsored activities. This policy shall apply to all students, participants in parish programs, teachers, administrators, and other personnel in the school or parish. This policy includes, but is not limited to, any object used as a weapon, any firearm, knife, deadly weapon, or explosive or incendiary device. As defined by state law, a deadly weapon is "any instrument, device, or thing capable of inflicting death, and designed or specifically adapted for use as a weapon, or possessed, carried or used as a weapon." (O.R.C. 2923.1 I A) Firearms shall include any loaded or unloaded gun of any caliber or type. This prohibition also includes any pistol, rifle or other device that uses air or gas propelled projectiles. Violations of this policy may warrant notification of the police, immediate suspension, and possible expulsion. If possession of a weapon is suspected, the principal or other administrator should immediately contact the police department. If it is determined that this policy has been violated, the parents

of the offender shall be immediately contacted and must cooperate with the disciplinary process.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT & SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICIES**

St. Patrick Parish School of Religion is firmly committed to providing a safe, positive learning and working environment for everyone in our Religious Education programs. For this reason, and in keeping with the goals and objectives of Catholic education, St. Patrick Parish School of Religion expressly prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence in the school environment. This policy reemphasizes the personal dignity of the individual and fosters positive sexual attitudes and respect for others. Sexual Harassment: The administration and staff of St. Patrick Parish School of Religion believe that all employees and students are entitled to work and study in school-related environments that are free of sexual harassment. St. Patrick Parish School of Religion will not tolerate harassment of any type, and the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Disciplinary action may include suspension or expulsion. Examples of peer sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, verbal or written taunting; bullying; other offensive, intimidating, hostile or offensive conduct; jokes, stories, pictures, cartoons, drawings or objects which are offensive, annoy, abuse, or demean an individual or group.

### **Procedures to File a Sexual Harassment Complaint**

Students or employees who believe they have experienced sexual harassment shall report such matter to the principal, who shall be the investigator for sexual harassment complaints.

1. A complaint of sexual harassment is to be made to the DRE or other designated impartial administrator. The complaint shall be as specific as possible regarding details. If the complaint is made by an employee, it shall be in writing.
2. The DRE or other impartial designee shall immediately investigate the complaint and shall make written notations of the specific allegations.
3. Information to be acquired during the investigation of the complaint shall include names of witnesses, date(s), times, and the specific charge of sexual harassment.
4. The need for confidentiality shall be stressed.
5. No reprisals will be tolerated against complainants, witnesses, or of individuals involved in the investigation.
6. The DRE shall make a prompt determination regarding any disciplinary action. Notice shall be made to the parties regarding the disposition of the investigation consistent with the mandates of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE**

Upon receiving a complaint from either a student or a school employee, the principal shall



discuss the allegations with the complainant-victim to obtain a statement of the facts (e.g., what occurred, when, where, by whom, names of witnesses). All complaints are to be taken seriously. It is the responsibility of the principal to investigate promptly and impartially all claims of sexual harassment and to take appropriate and equitable action. Parties shall be given an opportunity to present witness or other evidence during the investigation. Information regarding an investigation of sexual harassment shall be confidential to the extent possible, and those individuals who are involved in the investigation shall not discuss information regarding the complaint outside the investigation process. No one shall retaliate against any employee or student because he/she filed a sexual harassment complaint, assisted or participated in a sexual harassment charge or because they have opposed language or conduct that violates this policy. Retaliation will result in discipline. If the investigator is the alleged harasser or witness to the incident, an alternate investigator shall be designated.

When a crime has been committed, the designated administrator shall immediately notify the local police department.

After the investigation is complete, notice of the outcome shall be given to the complainant(s) and the alleged harasser(s) consistent with the mandates of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken when harassment has occurred, and appropriate efforts shall be taken to prevent reoccurrence of the harassment.

### **Sexual Violence**

If an incident of sexual violence occurs, the DRE, pastor, or other school authority is required under state law to report the incident (O.R.C. 2151.421). The Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately if a staff member knows or suspects (O.R.C. 2151.421) that sexual abuse or violence has occurred involving a child less than eighteen years of age. Generally sexual harassment should be construed as sexual violence when: the recipient is physically touched without his/her consent in a sexual manner: is expressly threatened or perceives a threat of physical harm for purposes of the offender's sexual gratification: or is the victim of sex offenses under Ohio law, including Gross Sexual Imposition (O.R.C. 2907.05), Sexual Battery (O.R.C. 2907.03), Rape (O.R.C. 2907.02), Importuning (O.R.C. 2907.07), Voyeurism (O.R.C. 2907.08), Public Indecency (O.R.C. 2907.09), or Felonious Sexual Penetration (O.R.C. 2907.12) as examples. In each one of the above examples, the Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately.

***While not all emergency situations are listed in this handbook, know that it is the policy of the St. Patrick's Parish PSR/Junior High program to keep your child safe and to take appropriate action should emergency situations arise. We have done our best to create policies that benefit everyone. Should you have any questions or concerns about anything in this handbook or any of these policies, please contact the Director of Religious Education at any time with your concerns or questions.***

Revised May 19, 2021