



Policy Statement of Expectations – Parent Handbook

Parish Mission Statement

We, the Catholic Parish of St. Alexander of Villa Park, Illinois, are called by our baptism to be followers of Jesus Christ. Therefore, our mission is to know, love and serve God through worship, education, care of God's people and all of creation.

Religious Education Statement

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church...

Catechesis aims at putting "people...in communion...with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity."

CCC 426

Religious Education is a life - long learning process in which the family is the **PRIMARY** educator! The parish, for children, is an extension of the religious education received from their families, through the parish mission. The religious education program assists families in the teaching of the Catholic faith. Our religious education program is available from 1st through 8th grade.

It is important that children continue their formation each year so they can come to understand and experience their faith at each level of their development.

TUITION AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Families registering for classes must:

- Fill out **all forms completely**
- Have a copy of the child(ren) **Baptismal certificate** (either on file or included with registration).

- Books and Tuition payment (full or partial with agreement) at time of registration.

While paying tuition in full at time of registration is preferred and helpful to the parish, we do have payment plans available to help families afford tuition.

Payments due are the responsibility of the parent. All due dates are listed on our current calendar.

A family will not be turned away because of an inability to pay. If you have a need for tuition assistance, please speak to the Religious Education Director.

SACRAMENTS

The Diocese of Joliet requires that children complete a minimum of two (2) consecutive years of religious education before receiving sacraments.

Children receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in the second consecutive year of religious education after all requirements have been met.

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated in the 8th grade following two (2) consecutive years of religious education and meeting all requirements. Confirmation is a sacrament which requires the student to make a personal choice to be confirmed.

Sacramental preparation involves additional parent and student activities during the school year. Parents will be notified of all meetings and special events.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Weather and Other Emergency Closings

Parents will be informed through Flocknote messages if class is cancelled due to bad weather or other emergency situations.

Change of Information

Please notify the Religious Education office should you move or change any of your phone numbers, including your emergency contact number.

Custody Issues

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform us of a change of marital situations involving custodial issues. Normally, it is presumed that both parents have equal access to a child. If this is not the case, the custodial parent must inform the Director in writing, with documented evidence.

Parent Communications

The Religious Education program will send notifications concerning changes in schedules, upcoming events, etc. Please check your phone, email and/or your children's backpacks for any of these communications.

Parent Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the **Religious Education office at (630) 832-7588**, send an email to stasfaithform.dre@gmail.com or stop by any time during class time.

POLICIES

Attendance & Absence

Attendance is expected for the **full class** each session. Leaving early or arriving late is discourteous and disruptive and should be for **emergency purposes only**. While understood, participation in non-religious activities is also important for a child's social and physical well-being, these activities should **NOT** interfere with religious education classes. Each class builds upon the preceding class and is essential for the learning process. Children showing a pattern of absences, late arrivals or early dismissals will result in the parent being called to come in and discuss with the Director ways to resolve these issues. If your child has any activity that conflicts to attend our classes, please discuss with the Religious Education Director.

In the event a child must leave class early, a parent must come into the religious education office **with a photo ID** to sign a child out. **NO** child will be dismissed from class without a parent coming to the office. Children arriving late must have a parent come in to sign a child in.

To report an absence, email stasfaithform.dre@gmail.com before class starts and provide: **Student's name, catechist's name and reason for absence. It is the responsibility of the parent and or child to contact the teacher for makeup work.**

Cell Phone Policy

If your child carries a cell phone, it must be turned off during class time and be kept in a jacket pocket or purse.

Medication

If a child has any health condition that requires medication, parents must have a permission form signed by the doctor and return it to the Religious Education Office before classes start.

Special Needs

In the space provided on the medical form, indicate any special needs your child may have regarding health concerns, allergies, hearing or visual impairments, educational needs, etc.

Please feel free to contact the Director of Religious Education to discuss your child's special needs.

Conduct

Good conduct, cooperation, attention and courtesy are expected from all students. This also means showing respect for other participants, catechists and church property. Any student who continually fails to cooperate with the catechist and or other students shall be subject to disciplinary action which may include:

- Sending the student to the Director of Religious Education office for a conference.
- Calling the student's parents in for a conference.
- Requiring parents to attend classes with the student until the student's behavior improves.
- Expulsion from the program.

Serious misconduct includes fighting, stealing, cheating, possession/use of drugs in any form, weapons, and/or alcohol, gang involvement, vandalism, aggressive behavior, threats and disrespect to staff are all eligible offenses for expulsion from the program.

Dress Code

Appropriate dress attire is expected. The religious education program is an extension of the Church; our focus is on learning about our faith and should not be distracted by what someone is wearing.

Student Drop-off and Pick-up

In order to provide adequate supervision for the health and safety of each child, we ask the following:

- Do **NOT** drop students off earlier than 20 minutes before scheduled time unless prior arrangements have been made with a catechist or Director of Religious Education.
- Please park in the parking lot next to the school building, and come to the assigned exit door to pick up your child to avoid having them walk alone through the parking lot.
- Grades 1 - 4 will exit through the side door #2, located on the south side (parents can wait on the sidewalk next to the school); Grades 5, 6, Confirmation Prep 1, 2 and 3 will exit through the front door.
- Please be prompt in picking up your child at the end of classes.

Carpooling

Parents are to write a letter giving permission for individuals (naming them), other than a parent, allowing a child to be picked up by them.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS

Religious Education begins with the family. It is expected that the students and those members of their families who are Roman Catholic are practicing the faith.

- Regular Sunday Mass attendance, Mass attendance on Holy Days of Obligation and the reception of Reconciliation and Holy Communion.
- Help your children learn their prayers. Pray as a family.
- Make sure your children bring their books and necessary supplies to class.
- Review what has been sent home from class and help your children with their homework.
- Make sure that religious education classes are a priority for the whole family.
- Talk to your children about your own faith and values.
- Be examples of Christian service in the parish and the community.
- Help children become familiar with reading the Bible.

We cannot stress enough how important the role of parents is in raising children in the faith. We cannot expect the world to teach our children about Jesus. We cannot expect the religious education teachers, who have our children for limited time, to lead our children to Jesus. Remember that it all begins at home. When children grow up praying with their parents at home (rosary, meal prayers, night prayers) and regularly attending church with their parents, they are being formed in the ways of God. If it is important to the parents, there is a greater chance it will be important to the children.

Supplies

At the beginning of the school year, students will receive a bag and workbooks. Confirmation students will also receive a Bible. Students should bring their own folders, pens and pencils. They are responsible for their workbooks. Lost books will incur in a \$50 fee to get a replacement.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are essential to running a religious education program. Please contact the Director if you are able to give your time and talents. All catechists and others who work with children **are required to take a program called *Protecting God's Children* and fill out a background check release form.**