

Saint John XXIII Parish Religious Education Handbook Guidelines

Archdiocese of Miami



CLASS TIME: 10AM – 11:30AM

**CLASSES ARE HELD AT EVERGLADES HIGH SCHOOL. PLEASE ENTER
THE SCHOOL FROM 172nd Ave INTO THE STUDENT PARKING LOT.**

SAINT JOHN XXIII PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK GUIDELINES

**16800 Miramar Parkway
Miramar, Florida 33027
954.392.5062
Fax: 954.392.5063**

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**Pastor Reverend Ernest Biriruka
Saint John XXIII Religious Education**

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

Welcome to the Religious Education program of Saint John XXIII. Thank you for the privilege of allowing us to assist you in the religious and spiritual education of your children.

We would like you to take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the guidelines and policies included in this handbook. Your child will receive a communication folder in class which will contain calendars and important information for you during the year. It is your responsibility to check the folder after each class we will also contact you via email.

Parental participation is essential to the success of our program. You, as parents, are the primary educators of your children and we seek to encourage you in your efforts to provide good example by your weekly participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, fostering a dialogue on faith and family prayer in your home.

If there is any way that we may be of service to you in the coming school year please feel free to call on us.

Sincerely,

**Kathryn F. Cabrisas
Director of Religious Education**

MISSION STATEMENT

Obeying God's word that salvation comes from faith in Jesus Christ (John 20:31) the mission of Saint John XXIII Religious Education Program is to assist parents in their efforts to give the precious gift of the Catholic faith to their children. We hope to show our children that they are an important part of our faith community. We aim to show the entire community that Saint John XXIII is more than a place to worship but also a home where families can share laughter, tears, and play and pray together. We, with the parents educate our students in their Catholic faith so that they can face, with confidence, the difficult and often dangerous choices that confront them in their everyday lives. We desire to foster and nourish a joyful hope, founded in Jesus, our Savior. To help facilitate these goals, our program has set certain policies and we ask all parents to become familiar with them.

ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION

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Administration

The Pastor is responsible for the Religious Education Program in the Parish. He has appointed Mrs. Kathryn Cabrisas to serve as the Director of the Program, who may be contacted by phone at 954.392.5062 .

Archdiocesan policy requires that religious education programs meet with a minimum of 33 catechetical sessions/hours per academic year.

POLICY STATEMENT

All Catholic children who attend Public Schools should be enrolled in Religious Education classes from grades 1-12. It is the goal of Saint John XXIII to provide religious education for every child in the parish. In rare cases, the parish may not be able to invite a student into the program because it does not have the resources to meet the special needs of the child. In such case, the parish will assist the parents in providing catechesis for their child, especially in preparation for the sacraments. Children may receive First Communion age 7-up (second grade) during their second consecutive year in Religious Education classes. Confirmation is celebrated for students in grades 8-12 and who are in their second consecutive year of classes. Baptism of school age children, if needed, is scheduled during the second year of the child's formation.

General Expectations

"It is expected that each family become actively involved in Saint John XXIII Parish Religious Education Program and Parish in order to model a living, conscious, and active Christian faith and to reinforce the values and attitudes for living that faith. The family and their children also agree to act in accordance with these values and attitudes."

Custody Issues

If parents are divorced or separated, one parent must provide legal evidence of custody arrangements. If he or she has the sole right to a

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child, a copy of such agreement must be on file in the parish religious education office. Full rights apply to either parent unless a court order specifically revokes these rights. In the latter case, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide evidence of such a court order. See form at the end of handbook if you are a divorced or single parent with shared or sole custody.

In the case of a child who is not baptized as a Catholic, the person who enrolls the child as a faith formation student at the Parish must provide either (1) written consent of the other, non-enrolling parent or legal guardian on the attached form, or (2) appropriate legal documentation at the time of enrollment of his/her sole authority to enroll the child, such as a court order. Documentation of consent of all persons who have custody rights for the child is required for religious education classes, Rite of Christian Initiation adapted for children, sacramental preparation classes, Catholic school enrollment and youth ministry activities, if the child is not baptized as a Catholic.

Registrations

No person on the grounds of race, color, or national origin is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination in receiving services at the religious education program. Nor do we discriminate in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, gender or national origin.

It is the goal of the parish to provide religious education for every child in the parish. In rare cases, the parish may not be able to invite a student into the program because it does not have the resources to meet the special needs of the child. In such cases, the parish will assist the parents in providing catechesis for their child, especially in preparation for the sacraments.

The pastor has the final decision in matters of admission or dismissal to the program or to the reception of a sacrament.

Transfers

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Please notify the Catechetical Leader from the parish the child is transferring from to ensure that the information provided is accurate and that there are no outstanding issues at the previous religious education program.

Parental Communication with the Religious Education Program

Persons with concerns about a catechist should first attempt to address the concern with the catechist. Only after such attempts have failed, should the parent contact the parish Director/Coordinator of Religious Education. If the parent continues to be dissatisfied, the parent should contact the pastor. Only after such attempts have failed should the Office of Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Miami be contacted. All concerns or comments arriving at our offices will be followed up with the pastor and the parish Catechetical Leader.

Early Release of Students

A child must never be released early without the knowledge of the parent/guardian; The Director of Religious Education will release the child only to the person who has placed the child in the religious education program. Any other person seeking the release of the child must have the approval of the parent with legal custody, which ordinarily shall be in writing.

DISCIPLINE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Creating and Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children and Vulnerable Adults

“Recognizing that each individual is created by God, the Archdiocese of Miami is committed to the safety and well-being of its children and vulnerable adults and implements procedures to minimize risk and barriers and to build and foster a culture of safe environment. The Archdiocese does not tolerate abuse or neglect of anyone. It will comply with all obligations of civil and canon law; it will promote

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healing where it is needed, provide education, training and guidance when it is appropriate, and endeavor to prevent any abuse of minors or vulnerable adults with firm justice and mercy towards all.”

(Archdiocesan Policy)

The Archdiocese of Miami, in ongoing efforts to provide safe environments to our children and vulnerable adults, requires all employees and those volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults be fingerprinted, complete Virtus training, and sign a Pledge to Promote Safe Environment. Additionally, children in our parochial schools and Religious Education programs are to receive two lessons a year in the Virtus Teaching Touching Safety Program. This is an audited program that is administered with assigned, age appropriate lesson plans. Exact records of the participation of these lessons is logged in online. Parents may receive a guidebook and have an option to opt out, with proper documentation. For questions about the Teaching Touching Safety Program contact J. Rayburn at jrayburn@theadom.org or 305-762-1250.

Confidentiality

Catechists must keep confidential information entrusted to them as long as no one's life, health or safety is at stake or where disclosure is otherwise required by law or Archdiocesan policy. In these cases, parents will generally be promptly notified of catechist concerns. According to the state and archdiocesan law, all Catechists must report to the authorities when a child informs us of abuse. Then notify the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education. Archdiocesan procedures must be followed when it comes to child safety.

Conduct, whether inside or outside the Religious Education Program

A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside the religious education program, that is contrary to the moral code of the Catholic Church may be asked to leave the program.

Field Trips

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“Archdiocesan policy not only discourages field trips that extend beyond religious education program hours for elementary religious education programs but also forbids overnight field trips for elementary religious education programs.”

Field trips are privileges given to students; no student has an absolute right to a field trip. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic and/or behavioral requirements.

Parents should be allowed to refuse their child participation in a field trip.

Students are required to bring a parental permission slip which releases the religious education program from liability to participate in a field trip. Students who fail to submit a proper form will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. Telephone calls will not be accepted in lieu of written permission. If a child forgets to bring home the permission slip, a parent could copy the form from this book and complete it. This form could be faxed to the religious education program. Only the completion of this form satisfies the requirement of parental permission.

Search and Seizure

Search and Seizure are strongly discouraged in parish religious education programs. In case of reasonable suspicion of dangerous materials, report this to the legal authorities, inform pastor and archdiocesan Office of Catechesis.

The Director of Religious Education and his/her designee has access to any lockers, handbags, electronic devices, cell phones, book bags, desks, cars or any other object that is brought onto the religious education program property or any religious education function, and may remove or confiscate any object which is illegal or contrary to policy.

Reporting Physical Sexual Abuse

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“A Catechetical Leader/ Catechist who has been notified, or know, or have reasonable cause to suspect, that a child or vulnerable adult has been a victim of sexual abuse, shall immediately make any report required by law directly to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).” The parish pastor, archdiocesan Office of Catechesis and the archdiocesan Office of Safe Environment should be also notified. A CL must contact the Office of Safe Environment in case of doubts about the archdiocesan policy on reporting procedures.

Parents and guardians should understand that Florida State law requires a teacher or administrator who has reasonable suspicion that sexual or physical abuse has occurred to report this to the Division of Children and Family Services.

Harassment

“The Archdiocese of Miami religious education programs are committed to providing a safe, Christian, healthy and respectful environment that is free of discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, our parish will not tolerate harassment of employee or volunteers or students occurring in the religious education program or at religious education program-sponsored events.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, and/or visual, that is based on a person's protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status or other protected group status. The Archdiocesan religious education programs will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.”

Cooperation with Legal Authorities

It is the practice of the religious education program to cooperate with any local, state, or federal investigators or law enforcement officers that contact the religious education program in the course of any

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criminal investigation. The religious education program will attempt to notify the parents of any student sought to be interviewed in the course of a criminal investigation on the religious education program premises, unless directed by an investigator or law enforcement officer to the contrary, which is usually the case in investigations involving sexual or physical abuse. The religious education program will attempt as well to have a representative present during such an interview, unless this is not permitted by the investigators, which is often the case in investigations involving sexual or physical abuse.

Student Withdrawal

“The Catholic Church considers the parents to be the primary catechists of their children. The education of a student is a partnership between the parents and the religious education program.”

Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the religious education program administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken. As part of this partnership, parents are expected to pay the tuition that is charged for the Religious Education Program.

Substance Abuse Policy

“All Archdiocesan religious education programs are committed to a drug free environment. Any student selling drugs on religious education program property or at religious education program functions may be immediately expelled. All Archdiocesan procedures must be followed when it comes to child safety.”

The use or possession of illegal drugs or illegal mood altering substances, alcoholic beverages, drug-related paraphernalia, or the abuse of prescription or over the counter drugs by any student on parish property or while attending or participating in any religious education program sponsored activity is forbidden. Transgression of

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this rule will result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal from religious education program, even for a first offense.

Weapons Policy

“Weapons are not permitted anywhere on religious education program grounds. Students who bring weapons on religious education program grounds, who are in possession of weapons, or who threaten others with weapons or items used as weapons may be expelled from the religious education program.”

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Office of Religious Education at Saint John XXIII is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment for all. As such, bullying is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Therefore, this policy prohibits any unwelcome verbal or written conduct or gestures directed at a student by another student that has the effect of:

- (1) physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student;**
- (2) damaging, extorting or taking a student’s personal property;**
- (3) placing a student in reasonable fear of emotional or mental harm;**
- (4) placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or**
- (5) creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or the Catholic mission of Saint John XXIII Parish.**

I. Definition

- a. Bullying may involve but is not limited to: teasing, name-calling, slurs, rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, stalking, innuendos, demeaning comments, pranks, social isolation, gestures, cyber-bullying or other**

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verbal or written conduct. Cyber-bullying includes the following misuses of digital technology: teasing, intimidating, or making false accusations about another student by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital images or website postings (including blogs and social network sites).

- b. This definition includes students who either directly engage in an act of bullying or who, by their behavior, support another student's act of bullying.**

II. Scope

- a. This policy prohibits bullying that occurs either:
 - i. on parish premises before, during, or after Religious Education hours;**
 - ii. on any bus or vehicle as part of any Religious Education activity; or**
 - iii. during any function, extracurricular activity or other Religious Education-sponsored event or activity.****

III. Reporting Complaints

- a. Each student and parent has a duty to report any bullying to the Office of Religious Education immediately. If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses or learns of) any incident of bullying, the incident must be promptly reported to the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education. The DRE/CRE will provide the student/parent with the Bullying Complaint Report Form which must be completed, dated and signed by the complaining party so that the Office of Religious Education may initiate further inquiry, when appropriate.**

IV. Disciplinary Action

- a. Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include: temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference,**

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suspension, expulsion, and/or notification to appropriate authorities. The disciplinary action may be unique to the individual incident and may vary in method and severity based on the principal's discretion.

- b. False reports or accusations of bullying also constitutes a violation of this policy and may subject the offending party to appropriate disciplinary action.**

HEALTH ISSUES AND PROCEDURES

Medication Procedures

The administering of medicine to a child outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should not be delegated to religious education program personnel except under unusual circumstances. Only when absolutely necessary is the religious education program willing to accept responsibility for administering medications, and then under the following guidelines:

The religious education program will never administer/dispense medicines (including "over the counter drugs) to students without specific authorization by both a licensed physician and the parent of the students. An "Authorization for Medication" form must be completed and submitted by the parent. The name of the medication and dosage must be indicated on this form.

All medication must be brought to the office with a parent's authorization.

Only prescription medication can be brought to religious education program and must be stored in a religious education program office; no over-the-counter medication is allowed, unless a doctor's written authorization is submitted.

Prescription medication must be in the original bottle, which must be labeled and must have the exact dosage.

The religious education program will not dispense medication, so students are responsible for their own medication.

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All medications will remain in a secure location. (By exception, students who are asthmatic may carry a prescribed inhaler with them during the religious education program day.) A written log will be kept of dispensed medication.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RECORDS

Student Records

The following records are kept in the official file of the student: sacramental records, health records and an emergency information sheet. Only the contents of the official file will be forwarded to a new religious education program.

Use of Student Pictures and Video

The religious education program reserves the right to use student pictures in publications. Any parent who wishes to opt out must notify the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education in writing prior to the beginning of the religious education program year.

Emergency Information

The policy of the religious education program with regard to program closings in cases of emergencies is to follow Public Schools decisions in the county in which the religious education program is located. Parents should listen to broadcasts and keep their children home on days when the local public schools are closed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICY AND DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION'S RIGHT TO AMEND

“Since situations can arise that were not foreseen at the time of writing this Handbook, the religious education program reserves the right to initiate, change or modify the policies as needed. Parents and students will be notified of any amendments.

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The Director of Religious Education and/or Pastor is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rules for just cause at his/her discretion.”

Dear Parents,

This is your copy of the Rules and Regulations Handbook for Saint John XXIII Parish Religious Education Program.

In order that you might better understand the philosophy and requirements of Saint John XXIII Religious Education Program, it is important that you thoroughly read this handbook.

Please sign and return the last page of this package, which indicates that you have read and accepted the rules and regulations and also allows you to opt out of allowing your child’s picture to be taken.

Sincerely,

Kathryn F. Cabrisas

You must turn in the next page – The parent signature page must be in child’s folder for registration to be complete.

PARENT /GUARDIAN SIGNATURE PAGE

I, as Parent or Legal Guardian, acknowledge that I have read or will read the entire contents of the Parent-Student Handbook and understand the consequences of any violations of the rules and policies of the school. I agree to cooperate with the religious education program’s interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the handbook. I also understand that the religious education program has the ultimate authority over the administration of the program and the interpretation of the program’s rules and policies. Moreover, I further understand that all of the program’s policies whether written or verbal are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the program with or without notice.

I have read and do accept the rules and regulations as printed in the handbook.

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different Catholic church you can bring the bulletin from the church with the child's name and grade on the top and give it to their teacher during the next class.

The Archdiocese requires 33.5 hours of instruction per year for a child . Our program is designed to meet these hours through the class time, family masses and attendance at our Passion play and other parish activities. 2 and only two absences are allowed during the school year. If you have emergencies or a situation you must contact the teacher to make arrangements if you exceed this requirement.

Class starts at 10am . Students are marked tardy after 10am. NO student is admitted into the building after 10:15am . Safety first! NO EXCEPTIONS!!!! If you are running late contact the teacher later and explain and she can give you the work.

All parents must walk their child to the classroom.

Class ends at 11:30am. Some of the teachers wish to speak with parents at 11:15am to discuss the class progress . Please check with your child's teacher so you know what time she wants you to pick up your child.