



HOME FAITH PARENT POLICY HANDBOOK

(revised 6/25/17)

MINISTRY OF EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM

4475 Dublin Road, Hilliard, Ohio 43026
Phone: (614) 876-1272 Website: www.stbrendans.net

Dear parents,

On behalf of St. Brendan's and the Ministry of Evangelization and Catechesis, we welcome you to our Home Faith program!

Each of us is called to be a disciple—to say yes to Jesus' invitation and go wherever he leads us. When we surrender ourselves to the Lord and actively grow in our relationship with him, we discover true purpose for our lives along with the freedom, peace, and fulfillment that we long for so deeply. This call extends to our children and those around us, to whom we play a pivotal role in leading toward Christ and the Catholic Church that he founded. All of us want the very best for our children. We want them to know their worth in the eyes of God, to make good choices, to live out the truth, and to be authentically happy both now and forever. This is why we strive to help them discover the timeless truths of the Catholic Faith and to experience a real, personal encounter with our Lord who never ceases to call us to himself.

As a parent, no one plays a more influential role in a child's life than you. Trends demonstrate that when parents develop their own faith and model it to their children, their children are much more likely to follow their footsteps and continue practicing their faith as they grow into adulthood. Today, as younger generations are facing unprecedented challenges to their faith and morals, there is a tremendous need for this. As your child goes through the most formative years in their faith development, the most valuable thing you can do is continue to invest in your own faith as an adult. This in turn, will provide a deeper contribution to your child's faith than our children's faith formation programs ever could. We want your children's faith experience to take root in their lives—and know that you do too—which is why we invite each parent to join their child in faith formation by committing to the following:

- 1) To live out your Catholic Faith by attending weekly Mass, as well as engaging in daily prayer and frequenting the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- 2) To grow in your Catholic Faith by proactively investing in your own faith formation within our parish community. St. Brendan offers a number of worthwhile opportunities for adults that take less time per week than watching a movie—these programs include Walking with Purpose, Adult Bible Studies, That Man is You, and weekly Eucharistic Adoration.
- 3) To serve others in our parish community through offering your time, talent and treasure. The mission of St. Brendan is one we all share together—when each of us contribute to this mission, everyone benefits and our parish thrives!

We are blessed to have an amazing team of volunteers and staff who are dedicated to leading the youth of our parish closer to Jesus Christ and helping them build a life-long foundation for their faith. Our goal is to support parents in their role as the primary educators of their children by presenting an opportunity for children to discover the truth and joy of the Catholic Faith while building lasting friendships with their peers.

We are grateful for your commitment to your children and our parish community. Know that you and your families are in our prayers!

In Christ,

The Ministry of Evangelization and Catechesis Staff

Why do I need to read through this handbook?

Think of this handbook as your guide to this coming year. We've taken the most important information you need to know and condensed it into one document, which means whether you are a new or returning parent, you'll want to carefully read through the following pages. If any questions come up during the year, this is the place to check first.

Within this handbook you'll find updated information about:

- Communications – How do I stay in the know and receive the latest updates? Who do I go to if I have questions?
- Fees – how much do the programs cost for each grade?
- Requirements & Assignments – what do my child and I need to do to advance through the program? How can we make the most of our faith formation experience?
- Attendance – What do I do if my child or I have a scheduling conflict?
- Sacraments – What does my child and/or I need to do to prepare for and receive the Sacraments?

Communications & Contact Information

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that they stay current with the correct information and news about Home Faith and Faith Formation events. If your contact information changes during the year (email, phone, address), you will need to contact us so we can make sure your information is updated in our system. There are several communications sources that families will need to access throughout the year:

- **Flocknote**
 - News and updates will be mainly sent out through our parish email service called Flocknote. **Each Home Faith family is expected to signup for flocknote if they are not signed up already.** To sign up for flocknote, visit: <https://stbrendans.net/keeping-in-touch> . If you are already signed up for flocknote, make sure your email address is updated and your settings are correct.
- **Website**
 - *The following information can be found on our website at* <https://stbrendans.net/faith-formation-1>
 - Weekly lesson plans for classes and home faith
 - All class and home faith registration information

- Yearly calendar of dates and events
- Sacramental information
- Volunteer forms
- School & parking maps
- Information about other parish activities

• **The Ministry of Evangelization and Catechesis Office**

- For calls related to Home Faith and Faith Formation, please contact us during our normal office hours at 614-876-1272 x. 233
- Phone information box: 614.876.1272 then press 4
- Staff
 - Director of Evangelization & Catechesis: Drew Snyder ext. 231 or dsnyder@stbrendans.net
 - Assistant to the Director: Bonnie Creeger ext. 233 or bcreeger@stbrendans.net
 - 7-8 Grade Home Faith Administrator: Fr. Tom Gardner at frgardner@stbrendans.net
 - Director of Youth Ministry/Confirmation: Adam Boyden ext. 232 or aboyden@stbrendans.net

WEATHER EMERGENCIES & CANCELLATIONS

For meetings, special events, and Sacramental occasions, please check your email and/or stbrendans.net for cancellations in the event of inclement weather.

Home Faith Information

Raising your children in the Catholic faith is both a privilege and a commitment that you made when you brought your child to the waters of Baptism. Our parish community supports parents in their vocation as the primary educators through providing faith formation programs. Together, our goal is to offer a faith-engaging experience wherein children can grow in their relationship with God and learn about our Catholic Faith in an age-appropriate and organized manner.

The Home Faith program (for grades 1-8) is designed for parents to use at home in place of the Monday/Sunday evening sessions held throughout the school year. If you are interested in the option of teaching your children from home, the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis will happily provide you with the resources needed for your child's faith formation.

Home Faith can offer a rewarding opportunity for both parents and children to grow in their Catholic Faith together and focus their family life on what matters most. The lessons in the books are only the tip of the iceberg. When used effectively, Home Faith fosters a Christ-centered culture at home that inspires daily conversations and faith devotions within the family.

Fees for Grades 1-8

Home Faith follows the course of the catechetical year, beginning in mid September and ending in May. To register, each family pays a family registration fee plus the cost for each grade, which is based on materials and resources. Additional Sacramental fees apply for 2nd and 8th grade.

- **Early Family Registration Fee** is \$85/family if you register before August 11th. **Regular Family Fee** is \$110 after August 11th.
 - \$50 additional fee/family if not a St. Brendan Parish member. You must also submit a letter of permission from the Director of Religious Education of your parish to be approved for registration.
 - Additional \$40 for "**At Home Parent Guide**" (one time required purchase per family for GRADES 1-5)
- **Resource Fee for Grades 1, 3, 4, 5** is \$25/student
- **Resource Fee for Grade 2** is \$60/student (the cost of 2nd grade is higher is because it includes extra Sacramental workbooks for First Communion and First Reconciliation)
 - ** Separate Sacramental Fees will be due later in the year for 1st Reconciliation and 1st Communion. More information will be provided at 2nd grade parent meeting in the Fall.*
- **Resource Fee for Grade 6** is \$50/student
- **Resource Fee for Grade 7** is \$50/student*
- **Resource Fee for Grade 8** is \$50/student*
 - **8th Grade Confirmation Fee:** \$125 (includes 2-night confirmation retreat, bus fare, and Sacramental expenses)

** If students are missing the Chosen Workbook and/or the Study Bible from grades 6-7, additional fees will apply.*

7-8 Grade Requirements

All students in grades 7 & 8 Faith Formation Classes/Home Faith are expected to come to at least 2 of the 4 Middle School Nights which we are calling CONNECT (which take place on Sunday evenings from 4pm – 5:20pm). There will be a sign-in sheet available so we can keep track of attendance. Dates for the 2017-18 year will be posted soon. Only students are required to attend these CONNECT nights.

7th & 8th Grade students are also expected to volunteer for at least one night of the Children's mini-mission during Lent.

8th Grade Confirmation Requirements

8th grade is a pivotal year as students ready themselves for Confirmation and prepare for high school. This is why 8th grade students are asked to meet certain requirements before they can be confirmed. These requirements are intended to help students deepen their faith and grow in their relationship with Christ. Each 8th grade student in Faith Formation Classes, Home Faith, and the School commits to the following:

- **Attending the 8th Grade Fall Confirmation Retreat:** 2 night retreat hosted at Damascus Catholic Mission Campus, CYSC's brand new high-adventure camp. Last year's retreat was a huge success that made a positive impact on the rest of the year. This year, the retreat will take place on Friday, 9/15 - Sunday, 9/17. More details to come in August.
- **Completing 13 service hours** during 8th grade year (hours may begin to be applied at the beginning of the summer after 7th grade). Service hours need to be completed by April 1st. It is best for service hours to be completed through a ministry or event at St. Brendan Church. Our office will periodically send out volunteer requests throughout the year. If needed, students may also complete their service hours through other types of service activities within the community as long as they are not paid to do it and the service falls in line with the Catholic Faith. Service Hours will need to be recorded on a Log Sheet available at: <https://stbrendans.net/confirmation-1>
- **Attending 1 out of 4 of the Living the Faith Series.** Living the Faith is a speaker series that consists of one-hour faith-based talks hosted throughout the year at either St. Brendan or St. Brigid. As part of their preparation, each Confirmation student will be required to attend 1 of the 4 talks and are encouraged to attend more if they would like. Parents are also encouraged to attend but not required. Dates and locations will be listed at: <https://stbrendans.net/confirmation-1> .
- **For parents, there is a required Confirmation parent meeting in the fall.** Dates and details will be sent out closer to the beginning of classes.
- **Home Faith students are also expected to complete all assignments and reviews and attend CONNECT nights** (see above for more info)

Sunday morning Children's Liturgy of the Word (ages 4-7)

- Over the course of the school year, Children's Liturgy of the Word is typically offered at the 8:45 & 10:30 AM Masses (open to ages 4 to 7 years old). For a schedule, please see: <http://stbrendans.net/childrens-liturgy-of-the-word>.
- *Children's Liturgy of the Word* is wonderful way to complement Faith Formation classes at no cost. It aims to help engage children in the Mass and teach them how to participate (note that it is not a substitute for elementary Faith Formation though). Children are not required to attend children's liturgy of the word but are very welcome to try it out. Most children love it and parents do too! Parents do not need to sign up their children for Children's Liturgy of the Word.

- *How it works:* During the first part of Mass, children are invited to go off to a separate area in the church where they will hear about the Mass readings and receive a lively teaching that is geared toward them. Then, when the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins (during the offertory), children will re-join their families.

Home Faith Policies & Requirements

HOME FAITH REQUIREMENTS

While one of the advantages of Home Faith is its flexibility and family-friendly format, a high level of commitment and discipline is needed to do Home Faith effectively. *Parents will need to discern if Home Faith is a good fit for their family and if they will be able meet the basic requirements.*

Each family enrolled in Home Faith commits to fulfilling basic requirements that cultivate a fruitful partnership with the parish and help promote children's intellectual, moral, and spiritual development:

1. **Attending all Home Faith meetings and events throughout the year.** In addition to attending all 4 Home Faith Meetings during the year, new parents will need to attend a Home Faith training session in the fall. 7th grade parents will also need to attend an additional meeting in late fall/winter to learn about the Theology of the Body curriculum.
2. **Using the lesson plans to teach your child the faith from home each week.**
3. **Ensuring that each child completes all homework and assignments,** including two mandatory online semester reviews for grades 1-8. Children in 7 & 8 grade must also complete weekly online assignments. Student scores are expected to exhibit progress in learning and an appropriate understanding of the material.
4. **Striving to become an authentic witness of the Catholic Faith by living and communicating all of the teachings of the Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church.** As the primary catechists, parents are expected to faithfully present the Catholic Church's teachings on both faith and morals to the best of their ability. As tough questions arise, the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis offers teaching support and welcomes theological or moral questions. Please feel free to contact us anytime.

The completion of the requirements advances families through the Home Faith program and provides an indication of commitment to the Home Faith program. As such, **all requirements must be fulfilled in order to progress to the next grade level and/or to be eligible for future enrollment in Home Faith.**

Assignments, review scores, and absences will be recorded during the year. Then, at the end of the year, the fulfillment of these requirements will be assessed for each family. If you do not hear back from our office by the middle of June, it means you have fulfilled your

requirements. Families who have missed requirements will be contacted by email or phone. **Unexcused absences from parent and/or children's meetings, missed assignments, and unsatisfactory review scores will affect future eligibility to enroll in the Home Faith program and/or may result in repeating the grade.**

HOME FAITH MEETINGS & EVENTS

Meetings are designed to provide communication, teaching, training, support, and opportunities to connect with other Home Faith families (*meetings are for parents only unless otherwise noted*). Most Home Faith meetings take place on Sunday afternoons. When parents and/or children arrive at each meeting/event, they will need to sign in first.

This year, the **Parish Mission will serve as the 3rd Home Faith Meeting**, providing an opportunity for the whole family to live and grow in their faith together. Children will attend the "mini-mission" in the school while Home Faith parents attend the Mission in the church. Home Faith Families choose one of three nights they would like to attend and are highly encouraged to come to all three nights. This event will also take the place of the previous Children's Home Faith event that parents helped facilitate. 7th and 8th grade students will be able to fulfill their 3rd Home Faith meeting requirement by helping with children's activities at the mini-mission (this will also be able to count as service hours for 8th grade students).

As mentioned above, there are additional meetings that new parents and 7th grade parents will need to attend during the year.

Meeting dates will be posted at <https://stbrendans.net/home-faith> .

HOME FAITH ABSENCES

At least one parent is expected to attend the parent meetings. If a parent or child has a legitimate excuse for missing a Home Faith meeting or event, please notify the office of the Ministry of Evangelization and Catechesis as soon as possible so we can mark down the absence as excused.

Excused absences include: family emergencies, illnesses, mandatory school functions, mandatory job conflicts, family reunions, weddings, funerals, and Sacramental events. Since we only have a few Home Faith meetings and events per year, it is especially important that these events be treated as a high priority. For this reason, extracurricular activities such as children's sporting events will not be able to be counted as excused absences. It's the parent's responsibility to plan and schedule accordingly in order to attend home faith events. If you have questions about absences, please contact our office.

Attendance Records

Each parent (or child) will need to sign in at each Home Faith meeting or event so that you are not marked as absent. This includes both parent events and events for children/teens.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Home Faith is much more than weekly lessons—it is meant to be lived by word and example every day of the week. Here is a self-assessment guide to help encourage your child's spiritual growth and bring their lessons to life:

- ✓ I become familiar with my child's book and engage him/her in conversation on the basic concepts taught each week
- ✓ I ask my child to tell me 2-3 things they' learned from their lesson
- ✓ I try to apply what was learned in their lesson to our day-to-day family living
- ✓ Someone that I love taught me my prayers when I was young: I do the same with my child
- ✓ I often use real-life situations and media to support their faith formation
- ✓ Our family has been blessed in so many ways; I am teaching my child how to give back through service
- ✓ I model an active and vibrant faith to my children by praying daily, attending weekly Mass, and participating in other parish activities like adult Faith Formation opportunities.

Home Faith Reviews and Assignments

Children are welcome and encouraged to interact with their peers in the Home Faith program and learn together insofar as possible. This helps to cultivate a fun and engaging learning environment.

At the same time, student's assignments and reviews should reflect their own knowledge. Just as plagiarizing from the internet or copying answers from peers is not permitted in schools, cheating is also not permitted in Home Faith and will result in zero credit for the assignment or review. The amount of parental assistance given should depend on the age of the child (for example, younger children tend to require more assistance from parents with tasks like reading, typing, and understanding questions).

Semester Reviews For Grades 1-8

Students in Grades 1-8 are required to fill out Semester Reviews that will be posted online at the end of each semester. Students will typically have two weeks to complete the reviews. Each review will consist of a series of questions based on the lessons. We will notify you by email when these reviews will be available. The purpose of these reviews is to help motivate learning and assess student progress. Younger children will likely need parents to assist them in taking the review. Each family is responsible for completing the reviews on time (siblings in the same grade will need to fill out separate reviews). Students who do

not submit the reviews by the deadline may be subject to makeup work or repeating the grade over again.

7th & 8th Grade Weekly Assignments

Each week there will be a short electronic assignment that 7th and 8th grade students will need to complete. An email blast will be sent out with a link to the video lessons and the assignment. **Assignments must be turned in by or before the deadline.** Each student must submit his or her own work (one assignment per student). If a serious situation prevents a student from completing the weekly assignment by the deadline, please contact Fr. Tom Gardner at frgardner@stbrendans.net. There will be a three-strike policy: if three deadlines are missed without a serious excuse, students will have to repeat the grade.

Photo Permissions

From time to time, we will take photos at parish and Home Faith events. We sometimes share these photos on the St. Brendan website, press releases, or in marketing materials. We do not include student names with the photos.

If you prefer that your child does not appear in any photos, you have the option to select "do no consent" to the photo release on the online registration form. We maintain a database of parents who do not grant permission for photos.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS

The Office of Evangelization & Catechesis provides formation for the reception of FIRST EUCHARIST, FIRST RECONCILIATION AND CONFIRMATION for all children in the parish enrolled in St. Brendan School and in our Faith Formation program. Our office is charged with the preparation of specific sacraments for our parish children and it is a "charge" we take seriously. The children from St. Brendan School and the children from Faith Formation receive these sacraments together at scheduled liturgies. Our parish children are our parish children regardless of where they receive preparation. Because we are a large parish, we have more than one date or time scheduled for the reception of First Eucharist and Confirmation. Parents choose the time that best suits their needs.

Sacraments are not received in a vacuum. They are celebrated within a vibrant parish community as well as anticipated and valued within family life. Because catechesis and an understanding of each sacrament is essential, children who ask for the reception of these sacraments with no prior catechesis will need the following support before the child is eligible for that sacrament. The guidelines are listed below:

THE SACRAMENT OF FIRST EUCHARIST

We are invited to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist every day of our lives, and do so, especially on weekends. Holy Eucharist is a lifelong, ongoing sacrament. By going to Mass each Sunday, you are actively supporting what your child is learning through Faith Formation and

helping them learn by example that nothing is more important than our relationship with God! The reception of this sacrament is the most frequent and common public experience in a church community.

What can I teach my child and how can I prepare at HOME?

Children watch us and often imitate what we do without knowing why we do what we do the way that we do it!! Just as you teach your children HOW to answer the phone, write a "Thank You" note, or complete chores around the house, so must you explain and model for them the gestures and practices we use when receiving the Sacred Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist. As the primary influence in your child's life, you have the perfect opportunity to do this, but it takes time and a commitment on your part to do it. Ultimately, there is no better way for your child to grow in their appreciation for the Eucharist and prepare for it than by fulfilling your family's responsibility of going to Mass each Sunday. Just like eating healthy, children may not always want to go to Mass but they need to in order to grow and thrive spiritually! Going to Mass every week can be challenging and children may be resistant, but keep going—your perseverance will pay off over time!

Who is Eligible to Receive?

- Usually received in Grade 2, but can be received at any time after that grade once preparation has been completed.
- **Children must be baptized before receiving First Communion and First Reconciliation.** If your child is not baptized they will need to go through special classes. For more information, please contact our office.
- If the child is enrolled in St. Brendan School in Grade 2, because our Catholic heritage is taught within the classroom on a regular basis, the child is eligible for the reception of First Eucharist in May of that year. If a child enters St. Brendan School in a grade other than Grade 2 and wishes to be prepared for and receive First Eucharist, the parent needs to contact our MEC office so that a plan of preparation and materials for the sacrament can be received and discussed.
- If the child enters our Home Faith Program or our Faith Formation program in Grade 2 where preparation for and catechesis on the sacrament is built into the curriculum for that year, the child will receive First Eucharist the following May once make up work for the year of catechesis that the child missed has been completed. If the child has missed 1st grade they will need to complete makeup work.
- If the child enters our program in a grade other than Grade 2, at least two years of catechesis is required before the child is eligible to receive. He/she will also need to complete "make up" work for the years of catechesis missing, and will receive specific information from our MEC office about the sacrament for understanding and review. It is the parent's responsibility to contact our MEC office, to mentor and prepare the child.
- Any child who has special needs and has the desire to receive First Holy Communion is exempt from the preparation process as noted above and will be eligible for the reception of the sacrament following parent request.

Attendance at the parent First Reconciliation/First Eucharist meeting in the Fall is a requirement.

THE SACRAMENT OF FIRST RECONCILIATION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of God's greatest gifts to us. Desiring to forgive us, heal us, and restore us, Jesus established the Sacrament of Reconciliation so we could receive from his boundless mercy. Preparing children to receive this gift is an awesome responsibility. It is an opportunity to lead our children to open their hearts to receive the gift of forgiveness with joy and excitement. Like receiving the Eucharist, there is no better way for your child to grow in their appreciation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation than to model it by going yourself (feel free to bring them with you and have them sit in the church while you go). They will learn from your courage as you go to Confession and your joy after you've finished!

- If the child is enrolled in St. Brendan School in Grade 2, because our Catholic heritage is taught within the classroom on a regular basis, the child is eligible for the reception of First Reconciliation in November of that year. If a child enters St. Brendan School in a grade other than Grade 2 and wishes to be prepared for and receive First Reconciliation, the parent needs to contact our MEC office so that a plan of preparation and materials for the sacrament can be discussed.
- If the child enters our Home Faith Program or our Faith Formation program in Grade 2 where preparation for and catechesis on the sacrament is built into the curriculum for that year, the child will receive First Reconciliation in November of that year. If the child has missed 1st grade they will need to complete makeup work.
- If the child enters our program in a grade other than Grade 2, at least two years of catechesis is required before the child is eligible to receive. He/she will also need to complete "make up" work for the years of catechesis missing, and will receive specific information from our MEC office about the sacrament for understanding and review. It is the parent responsibility to contact our MEC office, to mentor and prepare the child for the reception of the sacrament.
- Any child who has special needs, mental or physical, and has the desire to receive First Reconciliation, although not necessary, is exempt from the preparation process as noted above and will be eligible for the reception of the sacrament following parent request.

Once again, **attendance at the parent First Reconciliation/First Eucharist meeting in the Fall is a requirement.**

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

It is a general practice that the Bishop of each diocese decides the appropriate age when the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred. In our diocese, it is in 8th grade when a young Catholic teen is confirmed in his/her faith.

Like First Communion and First Reconciliation, children must be baptized before receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. If your child is not baptized they will need to go through special classes that are separate from Home Faith. For more information, please contact our office.

Information about the sacrament and its 2 year preparation cycle is outlined on our web site under the title "Sacrament of Confirmation." **Attendance at the parent Confirmation meeting in the Fall is a requirement. For more information on Confirmation requirements see page 6.**

See the Columbus Diocese Harassment Policy on the following pages.

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

HARASSMENT POLICY

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.

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■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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.

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

(cont'd.)

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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 program administrator 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.

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