

St. Francis de Sales

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

PARENT HANDBOOK (V3)

Kindergarten, Grades 3-5
RCIC and First Communion Grades 1 & 2
Confirmation Candidates Grades 6-7

The Parish House
216 Beach 130th Street
Belle Harbor, New York 11694
718.945.6911

Mrs. Anne Marie Greene
Director
annemarie@sfdsparish.org

Ms. Suzanne Blum
Assistant Director
sblum@sfdsparsih.org

www.sfdsparish.org

St. Francis de Sales Program

Courses, Policies and Procedures

Grades K-8

The Diocese of Brooklyn Religious Education Curriculum, *The Seed is The Word of God*, is followed in all grades. Our textbooks and course materials correlate with the standards in the curriculum.

Every class will have a minimum of two *Family Life* Lessons and one Child Lures session as mandated by the Diocese.

Students in Grade 1 and 2 are prepared for the Sacraments Penance and Holy Eucharist and those in Grades 6 through 8 are prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

We also offer Online Catholic Homeschooling provided by My Catholic Faith Delivered for non-sacramental grades 3,4,5. Completion of the program is mandatory each year in order to be promoted to the next grade.

Two Year First Communion Preparation Program

Grades 1-2 students are presented with a summary of the Catholic Faith and Doctrine in an age-appropriate way. Students are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist.

Two Year Confirmation Preparation Program

Grades 6-8 students are presented with a summary of the Catholic Faith and Catholic Doctrine in an age-appropriate way. They are prepared to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

Fees

One child \$200 Two children \$250 Three or more \$300

Fees are due at time of registration unless other arrangements are made through the Religious Education Office. We do not accept debit or credit cards.

The registration fee for online children will be the same as those children who attend class.

There is a \$150 fee for Confirmation candidates. It covers the retreat, facilitator fee, food, and Confirmation robe.

There is a \$150 fee for First Reconciliation, First Communion and RCIC candidates. This fee covers banners, retreat, food, and activities.

Inclement Weather

We follow the inclement weather directives of New York City Department of Education.

Listen to 1010 WINS (AM). You might also receive an email from the Religion Education office from Option C parent alert.

If Saint Francis de Sales Catholic Academy is closed, then we are also closed.

Parental Involvement

As stated in the documents of Vatican II, "...As it is the parents who have given life to their children, on them lies the gravest obligation of educating their family. They must, therefore, be recognized as being primarily and principally responsible for their education" (Cf. VAT. II Declaration on Christian Education, n. 3: (1965).

In the Sadlier, We Believe Series, there are the Family Feature and Building Family Faith sections to offer ideas and activities to connect faith and family and reinforce learning at home.

Children Preparing for Sacraments

Children preparing for the sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation are required to attend Religious Education classes for two years: Grades One and Two for Penance and Holy Eucharist and Grades Six through Eight for confirmation. This is to ensure that the Diocesan guidelines are met. The following guidelines are intended to assist catechists in fulfilling the mission of the Church

- to educate her children in the fullness of the Catholic Faith
- to believe what the Creed teaches
- to participate in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church
- to live a life of love for God and neighbor
- and to pray to the Father through Jesus, His Son, in the Holy Spirit

Special Needs Children

We will work with you, your child, and their Catechist to meet your child's special needs for sacramental preparation for Grades K-8 students. If your child has a current ISP/IEP with the NYC DOE, please complete an Inclusive Registration Form and provide a copy of the relevant pages/sections of the ISP/IEP regarding the child's classification and services to the main office for review so that we can assist the catechist in providing the best environment for the child and others in their faith journey.

Volunteers

All of teachers are VOLUNTEERS. Our program cannot be run without their help and your help. We need catechists, assistant catechists, and substitute catechists. We will be glad to work with your schedule so that you can evangelize.

Catechists are responsible for teaching the class, and the assistants help the catechist with lessons, attendance, projects, etc. Substitute catechists fill in for the catechists and may specify the grade they would like to substitute for. The prayer aides help students learn their prayers.

All volunteers must complete mandatory diocesan requirements including attending a VIRTUS (Protecting God's Children) training session and complete a satisfactory background check.

All Volunteers under the age of 18 must take the Diocesan course at: [www.virtus.org / building relationships](http://www.virtus.org/buildingrelationships)

All new catechists are required to attend an orientation session.

All Catechists are required to attend at least one professional development training session and Diocesan Living and Leading in Faith development sessions.

Sunday Mass

Mass attendance is vital to our religious formation and the development of a Catholic community. Children learn by repetition, consistency and good example. When Sunday Mass is part of children's regular routine, they learn to maintain the habit of weekly Mass attendance. Seeing the importance their parents place in Sunday Mass attendance teaches them obedience and discipline.

Weekly Sunday Family Mass attendance is strongly suggested for all grades.

Our Sunday Mass times are as follows:

Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:30 pm

Sunday: 8:00 am, 10:00 am and 12:00 pm

Please refer to the Parish Web Site for Holy Day of Obligation Mass times.

Prayers

The Diocese has set up guidelines for the memorization of devotional and liturgical prayers. Keep in mind that the family is where the learning of prayer first takes place. We ask that parents take the responsibility of making prayer an integral part of family living. Your child will also be saying prayers in class each week and an assistant will be listening to them and reporting their progress to the catechist. Please help your child learn the required prayers each year.

Advent/Lent Confessions

We attempt to schedule confessions during Advent and Lent. Confession is recommended every three months. Confessions are heard at St. Francis de Sales Church at 3:30 PM every Saturday.

Attendance

For the safety of our children, parents are asked to drop off their children as per the locations listed in the next paragraph. The Director/Supervisor will meet your child at the door and ensure that children proceed to their respective classrooms. There is no need for the parent to enter the Hall with them, unless you need to speak to the catechist.

- **Arrival** times are 3:30 for Grades K-5 and 6:30 for Grades 6-7.
- **Dismissal** times are 4:40 for Grades K-2, 4:45 for Grades 3-5 and 7:45 for Grades 6-7.
- Arrival and dismissal location for Grades K-3 is at the Academy main entrance.
- Arrival and dismissal location for Grades 4-5 is the Academy Gym (side door).
- Arrival and dismissal for Grade 6-7 is the Msgr. Reedy Hall doors (the Small Hall).

Please note that student may arrive 15 minutes BEFORE the above arrival times.

ALL DOORS WILL BE SECURED (LOCKED) 10 minutes after the above arrival times.

Any student in Grades K-5 arriving late is to report to the security guard at Academy main entrance. Any student in Grades 6-7 arriving late is to report to the Parish House.

We ask that you make every effort to have your children in class each week, with the necessary textbooks or materials and to be on time. Our classes build on each other and carry a central focus throughout the year. Religious Education class attendance should take precedence over all extracurricular activities, including sports. Students are required to attend at least 80% (miss no more than 5 classes) of the scheduled classes to be recommended for the reception of the sacraments

and satisfactory completion of their grade program. Those who miss more than 5 classes will be required to repeat the class the following year.

If your child has three consecutive absences, we will notify you to discuss whether your child will remain in the program. A parent/guardian is requested to call the Religious Education Office (718-945-6911) to report that a student will not be able to attend class. We will call or email to check on those students who are absent. A child who is absent is responsible for all classwork, tests, projects, etc. that he/she has missed.

If early dismissal is necessary, provide a written note notifying the catechists when bringing your child to class and let the office volunteer know.

Parents are **NOT** permitted to go to the classroom to pick up their child. An assistant will bring your child to you at the security area of the Academy main entrance.

Students must be picked up on time. In an emergency or delay, please call the Main Office and your child will remain with an adult until your arrival.

Please drive SAFELY in the vicinity of the school and church and DO NOT park in neighbor's driveways or on property and do NOT block fire hydrants or double park. You may use the church parking lot for arrival and dismissal but cars/vehicles are NOT to park on the street in front of the school or church. After SAFELY dropping off and picking up students, please move from the area so that ALL STUDENTS CAN SAFELY ENTER OR LEAVE.

Books and Supplies

Students will be issued books, a pencil and crayons (Grades K-3) in an envelope. The current price of the book will be charged to replace a lost book.

Learning Environment

Students will be expected to all program rules and regulations. Courtesy, cooperation and respect are expected from students towards each other and the catechist. Care must be taken of classroom property including tables, chairs, walls, projects, etc. Cell phones may be brought to class but **MUST** be turned off during class time. No other electronic devices are permitted. Our parish is not responsible for lost or stolen personal items.

Program Expectations

Religious Education is an integral part of development of a follower of Jesus. As such, our expectations for all students are stated in a positive way and in a manner that aligns with Christian values. We expect all students to:

- **Respect yourself**
- **Respect others**
- **Respect property**
- **Be responsible at all times**

Student Regulations

- Dress appropriately—no hats, hoodies or “flip-flop/shower shoes” are to be worn at any time.
- Students should act respectfully toward all adults and to address all catechists or other adults using that person's last name.
- Students are asked to have a snack and drink BEFORE arriving to class. No food or drink is permitted in classrooms.

- Our Program is a “tenant” of Saint Francis De Sales Catholic Academy. As such, students are never to go into desks and touch or use materials from these desks.
- Students are to leave the Academy or Church property in the same condition in which it was found prior to class.
- No chewing gum.
- No toys or games.
- Students may not write on chalk/dry-erase /smart boards unless it is for the purpose of the lesson and given teacher approval.
- Cell phones should be used for emergency purposes only.

Charities and Service Projects

Children should practice sharing with the less fortunate and support our Church. The following charitable activities and service projects will be supported: Thanksgiving Food Drive, CRS Rice Bowls, neighborhood or church grounds clean-ups and other charitable causes and service projects the parish deems fit.

Disruptive Behavior

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| First step: | Catechist will speak to the child in class and inform the parents of the child’s behavior. |
| Second step: | The catechist will have the child escorted to the office. The Director or Assistant Director will contact a parent/guardian regarding student behavior. |
| Third step: | A parent and child will meet with Father Jim Cunningham and the Director of Religious Education to resolve the situation. |
| Fourth step: | The parent will attend class with their child or use the online program for the remainder of the program year. If necessary, the student will be dismissed from the Religious Education Program. In such case, NO refund of any fees/payments will be made by Saint Francis de Sales. |

Progress Reports

It is important that parents/guardians are aware of their child/children’s progress throughout the program. Directives from the Diocese call for specific teachings, doctrine and prayers at each grade level. We adhere to these guidelines and issue a Progress Reports in January and an End of Year Report in May to help you determine your child’s spiritual, moral, doctrinal and social growth.

Change of Address and /or Phone Number

Please notify the Religious Education Office if your home address, e-mail address or phone number(s) change.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PRIMARY MEANS OF COMMUNUCATION FROM OUR OFFICE WILL BE EMAIL THROUGH OPTION C PARENT ALERT

WE MUST BE ABLE TO REACH YOU BY PHONE WHILE YOUR CHILD IS ON SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES PROPERTY

Thank you for your support and cooperation and we all look forward to a rewarding and faith-filled new year. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the office or email using the information provided on the cover of this Handbook. May the Holy Spirit watch over us and keep us protected this school year.

A copy of this HANDBOOK, in PDF format, is on the parish web site under the Office of Religious Education tab

We reserve the right to update this Handbook as necessary in accordance with applicable New York State Education Laws concerning safety and Diocese of Brooklyn or Parish requirements. If any substantive changes are made, we will notice families via Option C email.

“BE WHO YOU ARE AND BE THAT WELL”-Saint Francis de Sales (1567-1622)

Patron Saint of writers/authors, journalists, deaf people and adult education

Feast Day-January 24th

