



St. Joan of Arc Church

OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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**Policies
&
Procedures
from our
FAMILY
HANDBOOK**

2025-2026

Our 2025-2026 Family Handbook in its entirety can be found [online here](#).

Policies and Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal – Weekly Classes (5:15-6:30)

[Please click here](#) to read through our procedures. An important reminder: these directives are not only in place to ensure that arrival and dismissal run smoothly and efficiently, but are also in place to help ensure the safety of everyone on our campus. As such, complying with these procedures is mandatory for participation in our program.

The arrival and dismissal information for all other options in our program (OCIA Tweens/Teens, Special Disciples, etc.) will be communicated to parents with children enrolled in those options directly via email.

Attendance

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Attendance Policy

Children are expected to attend each class unless extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent them from doing so. **No more than three absences are allowed during the year.** Regular attendance is essential for students to progress to the next grade level.

Sacrament Years

For children preparing to receive Sacraments, consistent weekly attendance is especially important to ensure they are properly prepared. Excessive absences may result in the postponement of Sacrament reception to allow time for adequate preparation.

For intensive programs, i.e. OCIA Tweens/Teens and the Summer Program, attendance is particularly important, as a great deal of content is being taught in a relatively short period. As such, regular attendance is mandatory, and a doctor's note is required for any absences.

If your child has to be absent from class, please do the following:

- ⇒ Contact the Office of Religious Education at 856-983-7575 or email us at rem@stjoans.org as soon as possible. If the reason for the absence is offered, we will note this in the attendance record. We will inform your child's catechist of the absence.
- ⇒ Have your child complete any missed work or assignments and submit as directed by the catechist or staff. *You can find information and instructions for this on our website at <https://www.stjoans.org/religious-education/>.

- ⇒ If you have a doctor's note to excuse the absence, please submit to the office at your earliest convenience, either in hard copy format or scanned and emailed to rem@stjoans.org.

Early Dismissal

Early dismissals should only be requested when absolutely necessary, as they interrupt the classroom environment. **Early dismissals absolutely must be reported in advance for safety and security purposes.** Please contact the office as much in advance as possible if your child needs an early dismissal. Parents must sign their child out at the front door when there is an early dismissal and must be prepared to present identification.

Class Cancellation

Occasionally we may need to cancel classes due to inclement weather or if a catechist cannot attend class and we are not able to schedule a substitute. In these cases, we will inform you via email and text through the Flocknotes system. We will also post this information [on our web site here](#).

General Safety & Security

Driving/Parking Lot

- The parking lot of our parish is very busy throughout the day and evening. Prudent driving is essential to the safety of our children and to the safety of our parishioners who are on the parish grounds as well. Please be sure to drive slowly and carefully at arrival and dismissal.
- Please see our [parking lot overhead view here](#), which shows the "safe zones" and the required traffic flow.

School Building

- For safety reasons, the doors of the building will be locked during each session. If you need to enter, please go to the front door of the school (facing the parking lot) and ring the bell.
- Please note that we cannot allow people inside the school to use the restrooms prior to or during class times.
- A security officer will be present in the building during our weekly classes.
- Staff, volunteers and students will go through fire, lockdown, and shelter-in-place drills in the fall and after the new year.

****A note about our policies and procedures:
All policies and procedures are put into place**

**to ensure the safety and well-being of our children.
Cooperation with these policies and procedures is absolutely mandatory.**

Behavior

All students are expected to share in the faith learning experience of the parish program. If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process for him/herself or others, or makes the running of the classroom unduly difficult for the catechist/aide, the steps below will be followed to ensure that group participation may continue:

- 1) At first incident the student will be reminded of expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior.
- 2) After the second incident, the student will be sent to the Director.
- 3) If inappropriate behavior continues, the student's parent/guardian will be contacted. The student will be allowed the opportunity to rejoin his/her group if an understanding can be reached as to how all involved may best continue to learn and grow in their faith.
- 4) If the student's behavior continues to disrupt the learning environment, the Director and the parent will discuss an alternative religious education option for the student.

*We understand that some behavioral issues are related to a child's special needs. Our knowing in advance what works best for your child enables our staff and catechists to facilitate an optimal classroom environment and experience for him/her and the other children in the classroom. As such, we invite our parents of children with special needs to advise us on their child/children's unique way of learning, perceiving, interacting etc. so that we may be able to accomplish this together.

Serious Behavioral Issues

In a case where there is an incident or behavioral issue which creates serious concern, the following steps will be taken:

- The parent is called immediately and asked to come to the school.
- The Director meets with the parent to explain the issue.
- The issue is addressed by the parents at home/within the family.
- The parent and the Director have a follow-up discussion to discuss the child returning to the classroom.
- The decision of whether or not it is possible for a child to return to the classroom is made at the discretion of the Director in consideration of the nature of the issue and its resolution, the overall classroom environment, and the ability of the program within available resources to accommodate any resulting issues or concerns. Home study may be offered as an alternative, in which case the Director will work with the family to design a program which will meet the child's needs.

All decisions are made with the well-being of the child and his/her classmates in mind, and with the compassion and love we are called to in our faith.

Electronic Devices Policy

Our technology policy is designed to support a learning environment that is free from distractions, where children can focus on their faith formation and catechists can teach effectively without the added responsibility of managing inappropriate use of electronic devices. This policy applies to all students and parents, and is in place to ensure the safety, well-being, and growth of every child in our program.

Please carefully review the following guidelines:

- **Electronic devices may not be used during class time.** Each classroom is equipped with a shoe organizer for students to store their phones at the beginning of class. Alternatively, devices may be placed face down on desks. The catechist will decide which option will be used by the class.
- **Students are strictly prohibited from bringing cell phones or any electronic device into the restrooms.**
- **If a student needs to contact a parent during class,** they must first request permission from the catechist and will be directed to the office, where staff will assist them.
- **If a parent needs to contact their child during class time,** they should call the office. Staff will then retrieve the student from the classroom as needed.
- **Earbuds and headphones are not permitted** in class at any time.
- **Smartwatches must be turned off** or used **only for basic timekeeping.** If a smartwatch becomes a distraction, the student may be asked to turn it off or leave it at home for future sessions.

If a student has difficulty adhering to this policy, a parent will be contacted to help ensure the student is supported in meeting these expectations.

Thank you for your cooperation in maintaining a respectful and focused faith formation environment for all.

*****We are aware that a child may have a health issue that requires an electronic device for monitoring; for example, a diabetic child may need access to his or her smartphone in order to monitor blood sugar levels. If this is the case for your child, please contact the Religious Education Office so we are aware, and so that we can make note of this exception for our staff.***

Health Concerns and Special Needs

At registration, health and special needs concerns as well as any family concerns, such as custody issues, should be brought to the attention of the staff. If a child receives a diagnosis after registration, please inform our staff as soon as possible. We do have volunteers in our program

who have experience working with children with special needs and, when we are aware, we are able to find the optimal class placement for each child. Due to the fact that many children have food allergies, we do not allow food in the classroom under regular circumstances. The only exceptions are in the Summer Program when children must bring in lunch and snacks due to the length of the class (in this case, sharing of food between students is prohibited).