

All Saints Catholic Church Religious Education Parent Handbook 2025-2026

All Saints Religious Education Program

The Office of Religious Education (RE Office) provides religious education classes to children, teens, and adults of the parish. We seek to develop in each person an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, a love of the Church he founded, and an understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

All teaching aligns with the teachings of the Catholic Church. All classes are taught by dedicated volunteer catechists; all catechists have been approved by the Diocese of Arlington's Safe Environment program.

Family Responsibilities

Parent(s) and families are the primary religious educators of their children. RE classes only meet for 75 minutes per week. These classes are not a substitute for the necessary education in the faith that must occur in the home by the child's parents. The RE Office works in partnership with parents in order to assist them in living their vocations as educators of their children.

The Catholic Church's foundational expectations for practicing Catholics are as follows:

1. Attend Sunday Mass and rest from servile labor on Sunday & holy days of obligation.
2. Receive the sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) at least once a year.
3. Receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least once during the Easter Season.
4. Observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
5. Help to provide for the needs of the Church.

Prayers for Students

Parent(s) should ensure their children know the following prayers:

- K: The Sign of the Cross, Glory Be, Guardian Angel Prayer
- 1st: Those above plus the Our Father, Hail Mary, Grace before Meals
- 2nd: Those listed above plus the Act of Contrition.
- 3rd: Those listed above plus the St. Michael Prayer.
- 4th: Those listed above plus the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity (Love).
- 5th: Those listed above plus the Apostles Creed, Fatima Prayer, Hail Holy Queen.
- 6th: Those listed above plus pray The Rosary.
- 7th: Those listed above plus the Angelus and the Memorare.
- 8th-12th: Those listed above plus the Come Holy Spirit.

Volunteer catechists will teach the students about the importance of prayer in their daily lives.

Staff, Volunteers, and Safe Environment

The All Saints Religious Education program is founded upon maintaining a physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe environment. In the Diocese of Arlington all adults (*over 18 years of age*) undergo a background investigation and participate in a safe environment training course using the VIRTUS program.

- All clergy, staff, & adult volunteers are in compliance with the Diocese of Arlington Child Protection Policy.
- Volunteers under the age of 18 do not undergo this screening and training since, as minors, they fall under the category of children whom this policy is intended to protect.
- The website for the Diocesan Child Protection Office is <http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/childprotection/>

Textbooks and Materials

The RE Office uses textbooks from publishers that are in conformity with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the Diocese of Arlington. Each volunteer catechist receives a teacher's manual or similar class resource to assist in planning their lessons.

- Students receive a book on the first day that they attend class. Some classes also receive a folder. Students need to bring this book (and folder, if applicable) to class each week.
- The RE Office will call the parent(s) of students who forget their book 2 weeks in a row. If the student loses their book, the parent(s) will be asked to purchase another book for the student.

- All classroom materials and resources (such as writing and art supplies) are provided by the RE Office.

Sacrament Programs

The All Saints Parish sacrament programs for children aged 7 and above are coordinated through the RE Office. The sacramental programs for First Communion, Confirmation, and the RCIC are two consecutive years in length. • In the first year of preparation, the student classes (by grade level) are focused on information that is considered essential knowledge of the Catholic faith.

- In the second year of preparation the student receives education on the sacraments. The RE Office offers a sacrament registration meeting for parents of students eligible to receive the sacraments. Parent(s) should attend this meeting to receive the sacrament program requirements and the information about the reception of the sacrament(s).

Learning Disabilities / Health Related Problems

If a student has a learning disability or health-related problem, this information should be noted on the RE registration form. It will remain confidential, but this information will be passed on to the catechist to aid in the education of the child/ren. The RE staff and catechists will work with the parent(s) to address any learning or behavioral challenges. Please call the Religious Education Office with concerns or questions.

Diocesan Safe Environment Training

The Diocese of Arlington has implemented the Circles of Grace program for grades 1 through 12. The goal of the program is to educate and empower children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others.

- Parent(s) will be emailed the lesson; parents also have the opportunity to review the lesson in the RE Office. • Parent(s) have the option of opting their child out of the lesson.
 - The specific class day for teaching the program will be announced in early fall. There will be a make-up day for those students absent on the day of the lesson. All lessons will be taught by the volunteer catechist.

Attendance Policy

- Parent(s) should notify the RE office if a student will be absent from class.
- Students in sacrament year 1 or 2 classes are required to attend 80% of scheduled classes. Students with additional absences will be evaluated to determine their readiness to receive the sacrament. • Extraordinary circumstances do arise that result in multiple absences. The RE office may be able to assist families with a change in class times.

Tardy/Late to Class: Students may not be later than 15 minutes to class. Students will be admitted to the classroom hallways 10 minutes before classes are scheduled to begin (provided that all catechists are present).

Student Arrival Policy Grades K-12:

Arrival Time: It is important for students to arrive on time for class. However, the doors to the building will not open to students until 10 minutes before class. For their safety, students should not arrive before that time.

Only Students Entering the Building / Parent Customer Service: Only children enter the School / RE Center upon arrival to RE class. If parents need to enter the School / RE Center for any reasons, they should park their car in the parking lot and enter the building by Door #1 to see the RE staff or volunteer.

Late Arrival: If the child arrives after the class starting time, they will need to enter the building by the main doors of the School/RE Center (Door #1) and be signed into the building by a parent.

- **Arrival Grades K-2:** Students in Grades K-2 should arrive to the School / RE Center the building by the front church courtyard. Volunteers from these classes will assemble in the courtyard with a class sign. Parents will sign their child in with the RE volunteer, and the RE volunteer will walk the students to their class.
- **Arrival Grades 3-12:** Students in grades 3-12 will enter the building by the Breezeway doors from the front or back parking lot of All Saints School / RE Center. Front parking lot Breezeway door is Door #25. The back parking lot Breezeway door is Door #11. Additional RE classroom volunteers will be available by the breezeway doors during the first weeks of class to assist the students in finding their classroom.

Student Dismissal Policy Grades K-2:

Students in Kindergarten through grade 2 must be picked up by a parent or legal guardian. Once the closing announcements have been made, the Kindergarten, first grade, and second grade classes will proceed to the courtyard

through Door #24 (door close to the Parish Activity Center).

- The classes will stand in lines. Students will wait with the catechist / assistant until their parent/legal guardian signs them out of the class. After five minutes, any remaining students will be taken to the main School / RE Center office for parent pick up.
- If someone other than a parent is picking up the child, the parent must send a note with the child in advance before the child is released. If a note is not sent, the child will be brought to the office and the parent(s) will be called for verbal authorization.

Student Dismissal Policy Grades 3-12:

It is the policy of All Saints Catholic Church that students are NOT allowed to "self-dismiss" from their classrooms, except when prior written permission from the parent/guardian is on file with the All Saints Catholic Church RE Office. If this permission form is not on file with the RE office, it will be presumed that permission is not given for the child to self-dismiss from class.

The dismissal permission information for children in grades 3-12 was obtained from the parent at the time of the child's RE registration. If a parent wishes to update their child's dismissal permissions, they will need to contact the RE Office to update their child's permission forms.

- **If permission is given to "self-dismiss":** a student is able to leave the RE classroom on his/her own to walk home or to go out to a waiting car after the closing announcements of the RE session in which the student is enrolled. All Saints Church does not provide supervision outside the All Saints Catholic School / RE center after RE sessions.
- **If permission is not given to "self-dismiss":** approximately 5 minutes after the closing announcements of the RE session, a RE volunteer will accompany these students to the pick up location in the All Saints courtyard. A parent / legal guardian must walk to their child's line and sign their child out with the RE volunteer. If someone other than a parent is picking up the child, the parent must send a note with the child in advance before the child is released. If a note is not sent, the child will be brought to the office and the parent(s) will be called for verbal authorization.

Student Early Dismissal Policy:

If a child needs to leave class early, the parent /legal guardian must come into the main office of the School / RE Center (Door #1). Since students are not permitted to use their cell phones during class, **parents should not text their child when they are picking them up.**

The parent will wait in the main office and the classroom catechist will be alerted to send the child to the front office for early dismissal. The parent / legal guardian must sign the child out before leaving the main office.

Dress Code for Students

Students should be dressed appropriately. As such, students should not wear the following to RE classes: t-shirts with inappropriate pictures or words, tops with spaghetti straps, see-through garments, tops that expose the midriff, mini skirts, short that are worn above mid-thigh, clothing with wording across the buttocks, or excessively tight clothing. Pants and shorts must be worn at the waist and boxer shorts should not be visible.

Diocesan Electronic & Mobile Device Policy:

Students may not possess cell/smart phones during RE classes. Students may not bring out or use phones or earbuds during class. If a particular mobile device is to be used for an educational purpose, the catechist will provide parameters for this use.

Students who use a mobile device during class for any purpose other than a catechist-led educational purpose, will be asked to give their phone to the catechist for the remainder of class. In this case, the cell/smart phone will be returned to the parent at the end of class.

Classroom Behavior and Discipline:

Expectations regarding appropriate behavior and consequences for inappropriate behavior are established at the beginning of the year by the catechist. Every child has the right to education in an environment conducive to learning. Thus, it is necessary to establish order in the classroom.

- Inappropriate behavior includes: fighting, cursing, vulgar language; talking out of turn; disrespect to any volunteers, students, staff, or clergy; destruction of property; disruption of the classroom; and failing to cooperate with the request of any volunteers or staff.
- Students should respect the materials in the classroom that are the property of All Saints Catholic School and it's

students. Students should not have gum or food in class.

In the event that a student's classroom behavior is disruptive, the catechist will:

- Speak to the child in private (perhaps briefly stepping out of the classroom) to encourage the student to change their behavior.
- Establish assigned seating from the first day and physically separate students, as space allows.
- Speak to the parent(s) of the child at the end of that day's class; DRE may contact parent(s) as needed.

If the student continues to be disruptive, the catechist will send the student to the DRE during the class: • The DRE will speak to the student, return the student to class, and speak to the parent (s) after class. If disruption continues, the parent(s) will be contacted and asked to work with their child to correct the behavior. • If the child continues to disrupt the class, the parent(s) must accompany the student to class until the student's behavior is acceptable for the classroom environment. If school or private property is willfully damaged by a student, he/she and parent(s) will need to make appropriate restitution.

Medication and Illness

Parent(s) must inform the DRE in writing if a medical condition prevents their child from participating in any activity, if their child has severe food allergies, or if any classroom instruction modifications must be accommodated. • Those administering and volunteering for the RE program will not maintain, supervise the taking of, or administer medication to students, including over-the-counter products.

- It is the responsibility of parent(s) to notify the RE staff of any changes in allergies or dietary restrictions. For children with severe medical conditions, parents are asked to remain on-site in case of emergency. • If a child becomes ill or is injured during class, the office will immediately make every attempt to contact the parent or guardian. In the event that no one can be contacted or if time is of the essence, the DRE or a designated party will act in a manner that is both reasonable and responsible.
- Catechists are asked to report any significant injury to the RE staff immediately. If an injury occurs, first aid will be administered, and the parent(s) will be contacted. If the injury requires immediate professional medical attention, the RE staff will call the appropriate emergency services, followed by a call to the parent(s).

Inclement Weather

During the onset of a storm and/or predicted inclement weather, the RE Office will follow the decisions of Prince William County Public Schools regarding schedule changes.

- In the days following the weather event, the RE Office will make an independent decision. The RE Office will also make an independent decision when only severely cold temperatures impact the schedule for Prince William County Public Schools.
- All decisions regarding schedule changes are posted at RE voicemail and at allsaintsreligiouseducation.org • All Saints RE does NOT follow the PWCS schedule for cancellation of classes due to teacher workdays.

Safety, Fire and Other Emergency Drills

The school building will be secured during religious education classes.

- Side and emergency doors are locked at all times. All students, parents and adult volunteers must enter and exit via the school main lobby only.
- The school lobby is staffed by the RE staff and volunteers. In the event that the RE Staff and office volunteers must assist in a classroom, the lobby doors will be locked until the RE Staff/volunteers are able to return.

Annual Drills: Each year the RE Staff, volunteers, and students will complete a fire drill and a shelter-in-place drill.

- The drill procedures will be explained to the students by classroom volunteers.
- All students, visitors, volunteers and staff must participate in the drills.
- The drills will be pre-announced: parent(s) will receive notification of these drills in an email.

Policy Acknowledgement

I have reviewed the All Saints Religious Education Parent Handbook. I acknowledge and agree to the policies, and will require my child(ren) to comply with the policies which apply to students. I also realize that I will be informed from time to time, formally or informally, of various changes in All Saints Religious Education and/or Diocesan policies. I understand that All Saints Religious Education and/or Diocese reserves the right to change policies at any time with or without advance notice.