

# SAINT PAUL

PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION



## **Family Handbook 2020 – 2021**

**Saint Paul the Apostle Church ✕ Religious Education Department**

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# Who We Are and What We Do

Saint Paul the Apostle Parish School of Religion (PSR) is part of the educational arm of the parish community, responsible for providing religious instruction (known as *catechesis*), formation and sacramental preparation to children attending public or non-Catholic private schools. With the help of several hundred well-trained adult and teen volunteers, we serve between 750 - 1,000 children annually. Our materials, methods and practices follow the *Graded Course of Study* issued by the Diocese of Columbus and approved for use by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

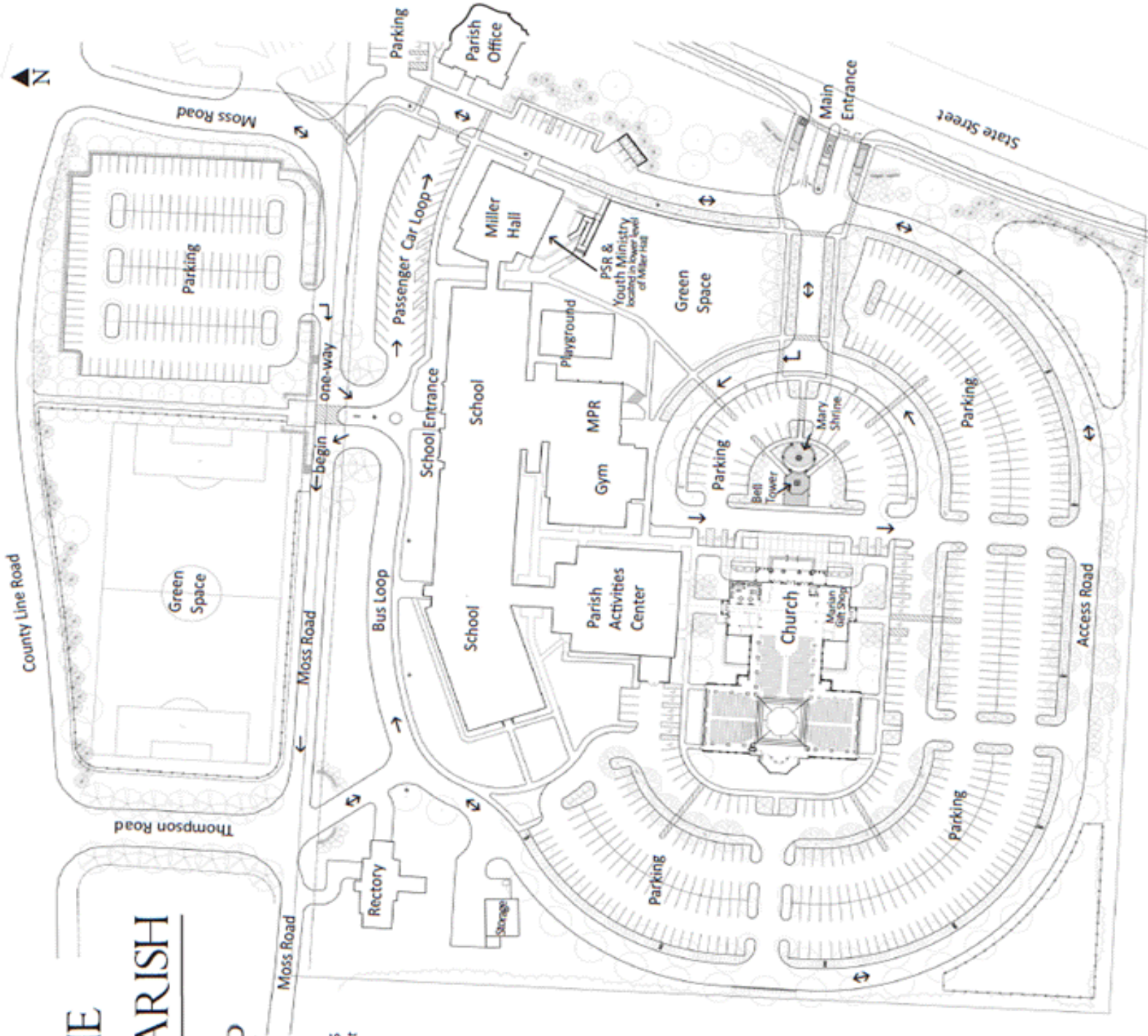
By the promises you made as parents at the Baptism of your children, *you* are the primary religious educators in your families. PSR exists to support you in this important work, and it is our privilege to partner with you and your family. With the commitment of others, we provide the children and youth of our parish a great environment for growth in their Catholic faith.

Religious education cannot exist without being tied directly to the public work and worship of our Church. As such, PSR is available to children of parishioners of St. Paul and is an essential part of Catholic life which includes regular participation in the Sacraments and weekly attendance at Mass.

The purpose of this *Family Handbook* is to provide you with the policies, guidelines and procedures designed to help accomplish our goal of providing quality religious education within a safe environment, relevant service opportunities, community expressions of faith and practices to keep our classes running smoothly. By registering for PSR you acknowledge these policies, and by understanding them you help us in our ongoing ministry to our students and their families.

# ST PAUL THE APOSTLE PARISH CAMPUS MAP

← Parish Athletic Fields  
*(located a few hundred feet west  
of the parish on Moss Road)*



## **SUNDAY PRE-SCHOOL**

**For students aged 3 – 4 – 5 (not in Kindergarten).**

**Sundays, during 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Masses**

The Sunday Pre-School PSR Program is a religious readiness program for mixed age classes, designed to support the family in bringing the child closer to love and knowledge of God and Church. There is a strong emphasis on the expression of each child's individual response to God's love and each family's support of their child's unique faith development. Classes provide numerous opportunities for the child to learn through discovery and experience in an atmosphere of love and support. The importance of the parental role in the development of Christian attitudes is emphasized. Parents are also given suggestions on ways to nurture faith in their home. Children must be 3 years old by September 30 of the current year, and toilet trained.

The Sunday Preschool PSR program uses a holistic approach of activities, affirmation, music, teachings, prayer, games and play to discover and explore God's life offered to us in the liturgy through the Sacraments and through creation in our world. Discovery and emphasis are placed on the gift of their lives and to be able to identify themselves as a people of God who need to make good moral choices. Basic prayers will be taught and emphasized along with basic Catholic devotions.

Please bring your child 5 - 10 minutes before the scheduled class time and check in with the teacher. Do not leave a child in the classroom unless a teacher and an aide are in the room. At the end of class, please wait in the hallway until the teacher opens the door. Children will only be released to their parents or a previously authorized adult. Please be aware that if sufficient staff is not available for any reason, (illness, etc.), Sunday Pre-school will be cancelled, and parents will be notified as soon as possible.

Registration is online through the parish website. Included with registration materials you will find the Transportation Information Form for each student in Sunday Pre-School. Please include any adult who has your authorization to pick up your student from class. Teachers and aides will keep track of who picks up each student each week. This information will be kept in the PSR office.

### **SUNDAY PRE-SCHOOL CLOSING POLICY**

When sessions are cancelled, parents will be notified by email as soon as possible. Please refer to our Cancellation and Closing Policies in this booklet.

## **PSR CLASSES**

**TUESDAY Grades K – 8: 4:45 – 6:00 p.m.**

**WEDNESDAY Grades 1 – 8, Sacramental Prep, and Special Needs: 6:30 – 7:45 p.m.**

PSR for younger students incorporates a variety of learning styles that include but are not limited to: classroom prayer, discussion, activities, games, music (both formal and informal) and prayer services. PSR for older students incorporates a community-building style of learning that includes small group prayer and discussion, service opportunities, guest speakers, and clergy involvement.

We are committed to partner with parents and guardians to develop households in which the faith is shared and lived with vigor. Our goal is to provide a place in which our students learn to live their faith as well as to understand it, where they can experience Catholic identity, integrate Catholic values, and express Catholic beliefs.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR YOUTH**

**Wednesdays: 6:30 – 7:45 p.m.**

Students who have not begun Religious Education classes by Grade 3, or who have not been baptized by age 7, will be entered into a program designed to be intensely focused on the Sacraments, Church history and saints. This is intended for those baptized Catholics who have never received formal religious formation, or students who are converting from another faith tradition.

Registration is required, and space is limited. Students baptized Catholic will be charged the standard tuition. Students who are converting from another faith tradition will be exempt from tuition.

## **PSR FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

**Wednesdays: 6:30 – 7:45 p.m., multi-age**

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) stated in 1995, “By reason of their baptism, all Catholics are equal in dignity in the sight of God and have the same divine calling.” We strive to offer appropriate classroom-based religious education regardless of a student’s abilities or needs, and work with families to place all students in our classes.

A Special Needs class for children is available during the Wednesday session. A parent/guardian or relative usually accompanies the student at class. Please contact the PSR Staff with any questions about Special Needs screening or PSR classes for those with a current IEP (Individual Education Plan) in their school system.

### **CANCELLATIONS AND CLOSINGS**

In the event of a Level Two Snow Emergency, other inclement weather, or insufficient staff on Sundays, PSR Pre-School and/or Children’s Liturgy of the Word will be cancelled.

If any Westerville City schools have evening activities for the day, PSR classes for that day will be open as scheduled. Should a late storm arrive, and Westerville City schools dismiss early, PSR classes will be cancelled. If the City of Westerville and/or Delaware County declares a Level Two Snow Emergency, all PSR classes, including Sunday Preschool, and activities are cancelled for that day. Families should exercise their best possible judgment in coming to class if any of the PSR programs are in session. Please contact the PSR office if your child cannot attend class due to weather related issues.

To check on the status of class when weather may be threatening, parents and/or students can check the PSR section of the Parish website (<http://stpaulcatholicchurch.org>), or call the Office at (614) 882-5045.

## **PSR HOME STUDY PROGRAM**

### **Grades 1, 3 - 7**

The PSR Home Study program is available for Grades 1, 3 - 7 for those families who wish to work with their children at home, rather than place them in a weekly Religious Education class. This option can be helpful for students with behavioral difficulties, or when PSR lacks the appropriate number of volunteers to provide adequate coverage for our classes.

Those who choose this option should indicate that they want their child in Home Study when registering for PSR and complete a *Home Study Application Form* (Standard PSR tuition applies). Home Study families whose applications have been approved will be given the expectations, materials and requirements at a **mandatory Parent-only Meeting in the fall**. Families applying for Home Study program are obligated to complete online assessments to remain in good standing. Please contact the PSR Office for more information.

## **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

### **A week-long camp in June. Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Vacation Bible School at St. Paul is a summertime camp that brings together Catholic families in a fun, dynamic and memorable week. The entire family is encouraged to participate.

Children who are in preschool through fourth grade are divided into multi-aged crews and are led by youth volunteer crew leaders in grades 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>. Students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade participate in a part service, part volunteer and part fun faith building program designed specifically for their age. Adult volunteers participate by leading interactive stations or as group leaders. Music, interactive Bible stories, crafts, service projects, games and faith sharing are all part of the week.

Registration kicks off in March. Our program takes place on St. Paul campus.

## **CHILDREN’S LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**For students ages 5 – 9.**

**Sundays at the 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Masses**

The Children’s Liturgy of the Word (C.L.O.W.) ministry is responsible for conveying to our students the form and dignity that the Liturgy of the Word calls for as part of the Mass, and an extension of the Assembly. This makes C.L.O.W different in how materials are presented and shared, as opposed to Pre-School or Elementary level PSR class. Our volunteer Catechists and class aides have as a priority the sharing of the Word of God.

Our use of the *Celebrating Children* leader guides, supplemented with *Explaining God’s Word* children’s bulletin and *Magnifikid!* ensure that students make the most of their time in class, ready to celebrate the remainder of the Mass with their families and discuss the role of the weekly Readings for Mass afterward.

## **CLoW CANCELLATION POLICY**

When sessions are cancelled, children will remain with their families during Mass. Please refer to our Cancellation and Closing Policies in the booklet.

## **REGISTRATION**

Tuition rates, payment plans and opportunities for tuition reduction or waiver may be found in the PSR Registration paperwork. Forms are available online at <http://stpaulcatholicchurch.org/parish-school-of-religion-psr/>.

Families of those who commit as weekly volunteers as teachers and childcare workers have all tuition waived. Aides, hall monitors, and office assistants will pay \$80 per student up to three students.

Prompt registration for classes is critical. ***Tuesday and Wednesday Night PSR registration for any given year closes at the last class of the first semester unless a family moves into the parish.*** Pre-Registration for the next academic year is available for families currently enrolled in PSR from May to June 30. Families who pre-register assist PSR in obtaining advance information for book and material ordering and will have the registration fee waived.

## **SACRAMENT PREPARATION POLICY**

At St. Paul, **First Reconciliation and First Eucharist are normally celebrated in Grade 2 and Confirmation is celebrated in Grade 8.** Students work with special materials and have requirements for each Sacrament (Rehearsals for First Eucharist and Confirmation, Saint Projects and a retreat experience for Confirmation). Parents ***are required*** to attend Sacrament Parent Meetings, Rehearsals, and provide additional information about their students.

It is our policy that students are eligible for consideration for a Sacrament if they have been registered for Religious Education ***in at least the two immediate years*** prior to reception of Sacraments. In keeping with this policy, consideration for class enrollment in Grade 2 is given first to students who have successfully completed Grade 1. Consideration for class enrollment in Grade 8 is given first to students who have successfully completed Grade 7.

## **TRANSFERRING FROM/TO ANOTHER PARISH**

Students who have attended another Catholic parish program and register for PSR at St. Paul must provide documentation from their former parish as to their religious education, which will then be credited to them. Those permitted to transfer into PSR during the year will have their tuition pro-rated.

Religious Education credit will be granted only for work which follows a *Graded Course of Study* (a curriculum recognized by the student's former diocese or the Diocese of Columbus, and the student's former parish). PSR cannot accept prior work if it does not follow the standards of the Diocese of Columbus Department of Religious Education and Catechesis. Students registering at another PSR may request transcripts from this Office for previous work, which will be sent to that program's Director.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PRIORITY**

PSR assists parents in carrying out their Baptismal responsibility as “first educators” of the Catholic faith to their children. This includes those parents who choose extracurricular programs for their children that may, on occasion, conflict with PSR class sessions. Parents are *strongly urged* to review our Attendance Policy and exercise good judgment in planning their children’s schedules.

If outside activities will be a known conflict, parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the Director of Religious Education to discuss the options available to them to complete PSR for the current year at St. Paul. A family should never feel that they must leave their parish to have their needs for religious education met, and so a reasonable solution will be sought that is mutually beneficial to all parties.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY (GRADES 1 – 8)**

Our parish provides an opportunity for children to attend PSR *each and every year*, in support of the Baptismal responsibility parents bear as first teachers of the Catholic Faith to their children. As our curriculum is based on a *spiral scope and sequence*, students engage their coursework in an age- appropriate manner each year as a part of their ongoing Religious Education. The vast majority of our students make this progress year after year, and the benefits are a testimony to the faith lives of the families in our parish community. In classes directly involving preparation for reception of Sacraments (Grades 1, 2, 7 and 8), regular attendance ensures the success of class-based communication, group discussion, reflection and community-focused action.

If a student must be absent from PSR class, parents are asked to notify the PSR Office (not the Catechist) stating the student’s name, grade, classroom number and reason for the absence. The student should then submit the work covered in the missed class before the end of the next scheduled class. Each student is given a Class Syllabus at the beginning of the school year so that they can keep track of topics, complete missing assignments at home and assess their progress throughout the year.



# ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES, GRADES K - 8

## ENTRANCES AND EXITS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING

- The front door (by the flagpole)
- The doors in the glass hallway between Miller Hall and the school building
- The west door of the school by the Rectory

These doors will be opened 15 minutes prior to the start of class. The doors at the west bus loop, leading to the Klinger Center, are *only for students or parents with mobility issues*.

## ARRIVAL

Students enter through the above listed doors. Please check in with the Hall Monitor at the central table (between the School Office and the Gym) if you enter after the start of class.

## DISMISSAL

In order to maintain a safe flow of traffic for children and families, all students must be picked up from their assigned classrooms by a parent or other authorized adult. Please park your car and enter the School building through the doors listed above.

Catechists and Classroom Aides will monitor when each student leaves a classroom. Each student must have an authorized adult sign them out after each class. Authorized adults can be listed on the student's *Transportation Information Form* (see below).

## EARLY DISMISSAL

Releasing students early from class is extremely disruptive to students and classroom progress; therefore early dismissal is permitted for emergencies only. Parents or responsible adults should enter through the front doors of the School and report to the table in the center hallway in front of the learning commons if early pick-up is necessary.

## TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

Included with registration materials you will find the Transportation Information Form for each student in Grades K - 8. Please include any adult who has your authorization to pick up your student from class. Catechists and Classroom Aides will keep track of who picks up each student each week. This information is kept in the PSR Office.

## PARKING

Parking lots are across the street from the School on Moss Road, by Miller Hall in front of the Parish Office, and on the west side of the School building near the Church.

To provide the safest environment possible for our families, we ask the following:

- Please note where there is assigned handicapped parking. Do not park in these designated spots unless you have a state-issued permit and display the permit placard when parking.
- Local fire regulations state that no one may park in the road in front of the School. Traffic must be kept moving on these roads during dismissals.
- **Parking along any part of Moss Road, Thompson or in the Rectory driveway is *never permitted* during PSR class time.**

## SAFETY & DISCIPLINE POLICIES

We strive to create an environment where students may learn, and our catechists may teach safely and effectively. To do this, volunteers are trained, and preparatory drills are conducted during PSR class time throughout the year.

Basic and effective classroom rules also exist in the PSR classroom:

1. This classroom/activity is a safe place. Violence/bullying is never tolerated.
2. When a Catechist or Classroom Aide talks, everyone listens.
3. Respect is shown toward everyone.
4. Inappropriate language is never tolerated.

Once the guidelines or rules of behavior are established in a classroom, students will know in advance the consequences of noncompliance:

1. When a student misbehaves the student will be made aware of the behavior and that it is unacceptable. A correction may be given by the Catechist.
2. If the behavior continues, the Catechist will inform the student that he/she will be sent to the Office. If the student must be sent to the Office, they will be escorted by a Classroom Aide. If an Aide is unavailable, a Hall Monitor may be asked to escort the student.
3. The student who has misbehaved and the Director will discuss the behavior in the Office and reach a conclusion about appropriate behavior during PSR classes. The incident will be noted in the student's file and the appropriate Classroom Folder. The student will then be returned to class.
4. The second time a student is sent from class to the Office, the Director will telephone the parents to inform them of the situation and set up a meeting with them to discuss the student's behavior. Both the event and the parent meeting will be noted in the student's file. The student may return to class if conditions permit.
5. The third time a student is sent from class to the Office, Step 4 will be repeated *except* the student will not be re-admitted to class without an accompanying parent. This will remain until the Catechist, the parents and the Director agree that the situation has been resolved and a Behavior Contract (or, if necessary, an Alternative Learning Plan) has been agreed upon.

## FOOD ALLERGY/SENSITIVITY ISSUES

All known or diagnosed food allergies and/or dietary restrictions of PSR students should be noted at Registration in the Medical Section of the student's PSR *Registration Form*. Parents are also advised to notify their child's PSR teacher as soon as possible.

Due to allergy and food safety concerns, **food is never permitted in our classrooms**. There are many students who have life-threatening allergies who use these classrooms throughout the day; for this reason, we ask you to *not* bring in treats or snacks of any kind. There are occasions where food may be served in other locations on the St. Paul campus.

If a PSR student preparing for a Sacrament has a food allergy and/or there are concerns about contact with the physical components of Sacraments (water, wine, unleavened whole wheat bread, perfumed oil), the PSR Office should be notified as soon as possible so Staff may work with parents to accommodate that student's needs. Serious allergy cases may warrant reception of Sacraments in an acceptable alternate format or reception of that Sacrament at an alternate date/time.

## **DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS 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 sexual activity in front of others;
  - Spreading rumors about or categorizing others as to sexual activity.

Sexual 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.
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 director of religious education, 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

