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# St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education

Family Handbook  
2013-2014

## **A Brief History of St Mary Magdalene Catholic Church**

For many years the Catholic families living in the Ingalls Park area of Joliet felt a great need for their own place of worship. With the permission of the Chancery Office, the Most Reverend Martin D. Mc Namara, Bishop of Joliet-in-Illinois and The Right Reverend Monsignor Romeo R. Blanchette, Chancellor, a Catholic census was conducted.

After identifying over 440 Catholic families in the Ingalls Park area and the Diocese decided to establish a new parish. On June 18, 1953, St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church was formally announced, and two days later, The Reverend John W. Desmond was appointed as its first Pastor.

Ground was broken for a new Church and School building on August 30, 1953 and actual construction began on September 8. On November 30, 1953, Monsignor Romeo R. Blanchette blessed and laid the cornerstone. The first Mass in the new Church was celebrated on Easter Sunday, April 18, 1954. The School was completed and furnished by early August. On August 29, 1954, Monsignor Romeo R. Blanchette dedicated the building exactly one year after the ground breaking ceremony.

The Reverend John W. Desmond served as Pastor from 1953 to 1961. In October 1959, Pope John XXIII bestowed on him the honor of Domestic Prelate, with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. In addition to his work at St. Mary Magdalene, Monsignor Desmond was the founding Editor of the diocesan newspaper, *The Catholic News Register*.

Fr. Vincent Lavery succeeded Monsignor Desmond as Pastor in October 1961. His previous assignments included service as a Chaplain in the Second World War (1944-1946), holding the rank of Lieutenant Commander. Fr. Lavery remained at St. Mary Magdalene until the arrival of Fr. John Slown in October 1972.

Upon his arrival in 1977, Fr. Daniel Stempora began an extensive remodeling of the school classrooms and gymnasium. During his Pastorate, St. Mary Magdalene Parish celebrated its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary. In honor of this milestone, Bishop Romeo R. Blanchette was Principal Celebrant of a special Mass on Sunday, October 8, 1978. In 1985, Fr. George Klepec served as Temporary Administrator while Fr. Stempora was on sabbatical.

Fr Dennis White was appointed Pastor in 1987. Due to complications diabetes and declining health, he was granted a medical leave in March of 1989. During the following three months Fr. William Irwin was Parish Administrator.

In 1989, Fr. Richard Ross became Pastor. Highly regarded for his patience and thoughtfulness, he oversaw the renovation of the Church. New carpeting was added and the side altars were refurbished. Century-old stained glass windows from St. Boniface Church in Chicago, crafted by the world renowned studios of F.X. Zetter in Munich, Germany were also installed.

A very spiritual man, with a huge heart and following to match arrived in June, 1999. Soon after his arrival, Fr. David Stalzer was diagnosed with lymphoma and succumbed to the disease on June 18, 2000.

Fr. Ron Nietzke was appointed Pastor in July 2000. His first project was a five car garage, a programmable sign and classroom memorials. Other achievements included a debt reduction program, Sunday morning Children's Liturgy of the Word, a Parish Life Commission, Parish Council, Adult Bible Study, Modular Classroom for Kindergarten and Computer Lab, and Vacation Bible School. Fr. Nietzke also served as a Chaplain in the United States Naval Reserve, holding the Rank of Commander. On January 15, 2003, he was called to active duty in "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Iraq. With the support and prayers of parishioners, Fr. Nietzke safely returned to St. Mary Magdalene on June 16, 2003. During his deployment, Fr. Henry Wilkening was Temporary Administrator of St. Mary Magdalene Parish.

The closing of St. Mary Magdalene Catholic School was announced at the end of the 2008-2009 academic year. It was a difficult period for parishioners, school parents and faculty members who had valiantly worked for several years to increase enrollment and to address a rapidly increasing parish debt.

In June 2011, Fr. Christopher Groh was appointed Pastor. Upon his arrival, he quickly undertook responsibility for a major capital project necessitated by a leaking Church roof and aging air conditioning system. To date, the stained glass windows have been repaired and releaded, a new organ was installed in Church and structural repairs were made to the Rectory. Adult and Children's Religious Education opportunities have been enhanced, and a Stewardship program was initiated to address nearly \$800,000.00 in school and parish indebtedness. Ongoing Parish renewal and evangelization through active participation of parishioners in the life of St. Mary Magdalene Parish continues to be a priority.

## **Mission Statement**

St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education fosters a Christ-centered educational environment. This environment is rooted in the Catholic Faith experience, guided and nurtured through spiritual, social, academic, technological and physical development. St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education provides a safe, positive and creative learning environment, maintained in a cooperative partnership with parents, catechists, staff, volunteers and parishioners.

## **Philosophy**

The St. Mary Magdalene community strives to maintain a safe environment where each individual is respected as a child of God. Each student is encouraged to develop a life-long desire for learning, academic excellence, and respect for the uniqueness of self and others. We believe in teaching each child that mistakes can be the stepping stones to success.

In response to the Gospel message, a comprehensive, faith-based curriculum is offered and enhanced through the celebration of the Sacraments and the recognition of the traditions of the church. These experiences are enriched by the study of Scripture and by participation in the Liturgical Seasons. Thus, students are provided with the foundation for the development of a healthy self-image, positive social interaction, personal and community prayer life, strong morals and values, and the groundwork for Christian service. In preparation for a lifetime of challenges and successes, St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education partners with the Parish community to assist parents in their important as primary Religious Educators of their children. Through this partnership, students are encouraged and equipped to become responsible and contributing believers with a strong Catholic identity. As part of a global society, St. Mary Magdalene promotes the integration, acceptance, and enrichment in a diverse cultural, racial and socio-economic community.

## **Catechesis at Home and in the Classroom**

- 1. To proclaim the message of Jesus Christ ... to teach by word and example what we believe.**
  - We believe in the mystery of the one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Blessed Trinity.
  - We believe in God, our Father who created us and all things.
  - We believe in Jesus Christ, who became man to redeem us from sin.
  - We believe in the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies us.
  - We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
  - Our teaching must also include the Sacraments, the life of Grace, the moral life, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints, and the last things every human person experiences (death, judgment, and eternity — Heaven or Hell).
- 2. To provide opportunities for worship and the reception of the Sacraments.**
  - Parents must participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with their children every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation.
  - Families and classes should celebrate the seasons of the liturgical year.

- Parents and catechists should assist children in understanding and remembering the common prayers of the Church, the 10 Commandments, and the laws of the Church, the Seven Sacraments, and other assigned memorization work.
  - Opportunities for frequent reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion should be made available to the children as often as possible, especially during the seasons of Lent and Advent.
- 3. To foster Christian community.**
- Children should have opportunities to share their faith with others (older children could help parents practice prayers with younger children).
  - Children should be given help and example in understanding the principles of Christian morality and living out God’s law in daily life.
- 4. To guide children in Christian service.**
- We serve because we follow Jesus who served.
  - Prayer and service should be fostered in response to God’s many gifts.
  - Children should be encouraged to serve those who are suffering or less fortunate.
  - Children should be encouraged to pray and discern what vocation God is calling them to: the religious life? The priesthood? The holy state of Matrimony? Single for Christ?

**Non-Discrimination**

Under the auspices of the Diocese of Joliet, St. Mary Magdalene admits students of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally available to students in schools.

**Registration**

**New Student Registration**

Registration for currently enrolled students is conducted prior to the final class in May. New families are encouraged to register by August 15.

First Grade Students must be 6 years of age by September 1. All students entering the Religious Education Program first time, including those baptized at St. Mary Magdalene, must provide an original Baptismal (and First Communion, if applicable) certificate at the time of registration.

Parents and students agree that once a student is registered at St. Mary Magdalene School, all policies and regulations will be observed by the student, and encouraged by parents. In all organizations and at all school related events, parents are expected to exhibit and to model Christian conduct at all times.

Parents are expected to support all school policies contained in this handbook and to be aware of subsequent changes made by the school or diocese of which they will be informed by letter or in periodic newsletters.

**Transfer Students**

Students entering St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education from another Religious Education Program or Catholic School an official certification of grade level, usually a report card or transfer slip from the former program or school.

**New Student Probation**

New students are accepted on academic and disciplinary probation. During this time there will be a review of the student’s records, his/her discipline, class participation, attendance and support of policies.

### **Student Transfers/ Withdrawals**

If a student is withdrawing from the St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education Program, parents are expected to:

- A. Provide the Director of Religious Education with written notification giving reasons for withdrawal, at least two weeks before transfer/ withdrawal.
- B. Schedule and complete an exit interview with the pastor.
- C. Provide name and address of the new Religious Education Program or Catholic School to which records are to be sent.
- D. Provide the new address and phone number if the family is moving.
- E. Complete all financial obligations, including a transfer fee of \$25.00 per student to cover the costs of processing student records.
- F. Sign an authorization for release of student records to the new Religious Education Program or Catholic School. Without this authorization records will not be forwarded.

### **Change of Address or Phone Number**

In order to keep our records up-to-date, the Religious Education Office (815-727-4600) must be immediately notified of any change of address, phone number (home or business) or email as soon as it is effective.

## **Financial Information**

### ***Tuition and Fees***

*Tuition covers books, instructional materials, music and audio-visual materials. Tuition is subject to change from year to year. Registration is considered incomplete if tuition expenses are not met. Additional Fees cover expenses related to preparation for and celebration of the Sacraments of First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation.*

A family must be active parishioners in order to qualify for the subsidized active parishioner tuition rate.

***Parishioner of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Bernard\*:***

*One Child \$175.00; two children \$200.00; three children \$225.00; each additional child \$25.00.*

***Non-Parishioner:***

*One Child \$225.00; two children \$255.00; three children \$285.00; each additional child \$30.00.*

*\*Parishioners of St. Bernard's, Joliet should contact their parish for subsidy to offset non-parishioner tuition rates*

***TO RECEIVE THE ABOVE RATES, TUITION MUST BE PAID-IN-FULL AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.***

**A LATE FEE OF \$10.00 PER CHILD WILL BE ADDED  
FOR PREVIOUSLY ENROLLED FAMILIES REGISTERING AFTER AUGUST 1, 2013.**

**A FEE OF \$20.00 PER CHILD  
WILL BE ADDED THE FIRST OF EACH MONTH FOR LATE PAYMENT OF TUITION.**

There is no grace period for late payments.

**ALL TUITION AND FEES MUST BE PAID-IN-FULL BY DECEMBER 1.**

### **Lost Books and Replacement Fees**

Each student receives a religion textbook to keep and use both in class and at home. Parents have the responsibility of making sure their children bring this textbook and any handouts to class every Saturday. The book replacement fee is \$40.00.

### **Delinquent Accounts and Fees**

St. Mary Magdalene is not required to send notification of delinquent payment. If notification of a delinquent tuition account is made by certified mail, a fee of \$10.00 will be added to the family tuition account.

Any payment returned as a result of family error, such as "Insufficient Funds," "Uncollected Funds," "Account Closed," will incur a \$25.00 returned payment fee. Each returned check and non-sufficient transactions will result in a \$25.00 returned payment fee.

- *Student report cards and official student records will be withheld until all tuition and fees are paid in full.*
- *To avoid assignment of past due balances to our collection agency, final payment of all tuition and fees must be received no later than December 1.*

### **Financial Suspension**

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to meet payment deadlines and to remain current in their payments.

All family tuition accounts must be paid and up-to-date to avoid financial suspension. **If the family tuition account is not paid-in-full, financial suspension will be imposed on December 1, 2013 and the student will be unable to attend class until all delinquent tuition and fees are paid.** No records will be released for any student until all financial obligations are met. A student whose tuition account is in arrears will not be allowed to take exams, submit homework or receive academic credit during the time of the financial suspension. Any previously awarded financial assistance or tuition grants will also be forfeited.

### **Collection Agency**

If no prior arrangements have been made, on December 15, 2013 delinquent balances will be assigned to our collection agency, C.A.B. Services, Inc., for payment:

**C.A.B. Services, Inc.  
90 Barney Drive  
Joliet, IL 60435  
(815) 725-1303**

C.A.B. Services, Inc. will notify credit bureaus of the delinquency and parents will be responsible for any additional late fees, collection fees, attorney fees and court costs.

St. Mary Magdalene is not required to send prior notification of delinquencies assigned to C.A.B. Services, Inc.

**Students will remain on Financial Suspension until full payment of past due tuition and fees is received from C.A.B. Services, Inc. by St. Mary Magdalene.**

**ALLOW SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS FOR YOUR PAYMENT TO C.A.B. SERVICES  
TO CLEAR OUR BANK.**

### **Tuition Procedure in Case of Divorce**

The custodial parent will be responsible for payment of all tuition and fees and for communication with the non-custodial parent. St. Mary Magdalene will not be involved in any family disputes concerning tuition payments.

### **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance is available to any St. Mary Magdalene family who finds tuition to be a burden. No student will be denied admission to St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education solely on the basis of financial need.

Families requesting tuition assistance must meet with the Pastor and provide financial information, including Federal and State 1040's and W-2 forms for the past two years.

**If family financial conditions should change during the school year, parents should contact the Director of Religious Education or Pastor. Names are kept confidential.**

### **Tuition Refund Policy**

Tuition and fees are non-refundable. Students enrolled for any portion of the program will be charged tuition for the full year. Report cards and transfer of student records will be withheld until all payments are completed.

***Families withdrawing students prior to the end of the school year will forfeit any financial assistance or tuition grants previously awarded.***

### **Definition of an Active Parishioner**

*“Sharing of time, talent and treasure through regular celebration of Sunday Mass, contributing weekly to the financial support of the church and participation in the volunteer ministries and activities of the Parish is the responsibility of each registered member of St. Mary Magdalene Parish.”*

An active parish family must satisfy the following:

- Each family must be a registered member of St. Mary Magdalene Parish;
- Each family must practice the Catholic faith through regular celebration of weekly Sunday Mass at St. Mary Magdalene and participate in Parish activities. ***(A weekly record of student envelopes placed in the Sunday Offertory Collection will be used to determine attendance at Sunday Mass);***
- Each family is expected to regularly contribute financially to St. Mary Magdalene Parish by using the parish weekly envelopes .
- **Contributing Parishioner status is reviewed annually on May 1 and December 1.** Families not making weekly financial contributions during the prior twelve months, or who have not been regularly attending weekly Sunday Mass at St. Mary Magdalene will be considered inactive parishioners and will be charged at the inactive/non-parishioner tuition rate for the year. (The status of newly-registered families will be based on the beginning date of school registration.)

The foregoing definition of a Parishioner will not be used to deny access to a Religious Education, rather, it will be used to determine which families qualify for the subsidized Active Parishioner tuition rate.

## **Communications**

Information is emailed to parents, including a periodic newsletter and updates to the 2013-2014 *Family Handbook*. Families who do not have email will receive information by mail.

### **GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

#### **Communication with Catechists**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact catechists if they have any questions or concerns about their children's progress, curriculum or other school-related matters. Messages may be left on our answering machine at any time or with the School Office between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. Messages will be forwarded to catechists who will call at their earliest convenience.

During Saturday morning classes, messages and deliveries for catechists and students should be brought to the School Office. This will keep class interruptions to a minimum.

In order to develop a sense of responsibility, students will be discouraged from calling home for assignments and other forgotten items. Catechists inform their students what is needed for the next class and encourage them to complete those sections in their assignment book

#### **Guidelines for Conference/Meetings**

The following guidelines are set forth for all conferences or meetings between parents and school personnel.

- Any parent wishing to have a conference should make an appointment. Setting up a mutually convenient time helps to provide for a setting where all parties can focus on the issue(s) without frequent disruption.

- The Director of Religious Education and catechists know that it is healthy to separate their professional career from their homes and families. We ask that parents please respect their privacy. Please arrange so that all phone calls or scheduled meetings take place at a mutually convenient location and time.
- All conferences with catechists should take place in a private room conducive to such a gathering.
- At the beginning of each conference, a mutually agreed upon agenda should be established. The focus of the discussion should remain faithful to the agenda.

**Boundaries/Confidentiality**

The effectiveness of our educational program and our continued growth and improvement is very much affected by the morale of our staff, students and parents. When communication is effective and within certain boundaries it can bolster school spirit and morale. Yet communication can also be very destructive especially when it involves non-affected parties or betrays the boundaries of confidentiality.

**When a problem or concern arises, the process of resolution should involve only those parties directly affected by the issue.** For example, if a parent judges that a problem exists between their child and his/her catechist, the involved parties are the catechist, the student, and the parents. It is not helpful to contact other parents to see if their children are having similar problems. While this form of solicitation may find other families with similar problems, it actually creates more problems and has a disastrous effect on morale. It does not help to resolve the immediate problem between a particular catechist and student. If other parents have similar problems it is best that each problem be resolved on an individual case-by-case basis.

We understand that we all need to share with others both our joys and our difficulties. When someone feels that he/she needs to share their concerns or frustrations with others, then friends and family members that are not part of the Religious Education community make better confidants.

**Confidentiality is a very essential element in fostering effective communication and respect. All discussions, conferences, and resolutions should remain only with involved parties.** For example, issues involving adults should not be discussed or reviewed in the presence or within earshot of a child. The details of a conference between a catechist and a given family are not a matter for other non-involved parties. Maintaining confidentiality will encourage respect, cooperation, and will help to foster more effective resolutions.

Concerns Dealing with:	Should Initially Involve:	If not resolved, whom to involve next:
Student’s Performance	Student	His/ Her Catechist
Catechist	Catechist	DRE
Unfair Discipline	Person who disciplined the child	That person’s supervisor
Specific Classroom Assignments	Catechist	DRE
DRE	DRE	Pastor
School Rules/Procedures	Director of Religious Education	Pastor

**Parent/Catechist Conferences**

Formal Parent-Catechist Conferences are held after the first report card is issued. All parents are expected to attend. Students should accompany their parents and be a participant in the conference. If a parent/guardian wishes to meet without the child present, parents/guardians may make special arrangements to meet with the catechist on a different day. An additional conference may be scheduled at the end of the school year at the request of either the parent or catechist. At this optional conference students may or may not be present.

Parents who need to confer with a catechist other than the designated Parent-Catechist Conference times should not hesitate to contact the catechist to set up a conference. Catechists may not be disturbed during class hours. A message may be left in the Religious Education Office for the catechist to call the parent.

### **Telephone Calls and Messages**

Students may use the office phone only in cases of real emergency, both for making and receiving messages.

## **Schedule**

### **Class Schedule**

Religious Education classes are conducted on Saturday Morning from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Classes begin in September and end in May. Please check the calendar for exact dates.

Students may arrive at school after 8:15 a.m. St. Mary Magdalene cannot assume responsibility for student safety prior to this time. Students must report directly to the gymnasium.

All students are expected to leave the building at dismissal time and must go directly home.

### **Tardiness**

Class time is a very precious commodity in a religious education program. Therefore, it is not only necessary that students attend each class, but it is also equally important that they be on time for class. Students who arrive after 8:30 AM will be marked late. If your child arrives late, please enter the building through the main Briggs Street entrance and report to the school office.

### **Arrival**

The small parking lot immediately in front of the school is reserved for catechists and the handicapped.

There are two options for dropping off your child:

1. Park in the Church parking lot on Briggs Street and walk to the main entrance with your child.
2. Park in the West (large) parking lot on Siegmund Street and drop your child off at the South entrance of the School.

### **Dismissal**

- Please arrive around 9:50 a.m. Be punctual for dismissal. We DO NOT offer after school care and do not have the resources to watch your children after dismissal.
- In any case of an emergency, and you anticipate you will be late in picking-up your child/ren, call the Religious Education Office at **815-727-4600**. If you will not be personally picking-up your child/ren after class, you must call the Religious Education Office to give instructions to whom your child is to be released at dismissal time.
- Please enter the West (large) parking lot on Siegmund Street and pull forward into the lanes facing south. The children will all be dismissed together at 10:00 a.m.

In the event that your child needs to leave class early, please send a written note that morning and contact the Religious Education office to confirm the time of departure. When picking up your child, please park in the Church parking lot, enter through the main (Briggs Street) entrance and come into the office to sign your child out.

### **Attendance**

The Diocese of Joliet requires that students receive at least 30 hours of religious instruction.

- *Students cannot be absent for more than 5 classes during the school year.*

Punctuality and regularity of attendance are excellent habits and are expected from the very first day of class

- ***Parents must notify the Religious Education Office whenever their child will not be in class. (815) 727-4600.***

- If a child will be absent due to illness or is tardy, a parent or legal guardian should phone the Religious Education Office by 8:15 a.m. A message may be left on the answering machine. If the Religious Education has not been notified a call to the home or workplace will be made.
- In addition to the telephone call, a written excuse, stating the reason for absence and signed by the parent or guardian, must be presented to the catechist when your child returns to school after an absence.  
When a child arrives late for school, he/she must report to the office for a tardy slip before going to class.
- If a child is to be dismissed early, a written note stating the reason must be presented to the Religious Education Office before the beginning of class.
- No child will be allowed to leave early without a parent/guardian reporting to the office to sign out and take the child.
- Parents are not permitted to go to the rooms to pick up children or deliver forgotten items. All business is to be transacted in the Religious Education Office.
- Doctor and dental appointments should be avoided during class hours.

### **Record Keeping**

Class attendance is kept for each child enrolled. Absences will be noted on permanent student records and report cards.

### **Vacations and Absences**

Vacation is not a legitimate excuse for absence. Catechists are not required to provide academic work or instruction to accommodate vacations. No assignments will be given in anticipation of an upcoming vacation. Student vacation time should be arranged after consulting the Religious Education school calendar. Although catechists and students attempt to offset the loss of instruction with make-up work, absenteeism definitely presents a difficult problem for both catechists and students because it prohibits the thoroughness and continuity of instruction. Student report card grades may reflect the loss of instruction due to student absence.

When an emergency arises that causes a student to be absent during school time, the following steps are to be observed:

- Written notice to the Director of Religious Education.
- Written notice to the catechist
- Completion of all missed work after returning to class.

The catechists will give assignments to be completed at home that will attempt to partially compensate for the loss of instructional time, due to an illness or emergency.

### **Truancy**

A "truant" is defined as a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without a valid cause. "Valid Cause" for absence shall be illness, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and shall include other situations beyond the control of the student.

Documentation will be kept on a student's absence and conference will be held with the student's, parents and Director of Religious Education about his/her truancy. If tardiness or truancy continues, St. Mary Magdalene will inform the family that their student(s) will no longer be permitted to attend classes and will need to have their records sent to a program that will meet their needs.

### **Emergency Closing Procedures**

If it is necessary to close school because of weather conditions or other emergencies, you will receive a call from your child's Catechist and an announcement will be made over Joliet radio station **WJOL, 1340 AM**, the Chicago radio stations WBBM, WMAQ and WLS on [www.cancellations.com](http://www.cancellations.com), [www.emergencyclosings.com](http://www.emergencyclosings.com), and our parish web page, [www.stmarymagdalenechurch.co](http://www.stmarymagdalenechurch.co).

**Please do not phone WJOL, the Religious Education Office or Rectory. These phone lines need to be open to communicate for the broadcasts.**

Religious Education classes will not be dismissed early due to bad weather. Parents may, however, come for children and sign them out at the Religious Education Office.

## Health and Safety

### Illness

- Children should not be sent to class when there is evidence of fever, sore throat, nausea, rash, swollen glands, abdominal pain, watering eyes or lice. Notify school immediately if lice or nits are found in your child's hair or if the child has a contagious disease. After a fever, the child must have a normal temperature reading for 24 hours before returning to class.
- When a child contracts communicable diseases (measles, chicken pox, mumps, pink eye), please notify the Religious Education Office immediately.
- Parents will be notified if a child becomes ill during class.
- Students are expected to make up all class work when they have been absent from class due to illness. It is wise to keep in contact with catechists, and request work once a child is well enough to do assignments.

### Special Needs

Learning disabilities:

- If you have a child who has special needs or accommodations made, please contact the Director of Religious Education.

### Medication

- If a child is usually on a certain medication, he/ she should continue to receive that medication if his/ her behavior will be affected by missing it.
- The State of Illinois prohibits Religious Education personnel from administering any kind of medicine to a child. Parents must administer the medication prior to class or, if absolutely necessary, come to the Religious Education Office to dispense it themselves.

### Asthma Medication:

Immediate access to an inhaler is vital. Children are encouraged to carry their inhaler as soon as the child's classroom catechist, family doctor and parents agree the child is mature enough. Parents are asked to ensure that the Religious Education Office is provided with a labeled spare inhaler. All inhalers must be labeled with student's name by their parents.

### Medical Emergencies

- In the event of injury of a child the Religious Education Office will attempt to contact parents first. If a parent cannot be reached, then the person designated by the parent on the emergency form will be contacted. If neither can be contacted immediately and the physical status of the child is in question by school personnel, emergency medical aid will be summoned.
- It is of utmost importance that parents/legal guardians make sure that current emergency information is on file in the Religious Education Office.

### Fire Drills, Tornado Drills, and Other Emergency Evacuations

According to Illinois State Law fire drills must be practiced regularly. Directions for exiting the building are posted in each classroom. Everyone must vacate the building despite health or weather conditions. It is the catechist's responsibility to acquaint the children with the correct procedure for fire drills.

- Tornado drills, and other emergency evacuations, are held periodically. Catechists acquaint the children with the proper procedures.
- Silence is to be maintained during tornado, fire, and other emergency building evacuations.

### Building Security

School doors are kept locked to prevent unauthorized access from outside the school building during instruction hours. St. Mary Magdalene School doors are designed to allow exiting at all times. Those inside can always get out, but entry is limited and controlled. Please use the bell on the right side of the main (Briggs Street) entrance for business purposes and for tardy students. Be sure to sign in and gain approval at the office before moving to any other part of the building.

Children are not permitted to leave the building during class, unless they are in the custody of their parents.

## **Charter for Protection of Children and Young People**

In 2002 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops implemented the *Charter for Protection of Children and Young People*. The norms of the Charter require the establishment of “safe environment” programs, standards of conduct and background checks for adults having contact with children.

**“Prior to beginning employment/ volunteer service, all persons involved with minors on a regular, recurring basis, or those who would have the opportunity to be alone with children during parish, school or religious education sponsored events are required to present the following:**

- **Results of a criminal background investigation and fingerprinting.** (Subject to the conditions of the Diocese of Joliet.)
- **Written acknowledgement that the person has read and understood the Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors and the Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors.**
- **Proof of attendance at a Protecting God’s Children program.** (Proof of previous completion of the program will be accepted.)

*(Diocese of Joliet, Approved: December 8, 2004, Effective: February 1, 2005)*

If you, your spouse, or a family member volunteer in any capacity, this policy applies to you. Further information concerning these requirements, and a schedule of upcoming workshops are available from the Rectory Office.

## **Safe Environment Instruction**

Effective August 15, 2005, the *Talking About Touching* program, as modified by the Diocese of Joliet, is the normative safe environment program for children enrolled in a Catholic school or Religious Education Program in grades K—8.

## **Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Devices**

We understand the importance technology plays in the lives of our students and families, but students are not allowed to bring their cell phones, music players or portable game consoles inside the building.

St. Mary Magdalene does not allow the possession or use of cell phones or other electronic devices during class hours. With the advent of picture phones, there is always the potential for improper use of such devices, resulting in safety and legal issues for our students, staff and families. During class, catechists may possess a cell phone for use in emergency situations.

At no time is a cell phone to be used to take any pictures while on premises. This applies to catechists, students, volunteers, staff and visitors.

Cell phones and other electronic devices brought by a student must be turned into the Religious Education Office for safe keeping, or they will be confiscated and held until the end of the semester in which the infraction occurred. If a second infraction occurs the Director of Religious Education may keep the cell phone or electronic device until the end of the school year.

## **Academics**

### **Attendance at Mass**

The Third Commandment reminds us that God requests our praise and worship every Sunday at Mass. Parents are urged to model and encourage in their children an appreciation for religious values. Since children learn by example, full participation in and regular Sunday attendance at Mass by parents and children is fundamental for conscious, intelligent and active spiritual growth of the child. Sunday Mass is one of the most important aspects of our faith and we consider this part of our weekly curriculum.

Religious Education classes use your family’s weekly participation at Mass as a focal point of weekly instruction. During each class, students will be asked to share what they experienced and learned from the Mass on Sunday.

Students will be asked about the scripture readings, the homily, season of the Church Year, what they learned and more. Catechists might pass out an activity sheet in advance for their students to complete during or after the Mass. Students will be graded on this assignment and their grade will be included in their report cards.

### **Religious Instruction**

#### **Liturgy and Prayer**

Religious Education Liturgies and Prayer Services are scheduled throughout the year. The opportunity for the Sacrament of Penance is provided during Advent and Lent. Stations of the Cross are held during Lent.

Parents are encouraged to assist their child/ren in memorizing traditional prayers. A Parish booklet outlining prayers to be learned is given to each child.

#### **Sacramental Preparation**

The Diocese of Joliet requires students to receive a minimum of two years of sacramental preparation before they receive First Communion or Confirmation. Attendance at Parents meetings is a required part of our sacramental preparation program.

#### **First Communion and First Penance**

Children receive the Sacraments of First Penance and First Communion in Second grade. If a child enters the Program after first grade please contact the Director of Religious Education.

#### **Confirmation**

Confirmation preparation involves a 2 year commitment. If a child enters the Program after seventh grade please contact the Director of Religious Education. The sacrament is celebrated with the Bishop in the Fall of Ninth grade. Preparation includes participation in regular weekly Saturday morning classes, attendance at an all-day retreat and attendance at all student/ parent Confirmation preparation meetings.

#### **Program of Studies**

The St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education Program adheres to the guidelines established in the *National Directory for Catechesis and Faith Formation in the Diocese of Joliet*.

#### **Grading Scale**

A+	100
A	99-96 (outstanding)
A-	95-93
B+	92-91
B	90-88 (very good)
B-	87-85
C+	84-83
C	82-79 (good)
C-	78-77
D+	76-75
D	74-72 (needs improvement)
D-	71-70
F	69- 0 (little or no progress)

#### **Promotion/Retention**

Promotion is based on academic achievement, work habits, attendance and overall development. In order for a student to be promoted to the next grade they must have a "C" average. If a student is absent 5 days or more, his/her progress will be reviewed for its effect on his/her promotion to the next grade. When a student does not perform according to his or her capabilities the following steps will be taken to determine whether or not the student will be promoted to the next grade:

- During the first semester, or *as soon as the problem becomes evident*, the catechist will notify the student's family. A conference will be held with the family to determine what steps can be taken to help the student succeed academically. The catechist will maintain contact with the family on a regular basis.

- At the end of the January, written notice of possible retention will be sent home to the family. A student's progress will be evaluated during the last semester to determine grade placement for the next school year. The Director of Religious Education may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer classes as a requirement for a promotion. The Director of Religious Education will schedule a conference with the catechist and parents to discuss ways to prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next school year.
- Parents desiring to have their child advanced to the next grade without the recommendation of the Director of Religious Education and catechist will not be permitted to have the child continue as a student at St. Mary Magdalene.

### **Academic Probation**

There are situations where a student is not achieving academically and is capable of being successful. In such cases the student, family, catechist and Director of Religious Education will meet to write an academic contract for the student.

### **Cheating**

Cheating of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat will receive a failing grade, in-class suspension and/or expulsion.

### **Homework**

Homework related to classroom instruction serves to reinforce and increase learning. The term "homework" is any work which is to be completed at home. This includes work that has not been completed in class, as well as other material assigned by a catechist or work that a student or parent may initiate to maximize learning. A student gains from doing homework when he/she understands the reason for it.

- Homework has a definite purpose.
- Homework has a definite function in enriching and extending what has been learned in class.
- Homework may be a preparation for sharing with others something that has been learned or discovered.
- Homework may be practice to improve basic skills.
- Special assignments, particularly in middle and upper grades, may be assigned in advance to be done over a period of several weeks

**Homework Policy:** Once a homework assignment is given, it is the student's responsibility to complete the work outside of class.

If a student is absent, she/he will have one additional week to complete the work and receive 100% of the credit; after that the homework is considered delinquent. In cases of serious illness, which require a doctor's note, the catechist will arrange a reasonable plan.

### **Illness and/or vacation**

- While a student is ill, the catechist will prepare an assignment sheet.
- If a student is on vacation s/he will receive the work when s/he returns to class.

### **Delinquent Homework**

- Homework handed in on the day due will receive 100% credit.
- After the due date, reduced credit may be given for the assignment.

*Catechists are not required to accept late homework. Late assignments may result in a zero grade.*

### **Required Materials for Class**

Students should bring the following to every class session: Textbook, weekly hand-outs, a notebook, a homework folder, pen or pencil and any other necessary class materials. This may vary based on the catechist's instructions. Students who are missing materials will have to call their parents so that they can bring the missing items.

### **Care of Textbooks and Supplies**

Each child is responsible for the care of textbooks and supplies furnished by the parish. A charge will be assessed if books and/or supplies assigned to a child have been lost or damaged. Textbooks, workbooks, notebooks, spirals, and all materials are to be kept free from graffiti and doodling inside, outside, and on covers.

### **Lost Books and Replacement Fees**

Each student receives a religion textbook to keep and use both in class and at home. Parents have the responsibility to make sure their children bring the textbook and any handouts and class materials to class every Saturday. The book replacement fee is \$40.00.

## **TESTING AND GRADING**

### **Report Cards**

Report cards are issued twice during the school year. These evaluations notify parents of your child's progress and reflect the following areas: Class attendance, understanding of the content, class participation, classroom behavior and the completion of assignments.

Report cards may be withheld if payment of tuition or fees is in arrears. The final report card will not be issued unless tuition and fees are paid in full.

Evaluation report forms have been designed to convey to parents not only a student's achievement, but also the effort expended. The "A-F" achievement grade is objective, based on the child's performance, whereas the effort grade is subjective, based on the catechist's assessment of how hard the child is working to achieve his/her potential.

## **Curriculum Enrichment Opportunities**

### **Youth Ministry**

Our parish Youth Ministry Program for Junior and Senior High students helps young people understand the importance of their faith through various activities and programs.

### **Altar Servers**

Boys and girls in grades 4 through 8 are encouraged to become altar servers to assist the priest at various liturgical functions.

### **Children's Choir**

Students in the choir sing for class Masses. Cantors are chosen from among members of the Children's Choir.

### **Monthly Religious Education Student Mass**

The monthly Religious Education Student Mass is usually celebrated at 9:30 AM on the first Sunday of the month, from October to May. Students assist in the various Liturgical Ministries of the Mass, including Usher, Minister of Hospitality, Cantor, Choir, Altar Server, Lector and Eucharistic Minister.

### **Children's Liturgy of the Word**

Children's Liturgy of the Word is offered each Sunday during the 9:30 AM Mass for pre-school to fourth grade students.

### **Vacation Bible School**

Vacation Bible School is offered each summer. The week-long program provides an opportunity for children to experience scripture in a fun-filled, hands-on setting.

### **Use of Facilities**

In accordance with diocesan policy, use of church and school facilities is limited to groups directly affiliated with St. Mary Magdalene Parish. Groups must contact the Rectory Office to schedule all activities. In order to avoid any scheduling conflicts a central calendar is kept in the Rectory Office.

Outside groups must submit a written request to the Rectory to use parish facilities. The request must include a certificate of insurance naming St. Mary Magdalene Parish and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Joliet as the insured. A minimum of \$1 million of liability and property insurance is required. At the time of the application to use church or school facilities, documentation of completion of all required "Safe Environment" policies of the Diocese of Joliet and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, including current criminal background checks and fingerprinting must be provided for all adults who will be present at the event.

At no time will activities be allowed that would cause damage to church or school facilities. (i.e.: indoor football, softball or baseball practice and games, etc.)

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are planned as educational activities directly related to the curriculum. A parent must sign a permission slip if their child is to participate in the activity. All cost, including transportation, must be paid by the student/parent. Those children who do not participate in the field trip are to report to the Religious Education Office.

Overnight activities shall not be sponsored by parishes except in the following instances:

- Retreat Experiences
- Outdoor Education Programs
- Vocation Experiences
- In-state Educational Trips (i.e. Springfield, Chicago)
- The Superintendent's approval is required for all overnight activities. Midnight-to-midnight trips will not be allowed.

Field Trips (even those with clear educational goals) will not be allowed unless the destination is within a three-hour drive.

All field trips must follow Diocesan regulations regarding:

- Protecting God's Children
- Criminal Background Checks
- Number and Sex of Chaperones
- Clearly written Educational Purpose
- Transportation
- Permission Slips
- Medical Release Forms

### **Off Campus Conduct**

The administration of St Mary Magdalene reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with behavior expected of its students. This off-campus behavior includes, but is not limited to, cyber bullying.

### **Dress Code**

Children should dress as for church. Appearance should be clean and neat. The dress code is based on appropriate dress for Catholic students, not current fashion. The following are NOT allowed:

- bare feet, thighs, midriffs, backs or shoulders
- spaghetti straps and mini-skirts
- coats, jackets and hats may not be worn in class
- t-shirts with disrespectful messages
- jeans or belts with studs/spikes (they scrape the classroom chairs)
- gang related clothing or colors
- No hooded sweatshirts in solid color such as dark black, dark blue, tan, gold or red should be worn.
- Hip huggers or bare midriffs are never permitted
- Shoes may not have heels higher than 1"
- Torn, soiled, faded, tight or worn-out clothing is not permitted

Clothing must be clean and fit correctly. All students are expected to have their shirts and blouses tucked in at all times. Skirts and pants are to be worn properly. A simple belt must be worn with belt loops.

### **Hair/Jewelry/Make-up**

- A simple hairstyle is expected; hair coloring, hair lightening, fad styles and/or shaved designs are not permitted.
- Girls hair accessories must be small and simple and not distract.
- No excessive cologne or perfume is permitted
- Girls may wear only post (stud) earrings; limit one per earlobe
- Boys may not wear earrings
- All students may wear a simple, non-distracting religious pin or medal
- All students may wear a simple wristwatch
- Only jewelry listed is allowed

Students who disregard above guidelines will be asked to remove items immediately.

The Director of Religious Education has the final authority to determine if any part of a clothing, shoes, hair, etc. is inappropriate for. The Director of Religious Education, or catechist, has the discretion to require any boy or girl to have a haircut within a specified amount of time.

### **Discipline Code**

The time students have for religious education is a precious commodity. Therefore, we request that parents make their children aware that good moral conduct and courteous behavior is expected toward their catechists, fellow students, and themselves

Procedures for conduct problems:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: Catechist speaks privately with the student.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: Catechist contacts director of religious education and parent.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense: Director, catechist, parent and student have a conference.

Disrespect to catechists, fellow students and parish property will not be tolerated. Repeated lack of respect will require that the parent sit in class and monitor the child.

### **Student Expectations**

The students and staff of St. Mary Magdalene value and strive to meet the following expectations:

- Demonstrate respect to self and all other people.
- Respect parish facilities and demonstrate the proper use of school equipment.
- Obey all classroom and Religious Education rules.
- Give 100% effort in all activities, so that we may take pride in all we do.
- Behave in a Christ-like manner – Cooperative, polite, understanding, humble and courteous.
- Prepare for all class activities, which includes homework, studying materials and observing the dress code.
- Promote a positive climate by maintaining a noise level that is appropriate to the activity and location.
- Food, drinks or gum chewing is not permitted in class.
- No permanent markers are to be brought to class. Only washable markers are allowed.

### **Classroom Expectations**

Each catechist establishes additional individual classroom expectations for the students in that class. Expectations are based on the needs of the students and the area of the curriculum.

### **Food and Drink Policy**

Food or drinks are never allowed in the classrooms, especially gum, candy and soft drinks. Students who bring food to share must have permission from their catechists and the Director. Due to Health Department regulations, food may only be served in the gymnasium.

## **Harassment**

Every student has a right to come to class and learn without anyone imposing himself or herself physically or in a manner that could have sexual implications. Bullying has become a serious issue in today's society and will not be taken lightly or as a normal occurrence of childhood. The Director of Religious Education and Catechists will take immediate action when bullying occurs. The child that has bullied another child will be sent immediately to the Religious Education office. If this is the student's first offense, the Director of Religious Education will have a conference with both students. If the offense was one of aggression toward a classmate, then the student will be removed from the classroom. The student's parents will be notified and they will be required to come to pick up their child and have a conference with the Director of Religious Education. The student will be suspended for a period of one day. If the bullying was of a lesser infraction, then a conversation will be held between the bully and the Director of Religious Education. If the behavior continues and there is a recurrence, then the child will be removed from class and parents will be notified and required to pick up their child and have a conference with the Director of Religious Education. The student will also be suspended for one day. A third incident will require that the student be in a disciplinary intervention program to remain at St. Mary Magdalene.

## **Student Consequences for Not following Policies**

Any participation in an unauthorized or unacceptable activity, prank, or destruction to parish property during the course of the year may result in suspension from the Religious Education Program. Participation may also result in suspension or expulsion.

## **Discipline Cycle**

Each student and catechist deserves to be treated with dignity. Each has the right to teach and learn in a safe and orderly environment. Realizing that a student's actions may have a serious effect on themselves, others, and the Religious Education Program as a whole, St. Mary Magdalene implements a discipline cycle that will help students understand the consequence of their behavior.

### **Steps:**

The catechist or administrator handles all minor offenses immediately. Students who fail to meet classroom or Religious Education expectations are subjected to a conference with the catechist and the Director of Religious Education. These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to observe classroom or Religious Education rules.
- Destruction to parish property.
- Disrespect for authority.
- Rudeness / lack of courtesy.
- Disrespect for classmates.
- Inappropriate internet usage.
- Late to class (tardiness).
- Disruption of academic lesson.
- Harassment.
- Restlessness/ Inattentiveness.
- Excessive talking/ Loudness.

The first infraction will be handled by the catechist. A second infraction will result in a conference with the Director of Religious Education. Three infractions will require a meeting with the parents, student, catechist and Director of Religious Education and possibly suspension or a disciplinary intervention program.

A student will not be admitted to class unless the behavioral notification is signed. For each major offense during a school year the student will be required to have a conference with the Director of Religious Education. A phone call from the Director of Religious Education to the student's parents will follow immediately after the conference. These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Endangerment of Self and/or Others – Fighting, Kicking, Leaving School Grounds, Spitting, Throwing Snow/Snowballs.
- Dishonesty - Lying, Cheating, Stealing.
- Consistent Disregard of Rules.

- Inappropriate Language.
- Vandalism.
- Truancy.

Each offense will include a consequence appropriate to the action as well as suspension from activities and privileges. This may include possible in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension. A student will not be admitted to class unless a conversation took place between the catechist, student, parent and Director of Religious Education.

As a part of the discipline cycle, students who receive a verbal warning or a phone call home to parents will develop a plan to improve his/her behavior.

If a student continues to fail to follow Religious Education policies he/she will be placed on disciplinary probation. A conference is held with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), catechist(s) and Director of Religious Education to draw up a contract with expectations for the remainder of the year. The contract is to be signed by the parent (s), student, and Director of Religious Education.

Failure to follow the terms of the contract will result in the student being given the opportunity to withdraw or be expelled.

The following offenses will lead to immediate disciplinary probation with a disciplinary intervention program or expulsion. A student may be placed on a home school program during this process:

- Sexual Harassment.
- Harassment/Bullying.
- Controlled Substance.
- Possession of Dangerous Object.
- Gang Activity or clothing.

The Director of Religious Education consulting with the pastor makes this decision. The pastor/Director of Religious Education reserves the right to evaluate a student's behavior and place that student on immediate disciplinary probation.

New students are accepted on disciplinary probation. A new student who receives two behavioral notifications within the first semester will be given the opportunity to withdraw or be expelled. The discipline code listed here is as complete as possible, but not exhaustive. The administration and faculty members involved in a manner consistent with the philosophy of respect and care for all will deal with situations not covered by the code on an individual basis.

## **Substance Abuse Intervention Program**

St. Mary Magdalene is concerned with the full and harmonious development of the whole Christian person. Emphasis is placed on the individual student to develop and assume responsibility to actively pursue his/her own growth as a person. St. Mary Magdalene recognizes that there are attitudinal, behavioral, and/or medical problems, which can obstruct the realization of this goal.

St. Mary Magdalene believes that it has an important role, along with parents and the community, in helping students to make responsible decisions about the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. A primary objective is to help facilitate the development of proper attitudes and behaviors.

### **Program Purpose**

Our purpose is to provide non-punitive, early intervention channels for students who are exhibiting unusual behaviors that are not appropriate for formal disciplinary action. Some behaviors that are of concern to the catechists are sleeping in class, bragging about weekend parties, and hyperactivity. In addition, a pattern of absences and falling grades has been shown to correlate with other problems, including substance abuse. Such behaviors present the catechist with an opportunity to offer assistance to the student or referral to an appropriate resource.

### **Policy**

Students shall not possess, use, transfer, conceal, sell, attempt to sell, deliver, nor be under the influence of narcotics, drugs (illicit, over-the-counter), alcohol, or other illicit chemicals. Students shall not possess flammable liquids, lighters, tobacco products or drug paraphernalia (roach clip, rolling papers, etc). All materials will be confiscated and turned over to the police, if necessary.

Students shall not possess prescription/non-prescription medication.

The policy is in effect in the school building, on buses and school grounds at all times. This policy extends to all parish-sponsored and related activities, as well as field trips, athletic events and trips, whether held before or after school, evenings and weekends.

Students shall be advised of this policy.

In the case of student overdose from drugs/alcohol, emergency medical procedures are followed

- Parents are notified.
- If necessary, local paramedics are called.
- Following the handling of the medical emergency, the policy for chemical abuse will be followed.
- The Director of Religious Education will attempt to notify the parent(s) by phone to explain the incident and arrange a conference, to be held within 36 hours of the incident. If telephone contact cannot be made, written communication will be sent.
- The student will receive an out-of-school suspension for a time determined by the Director of Religious Education.
- An alternative to suspension is possible. This option includes a chemical dependency assessment through an approved facility, and follows through with assessment recommendations. St. Mary Magdalene will provide a list of approved facilities from which the parent/guardian may choose. The assessment and other education/treatment costs will be the responsibility of the parent/ guardian.
- The suspension of the student, who agrees to be evaluated and treated, if necessary, will be commuted to a time determined by the Director of Religious Education.
- The parent must notify the Religious Education Office that the student has been evaluated, and that the student/ parent(s) intend to comply with the recommendations. If the Director of Religious Education receives such notification by phone within 5 days, the student may reenter the Religious Education Program.
- If the student/parent(s) do not agree to pursue the recommendations of the professional assessment, or fail to do so after making such a commitment, the student will be suspended or expelled. A second offense will merit unconditional expulsion.

## **Internet Access and Related Technology Use Policy**

The Diocese of Joliet and St Mary Magdalene support the use of technology in the instructional program through individual computer workstations, lab networks, school-wide networks, school owned hand held devices and the Internet as a means to facilitate learning and teaching through communication, access to information, research and collaboration.

All uses of the Internet and related technologies, including hand-held devices shall be for educational purposes only, and will be consistent with the Diocesan and Parish goal of promoting academic excellence as defined in the respective mission and philosophy statements. The failure of any user to follow the terms and conditions of this agreement may result in the loss of privileges and/or disciplinary action.

### **Terms and Conditions:**

#### **1. Acceptable Use**

The Diocese and Parish will make reasonable efforts to ensure that technology is used in a responsible, moral and ethical manner consistent with the educational and moral objectives of the Diocese and Parish.

#### **2. Responsibility**

School administrators, catechists and staff work together to help students develop the intellectual skills necessary to discriminate among information sources, to identify information appropriate to their age and developmental levels and to evaluate and use the information to meet their educational goals. However, there is an enormous range of materials available on the Internet, some of which may not be fitting with the particular values of a student's family. It is not practically possible for the Diocese and School to monitor and enforce a wide array of social and religious values in student use of the Internet. Therefore, the Diocese and Parish recognize parents as primary educators of their children and the need for them to be involved in instructing their children as to what material is and is not acceptable for

access and communication through the school network system.

The students catechists and staff have the responsibility to respect and protect the rights of every other user in the Religious Education Program and on the Internet. The Director of Religious Education or Pastor has the authority to determine what constitutes inappropriate use and his/her decision is final.

### **3. Code of Conduct**

Students are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and moral manner, use the accepted rules of network etiquette and follow federal and state law and the terms of this Agreement both at school and at home. Outside of school, it is expected that families bear the same responsibility for such guidance of their child(ren).

The Director of Religious Education has the right to intercede when the Parish, their employees, volunteers, Administration or students are affected by the inappropriate use of Technology Resources or Privately Owned Devices which are governed by the terms of this agreement including, but not limited to the following:

- A. All users are to be polite and use appropriate language. Students using blogs are expected to treat blog spaces as classroom spaces. Speech that is inappropriate for class is not appropriate for blogging. While we encourage students to engage in debate and conversation with other bloggers, we also expect that they will conduct themselves in a manner reflective of representatives of this School.
- B. No inappropriate, obscene, or pornographic pictures or drawing are to be downloaded, displayed, printed, or communicated through any electronic or handheld device.
- C. No School related picture, video, or other digital images of students, School employees, volunteers and/or School related activities are to be uploaded to any site on the Internet, including video sharing sites, such as You Tube, without the expressed permission of the Director of Religious Education or Director of Religious Education's designee.
- D. No offensive, harassing or threatening remarks or comments related to another student, catechist, administrator, employee or volunteer of the School or Parish are to be placed on the Internet, personal websites, blogging sites, social networking sites, or sent via texting, instant messaging, email or on handheld devices.
- E. Cyber bullying is not tolerated. No student shall participate in communication that spreads hate, or discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability.
- F. No students shall transmit any material that is derogatory or defamatory or which is intended to offend, annoy, harass or intimidate or has the effect of offending, annoying, harassing or intimidating another person or persons through Technology Resources or Privately Owned Devices.
- G. No student shall upload, download, copy, forward or transmit any copyrighted material or any portion of such copyrighted materials, including, but not limited to music, video, photographs, pictures, pamphlets, books, newspaper or magazine articles without the permission of the catechist.
- H. No offensive, derogatory or defamatory letters, essays, papers, email or other written documents are to be uploaded, downloaded, forwarded, copied, transmitted, displayed, printed or communicated.
- I. The use of the School network shall not disrupt the work of other users and this includes, but not limited to disrupting the School network's performance, deleting or altering files or destroying data by downloading or spreading viruses and/or worms.
- J. The personal address, phone number or social security number of any student, administrator, catechist, volunteer or staff member is not to be used in email or on the Internet.
- K. The School network may not be used for the purchase of any type of merchandise, services, copying of copyrighted material or to send material or communication likely objectionable to the recipients.
- L. At St. Mary Magdalene, no user shall be involved in or participate in, chat rooms, blogs or discussion groups without the express permission and/or supervision of the catechist/system administrator.
- M. No student shall post or send defamatory comments regarding the Diocese, Parish, administration, faculty, staff, catechist or other students comments or materials that could damage the reputation of the Diocese, Parish, Religious Education administration, faculty, staff or other students.

N. No student shall install any software, games, files or other electronic media on parish equipment or network, without the permission of the catechist/IT administrator or IT staff.

O. No student shall use or disclose someone else's code or password without authorization.

#### **4. Safety**

Reasonable efforts will be made to protect users of the network from harassment, unwanted and unsolicited communication. Any network user who receives threatening or unwelcome communication shall immediately bring this to the attention of a catechist or Director of Religious Education.

**5. Internet Filtering** The school will use technology protection measures in compliance with the **Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)** to protect minors and all users against access through such computers to visual depictions that are violent, obscene, constitute child pornography, or are otherwise harmful to minors.

**6. Privacy** The user does **not** have any right of privacy or ownership whatsoever in relation to his/her use of the School network and/or email. Consequently, all electronic and telephone communication systems and all communication and information transmitted by, received from, or stored in any manner are the property of the Parish or Diocese and are to be used for educational purposes only.

To ensure that the use of the network is consistent with the educational objectives and philosophy of the Religious Education Program, Parish and Diocese, authorized representatives may monitor the use of the network from time to time, which may include the printing and reading of **all information stored, and all emails** entering, leaving, or stored, and all files created and saved in the system. The system administrator (Director of Religious Education or designee, Pastor, Superintendent) may remove any material stored by the users, which violate the terms of this Agreement.

#### **7. Consequences For Inappropriate Use**

The School network user shall be responsible for damages to equipment, systems, and software resulting from deliberate and willful acts or installation of unapproved software and/or files.

Illegal use of the network, intentional deletion or damage to files of data belonging to others, copyrighting violations or theft of services will be reported to the appropriate authority and will result in the loss of access privileges.

General rules for behavior and communications apply when using the Internet, in addition to the stipulations of this agreement. Loss of access and other disciplinary actions shall be consequences for Inappropriate use. If a user mistakenly accesses inappropriate information, the catechist or adult supervisor shall be told immediately.

#### **8. Web Pages**

The Parish may choose to publish Web Pages for purposes of providing Religious Education or Parish information and catechist or class information. This may include the posting of meetings, agendas, student activities, projects and accomplishments, schedules and other information of interest to students, parents and the community. Classrooms may participate in the development of web pages as ongoing educational projects. The posting of any material that may violate copyright law is expressly prohibited.

Disclosure of student information on the parish web site will be limited to first name and last initial. Photography or video of students may be posted on the parish website; however, no photograph or video of any student will be captioned with the student's name, or identify the student by name in any other manner. No image of a student may be posted in such a way that the image of that student may be matched up with the student's name.

The Director of Religious Education or her designee shall monitor parish web publications.

#### **9. Blogs**

Engagement in online Blogs such as, but not limited to, MySpace, Facebook, etc. may result in disciplinary action if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the parish, Religious Education Program, faculty, administration, catechists or other students or parish.

#### **10. Hand-held Devices (Visors, Palm Pilots)**

The use of hand-held devices for educational purposes is limited solely to those devices approved by or distributed by the School. All rules of conduct shall apply. The beaming of information that is considered

threatening, unwelcome or inappropriate will be reported to the catechist or adult supervisor immediately.

#### **11. Personal Electronic or Cellular Devices**

Students may not carry Privately Owned Devices with them during class hours unless special permission is granted by the Director of Religious Education or his/her designee. Privately Owned Devices otherwise stored in student lockers must be turned off. These items include, but are not limited to: cell phones, pagers, Mp3 players, iPods, cameras/video recorders, laptops, notebooks/tablets and all other handheld devices (which exception to those covered in Hand-Held Devices of this agreement).

#### **12. Cell Phone and Other Electronic Device Usage**

St. Mary Magdalene does not permit the possession or use of cell phones or other electronic devices during class hours. With the advent of picture phones, there is always the potential for improper use of such devices, resulting in safety and legal issues for our students, staff and families. During class, catechists may possess a cell phone for use in emergency situations.

At no time is a cell phone to be used to take any pictures while on school premises. This applies to students, volunteers, visitors, staff and faculty members. Cell phones in a student's possession during class will be confiscated and held until the end of the trimester in which the infraction occurred. If a second infraction occurs, the Director of Religious Education may keep the cell phone until the end of the school year.

#### **13. Indemnification**

The user's parent/guardian hereby agrees to indemnify the Religious Education Program/Parish/Diocese for any losses, costs, or damages, including attorney fees, incurred by the Religious Education Program, Parish, or Diocese relating to or arising out of breach of, or enforcement of this Agreement or the Religious Education Program/Parish/Diocese enforcement thereof.

#### **14. Financial Obligations**

The student, parent, guardian, agrees to be responsible for any financial obligation incurred through the use of the School network that is contrary to the terms of the Agreement.

#### **15. Limitation of Liability**

The Religious Education Program/Parish/Diocese makes no guarantee that functions and services provided by the School's computer system and network will be error free or without any defect. The Religious Education Program/Parish/Diocese has no responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the use of the School network or for any damages users suffer.

## **Diocese of Joliet**

### **Videotaping and Photography of Students Agreement**

Religious Education Programs and Schools of the Diocese allow positive publicity of students using videotapes, digital images, photographs and web publications within the context of this agreement. Videotaping and/or photographing may be used in and by the Diocese, Religious Education Programs and Schools of the Diocese as a facet of instruction for enhancing learning, to share information, to promote the Religious Education Program, to assist in providing a safe and secure learning environment, and to monitor/record student activities. Such videotaping/photography may be announced or unannounced and will be conducted according to diocesan guidelines.

**However, the Diocese of Joliet, Religious Education Program and Schools of the diocese do no approve of the display of any videotapes, digital images, photographs on social networking or video sharing sites, such as YouTube, without the expressed permission of the administrator and all parties involved.**

1. Videotapes, photographs, digital images of students may be utilized by catechists, administrators, or their designee within the Diocese, Religious Education for classroom instructional purposes without advance consent of a student's parent/guardian. Such Religious Education and diocesan staff shall maintain the confidentiality of these student records in accordance with state and federal laws and the established Diocesan student record procedures.

2. Photographs or videos of students posted on the Parish website shall not be captioned with the student's name, or identify the student by name in any other manner. No image of a student may be posted in such a way that the image of that student may be matched up with the student's name.
3. A student catechist under the supervision of a college/university, or other certified staff member may utilize videotapes, photographs, or digital images of students for his/her own professuse without the advance consent of a student's parent/guardian. Examples of educational videotapes/ photographs include documenting science experiments, presentations, etc.  
A release form is required from the parent/guardian when students participating in class activities with a student catechist are videotaped or photographed for purposes of assessment of teaching as part of the university class assignment and/or student teaching portfolio development.
4. Students with the supervision of the administrator/catechist or approved designee, may videotape, photograph students without the advance consent of a student's parent/guardian for educational purposes, to promote Parish and Religious Education activities and to enhance learning. Examples: yearbook, school paper, sports games, etc.
5. Forms of release for videotaping, photographing of students **are not required** from the parent/guardian when:
  - A. A student has voluntarily chosen or been allowed by his/her parent/guardian to participate in, or be a spectator at, a Religious Education-related activity that is open to the public such as an athletic event, concert, theatrical presentation, dance, etc.
  - B. The student has chosen to be an officially designated Religious Education leader or role model, such as athlete, student council, and etc. for which there is potential for informal contact with news media.
  - C. Stock videotape footage or generic pictures. (i.e. yearbook individual and group pictures) are being obtained in public places (i.e. hallways, gymnasiums, general classroom areas, playgrounds, athletic fields, etc.) by the Diocese and/or Religious Education Program.
  - D. Outside news media videotape or photograph students in areas that cannot be effectively shielded from the public, such as playgrounds, parking lots, athletic fields, etc.
  - E. Video cameras are in use to monitor public areas of a school/church facility or bus.

## Parent Guide:

### Understanding & Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

*Dear Parents and Guardians,*

*The Diocese of Joliet is committed to promoting an environment that will help ensure the safety of children and young people. If you have participated in a Protecting God's Children session, you may have already received much information.*

*The following pages are the next step in our efforts to help keep children safe. You are the primary educators of your children, so it is important that you talk with them personally about their safety. The material in the following pages is designed to give you background information about sexual abuse, to inform you about other ways to keep your children safe, and to provide you with tips for talking to your children.*

*Staff members at the Religious Education Office (815-727-6411) and at the Catholic Schools Office (815-838-2181) are available to help you. Please call them if you have any questions about the material contained in the following pages or if you need more information.*

*Sincerely, Sister Judith A. Davies, OSF Chancellor, Diocese of Joliet  
425 Summit Street, Joliet IL 60435 [www.dioceseofjoliet.org](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org)*

#### **Some Background Information**

##### **What is Child Sexual Abuse?**

Child sexual abuse is the use of a child for sexual purposes by an adult or an older, more powerful person, including an older child. It is a crime in all 50 states. Sexual abuse is called incest when it happens between family members.

### **Who Are the Offenders?**

- Most sexual abuse is committed by a person the child knows and trusts.
- Offenders come from all walks of life and from all social and ethnic groups.
- Offenders actively work to develop trusting relationships with children.

### **Who Is At Risk?**

- Sexual abuse happens to boys and girls from all social and ethnic groups from infancy to 18 years.
- Young children are especially at risk.

### **Why Don't Children Tell?**

Some reasons children do not tell are:

- They have been taught to obey adults.
- They promised or have been bribed to keep the abuse secret.
- They have been threatened by the offender and are afraid to tell.
- They feel guilty because they believe that the abuse is their fault and are ashamed to tell.
- They are confused because the offender is someone whom they know and trust.
- They have been convinced that the abuse is normal or okay.
- They are too young to know the touching is not appropriate, especially if someone they know and trust does it.
- They don't know the words to tell about the abuse.

### **Do Children Lie About Abuse?**

Children rarely lie about sexual abuse. More often, they are afraid to tell.

### **Protecting Your Children**

Here are some things you can do:

- Educate yourself about sexual abuse.
- Learn and practice specific guidelines for protecting children from sexual abuse.
- Talk to your children about touching safety. (See Teaching Personal Safety Skills)
- Teach your children personal safety rules before they reach school age.
- Allow your children to participate in personal safety instruction.

### **Safety with Babysitters**

- Ask babysitters for references and check them.
- Interview babysitters in person. Ask how they discipline children. Ask *What If* questions to find out how they would cope with tricky situations.
- Inform them about your family safety rules, including touching safety rule.
- Set other rules for the sitter. (TV, phone use, and friends)
- Make surprise visits to check on them.
- Ask your children what happens when a babysitter is there and whether they like him or her. If they don't like the babysitter, ask for reasons.

### **Follow these guidelines even if the babysitter is a family member.**

#### **Guidelines for Single Parents**

If you are a single parent and are dating, this brings unfamiliar adults into your home.

- Let your new friend know your family's safety rules, especially about touching.
- Tell him or her that your children have been taught to tell if any of these rules are broken.
- Don't leave your children alone with a new friend until you know him or her well.
- Ask your children if they like the new person and why or why not.
- Watch your child's reactions for clues to how they feel.

#### **Teaching Personal Safety Skills**

Talking openly and honestly sets a tone that helps children feel safe and allows them to talk to you about anything. *Talk with them about touching and private body parts.* Here are some tips:

- Make touching safety a part of your family's safety rules.
- Take advantage of everyday teachable moments: bath time, physical play situations, when a child expresses curiosity about his body or sexuality, and before a child goes out without you.
- Read a book or view a video about touching safety together with your child.
- Revisit the conversation. Don't just talk about this important matter once!

### **Teach Your Children These Rules**

- It is not okay for someone to touch your private body parts.
- It is not okay for someone to touch his or her own private body parts in front of you or to ask you to touch them.
- It is not okay for someone to ask you to take your clothes off or to take photos or videos of you with your clothes off.
- It is not okay for someone to show you photos or videos of people without their clothes on.

### **Types of Touches**

Teach your children the names of their private body parts. Help them understand that they are the boss of their own body. Explain that there are three kinds of touches.

- **Safe touches.** These are touches that keep children safe and are good for their bodies. Safe touches include hugging, holding hands, pats on the back, and an arm around the shoulder. Safe touches can also include touches that might hurt, such as removing a splinter.
- **Unsafe touches.** These are touches that hurt children's bodies, feelings, or spirits, for example, hitting, pushing, pinching, and kicking. This also includes the sexual touches described in the previous section. Teach children that these kinds of touches are not okay.
- **Unwanted touches.** These are touches that might be safe but a child doesn't want. These include the sexual touches discussed earlier. It is okay for a child to say no to an unwanted touch, even if it is from a familiar person.

### **For Young Children**

Young children remember better how to protect themselves from sexual abuse when they learn and practice a few simple steps so they don't have to wonder what to do, or have to stop and think. Children can be taught to follow these three steps when someone breaks the touching rules.

- Say *no* or words that mean *no*.
- Get away.
- Tell a grown-up.
- Expand your child's understanding of the third step by teaching the following:
- Never keep secrets about touching.
- Always tell about a touching problem even if it has gone on for a long time.
- Keep telling until someone believes you.

### **Teach Assertiveness Skills**

Children who are assertive are better able to use the safety steps effectively and resist unsafe situations. Assertive behavior includes standing up straight, looking directly at the person and using a strong, clear voice.

### **Safety on the Internet**

It is important for parents to educate children about Internet risks and monitor use of the Internet. Some rules:

- Never give out personal information or use a credit card online without your parent's permission.
- Never share passwords with anyone.
- Never arrange to meet someone in person you have met online unless parents go along with you.
- Never reply to uncomfortable messages. Always tell parents about them.

### **For Teens or Pre-Teens**

Honest, open discussions about sexual values/limits, healthy relationships, and personal safety can make a difference. Teens should:

- Recall that human sexuality is a graced gift from God. Intimate touching and sexual intercourse are morally appropriate only within marriage.
- Know their own wishes, limits and values, and clearly communicate them to their dates. They should listen to their date's limits and respect them.
- Notice if their date is not respecting their limits and wishes or if their date's behavior doesn't seem right.
- Trust their feelings and intuition. If they are feeling pressured into sex, they have the right to say *no*.
- Be assertive and act immediately if their limits are reached, even if it means making a scene.
- Understand that it is never too late to say *no* and never too late to hear *no*.

### More Safety Tips for Teens

- Avoid drugs or alcohol, which reduce one's ability to think clearly and manage one's behavior.
- Always pour your own beverages at a party and keep them in sight. Date-rape drugs can be put in drinks and are often undetectable.
- Go to parties with a buddy and look after each other. Always have a safe way home.
- Meet a date in a public place or stay around others.
- Tell someone about the date, where it will take place, and what time it will end.
- Take a cell phone along if possible.

### The Bottom Line

- *No* means *no* whenever a person feels pressured about anything and it should be respected!
- If a person says *no* and the other person continues to touch or to force touch it is abusive behavior.
- If a person forces another person to have sexual intercourse, it is rape, a criminal offense.

### Safe Families

Being a parent is one of life's greatest challenges. However, if you have a strong relationship built on a foundation of trust, and your children have skills in self-management, relationship-building, and problem-solving, they are more likely to make safe choices and set personal safety boundaries.

For more tips for parents, please visit <http://www.cfchildren.org/parents/parenttips/>  
**If someone has been abused,  
contact the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services at  
1-800-25ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)**

Content of these pages adapted from  
"Keeping Children Safe from Abuse:  
Tips for Parents and Caregivers"

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The Diocese of Springfield, Illinois

## DIOCESE OF JOLIET POLICY REGARDING SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

Revised February 2013

### I. INTRODUCTION

On June 14, 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. On December 8, 2002, the *Essential Norms for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors* were approved by Pope John Paul II. In June of 2005, the *Charter* and the *Norms* were revised, and in 2011, the *Charter* was revised in order to re-affirm the deep commitment of the Church to create a safe environment for children and youth.

The Diocese of Joliet first promulgated a policy regarding sexual abuse of minors on June 14, 1990. Revisions were made in September 1993, in June 1997, in June 2003 and July 2008. As with the previous edition, this policy is intended to be in conformity with provisions from the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and from the *Essential Norms for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors*.

This policy is designed to ensure appropriate responses to allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by clergy, seminarians, religious, employees and volunteers. It addresses preventing sexual abuse through education and screening, reporting abuse, providing pastoral assistance to persons affected by abuse and the processing of allegations.

A copy of this policy is to be given to all clergy and seminarians as well as to all employees and volunteers who will sign an acknowledgement of its receipt. The policy is also to be published on the diocesan website.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

### **A. Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse is any sexual conduct with a minor or a vulnerable adult which is either unlawful and/or contrary to the moral teaching of the Church, which is engaged in by an adult employee/volunteer of the Diocese or a parish. It also includes the acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images of minors for the purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or the use of whatever technology.

### **B. Ministerial Relationship**

A ministerial relationship is established between persons when care or services are given. Persons in a ministerial relationship with others include clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates and religious, as well as employees and volunteers.

### **C. Employee**

An employee is a person who is compensated for services to a diocesan agency, parish or school.

### **D. Volunteer**

A volunteer is a person who functions without compensation in any role within a diocesan agency, parish or school.

### **E. Minor**

A person who has not reached his or her 18th birthday is defined as a minor.

### **F. Vulnerable Adult**

A vulnerable adult is one who habitually lacks the use of reason (Canon 99) or who, because of mental or physical disability is incapable of protecting himself/herself from sexual abuse.

### **G. Director of Child and Youth Protection**

The Director of Child and Youth Protection, also known as the Director, is appointed by Bishop to oversee the workings of the Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection.

## **III. POLICIES**

### **A. Healing and Reconciliation**

#### **1. Ministry to Victims**

The Victim Assistance Coordinator, appointed by the Bishop, is to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused as minors or vulnerable adults. Such care will serve to nurture healing and reconciliation.

The Diocese of Joliet is to assist the healing process of the abused. For this reason, it seeks to treat all allegations of sexual abuse with a prompt, direct, thorough and confidential pastoral response. Appropriate assistance is offered to victims in accord with recommendations of the Review Board. This may include counseling, spiritual direction, support groups or other social services.

#### **2. Ministry to the Accused**

Appropriate steps are to be taken to protect the reputation of the accused during an investigation of sexual abuse. The accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and/or canonical counsel. When the preliminary investigation of a complaint so indicates, a priest/deacon may be referred for appropriate medical and psychological evaluation, as long as this does not interfere with the investigation by civil authorities.

When an accusation has been unfounded, the diocese provides pastoral assistance, including psychological counseling to a person who was wrongly accused. All efforts are made to restore the good name of the person falsely accused (*USCCB Norms 13*).

### **3. Ministry to Communities**

In faith communities in which the sexual abuse occurred or where a priest/deacon has been removed, a meeting is held between a representative of the Pastoral Response Team and representatives of the affected community. If requested, the Pastoral Response Team offers pastoral assistance (spiritual and psychological) to the affected faith community.

Pastoral Response Team membership includes the Bishop or his representative, and may include the following individuals or their delegates: Superintendent of Schools, Director of Religious Education, pastor/head of institution, religious superior, as well as experts in trauma response/intervention services.

### **B. Prevention**

#### **1. Education**

To foster a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults the Diocese is to have in place educational programs which include information about sexual abuse, its identifying signs, controlling access to children, appropriate boundaries in relationships, reporting incidents of abuse and the effects of abuse on victims.

Prior to beginning service, all clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, employees and volunteers are required to present proof of attendance at a Virtus *Protecting God's Children* program. This requirement applies to all persons who are involved with minors on a regular, recurring basis and those who may have an opportunity to be alone with children during parish, school or religious education sponsored events. The program is also available to parents and guardians.

All persons who continue involvement with minors are required to participate in an updating educational program at least annually.

Children and youth are to receive instruction appropriate to their age level (*USCCB Charter 12*).

Prior to beginning service, all clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, employees and volunteers are to receive a copy of the *Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors*, and are to sign an acknowledgement of its receipt. The *Standards of Behavior* includes information about appropriate boundaries for those who have regular contact with children and young people (*USCCB Charter 6*). This requirement also applies to all persons who are involved with minors on a regular, recurring basis, and those who may have an opportunity to be alone with children during parish, school or religious education sponsored events.

Procedures for reporting abuse are to be readily available in printed form and are to be the subject of periodic public announcements (*USCCB Charter 2*).

The Office of Formation of Priests and Deacons is responsible for providing programs of human formation for chastity and celibacy that will assist clergy in living their vocation in faithful and integral ways. (*USCCB Charter 17*)

#### **2. Screening**

Prior to beginning service, all clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, employees and volunteers are required to undergo a criminal background check. This requirement also applies to all persons involved with minors on a regular recurring basis and those who may have an opportunity to be alone with children during parish, school or religious education sponsored events. Backgrounds are evaluated using the resources of law enforcement or other agencies (*USCCB Charter 13*). Background checks are to be performed every five years for all persons who continue involvement with minors.

All seminarians, extern priests, diaconal candidates, and diocesan and parish employees must be fingerprinted for the purpose of obtaining a criminal background check. Fingerprints are submitted to the Illinois State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for clearance as a condition of employment.

Fingerprinting is administered by a vendor approved by the Diocese of Joliet. Prior to the individual being permitted to begin service, results are evaluated by the Diocese with its legal counsel when appropriate. Name-based background checks are used only for volunteers or for renewals of employees who were screened through that type of background check.

Anyone with a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse may not minister, be hired or volunteer in a diocesan agency, parish or school.

#### **a. Employees**

Any prospective diocesan, parish or school employee must complete an application that includes:

1. Employment history, indicating positions held, dates of employment, name(s) of the immediate supervisor, phone number(s), and reason(s) for cessation of employment;
2. Any allegations of physical or sexual abuse made against him/her, which may/may not have involved civil or criminal complaints;
3. A signed authorization to release the applicant's employment history to the prospective employer, as well as at least two references who are not relatives.

Hiring agents must review the employment history and the references provided. All documents must be retained in the employees' file during the time of employment.

#### **b. Volunteers**

All volunteers are to complete an informational questionnaire provided by the entity for which they are intending to volunteer.

#### **c. Businesses Furnishing Personnel**

Any business supplying personnel for janitorial services, etc., is required to provide the diocese/parish/school with a copy of the criminal background checks of those persons who will be working at the facility. The business is also to provide a written guarantee that such personnel have never been arrested or convicted of any crime, that they are not aware of any complaint or allegation relating to sexual abuse or substance abuse, and that they are suitable to work in an environment where there may be contact with minors. Such information must be kept in a secure file along with the background checks of other employees and volunteers.

#### **d. Members of Religious Orders**

When any religious is presented for assignment or residence in an institution or parish, the appropriate religious superior is to provide the Bishop with a written statement about the person's suitability for ministry including information regarding allegations of sexual abuse.

#### **e. Priests/Deacons**

When a priest/deacon seeks an assignment in the Diocese of Joliet, his diocesan bishop or religious superior is to provide the Bishop with a written statement of suitability for ministry including information regarding allegations of sexual abuse.

No priest/deacon of the Diocese of Joliet who has a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse or who has committed sexual abuse may be transferred for an assignment to another diocese.

#### **f. Candidates for Priesthood and the Diaconate**

The Diocese of Joliet uses adequate screening and evaluations in determining the fitness of candidates for admission to the seminary or to the diaconate. Additional evaluations are conducted during the years of formation. A comprehensive psychological profile of each seminarian/diaconal candidate must be obtained before anyone is admitted to the priesthood or diaconate.

### **C. Response to Allegations**

#### **1. Reporting**

All persons, whether parishioners, employees, or volunteers who have reasonable cause to suspect an incident of sexual abuse by anyone including clergy, seminarians, religious or employees have a serious moral obligation to report the incident or allegation to civil officials (*USCCB Charter 4*).

Under Illinois law, certain personnel (including school, child care and recreational program personnel) are considered mandated reporters and must report to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) any situation in which they have reasonable cause to suspect physical or sexual abuse of a minor. Clergy are mandated reporters as to child sexual abuse. Reporting abuse of a vulnerable adult is made to the appropriate state agency.

Reports of abuse should also be made to the Victim Assistance Coordinator. Complaints against members of religious orders are to be reported to the Victim Assistance Coordinator as well as to the respective superior.

Procedures for making a complaint are available on the diocesan website, at parishes or diocesan offices, and are the subject of periodic public announcements.

When a person reports an allegation of sexual abuse, the person will be received with the utmost respect and pastoral sensitivity. Victims are advised of and supported in their right to report abuse to civil authorities (*USCCB Charter 4*).

## **2. Assessment and Determination**

a. The Bishop is immediately informed of any allegation. If he determines, after consultation with others, that there is a semblance of truth to the allegation, and that it is not manifestly false or frivolous, the assessment process begins. (Questions & Answers Regarding the Canonical Process for the Resolution of Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors) However, in no way will the process conflict with an investigation being pursued on a state or federal level.

b. The Bishop notifies the Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection (hereafter referred to as the Director) of the allegation, who in turn notifies the Review Board. He then appoints the Director to oversee an investigation. This investigation will be conducted by professional investigators and may include other competent professionals such as diocesan counsel and members of the Review Board.

c. The Review Board advises the Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry. (*USCCB Charter 2*) In certain cases, the Review Board may consider it important to speak directly with the person making the allegation, the accused person, or other persons for the sole purpose of gathering additional information. The Board will also offer to the Bishop other advice it considers pertinent to the case.

d. The Bishop has sole responsibility for deciding if it is more likely than not that sexual abuse has occurred and for determining any action with regard to the accused. In the case of clerics of the Diocese of Joliet, with sending the case to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, all in accord with Canon Law.

e. After reviewing the case, the Congregation will advise the Bishop as to which canonical processes are to be followed.

## **APPENDIX REVIEW BOARD**

The Review Board is a consultative body that advises the Bishop regarding allegations concerning the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults and related issues. (*USCCB Charter 2, Norms 5*)

### **A. Membership**

The Review Board, whose members are appointed by the Bishop, is composed of not less than nine or more than eleven members of outstanding integrity and good judgment. The majority of members are laypersons, none of whom are diocesan employees.

Members are to have expertise in one of the following areas: social work, civil law, education, treatment of sexual abuse of minors, or clinical treatment of sexual disorders. One member should be the parent of a minor and one member should be a pastor. When possible, one member is a victim/survivor of child sexual abuse or a parent of the same.

Annually members select a chairperson and a vice-chairperson from among themselves.

Consultants to the Board may include a representative of the Bishop, a canon lawyer, the Promoter of Justice, the Chancellor, the diocesan attorney and the Victim Assistance Coordinator.

### **B. Terms**

Members are appointed for a term of five years, which may be renewed once (*USCCB Norms 5*). The Bishop has the right to terminate the appointment of a member at any time.

### **C. Meetings**

The Review Board convenes whenever there is business to conduct or assembles at least on an annual basis. It will ordinarily meet in person, but members may participate by conference call.

#### **D. Duties**

Members of the Review Board are to:

- Advise the bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry.
- Review diocesan policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors on a regular basis.
- Advise the Bishop, as requested, on all aspects of cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively.
- Provide new members with an orientation to the Board and present them with a copy of the *Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors*, a copy of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* as well as other appropriate materials.
- Attend all meetings, especially those involving particular cases.

#### **E. Criteria for Making Recommendations**

- A simple majority of the entire Committee membership is needed to make a recommendation to the Bishop.
- Members may be present in person or electronically
- When considering an allegation of sexual abuse, each member decides, after considering all the evidence presented, whether the allegation is more probably true than not.

#### **F. Communication**

The Bishop will insure that the alleged victim and the accused are provided with appropriate and timely information about the progress of the case.

#### **G. Confidentiality**

Deliberations and conclusions reached by the Review Board are to be held in strictest confidence. The Bishop, or his authorized representative, are the only persons who communicate with the alleged victim and the accused, the media or any other persons.

#### **DIRECTOR OF CHILD YOUTH PROTECTION**

The duties of the Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection include, but are not limited to the following:

- Oversee the implementation of this Policy on a regular basis.
- Report regularly to the Bishop and the Review Board about the implementation of this Policy and the progress of individual cases of abuse.
- Supervise the work of the Victim Assistance Coordinator.
- Serve as the central information point for child abuse issues among pertinent members of the Diocesan Curia and diocesan attorney.
- Maintain all records pertaining to child protection and child abuse.
- Provide staff assistance to the Review Board.
- Prepare for the annual audit.
- Communicate to the public, i.e., within the Church community and beyond, the efforts of the Diocese of Joliet to prevent the abuse of minors and to heal past abuse.

#### **VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR**

The duties of Victim Assistance Coordinator include, but are not limited to the following:

- Receive allegations of sexual misconduct against minors and vulnerable adults.
- Listen with compassion to the experiences and concerns of victims.
- Advise victims of their right to report to civil authorities and inform them they will be supported in the exercise of that right.
- Inform the Bishop of allegations including any anonymous allegations or allegations that do not contain sufficient information.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

The Diocese does not enter into settlements which bind the parties to confidentiality settlements unless the victim requests confidentiality and this request is noted in the text of the agreement (*USCCB Charter 3*).

## **RECORDS AND REPORTS**

The Director maintains written and electronic documentation regarding all information acquired by the Review Board, its determinations and decisions.

All of the above records are confidential. However, law enforcement officials receive whatever information is necessary for them to carry out their duties.

Information and records generated by mental health practitioners, including those of alcohol and substance abuse treatment providers, are retained or released in accordance with the provisions of Illinois and Federal laws.

The Diocese communicates transparently and openly about issues of sexual abuse within the parameters of legally mandated confidentiality and privacy especially to the faith communities directly affected (*USCCB Charter 7*).

The Diocese publishes an annual public report on the progress made in implementing this policy and cooperates with audits conducted by the National Review Board.

## **POLICY SUBMISSION**

A copy of this policy as well as any revisions to the policy is filed with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops within three months of its effective date (*USCCB Norms 2*).

# **DIOCESE OF JOLIET STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR FOR THOSE WORKING WITH MINORS**

**June 1, 2003**

There will be clear and well-publicized diocesan standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other church personnel in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people (*USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, Article 6*).

To foster and maintain an atmosphere of trust and safety in its ministry to minors, the Diocese of Joliet has established *Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors*. The Diocese expects all Church personnel to maintain high standards of professional, ministerial and moral behavior.

## **A. Definitions**

1. A minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18. For the purposes of these standards, the term "minors" also includes adults who would be considered vulnerable to abuse because of physical or mental disabilities.
2. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a minor.
3. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a minor and an adult. This includes any activity that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult. Abuse of minors is contrary to the teachings of the Church and is never permissible. Church personnel have a responsibility to actively protect minors from all forms of abuse.
4. Church personnel are any persons, lay, religious or clergy, who are employed by or who volunteer for a diocesan agency, a parish or an educational facility.

## **B. General Guidelines**

The following guidelines are intended to assist Church personnel in making decisions about interactions with minors in Church sponsored and affiliated programs. They do not supersede state law or DCFS requirements. For clarification of these guidelines or for guidance for behaviors not addressed here, contact an immediate supervisor or consult *Faith Formation in the Diocese of Joliet* (Religious Education Office) or the *Personnel Policy Handbook* (Catholic Schools Office).

1. Ministry to minors respects the rights of parents to educate and form their children in faith. Therefore, activities with minors are to be conducted with the explicit knowledge and consent of parents or legal guardians.

2. Church personnel are responsible for releasing minors in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. In the event that Church personnel are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a minor, they are to contact the parent or legal guardian of the minor. Otherwise, they are to contact their supervisor before releasing the child.
3. Church personnel are never to leave minors unattended at the end of a class, session, event, etc.
4. Church personnel are to report uncontrollable or highly unusual behavior of minors to parents as soon as possible.
5. Church personnel are prohibited from the use, possession or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while working with minors. They are also prohibited from furnishing alcohol or illegal drugs to minors or permitting minors to use such in their presence.
6. Church personnel may occasionally provide transportation for minors. The following guidelines should be observed when Church personnel are involved in the transportation of minors:
  - a. Minors are never to be transported without written permission.
  - b. Minors are to be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops are to be made.
  - c. Church personnel are to avoid unnecessary and/or inappropriate contact with minors while in vehicles.
7. Church personnel are prohibited from speaking to minors in a way that is abusive or demeaning. All are to refrain from using inappropriate language/humor in the presence of minors.
8. Church personnel are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with minors. However, it is expected that classes may address human sexuality issues. These classes will convey the Church's views on the topics. If minors have other questions not answered or addressed by individual catechists, they should be referred to their parents or guardians. Church personnel are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with minors.
9. Church personnel are never to be nude in the presence of minors. Changing and showering facilities for adults are to be separate from those for minors.
10. Church personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented or morally inappropriate materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) or accessing similar materials on the Internet on Church property or in the presence of minors.
11. Church personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags or small tents with minors.
12. Houses used as residences for priests and religious are exclusively for their use. Minors should not be allowed in the private quarters of those residences. With the exception of occasional visits from immediate family members, minors are not permitted to be overnight guests in the residences of priests or religious.
13. Counseling areas should have transparent windows or open doors. Care should be made to have another adult in the general vicinity during counseling sessions.

### **C. Physical Contact**

The Diocese of Joliet has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing, safe environment for children and youth ministries while protecting both children and Church personnel from misunderstandings. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church personnel working with children and in youth programs.

Church personnel are prohibited from using physical discipline for behavior management of minors. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior by minors.

Appropriate affection between Church personnel and minors is important for a child's development. It is a positive part of Church life and ministry and should be given in public but not in isolated or secluded areas.

1. The following forms of affection are regarded as some appropriate examples for most Church sponsored and affiliated programs:
  - Side hugs.
  - Shoulder to shoulder hugs.
  - Pats on the shoulder or back.

- Handshakes.
  - “High-fives” and hand slapping.
  - Verbal praise.
  - Touching hands, faces, shoulders or arms of minors.
  - Arms around shoulders.
  - Holding hands while walking with small children.
  - Sitting beside small children.
  - Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
  - Holding hands during prayer.
  - Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (Avoid in some Asian communities.)
  - Reciprocation of appropriate gestures initiated by a minor.
2. Some forms of physical affection have been used to initiate inappropriate contact with minors. In order to maintain the safest possible environment for minors, the following are examples of affection that are not to be used in Church sponsored and affiliated programs:
- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
  - Kisses on the mouth.
  - Holding minors over five/six years old on the lap.
  - Touching buttocks, chests or genital areas.
  - Sleeping in a bed, sleeping bag or small tent with a minor.
  - Touching the knees or legs of minors.
  - Tickling minors.
  - Wrestling and/or roughhousing.
  - Piggyback rides.
  - Any type of massage given by a minor to an adult.
  - Any type of massage given by an adult to a minor.
  - Any form of unwanted affection.
  - Compliments that relate to physique or body development.

#### **D. Undue Attention**

Certain conduct has been used by adults to develop inappropriate relationships with minors. Activities include singling out minors or showing them unusual attention. Some examples of this behavior prohibited for Church personnel are:

- Presenting gifts to a minor that would not ordinarily be given to an entire group of children, excluding awards, etc.
- Allowing a minor to drive automobiles of Church personnel even though another adult may be present.
- Singling out a particular child for special dinners, events, trips or outings.

#### **E. Screening**

1. All applicants for Church personnel positions working with minors will be required to complete the following without exception:
  - a. A standard application that includes a release of information to conduct background checks. Applicants will also be required to read and sign the *Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors*.
  - b. Appropriate criminal records check.
2. For employees and volunteers who have worked in the parish or school for two years or more, the application and criminal records check will complete their screening process.
3. Additional screening procedures, such as reference checks and face-to-face interviews are recommended for new applicants.
4. Volunteers for programs working with minors in parishes should be registered members of the parish for at least six months before being placed in a volunteer position with minors. With care, exceptions may be made for parents of minors who can demonstrate evidence of satisfactory ministry with minors from a previous parish.

#### **F. Program Supervision**

1. Parents are encouraged to be a part of services and programs in which their children are involved in the Diocese of Joliet. If parents wish to observe programs/activities in which their children are involved, they may do so after making arrangements with the Director of Religious Education or program administrator.
2. Special care needs to be taken where a program is sponsored or administered by only one adult or by anyone under age 21.
3. Church personnel in leadership roles must be aware of all programs for minors that are sponsored by a parish or school.
4. Individual Church personnel are not permitted to implement new programs for minors without receiving approval from the appropriate administrator (school, religious education, parish).

#### **G. Reporting Violations**

All Church personnel are required to report violations of the Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors by an adult employee or volunteer to that individual's immediate supervisor.

Certain personnel (including priests, school and child care personnel, medical personnel, social workers, psychologists, professional counselors, and recreational program personnel) are considered mandated reporters under Illinois law and must report to DCFS any situation in which they have a reasonable belief that a child is being physically or sexually abused.

#### **H. Education, Distribution and Acknowledgement**

Members of the clergy, religious, employees and all volunteers who work with minors will be required to receive inservice education that addresses their role in protecting minors.

Minors who serve as employees or volunteers will be informed that they have a right to a safe working environment and a right to disclose behavior not in accord with these standards.

The Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors is to be given to all diocesan and parish employees and volunteers, as well as to all parents and parishioners whose children attend parochial schools or attend Religious Education. The document is posted on the Diocesan website: [www.dioceseofjoliet.or](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.or)

All Church personnel are required to comply with the *Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors*.

Information and records generated by mental health practitioners, including those of alcohol and substance abuse treatment providers, are retained or released in accordance with the provisions of Illinois and Federal laws.

The Diocese communicates transparently and openly about issues of sexual abuse within the parameters of legally mandated confidentiality and privacy especially to the faith communities directly affected (*USCCB Charter 7*).

The Diocese publishes an annual public report on the progress made in implementing this policy and cooperates with audits conducted by the National Review Committee.

#### **XIII. POLICY SUBMISSION**

A copy of this policy as well as any revisions to the policy is filed with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops within three months of its effective date (*USCCB Norms 2*).

## **St Mary Magdalene Parent and Religious Education Commitment**

We, as parents and catechists, acknowledge the importance and value of Catholic education and spiritual formation. As parents, we have selected Catholic education to significantly strengthen our children's identities as followers of Christ and members of the Roman Catholic community.

Our mutual goal as parents, catechists, and administrators is to stimulate the spiritual, moral, intellectual and social growth of our children. We parents are the primary religious teachers by the way we live our lives and give daily expression to our values. The school will share that responsibility through a strong curriculum; teaching at the highest caliber and giving example of care, love and support to our children.

## Parents' Commitment

We parents agree to live our religious, educational and financial commitment in many ways primarily by:

- Regularly attending Sunday Mass our children. We recognize and accept that Mass is an integral part of our Religious Education program. We also agree to be active parishioners through our participation in parish programs and activities;
- Prayer and example of Christian living in our home; teaching children to memorize required prayers;
- Attending any special meetings for parents convened by our Pastor or Religious Education Director for the purpose of religious formation or enrichment;
- Actively promoting our identity as Catholics and as a family in the Roman Catholic church;
- Reinforcing Catholic teachings with periodic home discussion regarding topics covered in religion classes;
- Encouraging completion of Religious Education homework; Assuring that textbooks, handouts and needed materials are brought to Religious Education Classes;
- Understanding that our catechists are professionals and should be given all due respect for their commitment and intentions to serve our children. Moreover, we will support them by: volunteering our assistance and active cooperation;
- Reading the Family Handbook, reviewing school policies and procedures with our children and abiding by the spirit and expectations of the handbook. A sign-off sheet, which is to be signed and returned to the school, is provided;
- Promptly reading all communications received from the Religious Education Office and promptly responding when necessary;
- Teaching our children to display respectful behavior towards others;
- Providing our children with required supplies, making sure they attend class each day it is in session and that they arrive on time;
- Promptly contacting the Religious Education Office (**815-727-4600**) when your child will be absent;
- Attending all orientation sessions, parent-catechist conferences, sacramental preparation meetings and any other special meetings convened;
- Fulfilling our financial obligations as outlined in the financial policy;
- Being active parishioners and helping to financially offset the cost of Religious Education by contributing through the weekly parish envelopes. Parents should also encourage children to practice stewardship in gratitude for God's blessings.

## Religious Education Commitment

The catechists and staff agree to fulfill our commitment in a variety of ways, primarily by:

- Teaching the consistent Roman Catholic faith and traditions as expressed in our rituals and practices;
- Continuing our religious education training and actively giving witness to our Catholic faith through our daily teachings and living;
- Properly preparing for each class in order to attain curricular objectives;
- Fostering a class environment where questions, discussions and suggestions are welcome and concerns addressed;
- Striving to treat students fairly and respect their individual faith journeys
- Inviting parental participation and maintaining open communications;
- Maintaining a safe and orderly environment;
- Maintaining high expectations for student achievement.

# St. Mary Magdalene Release Forms

2013 – 2014

*(below are listed the various release forms parents are requested to sign and return to the Religious Education Office. These are provided for your reference.)*

## **Photo-video Release**

St. Mary Magdalene Parish and Religious Education Program may produce or participate in videotape, Internet (i.e. Website), digital or still photograph productions that may involve the use of students' names, likenesses or voices. Such productions may be used for the educational and/or school marketing purposes and may be copied or copyrighted with the school retaining any and all rights to such productions.

Videotaping and photographing of students is permitted without parent permissions as stated in the Videotaping and/or Photographing of Students Agreement. Parents/guardians have the right to object to the use of the child's/children's name, picture, or voice in these media and may do so by completing the form below and returning it to the Director of Religious Education of the school to be kept on file there. I give permission to Saint Mary Magdalene to publish my child's/children's personally identifiable image and work in places and via electronic, video, auditory, print, and any other media accessible by the public (including said School/Parish/Diocese; bulletins, newspapers, websites and other print publications).

Yes No (circle one)

## **Web Site/Desktop Publishing Release**

During the school year, a digital camera may be used for still/moving photography for print or publication on the St. Mary Magdalene website (stmarymagdalenechurch.com). Images on the website may include sound. Any printed images are for in-school display only. Neither of these is used for commercial purposes.

I give St. Mary Magdalene consent to use my child's image for print or publication on the St. Mary Magdalene website.

Yes No (circle one)

## **Rights of Non-custodial Parents**

As a general rule, the law allows students and/or student records to be released to either parents or legal guardians. St. Mary Magdalene assumes both parents have custodial rights unless one parent presents the school with official original court documents to the contrary. If you are separated or divorced, do you consent to the child/ren's non-custodial parent being appraised of his/her (their) behavior and/or academic standing should s/he request this information? (If "No" you must bring to the Religious Education Office the section of the divorce degree which states custody rights)

Yes No (circle one)

## **St Mary Magdalene Family Handbook**

My signature attests to the fact I have received, read, and agree to abide by St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education's policy and procedures as stated in the *2013-2014 Family Handbook* as well as all subsequent changes or directives by email, letter, flyer, school newsletter, calendar, and other communications by the school administration.

### **Parents' Commitment**

We parents agree to live our religious, educational and financial commitment in many ways primarily by:

- Regularly attending Sunday Mass our children. We recognize and accept that Mass is an integral part of our Religious Education program. We also agree to be active parishioners through our participation in parish programs and activities;
- Prayer and example of Christian living in our home; teaching children to memorize required prayers; Attending any special meetings for parents convened by our Pastor or Religious Education Director for the purpose of religious formation or enrichment;
- Actively promoting our identity as Catholics and as a family in the Roman Catholic church;
- Reinforcing Catholic teachings with periodic home discussion regarding topics covered in religion classes;
- Encouraging completion of Religious Education homework; Assuring that textbooks, handouts and needed materials are brought to Religious Education Classes;
- Understanding that our catechists are professionals and should be given all due respect for their commitment and intentions to serve our children. Moreover, we will support them by: volunteering our assistance and active cooperation;
- Reading the Family Handbook, reviewing school policies and procedures with our children and abiding by the spirit and expectations of the handbook. A sign-off sheet, which is to be signed and returned to the school, is provided;
- Promptly reading all communications received from the Religious Education Office and promptly responding when necessary;
- Teaching our children to display respectful behavior towards others;
- Providing our children with required supplies, making sure they attend class each day it is in session and that they arrive on time;
- Promptly contacting the Religious Education Office **(815-717-4600)** when your child will be absent;
- Attending all orientation sessions, parent-catechist conferences, sacramental preparation meetings and any other special meetings convened;
- Fulfilling our financial obligations as outlined in the financial policy;
- Being active parishioners and helping to financially offset the cost of Religious Education by contributing through the weekly parish envelopes. Parents should also encourage children to practice stewardship in gratitude for God's blessings

### **Emergency Treatment**

I give permission for my child/ren to receive medical treatment in an emergency when I cannot be contacted. Emergency transportation by ambulance will be paid at the parent's expense.

### **Evacuation Release**

In the event of an emergency evacuation of St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education were to occur, I give my child/ren permission to walk with his/her catechist and classmates to either St Mary Magdalene Rectory or St. Mary Magdalene Convent to seek shelter.

### **St Mary Magdalene Permission for Service (Junior High Only)**

I give my child/ren permission to hold a service job at St. Mary Magdalene. I understand that at times this may take a few minutes of class time. My child/ren will be responsible for any announcements, handing in assignments and making up work.

### **Cell Phone and Other Electronic Device Usage**

St Mary Magdalene does not allow the possession or use of cell phones or other electronic devices during class hours. With the advent of picture phones, there is always the potential for improper use of such devices, resulting in safety and legal issues for our students, staff and families. During the school day, catechists may possess a cell phone for use in emergency situations.

At no time is a cell phone to be used to take any pictures while on school premises. This applies to catechists, students, volunteers, staff and visitors. Cell phones and other electronic devices in a student's possession during class will be confiscated and held until the end of the semester in which the infraction occurred. If a second infraction occurs, the Director of Religious Education may keep the cell phone or electronic device until the end of the school year.

I have read the above paragraph and understand the importance of following these guidelines.

### **Internet and Technology Agreement**

The St. Mary Magdalene and the Diocese of Joliet believe that all students should have access to technology when they act in a responsible, efficient, courteous and legal manner. Internet access and other network services available to students and catechists offer a multitude of global resources. Our goal in providing these services is to enhance the educational development of all our students.

Acceptable and ethical uses of technology are devoted to activities that support teaching and learning. The following is an agreement for the use of technology at St. Mary Magdalene. This agreement is an abbreviated version of the Diocese of Joliet's Student Agreement for Internet Access and Related Technology Use ("Student Agreement"). By signing below, the student, parent/guardian acknowledge receipt of and agree to be bound by the Acceptable use Agreement.

I will sign my name to show that I will follow these rules.

### **Student**

I have read, or my parents have read/discussed the *Internet Access and Related Technology Use Policy* with me.

Using the computer and the school network correctly and responsibly is very important. I will follow these rules:

- A. I will use the computer carefully and listen to the directions of my catechist.
- B. I will only work on the programs and web pages that my catechist tell me to use.
- C. I will ask for help if I don't know what to do or which key to press.
- D. I will tell my catechist if I read or see something on the computer that makes me afraid or uncomfortable.
- E. I will not use the computer to be hurtful to others.
- F. I will not give any information about my family, other students or myself to anyone on the Internet.
- G. I will print only when my catechist tells me to.
- H. I will only access my file or my own folder in the documents or on the student server.
- I. I understand that if I do not follow or break one of the rules, I may not be able to use the computer and may be otherwise disciplined.

I understand that using the computer and other technology equipment, as well as the Internet at school is a privilege. I know that you can obtain information on the Internet and communicate with others through the Internet. My parents and I have talked about using the Internet safely and the importance of using technology carefully.

I understand that my communication with others using school technology is to be polite and respectful at all times. I know that this applies to using email, the Internet, cell phones, Palm Pilots, and all other hand-held devices. If I send information to another person, I must only send it to those persons my catechists say are okay to write to. If I receive information from someone that makes me feel uncomfortable, or is not respectful or polite, I am to tell my catechist or another adult immediately.

I may get information from the Internet for projects that I am working on, but the information must be appropriate and within the guidelines set by my catechist. I know that I may not copy someone else's work and use it as my own.

I know that if I do not follow these rules and other rules my catechist and Director of Religious Education have for the use of computers and other technology, I may lose my privileges and may not be allowed to use the computer and other technology. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, I am aware that other disciplinary measures may be required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/ Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/ Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Parent/Guardian**

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Agreement for Internet Access and Related Technology Use and agree to all terms as stated.

I understand that this access is designed for education purposes. I recognize it is impossible for the Diocese of Joliet, the Parish and the Religious Education Program to restrict all access to all controversial materials and I will not hold the Diocese, Parish, Religious Education Program, or its agents, responsible for materials acquired on the network or harm to my child resulting from the use or inability to use the network systems, equipment or Internet. I will emphasize to my child the importance of following all rules of conduct and personal safety when using the Internet.

Furthermore, I accept responsibility for supervising my child's use of parish web pages and downloaded material when not in class that its use is not harmful to the parish, Religious Education Program, Religious Education personnel or other students.

I hereby give my permission to allow the use of the network and Internet access for my child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/ Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/ Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Acknowledgement of Reception and Review of Sexual Abuse Policy Documents**

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed a copy of the following documents contained in the *St Mary Magdalene School Family Handbook*.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors (revised February 2013)

\_\_\_\_\_ Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Guide: Understanding and Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

I understand that I am responsible to become familiar with the contents of the above documents. I agree to abide by and to conduct myself in complete accord with them.

***The undersigned have read and agree to follow the policies outlined in the 2013-2014 St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education Family Handbook.*** Parents also give permission and consent to the St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education Release Forms printed above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/ Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/ Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Disclaimer**

*This handbook consists of guidelines that provide a framework for the St. Mary Magdalene Religious Education practices. The Administration reserves the discretion to vary these policies so that specific problems are treated on an individual basis. The policies are subject to amendment or discontinuation, as the needs of the school require. The school will attempt to keep families and students informed immediately of all changes, which may be made to meet unforeseen circumstances.*



201 S. Briggs Street • Joliet, IL 60433  
815-727-4600 / [www.stmarymagdalenechurch.com](http://www.stmarymagdalenechurch.com)

### **Life Long Learning**

The 1989 *Joliet Diocesan Synod* and the 2005 *National Directory for Catechesis* emphasize the importance of life-long learning for catechesis. St. Mary Magdalene provides religious education and sacramental preparation for students in grades one through eight, Youth Ministry for Junior and Senior High students and numerous educational opportunities for Adults. Information about catechetical opportunities for families is included in the Religious Education Newsletter and the weekly Parish Bulletin.