

# *Church of Saint Aidan*



Religious Education Program

Parent / Student Handbook

**2020 - 2021**

Dear Parents,

The Saint Aidan Faith Formation Program is part of the community of believers who bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by helping families nurture their children in the love of God, the love of neighbor, and Catholic Christian values. We believe in each child's uniqueness and giftedness. We work to foster in each student a sense of respect for, and responsibility to God, self, and others.

Our program has as its primary mission the Formation of children in the Catholic Faith. The catechists of our parish are committed to teaching the fullness of revelation as taught by the Roman Catholic Church. Our catechists will always teach within the context of fidelity to the doctrine and traditions of our teaching Church. The instruction offered to the children seeks to fulfill the Six Tasks of Catechesis: Promoting Knowledge of the Faith, Liturgical Education, Moral Formation, Forms of Prayer, Education for Community Life; and Missionary Initiation. The ultimate goal is to help each child develop and grow in intimacy with God and to embrace his/her mission to spread the Good News to others.

Formation in the spiritual life begins at home and is always the primary responsibility of the parents. Parents play the key role in the spiritual development and growth of their children. The effects of the 2020Covid Pandemic have forced a major change in the Faith formation program. The 2020-2021 School Year must rest heavily on parents, who will need to be actively engaged in the learning experience of their children. Parents must step into the main role of our catechists by directly instructing their children in the appropriate grade level curriculum.

During this challenging time, it is essential that the family prays and worships together in whatever ways considered to be safe. Sunday Mass and Eucharist is the center of Catholic life; however, the pandemic has shifted Mass attendance from in person to online or tele-Masses for many Catholics, especially those who are medically vulnerable. It is our hope and prayer that attending Mass in person will soon be considered safe for all families. In the meantime; attending Mass in some form should be part of Catholic family life. Family worship strengthens the bonds of unity and assists children in becoming involved in the parish community.

The pages that follow provide you with general guidance for participation in the program during the upcoming school year. Please keep this handbook for your reference. This handbook as well as other documents and updates are available on the Faith Formation webpage, <https://StAidanParish.org/ff>. The policies and procedures included in this document are followed by the Faith Formation Office throughout the school year.

The whole staff of the Faith Formation Office welcomes you and your family. Please contact us anytime with any questions or concerns you may have. The Faith Formation Office is here for you!

Sincerely,

Elaine Smith  
Director of Faith Formation  
And Special Needs

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**PLEASE NOTE:**

**FACE MASKS MUST BE WORN BY STAFF AND STUDENTS AT ALL TIMES WHILE COVID RESTRICTIONS APPLY.**

## **Admission**

The Saint Aidan Religious Education Program (hereafter referred to as the 'Program') does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, nationality, or disability: Parents are required to register all students annually for admission into the program. A copy of the baptismal certificate must be submitted in order to complete each student's initial registration.

Transfers from another parish religious education program will require verification. The parent is responsible to providing the Program with a Letter of Transfer from the child's previous religious education program. Children must successfully complete each level of instruction. Children who have not received prior instruction will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine the appropriate level at which they should enter the Program.

## **Tuition**

Tuition charged in the program is used to offset some of the expenses for books, supplies, administrative costs and other needs of the religious education program and is due at the time of registration unless other arrangements have been made. Once classes begin, tuition is not refundable. Financial hardship should never preclude enrolling a child in the religious education program. Financial assistance is available for those in need by contacting the Director of Faith Formation

## **Arrival & Dismissal**

Students should be dropped-off and picked-up by their parent/legal guardian for all Church Gatherings and other program-related events. If someone other than a parent or legal guardian is authorized to pick-up a student, **the Faith Formation Office needs to be notified in writing.**

## **Attendance & Lateness**

Students are expected to attend all Church Gatherings and other program-related events unless a previous arrangement is made with the Director. Students should arrive and be picked-up on time.

## **Assignments**

Students must complete all program assignments in their textbooks according to the schedule provided and submit chapter/unit test assessments online.

Parents of students who fail to complete the necessary online assessments will be contacted regarding their children's situations. Parents should keep the Faith Formation Office informed about any events that could negatively impact their children's progress in the program.

## **Cancellation of Program Events and Church Gatherings**

Each family is given a Religious Education Calendar at the beginning of the school year, however sometimes parents have a question about our calendar. In general, Religious Education events WILL NOT be held if any of the following conditions occur.

- If Saint Aidan School is closed due to a holy day, a federal holiday or inclement weather
- If the Mineola School District schools are closed due to a federal holiday or inclement weather
- If the Herricks School District schools are closed due to a federal holiday or inclement weather
- If the East Williston School District schools are closed due to a federal holiday or inclement weather.

In the event of a need to cancel scheduled classes due to inclement weather or other emergency, notification will be made through the following mass-media outlets:

- TV- For Cablevision customers on News 12 (Channel 12) also at [www.news12.com](http://www.news12.com)
- TV- For FIOS customers on News 12 (Channel 29) also at [www.news12.com](http://www.news12.com)
- Radio ~ WBAB 102.3 FM also at [www.wbab.com](http://www.wbab.com)
- Radio - WBLI 106.1 FM also. at [www.wbli.com](http://www.wbli.com)

## **Textbooks**

All religious education textbooks used in our program conform to the guidelines published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Textbooks provided are the responsibility of each student. If a textbook is lost, a replacement textbook may be purchased in the Religious Education Office.

## **Complaint Procedures**

In the event that a parent has a complaint regarding program procedures, the following steps should be followed. First, contact the Director at x406 and then the pastor. If satisfaction is not reached, contact the Diocese of Rockville Centre Office of Faith Formation at (516) 678-5800, ext. 506.

## **Conduct / Discipline Policy**

We expect courtesy and respect from our students at all times. We are all created in the image of God and we are called upon to treat others with the dignity that they each have as images of God. Students are expected to treat all others with dignity and respect, fellow students and staff members alike. Inappropriate conduct during Church Gatherings and other program events cannot be tolerated. Parents will be contacted regarding their children's misconduct. In severe instances, the Director may decide that a child must be removed from the program. Such a decision must be approved by the pastor

## **Bathroom**

The church has very limited bathroom facilities and our time together is short and valuable; therefore the use of bathroom facilities during program events is discouraged. Parents should ensure their children use the bathroom before arriving at the event. If your child has a medical condition that may require frequent bathroom trips, please notify the Director in writing.

## Dress Code

Appropriate clothing must be worn at all times when attending Faith Formation events. Students are expected to dress in properly fitting, neat clothes. Shoes/sneakers must be worn at all times in the school buildings and church. Since proper footwear is a safety issue, students who arrive in flip flops and wheelies will not be permitted to attend the event until a parent brings the proper footwear.

General guidelines:

- Hoods and hats may NOT be worn inside the school buildings or the church
- Skirts and shorts should be an appropriate length - Skirts, no shorter than 1 inch above the knee; shorts should be standard walking shorts length - no gym shorts or short-shorts.

The following items are not permitted:

- Clothing with suggestive questionable language or drawings
- Bare midriffs or any shirt/top that exposes cleavage
- Basketball jersey or see through mesh unless a tee-shirt is worn underneath
- Sagging pants that expose undergarments
- Pajamas, bedroom slippers, shower shoes
- Flip flops and "wheelies" (shoes/sneakers with built in wheels)
- Chains or any attire that could be used as a weapon

## Snacks and Drinks

Unless a student has a documented medical need, food snacks and drinks are not permitted in the Church or school buildings. (Children needing to carry food for medical reasons should file a doctor's note with the Faith Formation Office.) Only if it is absolutely necessary, a water bottle may be brought into the Church. Gum is never permitted in the Church.

## Electronic Devices

While we appreciate the proliferation of electronic devices in our society, they must not be a distraction to others. Therefore, items such as AirPods, earbuds, iPods, MP3 Players, etc. are not permitted at any program-related events. Students may bring cell phones; however, they must be out of sight and **MUST be turned OFF (not airplane mode or silenced)**. Students who use their cell phones during program-related events will have their phones taken away. The cell phones will be placed in the Faith Formation Office and will be returned only to parents.

## Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is defined as the possession of, use of, selling or distributing any unauthorized, illegal drug, chemical, alcohol, tobacco, or tobacco-like substance, which can be introduced into the body through ingestion, inhalation, or injection. Any student found in possession of an illegal or unauthorized substance on parish property or parish sponsored events will be immediately suspended from the Program. A conference with the student, parent, Director of Faith Formation, and the Pastor is mandatory for re-admittance. Any student selling or distributing these type materials will be turned over to the local authorities.

## Vandalism

Students responsible for vandalism anywhere on the parish/school property will be responsible for the repair of damage. Depending on the extent/type of damage, the student may be removed from the Program.

## Safe Environment

Saint Aidan Parish complies with the Diocesan Child Protection Policy. All Program catechists and staff members complete the VIRTUS "Protecting God's Children" training program and have a Federal Background check performed. Children in grades 1 to 6 participate in the Child Lures Program as mandated by the diocese.

## Medical Conditions

Due to the current pandemic circumstances, parents of students with substantial medical conditions that may warrant intervention during any type of on-site gathering are asked to stay close by during such events. **Please note: Medication of any kind will not be administered by staff members or volunteers.**

## Photograph / Videos

Throughout the year pictures of the children in the Religious Education Program may be taken during various activities. Occasionally these photos may be submitted to the parish newsletter, the Voice, or the parish weekly bulletin. Parents are asked to complete a "Photograph/Video Release Form" for their children upon program registration.

## Communications

While the Program will attempt to maintain communication lines open with parents using various methods, the main method to be used will be by e-mail notifications and the Faith Formation Webpage. To ensure that they are receiving all communications from the Program, parents should keep the Office informed of their current:

- E-mail address
- Home & Cell Phone numbers
- Emergency Contact person's phone

## Right to Amend

The Director of the Religious Education Program reserves the right to amend this handbook at any time. Parents will be notified if changes are made.