

**St. Scholastica Catholic Church  
4301 W Homosassa Trail  
Lecanto, FL 34461**



# *Faith Formation*

## **Parent/Student Policy Handbook School Year 2020-2021**

Pastor: Rev. James B. Johnson  
Parochial Vicar: Rev. Jojo Tejada  
Faith Formation Coordinator: Kathy Brasseur  
kbrasseur@stscholastica.org  
Website: stscholastica.org  
Phone: 352-746-9422  
Fax: 352-746-2335  
Faith Formation Office Hours:  
Monday – Thursday 9:00 AM- 4:00 PM  
Closed on Fridays

***If you are enrolled or enrolling in Faith Formation please print and sign the last two pages of this handbook.***

# Welcome to Faith Formation at St. Scholastica

## PHILOSOPHY/MISSION STATEMENT

To quote the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, #2223:

“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by *creating a home* where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule... The home is well suited for *education in the virtues*. Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them...” (part 3, sect. 2, ch. 2, art. 4.iii).

The home/family is the domestic church. Your family is the foundation for your child’s faith growth. The work of The Faith Formation Program at St. Scholastica is to walk with parents and to assist them in forming their children for a lifelong faith. Our Mission is to help parents and young people to grow in their faith which will lead to a lifelong relationship with Jesus and the Catholic Church.

## FAITH

When your child was baptized you publicly promised to pass on the faith to him or her.

- ❖ Regular attendance at Sunday Mass is the best formation for all Catholics and is expected of all enrolled families.
- ❖ Faith Formation classes are in addition to Sunday Mass, not a substitute.
- ❖ Regular reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are essential.
- ❖ Family prayer and faith sharing.



## COMMUNITY LIFE

All Catholics are invited to share their time, talent and treasure with our parish and the greater community. Here at St. Scholastica there are many ministries where you can give of yourself to help others.

The Faith Formation program will need catechists, substitute catechists, classroom assistants, technical help with online classes, adults to lead new ministries we would like to begin, Children’s Liturgy of the Word at Mass, Vacation Bible Study, and adults to help with events for teens in our parish.

Parish organizations (Please contact parish office for more information):

Adult Spiritual Enrichment

Altar Servers

Arts & Environment

Bible Study

Choir

CCW – Community of Catholic Women

Culture of Life

Eucharistic Ministers

Greeters

Knights of Columbus

Legion of Mary

Readers/Lectors

RCIA

Rosary Makers

Sacristans

Safety Team

Ushers

## ENROLLMENT

You may obtain a Faith Formation Registration Form from the parish office or online at [stscholastica.org](https://stscholastica.org). Your family must be registered or be prepared to register in order for your child(ren) to attend Faith Formation sessions.

## FAITH FORMATION TRACKS

**Traditional Faith Formation** – Grades K – 8, Sunday mornings 10:15 – 11:30 in St. John Paul II Catholic

School.

**Family Faith Formation** – Grades K-8, the family meets with other families one Wednesday per month from 6:30PM – 7:30PM. All work is performed at home.

**Online Faith Formation** – Grades K-8, the parents and children will meet once in September and again in May on a Wednesday night. All work is performed at home and submitted online.

➤ Schedules will be released soon.

### FEE SCHEDULE:

#### Early Registration

1 child	\$30.00
2 children	\$50.00
3 or more	\$70.00

#### After June 1

1 child	\$40.00
2 children	\$60.00
3 or more	\$80.00

#### Sacrament Preparation Fees

Per Child	\$25.00
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**First Reconciliation/First Eucharist Preparation** – There will be four sessions for Reconciliation and four sessions for Eucharist. Parent(s) or another adult must attend the sessions with their children.

➤ Schedule to be determined.

**Confirmation** – There will be two-three hour sessions, attendance at a Confirmation Retreat and a Christian Service Day.

➤ Schedule to be determined.

### Sacrament Preparation

In order to begin preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation we must have your child's Baptism Certificate on file in the Faith Formation Office.

**Preparation sessions for these Sacraments are in ADDITION to Traditional Faith Formation, Family**

**Faith Formation or Online Faith Formation.**

**First Reconciliation/First Eucharist:** Children usually receive First Reconciliation and First Eucharist after completing first and second grade faith formation classes. A child must have one year faith formation prior to the year they would receive the sacraments. Parents or an adult must attend the sessions with the children. There are a total of four sessions for each Sacrament.

**Confirmation:** To receive Confirmation, students must be at least in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and have received Baptism and Eucharist. They must have completed at least 1 year of a Faith Formation program immediately prior to the Confirmation year. A Confirmation Retreat is a requirement for Confirmation. Our Confirmation retreat date will be announced and/or posted on our FAITH FORMATION Calendar. The candidate for Confirmation must attend a Christian Service day. If the candidate cannot attend the scheduled Christian Service day they will need to complete a minimum 8 Christian service hours with an organization in our community.

## ATTENDANCE

All children in grades K-8 who do not attend Catholic School should be enrolled in faith formation. It is also in the best interest of the children to attend/participate in faith formation from grade K-8 for all nine years, as each year builds on the previous year curriculum. By skipping years the children miss out on key knowledge to help them in learning and growing in the faith.

Faith Formation should be a lifelong process. (As adult Catholics we should continue learning about and growing in our faith from participating at Mass, serving our communities, reading the bible, seeking out other spiritual books to read, and small group faith sharing.)

Regular class attendance and/or participation at home is essential. Students who are chronically absent may be asked to withdraw from the program or repeat a year of faith formation. Tardiness is a distraction to both the catechist and the other children in the class. Please think of others and arrive on time.

## CURRICULUM

We use a lectionary based curriculum, Pflaum **Gospel Weeklies**, in our three Faith Formation tracks. We use both printed and digital versions. Our Reconciliation and Eucharist preparation uses The Pastoral Center - **Growing Up Catholic Series**, and for Confirmation preparation we are using Dynamic Catholic - **Decision Point**.

## SAFETY

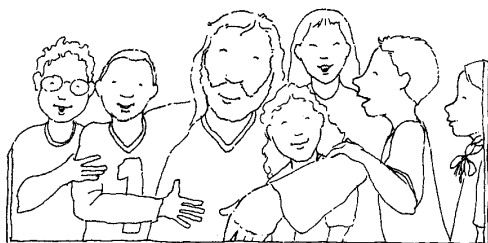
From the moment a child leaves home until he or she reaches the parish grounds and from the moment he or she leaves the parish grounds, the parent or guardian is responsible for the safety of the child. **ALL CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED TO BE SIGNED IN AND OUT BY THE PARENT. NO EXCEPTIONS.** If you are delayed in picking up your child, you must notify the director if you have delegated someone else to take your child home.

Our catechists and office personnel are not permitted to dispense medicine to any child. Parents may come to the school to give medicine to their child if it is essential that they receive it during the hours they are in class. Exceptions can be made only in extraordinary circumstances.

Children are not allowed to wear roller shoes to class and should not arrive for class chewing gum or carrying gum, candy, or toys. An exception is when they are bringing a treat for class. Unless your child is bringing a contribution to one of our collections for the poor, it is wise not to permit them to carry large amounts of money.

Treats are served to the children occasionally. We ask on the registration form if your child has an allergy that we should be aware of. If you find out about an allergy later, please notify the catechist or director to add that information to the registration records.

For health and safety reasons, please have your child(ren) bring a pencil to class each week.



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If parents are divorced or separated, the Faith Formation Children/Youth program presumes that both parents have access to the children's records and drop off and pick up of the child(ren) unless one parent can provide evidence that he or she has the sole right and sole custody. Information about the child's records and attendance will not be discussed with, or sent to, any other relatives or friends without parental

permission. Other than the parents or legal guardians, the only people who can pick up the children

are those listed on the enrollment form. If someone other than those on the form will be picking them up, the office must be notified ahead of time.

There is no smoking permitted on the school grounds.

Please assist us in providing a safe environment for all students.

Catechists are instructed not to release children unless the parent comes to the classroom and signs the child out.

If a parent is disabled and cannot come to the classroom, arrangements can be made in advance, so that a staff member or catechist can accompany the child to the car.

If a child is not picked up at dismissal time, the catechist will bring the child to the office, and the child will wait for the parent there.

If you need to pick up your child early, go directly to the classroom to sign your child out.

Parents should not leave a child in a classroom unattended by a catechist.

All of the above mentioned policies are enforced and pertain to the safety of all children who are on the premises while classes are in session. Non adherence to program policies may necessitate withdrawal from the program.

## **CONDUCT**

Students are expected to participate in class activities and discussions. Life as a Christian is a commitment to live by the example of Jesus Christ. This includes accepting responsibility for conduct and actions, along with the commitment to respect the rights of others.

Please review the class rules with your child and support the catechists and administration in enforcing the rules. The first four of the following rules are posted in the classrooms.

1. Respect all people and all property.
2. Raise your hand and wait to be recognized.
3. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
4. Follow the teacher's instructions.
5. Disruptions, disrespect, insubordination, profanity and illegal activities will not be tolerated.
6. Students are not permitted to smoke on the premises.
7. Students who choose to leave the activity site will not be allowed to re-enter and the parish will no longer be responsible for them.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Cooperation, attention, and courtesy are always expected during class time. Any student who disturbs a class and fails to cooperate with the catechist and other students within a class, will be subject to the following procedures:

- The catechist will handle normal discipline problems.
- If a problem becomes persistent, the student will be sent to the Director of Faith Formation Children/ Youth.
- A continuing problem may necessitate a call to the parents. A parent may be requested to attend class with the child. In extreme cases home school material will be made available.
- In the case of illegal activities, proper authorities will be contacted.
- The administration reserves the right to confiscate any inappropriate items during class, especially those that may cause harm to themselves or others.



- Please do not allow your children to bring any valuable items to class with them. We will not be responsible for personal items.

## COMMUNICATION

- Important information and notices will be provided in the Bulletin on Sundays.
- Letters and notices may be mailed to you periodically, and may also be given out in your child’s class. Please read all letters and notices carefully.
- Please follow the calendar that we provide to you at time of enrollment, or any amended calendar we provide during the school year.
- Please note that we rely on you to keep us informed of important developments in your family life such as address and telephone changes that affect our ability to serve you.
- Important information is on our website [@stscholastica.org](mailto:@stscholastica.org)
- **IMPORTANT OPT IN INFORMATION FOR FLOCKNOTE:**

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG, FL

The first premise of this code is that children and youth

function best when behaviors and expectations are clearly defined. It is accepted that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children in all aspects of their development. This experience aims at developing upright citizens and good Christians, following the new commandment Jesus gave His disciples, “A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another.” (John 13:34-35).

In Timothy 4:12 we read “Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.” Timothy is urged to rely on the gifts he has received from God. This code urges our children and youth to rely on God’s gifts to them, especially charity, chastity, and purity. This calls the young person to acknowledge and promote one’s personal dignity and the rights that go with it.

It becomes important for children and youth to know the difference between “right” and “not right” relationships. “Right” relationships foster personal, spiritual, and emotional growth, e.g., the ability to communicate, to forgive, to show affection, to be honest, vulnerable, dependable, etc. “Not right” relationships become harmful and hurtful, and even abusive. Abuse occurs when someone does not respect another’s boundaries, uses power, tricks, threats, or violence to cross or change another’s boundaries, or inflicts hurtful or unwanted behavior (physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual) on another person. This code is used in conjunction with existing local or diocesan policies, protocols or other codes and is not intended to supersede them.

When engaging in formal and informal activities, functions, and programs, children and youth are expected to behave appropriately at all times, respecting the rights of others.

1. Christian behavior is expected at all times.
2. Respect for individuals, the community and facilities being used are required.
3. Cooperation and self-control are necessary when participating in programs and activities.
4. Today’s fashions have relaxed considerably. However, when it affects Faith Formation, we suggest that the two terms we stress “modesty” and “appropriateness” be considered. Underwear

should not be seen; short shorts, crop tops, spaghetti straps and low cut, tight blouses should not be worn; vulgar sayings or pictures on T-shirts are not appropriate.

5. Unacceptable behavior and lack of cooperation will not be tolerated, but will be addressed appropriately. Examples of unacceptable behavior are as follows, though not limited to:

- Disrespect for adults and peers
- Use of vulgar language or gesture, use of racial slurs
- Damaging of property
- Fighting or intent to injure others
- Constant disturbance of others at work or in an activity
- Cheating

6. Possession of weapons, possession, sale or uses of alcohol or drugs are forbidden.

7. No child or youth has the right to treat another in any manner that will cause physical or emotional pain.

8. Coercion or threats to do something physically hurtful or for the purpose of exposing someone or something about another is unacceptable behavior.

9. Chastity is a virtue to be held in high esteem and promoted in practice. Sexual abuse of any sort, coercing a person to engage in sexual acts against her or his will, physically touching the sexual parts of another's body, treating a person like a sexual object are unacceptable and abusive behaviors. Consensual sex between students or initiated by minors to adults must never occur. Therefore harassment of any kind is un-Christian and unacceptable.

**HARASSMENT POLICY FOR NON-EMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN SCHOOLCENTERS, PARISH FAITH FORMATION PROGRAMS, AND PARISH YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS OF THE DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG, FL**

**Policy:**

The Diocese of St. Petersburg requires that each parish; Catholic school or early childhood center establish and adopt this policy that prohibits any form of harassment by any individual. The Diocese of St. Petersburg strives for the establishment of a Christian, professional and supportive educational environment for all persons engaged in or involved with the faith formation children/youth programs, schools and early childhood centers, and parish youth ministry programs in non-employment situations. No parish, school, or early childhood center will be responsible for off campus harassment, unless it occurs at a parish-, school-, or early childhood center sponsored event.

Purpose of the Policy:

This policy intends:

- That each individual is free from physical, psychological or verbal intimidation and harassment in the schools, early childhood centers, faith formation children/youth and youth ministry settings;
- That each individual involved in schools, early childhood centers, faith formation children/youth programs and youth ministry programs maintain and further develop attitudes and behaviors which express respect for others and are reflective of each person's God-given dignity.

• To encourage a heightened sensitivity toward behaviors that others may find offensive and intimidating, whether these behaviors refer to race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, familial status, veteran status or disability;  
This policy is not intended to otherwise limit the expectation of staff, children, students, and volunteers to engage fully in the traditions of teachings, celebrating, participating in and being formed by the Catholic faith, including but not limited to curriculum, catechesis, the Sacraments, other liturgies, worship services and ministries.

**Explanation of Harassment:**

Harassment can result from a single incident or from a pattern of behavior involving verbal, written or physical conduct or communication.

Harassment encompasses a broad range of behaviors, which could include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical, mental or verbal abuse
2. Insults, jokes, or derogatory slurs based on one or more of an individual's protected status(es)
3. Unwelcome sexual advances or touching
4. Implicit or explicit requests for sexual favors
5. Unwanted sexual comments (serious or humorous)
6. Unwanted sexually suggestive telephone calls, letters, e-mail, etc.
7. Comments or jokes based on issues of modesty and developing social awareness
8. Unwanted forced involvement in activities (e.g., physical, religious, etc.)
9. Coercion of religious styles of personal beliefs upon a participant
10. Intimidation in front of a group or forced personal sharing in groups
11. Inappropriate media or music use which would violate this policy

**SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY**

The Diocese of St. Petersburg has mandated that all adult staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care or supervision of children, the elderly, or the infirmed **MUST** be trained on the Safe Environments policy. This parish follows the Diocese of St. Petersburg policy on Safe Environments to provide such training on the subject to catechists and assistants. The purpose of the training is to:

- Teach practical ways to establish safe environments and relationships for all children and adults.
- Identify and protect youth and adult rights, identify barriers to abuse in church programs, etc.
- Provide information on identification of child abuse warning signs.
- Provide information on behavioral cues of sexual abusers.
- Provide information on appropriate response to an abuse disclosure or discovery.
- Provide information on appropriate reporting procedures for suspected or actual abuse.

In addition to the above, all catechists and assistants are finger printed and background checked. Additional information regarding this policy is available in the Faith Formation Children/Youth Office or the Diocesan website at [dosp.org](http://dosp.org).

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected to the extent possible, but will be consistent with legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and



to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

### **NCEA IFG: ACRE EDITION 2013**

The 5th and 8th grade students will be participating in the NCEA IFG: ACRE Edition 2013. The NCEA IFG:

ACRE Edition 2013 represents the next generation of program assessments for catechesis/faith formation developed by the National Catholic Educational Association to:

- Serve as a tool for assessing the effectiveness of catechetical/faith formation programs;
- Offer a picture of where grade 5 (Level 1) and 8 (Level 2) students are in terms of their basic religious knowledge;
- Assess the religious beliefs, attitudes, practices, and perceptions of students in these grades in addition to an evaluation of their religious knowledge; and,
- Provide information about areas of strengths in catechetical/faith formation programs as well as areas that may need additional attention or improvement.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS:**

Photographs of (a) student (s) will not be taken or displayed unless permission has been granted on the Media Release signed by the parent or guardian as part of registration.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN FOR PROGRAM CANCELLATION**

You will receive an e-mail or text from the Director of Faith Formation as soon as the decision to cancel the Faith Formation classes is decided. The decision to cancel classes will be based on the Citrus County School System's decision to cancel public school classes. Because the decision to cancel classes will be made in advance, it is important to remember that the decision to close will stand firm, regardless of how beautiful the weather may turn out to be. It's better to err on the side of caution than to create confusion or subsequent regret. It is up to the parents to seek out this information by checking the news and Citrus County Schools decisions.

### **POLICY OF THE DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

#### **Introduction**

The Diocese of St. Petersburg is committed to the well being of those served by the Church. The People of God have a right to be able to trust those who minister to them in God's name. The violation of this trust through any sexual abuse by Church Personnel is a source of great pain, for those involved and for the entire Church community. The Diocese published its first policy for the protection of children and youth on June 10, 1991, which required both employees and volunteers, who work with children and youth in any parish or Catholic School program to complete written employment applications for service with accompanying references. The following year on April 15, 1992, the diocese required background screening and fingerprinting of all employees who have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of children and youth.



In July of 1997, the Province of Miami required all dioceses to add vulnerable adults to the protected classes of children and young people. Background screening, reference checking, fingerprinting, and written employment and volunteer applications were now required of those wishing access to children, young people, and vulnerable adults. In June of 2002, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) adopted the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)*, which required background screening and Safe Environment Program training for all who may have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of

children and young people. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) obtained recognition for the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies* dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests or deacons in November of 2002. The Diocese of St. Petersburg revised its policy to comply with the *Charter and the Essential Norms* during December of 2002. The diocese publishes this revision of its current policy in response to a revision of the Charter in 2005 and as part of a continuing commitment to its gospel and pastoral responsibilities. This revised policy in combination with procedures and guidelines provides for the implementation and enforcement of a safe environment for our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

## **POLICY AND SCOPE**

**Policy to Protect.** The Bishop of the Diocese of St. Petersburg will make every reasonable effort to prevent sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults, and to respond promptly to all allegations of abuse where there is a reasonable belief that abuse has occurred. As such, the Diocese of St. Petersburg will comply with all obligations of civil and canon law and will promote healing where it is needed, provide education, training and guidance when it is appropriate, and endeavor to prevent any sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults with firm justice and mercy towards all. No person, including clergy, who has been determined to have engaged in sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult, will be allowed to remain in active ministry. Such actions violate Christian principles and are outside the scope of duties and employment of all church personnel. The diocese will not tolerate such behavior. This policy applies to all diocesan entities to include parishes, schools, early childhood centers, contractors and vendors and associated activities within the diocese.

Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly those of the person claiming to have been sexually abused and the person against whom the charge has been made. When the accusation has been proved to be unfounded, every reasonable step will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused.

**Policy to Respond to Allegations.** The Diocese of St. Petersburg will respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred. The diocese will utilize an objective outside investigator to investigate any such allegations. The diocese will maintain a Victim Assistance Minister to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who report sexual abuse incidents that occurred when they were minors by clergy or other church personnel. The procedures for those making a complaint will be readily available on the Internet via the Diocese of St. Petersburg website at <http://home.catholicweb.com/dosp> and in printed form in English and Spanish.

**Policy to Report.** The Diocese of St. Petersburg will report an allegation of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor or vulnerable adult to the public authorities. The diocese will comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults to civil authorities and cooperate in their investigation in accord with the law of the state of Florida. The diocese will cooperate with public authorities about reporting cases even when the person is no longer a minor. In every instance, the diocese will advise victims of their right to make a report to public authorities and support this right.

Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes mandates that any person who knows, or who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused, neglected or abandoned by a parent, legal custodian, guardian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare shall immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the Florida Abuse Hotline of the Department of Children and Families. Although every person has a responsibility to report suspected abuse of neglect, some occupations are specified in Florida law as required to do so. These occupations are considered "professionally mandatory reporters" and include such occupations as social workers, teachers and other school personnel, physicians and other health-care workers, mental health professionals, childcare providers, medical examiners or coroners, and law enforcement officers. It is a first degree misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of \$1,000.00 if a professionally mandatory reporter does not report. All church personnel, contractors and vendors who are not professional mandatory reporters are considered mandatory reporters and should report actual or suspected child or vulnerable adult abuse.

**Policy on the Diocesan Review Board.** The Diocese of St. Petersburg Diocesan Review Board functions as a confidential consultative body to the bishop. The majority of its members will be lay persons not in the employ of the diocese in accordance with *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons, 2002*. This board will assist the Diocesan Bishop in assessing allegations and fitness for ministry, and will regularly review Diocesan Policies and Procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. Also, the Board can act both retrospectively and prospectively on these matters and give advice on all aspects of responses required in connection with these cases.

E. **Policy on Removal of a Priest or Deacon from Ministry.** Sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is a crime in the universal law of the Church (CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 § 1). The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (Motu proprio, *Sanctissimum* *sanctitatis tutela*, AAS, 93, 2001) has reserved this jurisdiction because of the seriousness of this matter. Even after a single act of sexual abuse of a minor—whenever it occurred—which is admitted or established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law and the *Essential Norms*, the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry and, if warranted, dismissed from the clerical state. If an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is made against the bishop, the Apostolic Nuncio shall be notified and the investigation shall proceed according to his direction. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will follow the requirements of the

universal law of the Church and the *Essential Norms* approved for the United States.

**Policy on the Standards of Ministerial Behavior.** The Diocese of St. Petersburg will maintain standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers of the church in positions of trust who have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of minors or vulnerable adults.

**G. Policy on Communications.** The Diocese of St. Petersburg will be open and transparent in communicating with parish, other church communities, and the public about sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved.

**Policy on Distribution.** A copy of this policy will be distributed to all diocesan entities in printed form for posting to the general public. This policy will also be posted on the diocesan website at [www.http://dioceseofstpete.org](http://www.http://dioceseofstpete.org).

**I. Policy on Background Screening.** The Diocese of St. Petersburg will require that all church personnel, candidates for ordination, contractors, and vendors who may have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of children undergo a Level 2 FDLE/FBI criminal history background screen using the Volunteer, Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) and must meet the Diocese of St. Petersburg Minimum Standards of Moral Conduct. Employees between the ages of 14-20 must also receive a Level 2 background check as a condition of employment.

The FBI requires that background checks only be used for the purpose intended. Therefore, the diocese does not accept FBI background checks or background checks run by other entities for other purposes. However, the diocese will accept Level 2 background checks run by other entities of the VECHS system.

The diocese does not accept proof of Level 2 background checks or letters from other entities certifying a Level 2 background check except from the Florida Department of Education.

All church personnel, candidates for ordination, contractors, and vendors who may have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of children will be required to undergo a criminal history background screening conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and the FBI Volunteer, Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) every five years.

Church personnel who move from one entity to another with no break in service must submit a personal request in writing to the Safe Environment Program Office asking that his or her background check be transferred from the losing entity to the gaining entity or entities. If there is a break in service, a re-screening must take place.

Transfers of Level 2 background checks or certification of Level 2 background checks from outside of the diocesan system must come from Qualified Entities that are users of and registered with the FDLE Volunteer, Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) or are participants in the Florida Department of Education background screening authority.

All Level 2 background reports will be kept on file (actual or virtual) in the Diocesan Safe Environment Program Office. Copies of background screening reports will also be kept on file at respective schools and parishes under lock and key.

**Policy on the Diocesan Safe Environment Program (SEP) and SEP Training.** Under the auspices of the Safe Environment Program Office, which is responsible for the oversight, operation, maintenance, and enforcement of the Diocesan Safe Environment Program, the Diocese of St. Petersburg will require SEP training of all church personnel, contractors, vendors, and candidates for ordination who may have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of children or vulnerable adults. These individuals must attend the Standard 3-hour face-to-face SEP training initially. This training expires five years from the initial date of training and does not qualify individuals for the care, responsibility, and or supervision of vulnerable adults. SEP training re-certification is required every 5 years thereafter and can be taken online or by attending another 3-hour face-to-face training session.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Pastoral Care Providers who wish to have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of vulnerable adults must attend the Standard 3-hour face-to-face SEP training session for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion/Pastoral Care Providers. This training expires 5 years from the initial date of training and does not qualify one to have the care, responsibility, or supervision of children. Re-certification is required every 5 years thereafter and can be taken online or by attending another 3-hour face-to-face training session.

The diocese does not accept safe environment program training from other archdioceses, dioceses, or parishes because state laws, policies, procedures, and program jargon differ. Individuals coming into the Diocese of St. Petersburg must attend an appropriate standard 3-hour face-to-face SEP training session.

The Safe Environment Program Office will conduct training and education in cooperation with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations. It will require education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others to include contractors and vendors to make and maintain a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults.

The Diocesan Safe Environment Program Office is also responsible for maintaining a central database that will track the training and background screening status on all program participants.

## Definitions (See End Notes)

### End Notes

The statutory confidentiality of privileged communications established in Section 90.505, F.S., shall be observed when applicable to all reporting required under this paragraph. Section 90.505, F.S. establishes a privilege with respect to communications to clergy, if made privately for the purposes of seeking spiritual counsel and advice from a member of the clergy in the usual course of practice or discipline and not intended for further disclosure.

### Definitions:

- 2-1 **Adult:** An individual who is 18 years or older and who is no longer in high school.
- 2-2 **Allegation:** A statement or accusation of abuse, especially sexual abuse.
- 2-3 **Child, Youth, or Minor:** Generally, a person less than eighteen (18) years of age. Minors and the combined term “children and youth” are used interchangeably.
- 2-4 **Church Personnel shall mean all of the following:**
  - 2-4-1 **Clergy:** All priests and deacons who have faculties of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.
  - 2-4-2 **Employee:** Any lay individual who is employed by or engaged in ministry who is given payment for services (any form of compensation, whether monetary or otherwise) rendered in which the obligation to withhold for payroll tax (FICS, Medicare, and withholding) exists, whether part-time or full-time. This definition shall include all such persons whether employed by the diocese, parish, school, early childhood center, nursing home, group home, or other Diocesan entity that is controlled by or operated by the bishop. All employees, even those under 18 years of age (14-17 years of age) are subject to background screening as a condition of employment. Parental consent is not required in the state of Florida to sign the FDLE VECHS Waiver/Agreement. “Personnel” as defined herein, has reference only to the applicability of this policy, and is not indicative of any agency or employment relationship between the diocese and the party whose compliance with this policy is sought.
  - 2-4-3 **Contractors and Vendors:** This class of persons shall be understood for purposes of this policy and in accordance with the VECHS User Agreement to include contractors and vendors who have or may have unsupervised access to children, disabled, or elderly persons for whom the diocese provides care, responsibility, and or supervision.
  - 2-4-4 **Covered Volunteer:** Any unpaid person who is engaged or involved in any diocesan institution or parish activity, and who is entrusted with the care, responsibility, or supervision of children or vulnerable adults. Covered volunteers must be 18 years of age or older and are not in high school. Individuals younger than 18 years old cannot have the care, responsibility and or supervision of children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- 2-5 **Care, responsibility and or supervision:** Means unsupervised access by an individual who provides care, treatment, education, training, instruction, supervision or recreation to children, the elderly, or disabled.
- 2-6 **Criminal History Background Screen:** An investigation of an individual’s background that may be contained in the public record to include municipal, county, state, federal law enforcement, Social Security and state driving records. This screening is meant to (1) provide an insight into one’s character indicator of personal integrity (2) provide an indicator of one’s past behavior (3) offer a view of problem areas with personal situations, and (4) and to provide an indicator or personal integrity before allowing access to children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- 2-7 **Pastoral Care Providers:** Volunteers who provide various types of service and assistance to the sick and shut-in as a form of ministry. Types of ministry-in-service may include but are not limited to Vehicle Drivers, Errand Runners, Bereavement Ministers, Care Givers, Pastoral Ministers, Health Ministers, Helping with Chores, etc.
- 2-8 **Qualified Entity:** The Diocese of St. Petersburg is a Qualified Entity within the FDLE Employee, Volunteer Criminal History System (VECHS). An entity is a business or organization whether public, private, for profit, or not-for-profit that provides care to children, the elderly, or disabled and have entered into a User Agreement with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Qualified Entities are authorized to participate in the Volunteer, Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) and are authorized to request criminal history information from other members of the VECHS system.
- 2-9 **Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse means any act constituting sexual abuse as defined in Chapter 39 and Chapter 415, Florida Statutes, whether perpetuated against a child or vulnerable adult as defined therein.
- 2-10 **Vulnerable Adult:** A person 18 years or older whose ability to perform the normal activities of daily living or to provide for his or her own care or protection is impaired due to a mental, emotional, physical, developmental disability dysfunction, brain damage, or the infirmities of aging.

## RIGHT TO AMEND

Because situations may arise that are not covered by this Handbook, we retain the right to amend this handbook for just cause only. We will inform you promptly of any changes that are made.

## AGREEMENTS SIGNED BY PARENTS AND STUDENTS

For everyone’s protection, we ask that you and your child/children sign the enclosed statement agreeing to be governed by this handbook.

**PROMOTIONAL MEDIA RELEASE**

During the Faith Formation Program Year, St. Scholastica Parish may participate in videotape,

motion picture, audio recording or still photograph productions that involve the use of students' names, likenesses or voices. Such productions may be used for educational or exhibition purposes by St. Scholastica Parish in perpetuity and may be copied, copyrighted, edited and distributed by St. Scholastica Parish in perpetuity unless said consent is revoked in writing.

News media, including representatives of television, radio, newspapers and magazines, also often are permitted on parish property and may take notes, still photos, sound recordings and/or moving pictures that may include your child. These items may appear or be used in news or feature stories by print, television or radio media.

You have the right to object to the use of your child's name, picture or voice in these productions and may do so by completing the form below and returning it to the Parish Director of Faith Formation for St. Scholastica Parish.

If you have any questions, please contact the Faith Formation office at: 352-746-9422.

I/We, the undersigned, \_\_\_\_\_ **do** \_\_\_\_\_ **do not** hereby consent that:  
CHECK ONE

St. Scholastica Parish may use the name, portrait, or other likeness of my child for St. Scholastica Parish bulletin boards, Website, news releases, media and promotional activities. This consent is renewed at the beginning of each Faith Formation Program Year. Please add any additional children.

Student's Name

Date of Birth

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Father or Legal Guardian's Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Father or Legal Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mother or Legal Guardian's Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mother or Legal Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**PARENT/STUDENT PARISH FAITH FORMATION POLICY  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

I acknowledge that I have received, read, understand and my child/children agree to abide by the Policies contained in the Parent/Student Faith Formation Handbook including the local Parish program policies and Procedures, the Harassment Policy in Non-Employment Situations and the Safe-Environment of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Please check all that apply and sign/print/date as appropriate in the spaces provided. Please add any additional children.

\_\_\_\_\_ **I will attend the Parent/Student Safe Environment Education program Sessions as scheduled – *Parent sessions will be indicated on the Faith Formation/Parish Calendar.***

\_\_\_\_\_ **I cannot attend the Parent Safe Environment Education Program, but I wish to receive all additional (beyond handbook policies) materials related to the Safe Environment Parent/Student Education Program.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **I do not wish to receive the materials (beyond handbook policies) related to the Safe Environment Parent/Student Education Program.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) Parent/Guardian

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(Name Printed) Parent/Guardian

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(Name Printed) Parent/Guardian

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(Name Printed) Child

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