

**Health, Safety and Environment POLICY  
and PROCEDURES**

Prepared by: Director of Religious Education: Christine Dunn Pastor: Rev. Drew Wood  
Date Revised: August 17, 2018

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## 1. Statement of Purpose and Scope

***As a point of clarification, catechists in this document refer to all catechists, core team, or program facilitators for Religious Education programs.***

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The primary goal of this manual is to manage and provide for the safety and security of the St. Laurence Religious Education students, staff, volunteers, and visitors.

At the beginning of each religious education year, all St. Laurence employees and volunteers should become familiar with the Religious Education's general crisis procedures and be reminded of their individual responsibilities. Copies of this manual will be provided in all catechist handbooks and a copy will be found in the main office.

***Parents and catechists are expected to be aware of the procedures and procedures of the Religious Education programs.***

### SCOPE

St. Laurence Catholic Church is a welcoming and caring community. Our belief in the sacredness of life extends beyond the spiritual well being of each individual to include emotional and physical well being. In order to provide a safe and healthy environment for those involved with the St. Laurence Religious Education Program, this Health, Safety and Environment Policy and Procedures document has been developed. Although every circumstance cannot be anticipated in advance, these policies and procedures should provide the basic guidance to maintain a safe and healthy environment and to handle emergencies as they arise.

## 2. Health

### 2.1 General

The health of each child, adolescent and adult involved with programs at St. Laurence Catholic Church is important to the staff and catechists. If any individual has a medical condition or other health issue that may create a medical emergency or a health risk to other individuals, we ask that this information be shared with the staff. We respect the privacy and dignity of all individuals and will limit that information to those staff members and catechists who need to know this information.

### 2.2 Immunizations and Contagious Diseases

It is expected that each child enrolled be current with all immunizations. If an individual in any classroom setting is diagnosed with a serious contagious disease (tuberculosis, meningitis, etc.), which may pose a serious health risk to others, all parents will be notified in a timely manner.

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### 2.3 Illnesses

We are asking parents to respect the health and well being of other individuals in the program and refrain from sending students with fever, nausea, conjunctivitis (pink eye) and other minor contagious infections to class. Anyone attending a St. Laurence Religious Education program must be fever free for 24 hours without medication. Fever is defined as body temperature of 100.4° or above. If a child develops symptoms of illness during class, the parents will be notified immediately and the child MUST be picked up.

### 2.4 Medications

It is the policy of St. Laurence Religious Education NOT to administer any medications to any students enrolled in any program. If the student needs routine medications, they should be administered before or after class. If a student is required to carry and use prescription medications, the Program Coordinator and the child's catechist must be informed accordingly and a parent must remain on site to administer the medicine to the child.

### 2.5 Drug and Alcohol Abuse

If any individual is suspected of drug or alcohol abuse, immediate notification will be made to the Program Coordinators who will notify the Director of the Religious Education and the Parish Administrator. If the individual is deemed to be a hazard to themselves or others, parents will be called to pick up the student and legal authorities will be notified, if necessary. Disciplinary action for drug and alcohol abuse will include notification of parents or guardians, and may involve suspension or expulsion from the program. There is a zero tolerance policy for possession of illicit and illegal drugs on St. Laurence Catholic Church property.

### 2.6 Child Protection

Child abuse is a serious concern. Any staff member or catechist who suspects a child to be the victim of child abuse is required to notify the proper authorities first. They are then required to notify the Program Coordinator who will notify the Director of Religious Education and the Parish Administrator. Per the Attorney General of the State of Texas: "Anyone having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect MUST report the case immediately to a state or local law enforcement agency or the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Service (TDPRS)." (Texas Family Code, Chapter 261). Reporting suspected child abuse to anyone other than law enforcement will not satisfy an individual's obligation under this law.

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All staff members and catechists are required to attend a three hour program, VIRTUS, on Protecting God's Children (PGC). After five years of attending PGC, a refresher course called Keeping the Promise Alive must be attended by all staff and volunteers in regular, consistent contact with children. Staff members and catechists are also required to have a Criminal Background check. Volunteers must sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct and complete an application for volunteer service which includes references. All staff members are required to sign an acknowledgment that they have read and understood the *Ethical and Personal Conduct Policies of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston*.

### 2.6.1 Suicide/Self-Injury Intervention

Should a catechist become aware of a situation where a child may be contemplating suicide or inflicting injury to himself or herself, the catechist **must bring the child directly to the office of the Program Coordinator**.

**The parent(s) must be called immediately, proper documentation must be made and the pastor will be notified.**

**AT NO TIME IS THE CHILD TO BE LEFT UNATTENDED BY AN ADULT OR ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE PREMISES UNTIL THE PARENT(S) ARRIVE.**

When the parent(s) arrive, they are briefed about the incident and/or reason for concern. The child is then released to the parent(s) care. The names and telephone numbers for counselors and other appropriate assistance groups should be given to the parent(s) before they leave.

For administrative records a detailed memo describing the incident should be kept in a confidential file. The Program Coordinator may follow up with the parent(s), but there is no legal obligation to do so.

### 2.7 Behavior

All students are expected to behave in an age-appropriate manner and show respect for the staff, volunteer catechists and fellow students. Behavior that is disruptive, disrespectful, malicious and/or dangerous will not be tolerated. Discipline for such behavior may include counseling with program directors, joint meetings with parents and the student, suspension or expulsion depending on the severity of offense and the individual's attitude and receptiveness to counseling.

#### 2.7.1 Weapons

No weapons, of any type, are permitted on the grounds of St. Laurence Catholic Church. There is a zero tolerance policy for possession of weapons on St. Laurence Catholic Church property.

- If any person is found in possession of a weapon, legal authorities will be notified.
- If the individual is a minor, the parents and the proper authorities will be notified.

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- The individual must then receive written permission from the pastor, Director of Religious Education and Parish Administrator prior to returning.
- If a weapon is found unattended on the premises, the area shall be restricted until authorities intervene.

### 2.7.2 Communication Devices/Laser Pointers

The use of cellular phones and pagers should be restricted to emergency use only during normal class times. Laser pointing devices are prohibited from operation on campus, except for legitimate presentation purposes.

## 3. Safety

The safety of all individuals in the Religious Education Program at St. Laurence is a paramount concern. On such occasions when emergencies arise, personnel in the Religious Education Program will observe the following guidelines for appropriate action.

### 3.1 Program Closings/Event Cancellation

The health and safety of children and staff is the main factor in any decision to closure of a program or cancellation of an event.

Program closure/event cancellation notification will be made in the following ways- □

Posted online at [www.stlaurence.org](http://www.stlaurence.org)

- a recorded voice message will be placed on the Religious Education main number at 281-265-5774
- if possible an email will be sent out notifying parents of advance cancellations

The following criteria will be used to determine program closure/event cancellation.

**As a general rule, St. Laurence Religious Education program/classes will follow Fort Bend ISD closures unless specifically notified that the program/event will be held.**

#### Facility Related

- Conditions/Hazards which impact the health and safety of children and/or employees
- Facility without electricity for more than 3 hours
- Facility without water for more than 2 hours.

#### Weather Related

- Concerns referenced from weather bureau, travel advisory and NOAA.
- Weather conditions such as area flooding, icing, snow accumulations, etc, which would prevent safe arrival and departure of catechists and children.
- Immediate area under a hurricane watch

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**Health Related**

- Area Public Health officials recommend or order closure of the program to reduce spread of illness.

**3.2 Crisis Management**

A crisis is defined as any event that may disrupt the normal schedule of activities. The following potential crisis situations will be addressed by this policy: fire, injury and natural disaster. Adequate preparation is necessary in the event of an emergency in order to avoid panic, provide the fastest and best response possible, insure that appropriate officials are notified, eliminate any additional hazards, and return to normal operations as soon as possible.

**3.3 Notification Procedures for Crisis-**

1) CALL 911 - Emergency Response Personnel (Fire, Police, Ambulance)

2) Program Coordinators (typically on site during most events): 281-265-5774

Play and Pray	Elizabeth Hernandez
Pre School	Cindy Martin
Elementary CCE	Joan Hastreiter
Middle School CCE/EDGE	Maureen Bass
High School/Life Teen	Eric Painter
Confirmation	Daniel Glaze
Adult/RCIA/RCIC	Justin Frato
First Sacraments/Family Faith	Melissa Calcote
Spiritual Direction	Anne Marie Daniel

3) Director of Religious Education  
Christine Dunn Office: 281-265-5774

4) Parish Administrator  
Tony Oltremari Office: 281-980-9812

5) Facilities Director  
Sheila Stulak Office: 281-980-9812

6) Clergy

Pastor	Fr. Drew Wood	Office 281-980-9812
Parochial Vicar	Fr. Jaison Thomas	Office 281-980-9812
Parochial Vicar	Fr. Truong Son Nguyen	Office 281-980-9812

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### **Non-Emergency Telephone Numbers:**

Sugar Land Police	281-242-2600
Sugar Land Fire	281-491-0852
Methodist Sugar Land Hospital	281-274-7000
Memorial Hermann Sugar Land Hospital	281-725-5000
Texas Poison Control Center	800-764-7661
St. Laurence Catholic Church Parish Office	281-980-9812

### 3.4 Emergency Procedures

#### 3.4.1. **Fire/Smoke/Explosions**

A fire alarm in any of the St. Laurence facilities must be taken seriously. The pre-school through first grade classes are located on the first floor, close to an exit so that young children can be transported quickly and safely outside.

#### Fire Alarm/Drill Procedures:

- 1) Catechists must familiarize themselves with the nearest fire pull and fire extinguisher to their classroom. In each room a map is posted that details the primary and alternate exit routes and gathering place outside the building.
- 2) When a fire alarm sounds, catechists must gather their students and lead them in an orderly manner, single-file to the designated gathering point.
- 3) **Catechists are expected to carry the class attendance sheet and a flashlight** with them at all times during the evacuation.
- 4) Catechists should be the last ones out of the room, being certain all students have been evacuated. Students are expected to remain quiet and move quickly out of the building.
- 5) In the event that the primary exit route is blocked by smoke or fire, catechists should select the alternate exit route indicated on the room map keeping all students together and calm.
- 6) The Program Coordinator will verify all rooms and bathrooms are vacated.
- 7) Everyone must remain outside of building until an "All Clear" signal is given by fire department personnel or staff during a drill.

### **STANDARD EVACUATION ROUTES**

#### **Ave Maria Center First Floor:**

- Rooms 100, 101, 110, 113 & 114 – exit back(SOUTH) door of classroom area and gather along the fence line closest to Colony Park
- Rooms 102, 103, 104, 105, 106 & 107 will exit the side (WEST) door and gather in the parking spaces just outside
- Rooms 108, 109, 111 & 112 will exit through the playground(WEST) door and gather in the parking spaces just outside

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- Marian Hall, Guardian Angel Hall, Library, Oratory, Coffeehouse, and RE Staff Offices – exit the nearest front(NORTH) door and gather at front of the covered driveway

### **Ave Maria Center Second Floor**

- St Anne, St Joseph, St Clare, St Joseph, and Spiritual Direction rooms – head down the designated main front(NORTH) stairs, out the front door and gather at front of the covered driveway
- Youth Hall – head down the left (WEST) side stairway and gather in the parking spaces just outside
- Rooms 200, 201, 202, & 203 – head down the main front (NORTH) right stairway, out the front door and gather at front of the covered driveway
- Rooms 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210 & 211 head down the right side(EAST) stairway and gather in the parking spaces just outside
- Rooms 212, 213 & 214 – head down the main front(NORTH) left stairway, out the front door and gather at front of the covered driveway

**Note: All stairwell traffic flows TWO LANES DOWN during evacuation.**

### 3.4.2 Injury, Trauma, or Other Medical Emergency

Procedures for the First Responder to a Crisis Situation:

In the event that any student, catechist, visitor or staff member sustains an injury or requires emergency medical treatment, the following procedure should be followed by the first responder:

- 1) Have a responsible adult remain with the injured individual, while sending another for help. Never leave a class unattended. Combine two classes together, if necessary.
- 2) Assess life/safety issues immediately
- 3) Immediately call 911 and request an ambulance be routed to the appropriate location.

***It is very important to tell the emergency response units your exact location and when feasible that you call from a land line to help emergency personnel in tracking of location:***

**St. Laurence Ave Maria Center**

**3103 Sweetwater Blvd 77479**

- 4) Control the scene and the crowd; make sure any hazard has been eliminated.
- 5) If qualified to do so administer first aid as necessary. A first aid kit is available. Staff are trained in First Aid/CPR.
- 6) Have a responsible adult meet the ambulance and direct the emergency personnel to the scene.
- 7) Follow the notification procedures in 3.3

After the initial emergency response has been addressed, parents of the affected child(ren) will be notified, **per the phone listing on the registration form.**

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In the event that the emergency will impact other facilities of St. Laurence Catholic Church, such as the church offices, school etc., then those groups should be notified as well.

**3.4.3 Weather Watch/Warning**

*Before Program Begins*

- If a weather warning/watch is issued, a decision will be made by administration regarding the cancellation of program and notification will be given through the above listed procedures as listed in 3.1.

*During Program*

- Students follow weather watch evacuation procedure listed below.

**Weather Watch/Warning Procedures**

In the event a weather emergency (hurricane, tornado, massive flooding, etc.) occurs during the hours when students are in class, catechists will be warned (if possible) of the approaching danger.

- 1) For weather watch/warning, students and catechists will be asked to move to the center of the building away from windows on to the following rooms-

<b>Ave Maria Center Room</b>	<b>Evacuates to:</b>
100	Hallway outside of 108
101	Hallway outside of 108
102	Room 108
103	Room 108
104	Room 108
105	Room 110
106	Room 110
107	Room 110
108	Stays in 108
109	Stays in 109
110	Stay in 110
111	Room 109
112	Room 110
113	Stay in 113
114	Room 113
Marian Hall	Parish Library, Oratory, RE Staff Workroom
Guardian Angels Hall	Hallway just inside classroom area
Oratory	Stay in Oratory
Library	Stay in Library
RE Staff Offices	RE Conference Room

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Lobby & Coffeehouse	Parish Library
Kitchen	Parish Library
St Anne	St Joseph
St Joseph	Stays in St Joseph
St Clare	St Joseph
St Francis	St Joseph
Youth Hall	Admin hallway bathrooms (split up girls and boys)
Spiritual Direction Rooms	St Joseph
200	Room 201
201	Stay in 201
202	Room 201
203	Room 204
204	Stays in 204
205	Room 206
206	Stays in 206
207	Room 206
208	Stays in 208
209	Room 208
210	Stays in 210
211	Room 210
212	Room 214
213	Room 214
214	Stays in 214

- 2) All assume the “Duck and Cover” position. To assume the “Duck and Cover” position kneel with head against the wall and bend forward placing both hands on head.
- 3) Catechists and students remain in duck and cover until notified of “All Clear” by authorized personnel.

### 3.4.4 Shut Down Procedure (to be used **in the classroom** during a crisis on campus **when evacuation is not possible**):

In the event of a dangerous or toxic chemical release as notified by emergency authorities or an intruder on campus, Religious Education will follow our “Shut Down” procedures.

- 1) Everyone in hallways and restrooms must return to their classroom unless instructed to remain where you are.
- 2) Student roll is taken and catechists alert their Program Coordinator of any missing students. Catechists will keep at all times with them their class attendance list.
- 3) Staff will check hallways, bathrooms, etc for unaccounted students during drills.
- 4) The catechist locks door, turns off lights and closes blinds.
- 5) We will remain there until given the “all clear” by the emergency authorities. Staff will shut down air conditioning and lock exterior doors. Windows will be kept closed and outside doors will be remain locked for the duration of the “Shut Down”.

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**Parents please take note:** Students will not be dropped off or picked up during “Shut Down”. Doors will remain locked until local emergency authorities give the “All Clear” signal.

### 3.4.5 Emergency Response in the Classroom

In the event that an emergency happens in the classroom, the catechist must communicate the situation in one of the following methods-

- 1) Use the intercom in your classroom to communicate event to front office assistant who will notify the program coordinator to assist you.
- 2) Using personal cell phone or phone located in classroom to call the main RE number at 281-265-5774 and the receptionist will notify the program coordinator
- 3) Send co-catechist/assistant down to get help and to notify of situation, do not leave class unattended.
- 4) Locate a classroom nearby that has an two adults in room to receive help 5) Contact the hallway monitor(if applicable for the program)

### 3.4.6 Bomb Threat

- 1) The person receiving the bomb threat reports the information to the program coordinators who initiate a 911 call.
- 2) STAY CALM! Do everything possible to keep the environment calm.
- 3) Evacuate the building immediately. Walk away from the building as quickly as possible and remain at least 300 feet away from building. Never re-enter the building to retrieve any item.
- 4) If threat is specific to school building, evacuate to St. Laurence Parish Hall. If specific to Parish Courtyard, evaluate to the Main School Building.
- 5) Follow all directives of Emergency Personnel. Do not touch or approach a bomb or suspicious device, which is us something out of place, such as an unattended briefcase leaning against the outside of the building.

The children can be released to the parent or guardian, their normal carpool, or any individuals on their emergency contact information. Each child must be signed out before they can leave.

## **4. Environment**

### 4.1 Facilities

The facilities at the St. Laurence Catholic Church have been designed and constructed to offer a safe, climate controlled environment for the instruction of both large and small classes. The buildings have emergency lighting during power outages. While these facilities are designed to be as safe as possible, it is still possible for hazards to exist. Each staff member and catechist needs to be vigilant in identifying any potential danger and making the Program Coordinators aware, so that those situations can be remedied.

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#### 4.1.1 Hazard Identification and Reporting

If any individual identifies a hazard that may cause immediate danger to the safety of anyone such as water on the floors, electrical hazard, overhead (falling) objects, etc., that person should immediately secure the surrounding area and notify a staff member. The staff member will notify the maintenance staff and remain at the hazardous scene until the situation is remedied by the maintenance staff. Staff members all need to be aware of where the main cutoffs (electric, water and gas) are in each building and be prepared to shut them down.

#### 4.1.2 Orientation and Postings

All staff and catechists are required to familiarize themselves with the building layout and where the primary and alternate escape routes are from their classrooms as well as areas of responsibility. In addition, they must be aware of the gathering points outside, so that all persons in their control are quickly accounted for in an emergency. Each **catechist** must carry a copy of their class list/attendance sheet. The catechists and staff must also know the location of the nearest fire alarm and fire extinguisher.

Primary and secondary escape route maps are posted in each room. Names and numbers for emergency notification are posted by the phones in each building.

#### 4.1.3 Security

Security of our children is a primary concern, and we must be cautious before releasing children to any person. We need to report any activity that may seem suspicious or out-of-place on the grounds. It is better to be over cautious than to regret not having taken sufficient security measures. **It is everyone's responsibility to politely question anyone on campus who appears not to be part of the St. Laurence Religious Education program.**

##### 4.1.3.1 Child check-in and Release

All children who are brought to a religious education program must be picked up by their parent, guardian or other person specifically authorized by the legal guardian to do so. Any changes in the regular pickup schedule must be submitted in writing to the catechist or program coordinator.

##### 4.1.3.2 Visitor Check-in at Office

All parents and visitors must check-in with the Front Office Assistant expect during drop off or pick up for a program. Parents are permitted in the classrooms while classes are being conducted, but the program coordinator or the catechist must be notified. Visitors are not permitted to visit the classrooms. At no time will visitors be left with a child unattended.

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#### 4.1.3.3 Leaving Children Unattended

No child will be left unattended at St. Laurence. In the event of an emergency in a classroom, the catechist will combine the class with another **class** until the emergency is resolved. All catechists must remain with their students until the last one is picked up. If a child has not been pickup up after classes dismiss, please bring child to the Program Coordinator so that the parent can notified. Parents who do not pick up their children on time will be counseled. Repeat offenses could result in their child's termination from the program.

#### 4.1.3.4 Intruder on Campus

In the event of an intruder on campus, the following procedure will be followed:

- 1) Notify front office assistant and/or program coordinator
- 2) Lock doors and initiate the Shut Down procedure listed in 3.4.4 if deemed necessary and building to remain shut down until "all clear" is given
- 3) Coordinator will notify proper authorities.

#### 4.2 Mobility

The location of the Religious Education programs presents a normal risk of parking lot safety. Please use care within the parking lot and keep all children close to you to prevent any accidents.

##### 4.2.1 Street Crossing

If limited parking availability at church requires parking across the street on the main church campus vigilance is required in crossing the street. **All persons are required to cross the street at the marked pedestrian crossing at the intersection.** The light at the intersection controls both vehicle and pedestrian traffic, although care must still be taken for cars turning right on red, etc. **Jaywalking across the median is dangerous and is strictly forbidden.**

##### 4.2.2 Parking Lot Safety

All parent and student drivers are expected to use the utmost care when driving through the St. Laurence parking lots. This facility has many children and they may dart out at any time. Drivers that speed through the lot and drive in a manner that endangers the life of any persons will be counseled. For programs that have traffic flow policies, these policies will be strictly enforced to ensure safety of all.

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#### 4.2.3 Drop-off/Pick-up Procedure

##### Traffic flow pattern

For EDGE program that uses a carpool, you must enter **only from Austin Parkway** and follow the snaking around pattern within the parking lot to ensure we limit the number of cars that back up onto the main road. During carpool, children can only be loaded under the overhang of the Ave Maria Center to ensure safety of children not walking in front of the carpool line to find their parents car.

##### Drop off/Pick up Procedures

**All traffic is encouraged to enter via Austin Parkway to enter the parking lot.** Traffic may enter through Sweetwater *except during the carpool times for Wednesday night EDGE when the only entrance is the Austin Parkway entrance.* Colony Park drive is an exit only and is **NOT** an entrance into the Ave Marie Center.

- **Preschool and Kindergarten students** are to be dropped off and picked up in their designated Ave Maria classrooms. Drop off no earlier than 15 minutes before class and pick up immediately after Mass ends. Parents are the only authorized person to pick the child up unless you have a written note from the parents giving you permission to release the student to another adult.
- **Elementary (1st – 5th grade) students** must be escorted into the Guardian Angels Hall and picked up in their designated Ave Maria classrooms.
- **EDGE students (6th - 8th grade)** are dropped off and picked up at the covered entrance and following their carpool policy.
- **LIFETEEN / CONFIRMATION (9th – 12th grade)** students are dropped off and picked up or can park in the Ave Maria Center parking lot.

#### 4.2.4 Transporting Children

It is the policy of St. Laurence that staff and catechists WILL NOT transport students in their personal vehicles. In the event of a field trip or other off-site activity, parents will be asked to sign a waiver permitting such transport.

Very little control can be exercised with the high school students regarding accepting rides home from fellow students. We ask all students to be respectful to their parents and seek permission to do so, but St. Laurence Catholic Church cannot be responsible for the actions of these students.

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**5. *Applicability***

The policies and procedures detailed in this handbook apply to all individuals involved with any program (staff, catechists, parents, visitors, and students) at St. Laurence Catholic Church.

**6. *Authority***

This handbook is administered under the authority of the Pastor of St. Laurence Parish, who is directly responsible to the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Any deviations from this policy must be approved by the Pastor or his designates in this matter. The Church may be contacted at:

**St. Laurence Catholic Church**  
3100 Sweetwater Boulevard  
Sugar Land, TX 77479  
(281) 980-9812

**7. *Referenced Documents***

Policies of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, September 1997.  
Policy 590.2 Drug and Alcohol Awareness  
Policy 641.32 Criminal Background Check  
Policy 655.2 Release of Students to (Managing Conservator) Legal Guardian Guidelines  
Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), First Image Books Edition, April 1995.  
St. Laurence Catholic School, *Crisis Management Manual*, School Year 2015-16