



Natick Catholic Community – St. Linus & St. Patrick Parishes

Religious Education

Program Policies 2023-2024

The following guidelines are presented so that Parents, Students, Teachers & Staff will have an understanding of the policies which help the Religious Education Program run smoothly.

Attendance: Attendance, with students arriving on time (except in extenuating circumstances) is essential to the students' religious education and spiritual growth. An entire year of religious education instruction amounts to approximately 19-24 hours of class time. They are with us just one day or less out of 365! Every class is important. If your child has to miss class for illness or another serious reason, please email:

Grades 1-5: cdalessio@natickcatholic.org

Grades 6-8: rschneider@natickcatholic.org

Grades 9 & 10: Please email Dawn Sullivan, Confirmation Coordinator, at dsullivan@natickcatholic.org if your child is going to miss class. Please put the student's name in the subject line of the email.

Participation: Because our time together is limited, we depend on the cooperation of each student and the cooperation of each family to assist in making the most of each class. We all recognize the fact that circumstances beyond a student's/parent's control occasionally may affect a student's promptness and we understand this. We hope, however, that this is a rare occurrence. Students coming directly to class from a school activity may have a problem arriving on time for a number of weeks. In this case, they must speak to the Director and Teacher to inform them of the situation ahead of time.

As part of their overall faith formation, attending religious education classes (or being involved in a home school religious education experience in conjunction with the Parish Religious Education Office) on a yearly basis is most important to the development of all children and teens. It is expected that children and teens attend classes (or home school formation) from Grade 1 through Grade 10. If any grade is missed (and the student did not attend a Catholic School during the missed timespan), the student will be expected to make up the missed material before progressing to the next grade level. Depending on the grade level this may necessitate taking additional classes to make up missed material or participating in home school activities to make up the missing grade level(s) at the Director's discretion.

Sacramental Years: Please note that both our First Eucharist and Confirmation preparation programs consist of a two year time span. Therefore, students wishing to receive First Eucharist in Grade Two must first complete the Grade One year of religious education. Likewise, students wishing to receive Confirmation in Grade Ten must first complete the Grade Nine year of religious education. If a teen attends a Catholic High School, the Grade 9 year of Religious Education is not required. However, all students wishing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation (including Catholic High School Students) are expected to participate in our Grade Ten Program.

Food Policy: Due to the large number of students who suffer from serious food related allergies, it is the policy of our program not to allow food in any of our classrooms. We ask for your understanding as we strive to create the safest possible environment for all of our children and teens. On rare occasions, Catechists may request special permission to include food as a part of a class celebration. In these instances, prior approval from the Program Director must be obtained and written notice (by letter or email) must be sent to parents well before the scheduled activity takes place.

Pick Up and Drop Off: The policy printed below will be effective beginning with the first day of classes in the new

school year. We thank you in advance for your cooperation in helping to keep your children safe:

There are no words strong enough to express our ongoing concern for the safety of all children and teens in our religious education program. The grounds of the St. Linus property and St. Patrick property are very busy and at times quite congested with vehicles in the parking lots. The physical layout of the parish grounds make a smooth flow at drop-off and pick-up times quite imperative. We ask the cooperation of all parents and guardians in working with us to create the best environment for the well-being and safety of all our religious education children and teens by adhering to the following policy:

Norton Center & Lower Church Arrival (Sundays and Mondays, Grades 1-5)

We ask all Parents/Guardians of our younger students in Grades 1-5 to please park your car and walk your child(ren) to his/her/their classroom(s).

Norton Center & Lower Church Dismissal (Sundays and Mondays, Grades 1-5)

At the conclusion of our class hour, all students in Grades 1-5 will remain in their classrooms until picked up by a Parent/Guardian.

Please note, if someone other than a Parent/Guardian will be picking up a child, a note must be given to the child's teacher at the beginning of class on that day/evening. Also, no child or group of children will be permitted to walk home from Religious Education without a signed note from a Parent/Guardian.

Norton Center & Lower Church Arrival (Tuesdays, Grades 6-8)

Parents/Guardians of our older students in Grades 6-8 may opt to drop off their child(ren) at the Norton Center or Lower Church. When doing so, however, we ask that Parents and Guardians remain in their cars until they see their child(ren) enter the respective building.

Norton Center & Lower Church Dismissal (Tuesdays, Grades 6-8)

At the close of class on Tuesday for Grades 6-8, **the students will be walked out to the parking lot by their**

teachers and will remain there with their teachers until they are picked up by a Parent/Guardian. *Please note, if someone other than a Parent/Guardian will be picking up a student, a note must be given to the teen's teacher at the beginning of class on that evening. Also, no teen or group of teens will be permitted to walk home from Religious Education without a signed note from a Parent/Guardian.*

St. Linus (Sundays, Grades 9-10)

9th and 10th Grade Arrival - 3:50- 4 PM at St. Linus Lower Level

Please enter the St. Linus property from the Mill Street/Hartford Street entrance Doors will open at 3:50 PM.

9th and 10th Grade Pickup - - following 5 PM Mass

We ask that families make every effort to attend 5 PM Mass together during the faith formation year. Faith Formation leaders will remain after Mass until all students are picked up by a parent or guardian. *Please note, if someone other than a Parent/Guardian will be picking up a student, a note must be given to the teen's teacher at the beginning of class on that evening. No child or group of children will be permitted to walk home from Religious Education without a signed note from a Parent/Guardian.*

Behavior Code: Mindful of our Mission to prepare students for discipleship and citizenship, we strive to foster behavior that will promote a more civilized society. Everything that goes on at religious education class, before, during, and after the class hour must be rooted in the basic principle of respect. An atmosphere of mutual respect between teacher and students, and among students in a class, is the linchpin upon which learning revolves. All students must be respectful of Parish property, most notably the classrooms. We are committed to providing every student who wants instruction with a place in our program. However, we also must weigh the needs and demands of one student in a class against the needs of the class as a whole. If a student, in any grade, is unwilling or unable to act respectfully toward others or is disrespectful of parish property, we will notify the parents. If the unacceptable behavior continues, the student will be admitted to class only if accompanied by a parent for the class hour, or the parent will be invited to instruct the child at home. The Religious Education Office will provide teaching materials and support the parent in this task.

Our students come to class during a long and busy day. So too, our teachers come to class during a long and busy day of work inside and outside of their homes. All of our teachers are extremely dedicated and most generously volunteer their time. Teachers deserve to be treated with respect and appreciated for their effort.

Note: 9th and 10th Grade Confirmation Candidates will be asked to sign a *Candidate Commitment Form* outlining the desired mindset and behaviors in preparation for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Cell Phone and Technology Policy

Mobile devices, earbuds and headphones are not permitted during class or Mass. Students will be asked to place any electronic devices they choose to bring to class into a storage location that they can access after Mass. Any smart watches should be placed on "do not disturb" mode during class and Mass, or more preferably, left at home to avoid any potential distractions.

Cancellation of Classes due to Inclement

Weather:

Sunday Classes – Grades 1-5

- On stormy days, a decision will be made by 8:30 a.m. as to whether or not classes will be held for the lower grades on that Sunday.

-All decisions will be:

□ Placed on the religious ed voicemail (508-653-6005)

□ Listed on Channel 4 (WBZ) and Channel 7 (WHDH)

☐ Emailed out to all register families***

Sunday Classes – Grades 9 & 10

- On stormy days, a decision will be made by 12:00 noon as to whether or not classes will be held for the upper grades on that Sunday.
- All decisions will be:

☐ Placed on the religious ed voicemail (508-653-6005)

☐ Listed on Channel 4 (WBZ) and Channel 7 (WHDH)

☐ Emailed out to all register families***

Monday Classes – Grades 1-5

- If there is no school in Natick public schools due to stormy weather there will be no religious ed classes that day.
- If a storm begins during the day or if conditions are expected to deteriorate during the day a decision will be made as to whether or not to have classes by 12:00 noon.
- All decisions will be:

☐ Placed on the religious ed voicemail (508-653-6005)

☐ Listed on Channel 4 (WBZ) and Channel 7 (WHDH)

☐ Emailed out to all register families***

Tuesday Classes – Grades 6-8

- If there is no school in Natick public schools due to stormy weather there will be no religious ed classes that day.
- If a storm begins during the day or if conditions are expected to deteriorate during the day a decision will be made as to whether or not to have classes by 12:00 noon.
- All decisions will be:

- Placed on the religious ed voicemail (508-653-6005)

- Listed on Channel 4 (WBZ) and Channel 7 (WHDH)

- Emailed out to all register families***

***Every effort will be made to notify families of stormy weather cancellations via email (for those families who have submitted an email address on their religious education registration forms). However, there may be instances when we do not have access to our email lists or when our computer systems are down. Due to these possibilities, **we ask families not to rely solely on email notification for inclement weather but also to check either the religious education voicemail, and/or Channel 4/Channel 7 for information on cancellations.**