



**Parish of St. Columba**

# **A Holy Ground of Loving and Learning**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**2022-2023**

## **Parent Handbook**

**St. Columba Religious Education**

**P. O. Box 368**

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**PARISH WEBSITE**

**[www.stcolumbaonline.org](http://www.stcolumbaonline.org)**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**Parish of St. Columba  
Religious Education**

Fr. Michael McLoughlin, Pastor  
Director of Religious Education: Sr. Marie Pappas, C.R.

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 9:00AM to 3:00PM  
in the **CONVENT BUILDING OFFICE**  
and  
during Religious Education class time  
in the **SCHOOL BUILDING OFFICE**

Class Times

Tuesday Afternoon (Grades 1-6) - 4:30-6:00 pm  
Tuesday Evening (Grades 6-8, AND RCIA-teen) - 6:30-8:00 pm

Wednesday EARLY START DAY (Grades 1-8) - 4:15-5:45 pm  
Wednesday EARLY START EVENING (Grades 3-8) - 6:15-7:45 pm

Thursday Afternoon Only (Grades 1-8) 4:30-6:00 pm  
Saturday Morning – (Grades 1-8) 9:00-10:30 am.

Mass Schedule

Saturday Evening: 5:30 p.m.  
Sunday Morning: 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:00 Noon

Confession

Saturday: 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
or any time at the Rectory

REVISED 2/28/2022

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## **A. Mission Statement/Philosophy**

### ***Statement of Philosophy***

The parish of St. Columba looks upon religious education as a total parish experience involving not just the child, but also parents, parishioners, catechists, and priests who form our parish community of faith. We believe that religious education means getting to know Jesus personally and learning what is expected of one who chooses to follow him in the Catholic tradition. Our program reflects an integrated learning experience composed of catechesis, prayer, sacramental preparation, traditional Catholic doctrine, Biblical studies, liturgy, community building, and other dimensions of vibrant church life. Through the light of faith, we hope to develop in those entrusted to our care a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Through Jesus, with the help of the Holy Spirit, those involved in Religious Education, will come to know the depth of God's love for all.

## **B. Letter from Our Pastor**

*Dear Parents:*

In the new Catechism of the Catholic Church we read:

*Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents." (no.2226)*

The wisdom and beauty of the above words help us to put into perspective the responsibility we all share in the education of our children in the Faith. As parents, you have cooperated with God to bring forth life, now you continue to nourish their lives with the Truth of Jesus Christ.

It is the privilege, as well as the shared responsibility, of our Parish family to provide formal Religious Education classes to help you pass on the treasure of our Faith to our children. We hope that this handbook will assist you in this important work by providing the necessary information, policies and guidelines to run a well organized and productive program.

We wish to express the importance of attendance at Mass on the weekend and on Holy Days. Whatever is taught at home and in the classroom must be reinforced by our presence around the Table of the Lord. It is from the Altar that we receive the greatest gift of Jesus in the Eucharist. Non-attendance at Mass causes our children to learn one thing and to practice another, which is not only confusing but also counter-productive to their growth as Christians. The same is true for regular use of the Sacrament of Penance as a family.

I am personally grateful for your support of our School of Religious Education. We all look forward to a year filled with many Graces and Blessings. May God bless you and your families.

In Christ,

Rev. Michael McLoughlin, Pastor

### **C. Living a Christian Life**

Living the Catholic life, in addition to going to Mass regularly and attending religious education classes, is a way of life that is to be witnessed every day by what we say and what we do at home, at work, at school and at play.

**Mass Attendance** – An integral part of Religious Education is community worship at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation as well as full participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Learning in class becomes truly effective only when one meets the Lord sacramentally at the altar. The reception of the sacraments fosters a deep intimacy with Jesus Christ.

### **D. Role of Parent/Guardian**

The parent/guardian has the *primary* and sacred responsibility to foster a personal relationship between the child and Jesus by teaching the child to pray. Religious Education helps the children deepen their relationship with Jesus through spiritual formation and education. In this way, the parents' efforts are supported.

It is essential to the child's growth and development in the Catholic faith that the parents/guardians live the Catholic faith at home. The effectiveness of the religious education process radically depends upon this. In the religious education classes, children learn that celebrating the Eucharist on Sunday with their parish faith community is essential to being a Catholic.

It is obvious that the values of parents/guardians become the values of the child. Parents must provide a loving and caring atmosphere in which their children can grow in sound, Christ-like attitudes and values. The child receives a "mixed message" which causes inner conflict when what is taught by the church is not experienced by the child in his/her family.

**The custodial parent should inform the Director of the rights of the non-custodial parent as these pertain to the child's participation in, as well as release from, the program.**

### **E. Role of Student**

#### ***Spiritual:***

Regular attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, frequent reception of the Eucharist, regular Confession and living a moral life that reflects the values and teachings of Jesus Christ all contribute to the student's spirituality.

#### ***Academic:***

- Weekly attendance at religious education classes with a readiness to listen and learn
- Proper preparation for class instruction
- Completion of all assignments including study for tests
- Participation in class discussions and activities
- Coming to class prepared with textbook, notebook, and other necessary materials
- Doing the best work possible. Just “getting by” is never a worthwhile goal.
- Respect in manner and speech toward others

#### **F. Role of the Religious Education Director/Assistant**

The Director and Assistant of Religious Education at St. Columba are delegated by the Pastor to be responsible for the development, implementation, and administration of Religious Education in accordance with the Guidelines of the Archdiocese of New York. They also have the responsibility of implementing the principles of civil law concerning the safety of students in accordance with the Archdiocesan Safety Guidelines for the Protection of Children.

The Director and Assistant are also required to provide catechesis/religious education for all students of the parish including those who have physical, emotional, mental, or learning disabilities. The Church is responsible for nourishing the faith of the baptized person to the degree that the individual is capable of growing. The Director/Assistant determines the placement of the student after consultation with the parent, catechist and appropriate consultants. Instructional programs are developed in accordance with the Archdiocesan Guidelines for students with special needs.

#### **G. Role of the Catechist**

Catechists are those who are called to serve through teaching, witness, prayer, service, and building community. (*The Catechist in the Third Millennium*) The primary mission of catechists is to communicate God’s love to those entrusted to their care by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. This is accomplished through the fourfold aim of imparting content, fostering community, inspiring a deeper surrender to Jesus, and motivating service.

The tasks of the catechist are as follows:

- To help others grow in their personal faith and spirituality
- To initiate others into the faith community: its life, worship, symbols, and practices
- To pass on a worldview, a set of shared meanings and values, that are expressive of the Catholic Tradition.

## **H. Instructional Programs**

***Parish Based Program*** - Religious Education offers instruction for all Catholic students who are parishioners of St. Columba and have no opportunity to learn the Catholic faith in the school they attend. It is an eight-year course of study which aids in the development of the Christian personality. This program is not simply for the reception of the sacraments of Confirmation, Eucharist and Penance. Just as sacraments are not isolated events, but rather an integral part of the Christian life, so too each grade in Religious Education adds to the development of the Christian person and contributes to total maturity.

***Home Study*** - A home-study catechetical program is one in which the children of the family are instructed in the faith at home by their own parents. Any request for a home-study program that replaces attendance at the parish catechetical program will be carefully discerned by the Director/Assistant and is usually granted only in cases of extreme need (i.e. medical condition). Home study should adhere to the following norms:

- Textbook and materials must be approved by the Director. The Director may instead arrange for an online study program
- Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis must be followed and taught in its entirety
- Parents receive regular direction and guidance from those responsible for Religious Education
- Parents are encouraged to participate in the FREE Archdiocesan Catechist Formation Program ([www.nyfaithformation.org](http://www.nyfaithformation.org))
- The Director/Assistant holds accountability sessions with home study children to evaluate their progress (or monitors their progress online).

***Special Needs Religious Education*** - Special Religious Education is a ministry that responds to the religious and spiritual needs of persons with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities which impairs their functioning in a regular classroom. The student may require individualized instruction in a small group, or in a one-on-one setting, or may be mainstreamed into the regular catechetical program if assistance is provided. In consultation with the parent, the Director/Assistant will appropriately place each child in a program that will serve his/her special needs and further encourage spiritual growth.

Catechetical programs reflect the love and concern of Jesus and the Church for persons with disabilities. The universality of the Christian message: "Go teach all nations" includes those who are marginalized because of their disability. The Church's responsibility is to nourish the faith of the baptized person to the degree that the individual is capable of growing in that faith. The Church constantly reaffirms the sacredness of all human life, especially those who are fragile in mind, spirit, and body.

**Sacramental Preparation** - Christian initiation is celebrated in Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Through these visible actions a young person is incorporated into the Church and shares its mission in the world. Full initiation into the church occurs in stages.

Sacramental Catechesis includes preparation for the initial celebration of the sacraments and continued enrichment following the first reception. Requirements for First Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation are determined by Canon Law:

- Age of reason (to be able to distinguish right from wrong)
- Proper knowledge of sacraments
- Spiritual formation
- Approval by parent, pastor, catechist, and Director/Assistant Director

At St. Columba Parish any child preparing for First Penance and Eucharist must have completed one full year of religious studies above Kindergarten level and be currently enrolled in the second year of the catechetical program. Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation requires a child to have completed seven years of study and to be currently enrolled in the eighth year of the catechetical program

**Reconciliation** - Jesus began His work on earth by calling people to repentance and faith: "Reform your lives and believe in the gospel." (*Mark 1,15*) The Sacrament of Reconciliation continues His work of forgiving and reconciling. Catechesis for reconciliation must always respect the natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances of individuals. It seeks:

- to make clear the relationship of the sacrament to the child's life.
  - to help the child recognize moral good and evil, repent of wrong doing, and turn for forgiveness to Christ and the Church.
  - to encourage the child to understand that reconciliation is expressed by being forgiven and forgiving.
  - to encourage the child to approach the sacrament freely and regularly.
- Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation starts at the second grade level and should be a joint effort of the parents and the catechists. The following is used in the instruction for this sacrament.

The second grade curriculum contains focused preparation for reconciliation that helps the children learn what it means to be forgiven and to understand that they belong to the community of Jesus' friends – the Church.

The first reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is usually celebrated in January or February. All children preparing to receive their First Eucharist must first be instructed and prepared to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### ***Responsibilities of Parents for Reconciliation***

Parents:

- are the primary educators of their children.
- are responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life.
- serve as models for their children by being moral, practicing Catholics.
- receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly with their families.
- help children in forming a good conscience and a Catholic code of morality.
- are asked to attend meetings, participate in activities and prayer services that are planned to help their child prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- are asked to take time with their child to talk about reconciliation, to read Bible stories, and to pray together.
- are asked to determine their child's readiness for Reconciliation.

***Holy Eucharist*** - Catechesis recognizes the Eucharist as the heart of Christian life. It helps young people understand that celebration of the Eucharist forms and nourishes the faithful with Christ, the Bread of Life.

Catechesis for children seeks to strengthen their awareness of the Father's love, of the call to participate in Christ's sacrifice, and of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Children are taught that the Holy Eucharist is the real body and blood of Christ, and what appears to be bread and wine is actually His Living Body. They learn that the Eucharist is both meal and sacrifice and it is a memorial of the Last Supper.

Parents have the right and duty to be intimately involved in preparing their children for First Communion. Catechesis aims to help parents grow in understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist and participate fully in catechizing their children.

Catechesis for First Communion is conducted separately from catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Eucharist preparation focuses on explaining the meaning of the Eucharist and our actions at Mass; familiarizing the children with the main events of Jesus' life; receiving Christ's Body and Blood reverently; being informed about Communion in the hand, or on the tongue, and knowing the requirements for fasting (no food or drink except water or medicine for one hour before receiving Communion).

### ***Responsibilities of Parents for Eucharist Preparation***

Parents:

- are the primary educators of their children.
- are responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life.
- serve as models for their children by being moral Christians.
- worship regularly with their families.
- nurture their child in faith.

- are asked to attend meetings, participate in activities, and prayer services that are planned to help their child prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist.
- are asked to take time with their First Communicants to talk about the Eucharist, to read Bible stories, and to pray together.
- are asked to determine their child's readiness for the Eucharist.

The sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is celebrated in the spring. All children preparing to receive their First Eucharist must have already received the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Confirmation** - As a Sacrament of Initiation, Confirmation is intimately related to Baptism and the Eucharist. Christians are reborn in Baptism, strengthened by Confirmation, and sustained by the Eucharist. In Confirmation young people are signed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and become more perfect images of their Lord. This sacrament renews and strengthens their baptismal call to bear witness to Christ before the world and work eagerly for the building up of his body. The candidate must be baptized.

As the primary educators of their children, parents along with sponsors are to be intimately involved in catechesis for Confirmation. This will help to renew and to strengthen their own faith and to set an example for their children or the children they are sponsoring. Consult the parish website: <http://stcolumbaonline.org/religious-education> under CONFIRMATION.

**Components of Confirmation Program -**

**Academic**

- Weekly attendance at Religious Education classes
- Proper preparation for class instruction and completed homework assignments
- Textbook available for each class and participation in class discussions and activities
- Candidate demonstrates an adequate grasp of the content of the Catholic faith

**Spiritual**

- Regular attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
- Regular reception of the Rite of Reconciliation
- Living a moral life that reflects the values and teachings of Jesus
- Participation in a Confirmation retreat

**Communal**

- Perform no less than 10 hours of Christian Service
- Service hours may be started the end of 6th grade and completed by December 1st of 8th grade.
- Complete written service form (found online: <http://stcolumbaonline.org/religious-education>) and return the form by December 1st.

### ***Sacramental***

- Be baptized
- Select a Confirmation Name, (your Baptismal name is acceptable)
- Select a qualified sponsor (practicing Catholic 16 or older—not parent)
- Return the Sponsor's Certificate or letter from Pastor for the sponsor

**ALL CONFIRMATION FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY DEC. 1ST OF 8TH GRADE.** THESE ARE POSTED ON THE PARISH WEBSITE:  
<http://stcolumbaonline.org/religious-education>

### ***Responsibilities of Confirmation Parents***

- Responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life
- Serve as models for their children by being committed Catholics
- worship faithfully with their families
- Share their faith with their children both in word and action
- Encourage their child to reflect on and thoughtfully consider the decision to receive the sacrament of Confirmation
- Attend meetings, participate in activities, and prayer services planned to assist their son/daughter prepare for Confirmation
- Assist their child with the immediate preparation for Confirmation through prayer, study, and Christian service
- Stress the initiation aspect of the sacrament by encouraging their son/daughter to continue learning more about their faith
- Help their child understand that the Confirmation service hours are just the beginning of a life committed to service of those in need

### ***Special Programs***

***OSS/Out of Sequence Sacrament*** – The Out of Sequence Sacraments Class is a program designed for students in grades 3 – 8 who have not yet received the sacraments of First Reconciliation and/or First Eucharist. Parents/guardians and students attend monthly classes and receive instruction. First Reconciliation is received before receiving First Eucharist.

***RCIA for Teens***—The RCIA for Teens is a program of study and religious formation for older teens who for some reason have not received the earlier sacraments of initiation and/or have not receive proper foundational instruction in the faith. The RCIA program is no less than two years but may be extended depending on the needs of the student. At least one parent or guardian must attend RCIA sessions with the teen.

**Exceptional Programs of Study and Religious Formation** must be arranged with the Director of Religious Education who will determine appropriate forms, materials and accountability.

**Youth Ministry** - Ongoing Youth Formation is offered to high school students through St. Columba's "God Squad." The group provides teens with opportunities to participate in service, spiritual, and social activities. Information is available on <http://www.stcolumbaonline.org> (look under Groups: Youth Ministry) and through the parish bulletin.

**Vacation Bible School/KIDZ Camp**—This program takes place during the month of July. It is a short summer program that focuses on Scripture, music, and activities. The KIDZ Camp program is for children entering Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades. For more information contact St. Columba Religious Ed at 845 221-4900.

### **I. Instructional Guidelines**

**Archdiocesan Guidelines** - The Archdiocese of New York has published Guidelines for Catechesis for Grades 1-6 and Grades 7 and 8. These ensure a clear and uniform presentation of the faith for each grade level. The catechists who serve St. Columba Religious Education follow these guidelines.

**Composition of St. Columba's Religious Education** – Our Religious Education Program offers instruction to students in elementary and junior high school who attend St. Columba Parish. It offers an eight year course of study for all Catholic children attending public school. St. Columba Religious Education offers ongoing, continuing development of the Christian Personality. This program is not only for the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation, Eucharist, and Penance. Our aim is to provide a loving and caring Christian atmosphere in which our parish youth can grow in sound, Christ-like attitudes and behavior.

**Catechesis** – St. Columba Religious Education meets the requirements of the Catechetical Office of the Archdiocese of New York, and adheres to the *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis*. Our program insures a clear and uniform presentation of the faith in concepts appropriate to each age level. St. Columba Religious Education is designed to assist parents in their sacred responsibility to educate their children in the faith. It complements, but can never replace parents in carrying out their responsibilities. "Parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children" (*National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States*).

**PARENTS ARE INVITED TO CONSIDER SERVING AS CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS OR CATECHISTS FOR ST. COLUMBA RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.** If you are interested in this opportunity, please fill out the application posted online under "Religious Education—Become A Catechist"

**Safe Environment** – The Archdiocese of New York, as part of the *Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, now requires lessons of Safe Environment to be implemented within our curriculum. Lessons for primary, intermediate and junior high grades will be included each year. Topics include appropriate touch, identifying safe people and types of lures and internet safety. All catechists undergo a background check. This curriculum is posted online and dates of presentation are on the school calendar also posted online.

**Curriculum** - The themes and prayers of each grade level are as follows:

### **Grade One**

**Theme:** God is our Father who loves us. Jesus is the Son of God who saves us. The Holy Spirit helps us to be holy.

**Prayers:** Sign of the Cross  
Our Father  
Hail Mary  
Glory Be to the Father (Doxology)  
First statement of the Apostles' Creed: I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

### **Grade Two**

**Theme:** Jesus nourishes us and strengthens God's life and grace within us.

**Prayers:** Act of Contrition  
Simple responses at Mass  
Apostles' Creed to "He will come again to judge the living and the dead"  
All prayers taught in Grade 1

### **Grade Three**

**Theme:** Jesus continues his life and work through the Church.

**Prayers:** The Apostles' Creed  
Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary  
All prayers taught in Grades 1 and 2

### **Grade Four**

**Theme:** As God's people we are called to live as Jesus did, choosing a life of love, characterized by obedience to God and service to others.

**Prayers:** Sanctus  
Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary  
The Ten Commandments

All prayers taught in Grades 1, 2, and 3

**Grade Five**

**Theme:** Through the sacraments, the Church celebrates Christ's saving actions in our lives.

**Prayers:** Gloria  
Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary  
All prayers taught in Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4

**Grade Six**

**Theme:** God's saving actions are found throughout history. The Bible, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, records God's plan of salvation.

**Prayers:** Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary  
All prayers taught in Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

**Grade Seven**

**Theme: Personal Growth, Part I: The Human Person**  
The growth and change experienced during adolescence are part of the unfolding of God's plan for our development as fully Christian persons.

**Theme: Jesus and the Gospel Message**  
The Gospels reveal Jesus as the Savior and Risen Lord who calls us to advance the kingdom of God through discipleship.

**Theme: Sacraments**  
The mystery of Christ continues in the Church through the sacraments which are visible signs of the love and saving action of Jesus.

**Theme: Human Sexuality**  
Sexuality is a gift from God. It embraces psychological, spiritual and physical characteristics of men and women. We human beings need to integrate our sexuality into our total personality in order to develop into the persons God has called us to be.

**Grade Eight**

**Theme: Personal Growth, Part II: The Human Community**  
Developing relationships with others and God is essential to becoming our true selves.

**Theme: Prayer**  
Prayer is an expression of our awareness of and response to God's presence, love, goodness, and saving power.

**Theme: Church History**

Jesus' life and mission continue through the Church, the community of believers called by and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the sign of the Kingdom of God.

**Theme: Morality**

Through our relationship with Jesus, we grow in an ever-deepening awareness of who God is, who we are, and how God calls us to live. Catholic Christian morality gives direction to our response to God's call.

**Homework** - Homework is meant to keep the students in touch with their once-a-week learning. So much happens in-between one week and the next, that it is difficult for a child to remember the connection. Modest homework reawakens what was presented in class. Such assignments are not extensive or labor intensive. Often the assignments will be an activity that helps the student integrate what was learned into a lived experience rather than a written account. Sometimes written exercises will be given as a learning re-enforcement.

There are two types of homework:

- **Short Term:** Assignments/challenges given and required to be completed by the following week of class.
- **Long Term:** Assignments spread over a number of weeks. This type of assignment is outlined and explained in class by the catechist. It may include projects, extended reading, spiritual or corporal works of mercy, independent exploration, or other such extensions of experiential learning.

**Academic (Notice of Concern)** – Whenever a student is not working to potential, a notice will be sent home to parents and will serve as documentation advising them of the situation. It should be regarded seriously.

**Textbooks** - St. Columba Religious Education provides textbooks to all enrolled students. The classroom catechist distributes textbooks on the first day of class. Students are to write their full name, day, room number, and catechist's name on the front inside cover. Textbooks are to be brought home and back to class weekly. If a textbook is lost, stolen, or damaged, a new one must be purchased **as soon as possible (\$30)**. Textbooks used for study have been reviewed by the US Bishops to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

**Testing** - Since formal testing occurs at each grade level, a certain amount of basic knowledge will be expected to be retained by each student. Study and memorization are absolutely necessary. The objective of testing is to monitor student growth and the effectiveness of our Religious Education Program. Students will be tested regularly. Tests can be oral and/or written.

If a child does not fulfill grade level requirements, a meeting will be arranged with the parents, the catechist, and/or the Director/ Assistant to discuss the situation. **The Director will decide if the child needs to repeat the year.** Students preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation will take a Comprehensive Test demonstrating knowledge of the Catholic faith and practice.

**Report Cards/Progress Reports-** Religious formation of the child takes place in the home, in church, and in the class setting. Report cards for the Religious Education Program reflect class performance only. They are issued twice yearly to indicate the student's strengths and weaknesses. Parents must sign and return the first period progress report to the child's catechist.

**Retention -** Students who do not satisfactorily complete the course of study at each grade level or do not attend the required number of catechetical sessions may be retained and required to repeat the grade level course. This is at the sole discretion of the Director/Coordinator. Summer online study may be arranged for the purpose of rectifying deficits.

## **J. Attendance**

**Absence Policy** – Your child's regular attendance at St. Columba Religious Education is required and should take *top* priority over all other programs and activities. Absence from 4 classes may result in a student's repeating the grade level. A conference between the Director/Coordinator and the parents regarding this matter may be required. If your child cannot attend class, please call St. Columba Religious Education Office and send a written note to the catechist explaining the absence.

**Arrival Procedures** – To insure the safety of the children, it is imperative that the parent or parent substitute follow these directions:

- Arrival should be no earlier than 10 minutes before the scheduled class time to insure supervision by the teacher.
- Park only in the designated spaces
- Parking in the Fire Zone or Handicapped Spaces may result in a parking ticket
- Use MAIN ENTRANCE marked "Religious Education " above glass doors.
- Children in Grades 1-5 should be escorted to the classroom. Be sure the catechist/assistant is present before leaving the student.

**Dismissal Procedure** – To insure the safety of the children the parent/parent substitute must follow these directions:

- Arrive on time for dismissal.
- At the end of the catechetical session children are dismissed to the care of the parent or parent substitute as indicated in the email directives you will receive before the start of school.
- Use caution as you leave the building and in the parking lot.
- Instruct your child to report to the office in the unforeseen event of not being picked up.
- The child will remain with the Director/Assistant until the child's parent arrives.

The Religious Education staff or Catechists are **NOT** permitted to drive students home.

**Early Dismissal Procedures** – If early dismissal is UNAVOIDABLE, parents/parent/substitute must:

**BEFORE CLASS BEGINS** — Upon arrival have student present catechist with a written note indicating early dismissal time.

**WHEN YOU RETURN FOR EARLY PICK UP:**

- Report to the Main Entrance,
- **Have the child's room number and/or teacher's name ready.**
- Sign the early dismissal book.
- Wait for the child by the Main Entrance.

Please note that early dismissals disrupt classroom instruction. Early dismissal during the last 10 minutes of class is not permitted except in the event of an emergency.

**Supervision** – To insure proper supervision:

- Students should be dropped off no earlier than 10 minutes before and picked up no later than 10 minutes after scheduled class time
- Entering or wandering the halls during class time is not permitted
- Unauthorized visitors are not permitted in the classrooms or building during class times
- Students must leave the parish premises after classes are dismissed
- Carefully supervise children at all times in the parking lot.

## **K. Discipline**

**Student Behavior** – Every student that attends St. Columba Religious Education is expected to cooperate in the maintenance of the building where classes are held as well as its grounds. Disruptions, disrespect, defacing, or damaging property will not be tolerated. The behavior expected from students enrolled in St. Columba Religious Education is a combination of common courtesy and

safety considerations.

The following types of conduct are inappropriate:

1. Fighting
2. Defiance of staff
3. Use of profanity
4. Refusal to prepare assignments or to participate in class
5. Possession of dangerous objects
6. Possession or use of tobacco or a controlled substance
7. Damage to school, classroom, or personal property
8. Leaving the building/premises without permission
9. Habitual tardiness & absenteeism
10. Intimidating fellow students
11. Cheating
12. Throwing objects
13. Gum chewing or eating while classes are in session
14. Wearing hats in the building

Students will be accountable for their conduct.

**Behavioral Warning** – From time to time some students find it difficult to follow the rules that are made to ensure learning, safety and respect. Continued infraction of rules of conduct will necessitate a meeting with the catechist and/or Director/Assistant, noting the infraction of rules . It should be regarded seriously and will be documented.

**Vandalism** – Willfully damaging or destroying property will not be tolerated. The parent of the student must pay for the replacement or repair of any damages. Accidental damage should be reported to the catechist and coordinator immediately. Serious or repeated infractions may result in expulsion from the Religious Education Program.

#### L. Admissions

**Registration for New Students** – Early Bird registration takes place from March 1st—30th. Reminders are published in the parish bulletin and through electronic reminders. To register a child in the Religious Education Program, a family must first be registered in the parish. All children regardless of race, sex, or national origin will be admitted to the parish program.

#### **Requirements for Registration of Students**

- Family must be registered parishioners at Saint Columba
- Completion of a registration form (available online: <http://www.stcolumbaonline.org/religious-education-form> for registration.)
- Payment of tuition fee (Additional fees for Sacrament Reception, Bible, special instruction programs may also be required).

- Copy of child's Baptismal certificate and, when applicable, First Communion certificate.
- Records from previous parish, if child is a transfer student. (Call the office at (845) 221-4900 to inform us of the name and location of the parish your child is transferring from, so we may secure transcripts.)
- If a child has a designated learning challenge, submit a copy of the IEP to the office.

**Medical Condition of Student** - The parent/guardian must provide medical/special needs information for any child who has a medical condition (allergy, asthma, seizures, etc.) or learning disability (ADD, dyslexia, etc.) that could affect effective teaching/learning. This information is to be provided on the online registration/re-registration form.

No child is allowed in the classroom without a completed registration which must include payment toward tuition.

### **Registration/Re-Registration**

MARCH IS THE MONTH OF REGISTRATION. A DISCOUNT IS PROVIDED FOR THOSE REGISTERING IN MARCH (STANDARD TUITION RATES APPLY IF PAYMENT OR FORMS ARE RECEIVED AFTER MARCH 30TH).

To receive the discounted, Early Bird Rate, the Religious Education Office must *receive* **ALL** of the following by the March 30th deadline:

- On-line Registration Form for each enrolled child
- All previous tuition fees/Sacrament Fees paid before re-registering
- Full payment of tuition OR deposit with written tuition payment plan (FINAL PAYMENTS must be received by December 1st or the Early Bird Discount will not be honored.)
- Parents are advised to pay the Sacramental Fee (First Holy Communion and Confirmation Students) at registration
- Media Release Form release is acknowledged

Please note: If Holy Week and Easter take place during the end of March, Early Bird payments must be postmarked by March 30th or delivered to our office PRIOR to our closure for our observance of these Holy Days.

**Tuition** - Tuition is used for educational materials, supplies, activities, AV resources, copier, etc. These resources contribute to quality education. The parish subsidizes the balance of the Religious Education budget. **For your convenience, payments may be made electronically from the WeShare link on the parish's homepage. StColumbaOnline.org**

Grade 2, 6, OSS and 8 students have added fees as noted below.

 <b>2022 - 2023 TUITION AND FEES</b>					
# of Students	Tuition	Register & Pay March 1-31	Communion	Confirmation	Grade 6 (Bible Fee)
1	170.00	Subtract \$20	Add \$30	Add \$55	Add \$10
2	240.00	Subtract \$20	Add \$30	Add \$55	Add \$10
3 or more	290.00	Subtract \$20	Add \$30	Add \$55	Add \$10
<b>OTHER FEE: For those needing OSS Class (rare) add \$30 per Family</b>					

In order to keep program increases to a minimum for all our families, these additional fees may be issued as situations warrant:

Replacement/Lost Text Book Fee: \$30  
 Returned Check: Actual Bank Chargeback Fee + \$10  
 Non-refundable Portion of Registration Fee: \$20

(Note: This is not an additional fee, but represents the non-refundable portion of the "Tuition Fee" due at registration. After September 1st, no refunds will be given.)

Change Day/Class Fee: \$5

(One "No Fee" change request will be considered for a student prior to September 15th. Parents must submit the electronic change class form. After that time (or for multiple requests), there will be a \$5 administration charge for transfers.)

**Above fees, updated March 1, 2020, are subject to annual review/change.**

**Class Placement** -The following requirements fulfill the directives of the Archdiocese of New York. Since Parish Religious Education Programs are preparation for life, the students are expected to attend Religious Education classes continuously from grade 1 through grade 8.

In order to be eligible to attend the First Reconciliation and Communion preparation classes, a student must complete the first year of the Religious Education Program. Any child older than the first grade level who enters the program without previous formal Religious Education must also complete one year of preparation prior to beginning First Penance and Communion preparation. The child will do the immediate preparation for

the sacraments by special arrangement determined by the Director—usually the OSS program.

Any child who leaves the Religious Education Program after receiving First Communion will, upon re-entering, be required to complete the grade level(s) curriculum missed. After successful completion, the Director/Assistant will determine the grade level placement of the student after consultation with the parent.

***Student Transfer/Withdrawal*** - If a student leaves the program before the completion of the catechetical year or at the end of the catechetical year, please advise the Director/Assistant to facilitate the transfer of records to the new parish.

***Student Information Record (medical emergency information)*** - Parent/guardian is required to complete this information for *each student* in the program as part of the registration process. The information given is vital in case of a medical emergency. A parental signature or electronic sending from authorized e-mail validates this form. Contact the office with changes during the year.

## **M. Communications**

***Parents*** - Participating with parents is a vital part of religious formation. Parents are given opportunities to participate in scheduled classroom events and/or presentations, monthly leadership Masses, seasonal Church devotions, missions, and sacramental celebrations.

In addition, you are invited to contact your child's catechist with questions or concerns as needed. Generally, this can be arranged when the child is picked up at the end of class.

***Parent Meetings*** - Parent meetings will take place for all parents whose children are preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. All are *expected* to attend the opening General Parent Meeting.

***Calendar*** - A calendar of all class dates, holidays, times of classes, all catechist and parent meetings, and all events for sacramental programs is posted and updated regularly on the electronic Religious Education Calendar page of the website at [www.stcolumbaonline.org](http://www.stcolumbaonline.org). PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR LOOKING AT CALENDAR.

***Communication with Families***— *Most communication is conducted through e-mail sent directly to the parents or guardians of students registered in the parish religious education program. There are also postings on the parish*

website ([www.stcolumbaonline.org](http://www.stcolumbaonline.org)) and the weekly Church bulletin. Please read *all e-mail* and consult *the parish website and bulletin* each week for relevant information.

If a parent needs to meet with the Director of Religious Education, please call the office and make an appointment. The Director may not be available for spontaneous meetings if school is in session. Try to arrange for personal meetings during office hours.

**Cancellation of Classes/Events** - St. Columba Religious Education is closed ONLY if you receive an email indicating "St. Columba Religious Education is CLOSED". Ignore any other communication that refers to "after school activities or "St. Columba School". The message must indicate St. Columba RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. For your confidence and confirmation, e-mails are sent, the notice is posted on the parish website ([www.stcolumbaonline.org](http://www.stcolumbaonline.org)—RELIGIOUS EDUCATION), and you might also want to consider signing up for notifications from [www.cancellations.com](http://www.cancellations.com). Notices are also announced on the following radio stations:

RADIO STATIONS - FM - WPDH: 101.5, 106.1, (106.3(Westchester); Mix 97: 97.7, 97.3; WRRV: 92.7, 96.9,; AM - Radio Disney: 1340, 1390; FM - WRNQ: 92.1 Lite; WPKF: 96.1 Kiss; WBWZ: 93.3 Star; WBPM: 92.9 Cool; WRWD: 107.3 Country; AM - WGHQ: 920 News Talk

## **N. Safety**

**Transportation** – Parents will assume responsibility for the transportation of their children to and from the parish site where classes take place.

**Crisis Management** – In addition to fire drills, we will conduct one of the following drills:

- “Inside Building Alert”
- “Outside Building Alert”

Drills are conducted for your child’s safety.

**Medical Emergency Procedures (in case of accident or illness)** - If a relatively *minor accident* occurs to a student while attending the catechetical program, the following steps are taken:

- The catechist reports the accident immediately to the Director/Coordinator. If bleeding is involved, the procedure outlined under “Blood Borne Pathogens” is followed.
- The Director notifies the parent. If parent cannot be reached, Director/Coordinator follows emergency contact instructions. The Director/Coordinator completes an accident report and keeps it on file.
- If there does appear to be injuries, a copy of the report is sent to the Archdiocesan Insurance Division.

*In case of serious accident or illness:*

- Catechist reports the accident immediately to the Director/Coordinator.
- 911 is called immediately.
- The Director/Coordinator notifies the parent. If parent cannot be reached, Director/Coordinator uses the emergency contact.
- The Director completes the accident form, keeps a copy in the file, and sends a copy to the Archdiocesan Insurance Division.
- The Director notifies the Archdiocesan Insurance Division.

**Medication**—No Medication of any kind (prescription or over-the-counter) should be administered to, or taken by the student during the Parish Catechetical Program. If any exception has to be made, the parent must provide a written request and directives to the Director/Coordinator.

**Visitors** - Visitors are not permitted in the classrooms or building during class time. In case of necessity, a visitor should report to the office of the Administrative Assistant for referral to the Director or Assistant to the Director.

**Safe Environment – Protecting God’s Children** – We know that ministry with children and youth, in particular, is a sacred trust. All of us in this parish are committed to preserve, at all times and in all places, this sacred trust which is rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ.

Article 12 of The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People directs all dioceses to create programs and processes to teach children and youth about sexual abuse and its prevention. In the Archdioceses of New York, this training will be integrated into the religious education program each year in all parishes.

**PARENT FACT SHEET** – Children are gifts from God to loving, caring families. As the **PRIMARY** educators of your children, here are some suggestions for you to ensure their safety.

Teach your children that they are very precious to God and if anyone tries to touch them in a private place, they are to say “NO” in a very loud voice and that they should tell you immediately. Assure your children that if someone touches them they are NOT at fault – the adult who touched them is.

Tricks Used by Sexual Predators - Sometimes, adults who want to abuse children use lures to entice children. Here are some you can warn your children about.

Bad News Trick – The predator tells a child that something bad happened (sickness or death of a parent, fire...) and that the predator was asked to pick up the child and bring him or her home.

Bribe Trick – The predator offers something special that the child may want and then asks for sexual favors in return.

Can I Help You Trick – The predator may give assistance to a child when needed or may offer to help the family of the child by offering rides or babysitting. This puts the predator in a position of trust for future abuse.

Drug and Alcohol Trick – Drugs and/or alcohol can be given to a child to make it easier to take advantage of the child.

Game Trick – Wrestling, tickling, accidental or deliberate contact with genitalia as part of the rules to a game played with a child.

Help Me Trick – The predator may ask for help from a child such as asking for directions, finding a lost pet, carrying heavy packages.

Internet Trick – A predator will try to get personal information from the child. The predator may act as though he or she is the same age as the child in order to establish a friendship. He or she often will send the child sexual material and will try to set up a meeting with the child.

Position of Power or Authority Trick – A predator may be in a position of authority such as a coach, police officer, clergy or teacher and use this position to get children to be obedient to his or her request.

“You are Special” Trick – The predator gives special attention or favor to a child to gain trust for future sexual abuse.

### **ON-LINE SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS**

Parents must take full responsibility for their children’s on-line computer use. Sexual predators often use the Internet to sexually exploit children and teens. School age children should be strictly monitored whenever they use the computer. Here are some common sense rules to set for your children.

- Never give personal, identifying information to anyone on-line.
- Never respond to messages that are suggestive, obscene, or make you feel uncomfortable.
- Not everything you read on-line may be true. An offer that is “too good to be true” probably is.
- Make the use of the computer a family activity. The computer should not be in a child’s bedroom but in the family room or living room.
- Use a filter to deny access to certain types of material.
- Monitor “permissions” on applications.
- Be suspicious if your child spends late night time on the computer or if he or she changes the screen quickly when you come near.

Be Conscious of Behavior Changes – If a child is experiencing emotional difficulties, his or her behavior often changes. The garrulous child may become moody and reclusive. The quiet child may react with anger in fits of temper or voiced resentment. The vigilant parent must be sensitive to these changes in ordinary behavior. This is the time when communication is very important and a kind and caring approach is necessary. Make sure your children know your love for them and your interest in their concerns. Sometimes children will speak to a grandparent, aunt or uncle if they are reluctant to speak to parents. Remember, if you suspect that something is wrong, it probably is. Bring in your family support system to help you in this situation.

The Company Your Child Keeps – Always know where your children are and who is supervising them. Be aware if an adult chaperone is paying attention to your child to the exclusion of others. Be concerned about the adults with whom your child communicates via e-mail or phone if the adult seems to monopolize his or her time. Be prudent about excursions and outings, which you allow your child to attend; try to serve as a chaperone yourself as often as possible. Let your children know that their friends are welcome in your home.

Communication – Always keep communication open between you and your children. Encourage them to speak about their day in school and afterward.

Always listen respectfully and try not to react with emotion if you hear something which shocks or surprises you. Be ready to discuss, advise, even admonish in a calm and loving way. Praise your child whenever possible and if it is necessary to be disapproving, choose your words carefully and be kind as possible when speaking. Young children want to please their parents and can be emotionally hurt by critical comments. Always let the child know you love him or her, it is the behavior you may not like. The more open a parent can be, the more interested in the child's behavior, the easier it will be for the child to speak to the parent if serious problems occur. Be a good listener.

Recognizing the Dignity of the Child – All of us are children of God and, as such must be treated with dignity and respect. Teach your child about this dignity and that no one should touch him or her in a disrespectful way. Children should know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touches. We teach primary grade children that certain parts of our bodies are private. It is advisable to use proper names for the parts of the body when you have this discussion with your child. Tell the child that no one is ever to touch those private parts of their bodies unless they're at the doctor for a check-up (and you are there with them) or when they might ask you for some assistance.

**Religious Education Policy**

All paid staff and volunteers working directly with children, in any capacity, will be subject to a background check to ensure the safety and well being of all children.

O. **General Information**

**Phone Use** - Cell phones, pagers, or any other electronic devices are not to be used by students except in the case of an emergency. Also, the office telephone is exclusively a business phone but it may be used by students in an emergency if they do not have a cell phone.

**Valuables** - The catechetical staff cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to class. All valuables should be left at home.

**Dress Code**– Students are not permitted to wear hats, pajama bottoms, flip-flops, cleats, sneakers with wheels or clothing with inappropriate wording.

**Lost & Found**- All clothing, money, jewelry, or any other article of value found, may be claimed at the Religious Education Office after proper identification is presented. Items left for longer than one month will be placed in the lost and found box in the school kitchen.

**Snacks** - The catechetical program avoids serving food during the sessions because some children may have medical restrictions and/or allergies to certain foods or ingredients. When food is part of an occasional celebration, parents are notified and invited to help supervise if their child is young and has allergies.

## **MEDIA AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE FORM**

I hereby consent to the taking of photographs, movies, videos, and images capable of reproduction in any medium of me or my children or children of whom I am the designated guardian.

*( Children attending St. Columba School of Religion)*

by **Saint Columba Parish**, the Archdiocese of New York and its parents, affiliates, trustees, directors, members, officers, employees, volunteers, agents, invitees, and contractors St. Columba Parish.

*I hereby grant to the parish the right to edit, reproduce, use and reuse images for any and all purposes including, but not limited to, advertising, promotion and display, and I hereby consent to the editing, reproduction, use and re-use of said images in any and all media in existence and all media yet in existence including, but not limited to, video, print, television, Internet, and Pod-Casts.*

I forever grant, assign, and transfer to the parish any right, title and interest that I and/or my child/children may have in any images, including negatives, taken of me and/or my children by the parish. I hereby agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the parish from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of actions, loss, liability, damage or cost arising from this authorization.





