

# **ST. MICHAEL CHURCH FAITH FORMATION HANDBOOK**

## **Faith Formation Program**

### **Mission Statement**

**To build a foundation of faith through knowledge, service and the recognition of God's love within the parish, community, universal church and world.**

### **Vision Statement**

**To educate in the Catholic tradition and enable families to belong to the life of our parish, where their talents are recognized and they are empowered and called to share their gifts, serving God and the community.**

**Revised as of 10/10/2023**

St Michael & St. Margaret's Catholic Parish strives to be a Christian community faithful to the Gospel and the Catholic Tradition. The parish, in reality, is a community of communities. This community is made up of people young and old, who have come from many different walks of life, all united in the endless struggle and search to know, love and serve God, self and one another. This unique diversity offers not only a challenge, but also a rich resource for learning.

## **ELEMENTS OF CATECHESIS**

### **Four elements essential to our Faith Formation program:**

#### **Message**

The story of Scripture and the teachings of the Church will be communicated within the context of the faith story of each student and the signs of the times.

#### **Community**

Efforts will be made to form Christian community among the students through interaction and faith sharing.

#### **Worship**

The participants will experience many forms of Catholic prayer and worship to help them become prayerful people.

#### **Service**

Participants will be called to service and justice, which is inherent in the message of Jesus and the teachings of the Church.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

### **The Goals of St. Michael Church Program are:**

1. To provide a program of formal religious instruction for the children and youth of the parish.
2. To support parents in their role as primary educators of their children.
3. To offer sacramental preparation to children as they become ready to receive the sacraments.
4. To help youth discover the richness and challenges of Scripture and the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church.
5. To build a strong Catholic identity among the youth of the parish.
6. To give the youth an experience of the Church as community.
7. To deepen the prayer life of the children and youth.
8. To motivate the youth to live lives rooted in charity and justice based on the moral teachings of the church.
9. To expose students to the liturgical and sacramental richness that is part of the Catholic tradition.
10. To enable students to become responsible, self-reflecting, loving and praying individuals.

## ROLE OF PARENTS

It is the role of the parish to **assist** parents in nurturing the faith of their children. Parents who are enrolling their children in the parish catechetical program will be assisted and enabled in their role as the primary educators of their children. It is essential that the parents cooperate with parish policy and work with those who are the designated leaders of the parish program. In order to promote the faith growth of the children and youth and to insure a smooth-running program, parents are asked to fulfill the following expectations. A parent who would like their child to attend the program...

1. Should be a registered member of the parish.
2. Attends Mass weekly and on Holy Days of Obligation with the child and takes responsibility for their role as primary educator(s).
3. Collaborates with the catechists in the program by sharing faith with their child at home and by making sure the child does any required homework on the lessons taught in class. Teaches the child the traditional prayers of the Church at home.
4. Maintains an open line of communication with the child's catechist and the Faith Formation Leader.
5. Makes sure the child arrives prepared to participate at the scheduled time in the proper location, and that they are picked up promptly at the end of class.
6. Attends parent meetings when requested.
7. Is supportive of the catechist especially in the area of discipline (see pg. 11).
8. Reads this handbook, completes and turns in the forms necessary for registration, providing all pertinent sacramental, medical and emergency information.
9. Informs the Faith Formation Leader of the rights of the non-custodial parent in the case of divorce.
10. Alerts the Faith Formation Leader of any changes that occur such as address, medical information, special needs, family situation, etc.

## ADMISSION POLICIES

St. Michael's Faith Formation program does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, national origin, religion or physical challenges.

1. **Any family that is registered in St. Michael Church or St. Margaret Mission may enroll their children in the catechetical program.** In order for their children to be admitted, the family must complete the appropriate registration and student information forms and are expected to read and follow the policies contained in this handbook. These forms are available from the Faith Formation office located in the church offices.

2. Students are enrolled in the grade in which they are currently attending in school, unless other arrangements are made with the Faith Formation Leader.

3. A general registration session for all children is held each September. A pre-registration will be held in the Spring. This helps us to be more accurate in ordering student materials. Families who wish to enroll their children at other times during the year may do so by contacting the Faith Formation Leader.

### FEES

The Pastor, in cooperation with the Faith Formation Leader, determines the annual fees for the Faith Formation Program. The combined fee for textbooks, sacramental materials, craft items, supplies, retreat costs, etc will be covered by the church at no cost to the families.

### BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES

Families with children who were not baptized at this parish must bring a copy of the baptismal certificate, along with any other sacramental records, when they initially enroll their child in the program. Children who have not been baptized will be accepted into the program provided the family intends to have them baptized and raised as participants in the Catholic faith and is willing to make sure they fulfill the extra educational needs necessary to satisfy the curriculum requirements for the child's age appropriate level.

### COMMUNICATION

Catechists that teach the classes in the Faith Formation program are volunteers. The parish has made every effort to screen them and require clearances to insure that they are capable of handling the responsibility involved in this ministry. The Faith Formation leader supervises the catechists in order to help them fulfill their responsibility. As parents you are asked to recognize the challenges involved in being a volunteer catechist and to support them in whatever ways possible. If any problems arise however, please contact the Faith Formation Leader. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue and the Pastor will be informed.

## CLASSES

### ATTENDANCE

**Children who are enrolled in the parish catechetical program are expected to be in attendance each class.** It is the responsibility of parents to insure their presence. Only a child who is ill or has a family emergency, inclement weather or special circumstances to be determined by the Faith Formation Leader are legitimate excuses.

**Kindergarten – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade students are only allowed 2 absences.** Because classes are held generally twice a month and each class builds on the material covered in preceding classes, the child who is absent misses a great deal and is encouraged to make up the material that was covered in the missed class.

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade students are particularly responsible for not missing more than 2 classes as this is a sacramental year and could result in the sacrament being delayed to the next year.**

**7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Students preparing for Confirmation are only allowed 2 absences each year, and any days missed beyond that will have to be made up.**

If a pattern of continued absence occurs, the Faith Formation leader will contact the family to address the problem and offer support as needed.

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Classes are held in St. Michael School & Lateran Hall in Greenville and in the church meeting rooms. Supervision will be provided for students during the stated class times. The program is not responsible for supervising children arriving more than 5 minutes early, or for the activity of the children 15 minutes after dismissal.

#### FAITH FORMATION STUDENTS:

Arrival: Parents are to bring all students grade K-3<sup>rd</sup> to St. Michael School.

4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students meet in the Small Meeting Room of the church.

6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students meet in Lateran Hall.

9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Grade students meet in McElhinny Hall in the basement of the church.

Dismissal: Parents Kindergarten-6 are to pick students up at their classroom door.

**Students are only dismissed to their parent/guardian, those on the parent provided list or an older sibling (if permission has been given). If someone other than this is picking a child up, written permission must be given upon arrival from the parent/guardian.**

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **ST. MICHAEL & ST. MARGARET STUDENTS KINDERGARTEN-10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE:**

Classes for students age 5 by September 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade are held on Sunday morning from 8:45-10:45 AM. Classes are usually held twice a month, with additional meetings for yearly age level retreats and other special events. Advent and Lenten Family Activity materials are sent home to be done in the Domestic Church as a family. These lessons must be done and returned at the next class for credit as these days are needed to complete the 42 hours of time the Diocese of Erie requires.

A calendar of classes is given to all registered families at the beginning of each school year with the starting and ending dates, along with all breaks.

Retreats are planned for every grade each year. Students are expected to attend their grade level retreat. This is a Diocesan requirement.

Advent & Lenten Family Activity Days are done each year to have students and their parents work together through enjoyable activities and family sharing time. These days count in the required hours and the assignments need to be worked on at home and returned for credit to the next class.

## **WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

### **CANCELLATION OF CLASSES**

When there is inclement weather, classes for Kindergarten – 10<sup>th</sup> Grade will not be cancelled unless Mass is cancelled. Parents should use their own discretion in the case of bad weather. These cancellations may be announced on Flocknote.

### **SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR FIRES AND OTHER EMERGENCIES**

A policy for safety procedures in case of emergencies will be followed. Catechists will instruct the students in these procedures each year. In case of an emergency, attendance will be taken and no child will be dismissed without his/her parent or guardian. Parents must check with the Faith Formation Leader before leaving with their child to avoid unnecessary search and rescue operations.

## **SICKNESS**

Parents are asked to please keep students home who are not feeling well. If a child tests positive for Covid or is under quarantine for exposure and needs to miss any classes, we ask that parents contact the Faith Formation Office, so we can provide make-up materials to be completed so it will not count as an absence, and so we can lift the family up in prayer. Should a student become ill for any reason while in class, parents will be contacted according to the information provided on the student registration form. If the parent is unavailable, attempts will be made to reach the backup person listed. The Faith Formation leader will make every effort to keep the child comfortable until he/she is picked up. Medications will not be administered to the child.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Children are not to bring medications with them to Faith Formation classes without advance permission of the Faith Formation Leader. It is the responsibility of parents to notify the Faith Formation Leader immediately of any changes in allergies or dietary restrictions.

## **INJURY**

Catechists are asked to report any injury to the Faith Formation leader immediately. If an injury occurs, first aid will be administered in strict accordance with the *Blood-borne Pathogens* regulations of the Diocese of Erie and the parents will be contacted. **If the injury requires immediate medical attention, the Faith Formation Leader will call the appropriate emergency services, followed by a call to the parents.**

## **HOMEWORK**

Catechists may occasionally assign work for the children to do at home with the assistance of their parents. Parents are encouraged to ask their children about homework after each class. It is very important that parents help their children learn the prayers required at each grade level.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

Students in 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Grade will receive a report twice a year which shows what they have completed and/or what is still needed in preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation up to that point.

## STUDENT RECORDS

The Faith Formation Leader will maintain information on each student. This includes the following: A family registration form, a copy of each child's Baptismal Certificate if baptized outside the parish, sacramental preparation forms, a record of the sacraments received at St. Michael & St. Margaret's and attendance records. Parents can review these records during normal working hours by contacting the Faith Formation Leader. These records are the property of St. Michael & St. Margaret and are available to all the professional staff of the parish. This material will not be released to anyone outside those mentioned above without the written consent of the parents.

## CURRICULUM

St. Michael Church follows the Diocese of Erie Curriculum Guidelines issued by Bishop Lawrence Persico. Textbooks and other materials used in the classroom are in conformity with the teachings found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and have been selected to most closely match the Diocesan Curriculum. They have been chosen because they offer catechists the resources necessary to conduct classes, which include all the elements of the ministry of catechesis.

Grades Kdg.-5 *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*, Pflaum

Grades 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> (In Addition) – *Blessed*, Dynamic Catholic

Grade 6-8 – *Edge Curriculum*, Life Teen & *Catholic Youth Bible*, St. Mary's Press

Grades 9 & 10 – *Chosen*, Ascension Press, & *Catholic Youth Bible*, St. Mary's Press

## HOME-SCHOOLING

Some parents, especially those who home-school their children instead of sending them to public school, may choose to offer catechetical instruction to their children at home. It is the parent's responsibility to communicate to the Faith Formation Leader that they wish to offer catechesis to their children at home. The option of home schooling can be done in every grade except the years of sacramental preparation, which include 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Grades. More details are available through the Faith Formation office.

## **SACRAMENTS/LITURGY**

The parish follows the diocesan policies for sacramental preparation. Students must demonstrate that they are properly prepared for a sacrament and all deadlines have been met. The final decision about sacramental readiness for all students will be determined by the Faith Formation Leader in collaboration with the Pastor and Catechist for their sacramental level.

### **FIRST RECONCILIATION**

Children are prepared for the sacrament during the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year. Faith Formation and Catholic School students will need to complete the following requirements. Preparation involves a parent meeting, a retreat day, along with additional instruction from a textbook of 6 lessons about the sacrament. Pastor will determine each year whether the 6 lessons can be done in the religion class for the Catholic school students or if they will need to join the Faith Formation classes. First Reconciliation will be held in February or March. It will be done for all students from St. Michael and St. Margaret Mission and St. Michael School at a special Student/Family Reconciliation Service on a Saturday.

### **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION**

The students are prepared for the sacrament throughout the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Faith Formation and Catholic School students will need to complete the following requirements. Preparation involves a parent meeting, a retreat day, along with additional instruction from a textbook of 6 lessons about the sacrament. Pastor will determine each year whether the 6 lessons can be done in the religion class for the Catholic school students or if they will need to join the Faith Formation classes. First Communion is celebrated the beginning of May. It is celebrated at the Sunday 11:00 Mass with all students together from St. Michael and St. Margaret Mission and St. Michael School.

### **CONFIRMATION**

Preparation for Confirmation is a 3-year process with the sacrament being done at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of preparation. Catholic School students must also complete all the requirements including attending the entire Faith Formation year at the church in the third year of preparation. All students from both St. Michael's and St. Margaret's receive the sacrament together on a date set by the Bishop, usually between March and May. Due to the size of our classes and us not meeting the required number of students needed for the Bishop to come and celebrate Confirmation at our church, we have partnered with Beloved Disciple Parish in Grove City. The location of Confirmation will be announced each year. Preparation involves:

#### **1. SERVICE:**

The goal is for students to develop the habit of living the life of a Christian serving and loving others as God has first loved and served us. The activities they choose to do will be as unique as the individual and how God is calling them to respond. Students will practice reflection on their service and how it has helped in the growth of their relationship with God and living the life of a Christian by letters written monthly to the Pastor.

## 2. WORSHIP:

**Students are expected to attend weekly Mass and Holy Days of Obligation.**

All meetings will include prayer.

## 3. MESSAGE & COMMUNITY:

Confirmation preparation is a process requiring 3 years of participation. This sacrament completes the process started at Baptism of becoming a fully initiated Catholic Christian.

One Parent/Student meeting at the beginning of each year.

An Interview with St. Michael's Priest, Deacon or Faith Formation leaders during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Confirmation preparation.

All scheduled meetings are mandatory! **Only two absences are allowed each year, and make-up days/work will be assigned for 3 or more misses.**

Mandatory retreats in each year of Confirmation preparation.

The retreat in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of preparation is required to receive the sacrament! Anyone who misses it must notify the Faith Formation Office so different arrangements can be made for the student to do an online one or another nearby church Confirmation retreat in order to prevent the delay of Confirmation.

A typed and signed letter to the Bishop must be written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of preparation describing the student's preparation and readiness for the sacrament of Confirmation. A detailed list will be given to each student on what is to be included and when it is due.

## **CELEBRATION OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR**

In an attempt to help children and youth understand more deeply the power and mystery of the sacred liturgy, they will be instructed on the celebration of the seasons of the Liturgical year.

## **REMEDIAL FAITH FORMATION**

Students who are lacking faith knowledge and/or sacraments appropriate for their age will need separate instruction to catch up. Parents of these students should contact the Faith Formation Office to discuss it with the Faith Formation Leader who will work with them to make arrangements for tutoring.

## **PHOTO RELEASE AUTHORIZATION**

Parents will be asked to sign a form giving permission for your child's name, likeness and/or photographic image to be used in the production of the following: all area newspapers, Erie Diocese publications, our church websites and on-site displays. This form will be signed yearly. Parents have the option to refuse this request or to revoke it at any time by calling the Office of Faith Formation.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Everyone involved in the program is challenged by the words and example of Jesus to respect each person's right to be treated not only with dignity and respect but also with love. In order to provide for a safe and well-ordered program, in which students and catechists can learn to follow Jesus' call to love, some rules for behavior are necessary. Students are expected by their behavior to make the classes safe and positive experiences for themselves and their classmates. The program exists for student growth and in turn students are expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Show respect to catechists, other students and Faith Formation personnel.
2. Treat the property, good name of the church and others and the physical safety of others with respect.
3. Be present only in the areas of the building for which they have permission at a specific time.
4. Act in a safe manner in and around the building.
5. Use voice and display actions in a manner which is appropriate for a classroom.
6. Be respectful of the study time of others.
7. Use of or possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco or weapons of any kind is strictly prohibited. Such items will be seized and parents notified immediately.
8. Refrain from using cell phones and other electronic devices during Faith Formation classes and church youth activities. (See policy on page 13.)

Good discipline is self-discipline and is always aimed toward growth. We recognize that children may make mistakes and the role of the catechist at times will be one of guiding and correcting those mistakes. These corrections will always be done with the best interest of the child in mind and at no time will St. Michael's accept the demeaning or intimidation of children in the name of discipline.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCESS**

The following is the order of measures to be taken when discipline is warranted:

1. At the time of the first correction, the student will be warned.
2. Students whose behavior becomes a continual problem in the classroom will be sent out of class to the Faith Formation Leader. Any time a student is sent from class for discipline reasons, his/her parents will be contacted either by phone, in person, or in writing by mail or email.
3. If the student's behavior continues to be a problem, the student will be removed from class and the parents will be contacted again. In order to return to the classroom, the student and parents will meet with the Faith Formation Leader to resolve the issues.
4. As a last recourse, when a conflict between a student and catechist cannot be resolved, the parents will be asked to finish the year at home with the child. The child will be treated as one who is being home-schooled and the parish will follow the Diocesan guidelines concerning home-schooling. The child will be readmitted into the program in the next calendar year with no prejudice.

## **CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY**

Cell phones and other electronic devices, including MP3 players, Ipods etc. are not to be used during Faith Formation classes and church youth activities unless permission is given. They are a distraction, therefore hindering participation, so if any of these things are seen or heard, the student will be warned and if continued problems occur, they will be confiscated and given to the Faith Formation Leader. Only parents can retrieve the items taken.

## **WEAPONS/ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE POLICY**

In order to ensure a safe and Christian environment, it is forbidden for anyone to possess a weapon or any object/material/substance that could be used as a weapon or confused with a real weapon by any reasonable person (toy guns, etc.) in the buildings, or within the geographic boundaries of St. Michael's or St. Margaret's, or in any location used by the parish to conduct any catechetical activity, or in any conveyance providing transportation to or from any activity related to the Faith Formation program.

If a student is suspected of having an illegal substance (e.g. weapons, drugs, alcohol, etc.), it will be the responsibility of the Faith Formation leader, in the presence of another adult Faith Formation staff member, to question the student to resolve the issue. If it cannot be done in a satisfactory manner, or if something illegal is found, the parents will be contacted immediately.

Weapons or potential weapons will be confiscated by the Faith Formation leader when this action does not place the Faith Formation leader in danger. If the student has used a weapon against another person or will not surrender the weapon or offending object/material/substance immediately and willingly, **the local police will be called first**, followed by notification of the parents. This is a zero tolerance policy.

Any student who violates this policy will be subject to immediate parish disciplinary action over and above any civil/criminal action brought by injured parties.

The student will be removed from the Faith Formation class and an alternative method of Faith Formation will be negotiated with the parents. Judgments about re-admittance to the program will be made on a case by case basis and this decision is at the sole discretion of the pastor.

If the incident involves an exchange of bodily fluids (for example, as in a wound which breaks the skin), the student will be asked to submit to medical tests for transmittable diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis B as recommended by a doctor. These tests will be at the parent's expense. In the name of being a community of Christians motivated by care and respect, this policy asks that the results of these tests, which are governed by guidelines of strict confidentiality, be openly shared with the respective parties on a need to know basis.

## **THREATS OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR**

As a community of believers who value patience over aggression, and love above all else, it is inconsistent with our basic values to tolerate an environment of threat or fear. Threats of harm made against another individual or group of individuals are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

This policy recognizes that in any community of people there will always be some conflict. Students will always be encouraged to manage their conflict in a positive, non-aggressive manner. Behavior such as cursing, pushing or fighting will not be tolerated.

In cases which are deemed by the catechist or Faith Formation leader to be “minor” (meaning: no reason to believe the situation would lead to physical harm) the students will be separated and encouraged to work out their differences after a “cool-down” period.

If the catechist regards the altercation as “serious” (meaning: reasonable expectation that the conflict will lead to physical harm) the students will be immediately separated, the Faith Formation leader will be notified, and the parents of the students will be called. The Faith Formation leader must determine that the conflict is resolved before the students will be readmitted to the program.

Students are expected to report to their catechist or Faith Formation leader any threat made by a student that mentions the killing of any person. Such threats will be immediately reported to the pastor. It will be at the discretion of the pastor along with all adults involved to determine if a police investigation is necessary. In such a case, the student making such threats will be suspended from the program until such time as the police investigation is completed and the appropriate authorities are satisfied that there is no real threat of harm. Judgments about re-admittance to the program will be made on a case by case basis and this decision is at the sole discretion of the pastor.

## **HARASSMENT**

Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual is a basic precept of Catholic doctrine and therefore of St. Michael/St. Margaret's parish. Each person is entitled to work in an environment free from discriminatory practices such as any form of harassment based on race, sex, creed, color, age, or disability including sexual harassment. Parish leadership wishes to be vigilant regarding harassment whether between or among catechists and/or parish leaders, among students or between catechists/parish leaders and students. Such behavior will not be tolerated and if persistent harassment is proven, the offender will be dismissed when this is appropriate. Harassment of all forms is illegal as well as immoral and individuals will be encouraged to seek legal protection when necessary.

The term "harassment" refers to behavior that is not welcome, that is personally offensive and that fails to treat others with dignity and respect. It includes treating someone unfavorably because of his/her race, sex, creed, color, age or disability. Harassment may take the form of discrimination, unwelcome or critical comments or action. Harassment on the basis of sex might include unwelcome sexual advances, requests or demand for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct, including, but not limited to:

Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, intimations or comments.

Visual contact such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures.

Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements, or interfering with work, study or play because of sex.

Retaliations for having reported or threatened to report such harassment.

The term "sexual harassment" refers to harassment based on the gender of the offended individual when the people involved are of different "levels" within the parish. It involves threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of employment, grades or other benefits or to avoid some other loss and offers of benefits in return for sexual favors. It also means creating a hostile environment for the student or employee such that it is an unfit environment for learning or work. Examples include, but are not limited to repeated unwelcome sexual advances, repeated sexually explicit jokes or comments, or the displaying of sexually inappropriate materials.

Allegations and complaints of any type of harassment must be reported as soon as possible. With any incident of harassment, the individual will be immediately removed from the situation and the disciplinary process will be followed starting at the step three level (refer to #3 on page 13). Parents who become aware of incidents of sexual harassment should report them immediately to the pastor or to the Faith Formation leader.

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### **Protection of Children Policy: Diocese of Erie**

The Diocese of Erie is committed to protecting the children and youth who are entrusted to its care and to ensuring that those in ministry with our young people are in right relationship with the children/youth receiving services. Here at St. Michael's Faith Formation program, we realize sharing in the ministry of Christ is a great privilege as well as a tremendous responsibility. The *privilege* is the joy of sharing in the mission of Jesus. The *responsibility* is acting in a way that conforms to the attitude and actions of Christ.

In this spirit, the diocese has issued a ministerial Code of Conduct. The code is included in the diocesan *Policy for the Protection of Children*, which also includes mandates for creating safe environments. To read the policy, go to <http://www.eriercd.org/images/sections/childprotection/pdf/CURRENTPolicy.pdf>. For more information, you may contact Cindy Zemcik, at the diocesan offices at 814-824-1195.

At St. Michael's, policies are followed for all our staff and volunteers who have contact with our parish children and youth. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact the Faith Formation Leader at 724-588-9800.

### **Protection of Children Policy: St. Michael & St. Margaret**

St. Michael & St. Margaret's Pastor, Faith Formation staff and all volunteers who work with children are required to have clearances completed from the PA State Police (Criminal Record Check – PA Act 34), the PA Department of Public Welfare (Child Abuse History Clearance – PA Act 151), the Federal Criminal Record Check including Fingerprinting (if volunteer has not lived in PA for the last 10 years) and a Diocesan clearance. They must complete all appropriate forms as identified by the diocesan *Policy for the Protection of Children*. They are also bound by the Pennsylvania Revised Code and Diocesan Policy of Protection of Children to report suspected or actual child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

### **In-Servicing**

**STAFF:** All Faith Formation staff, paid and volunteer must complete an in-service training on protection of children, identification of child abuse and appropriate reporting procedures.

**STUDENTS:** The diocese requires that all students are in-serviced annually. If a parent DOES NOT want their child to participate, they must contact the Faith Formation Office in writing. The child will be given another activity to do in a separate location. If a child is absent on the day of in-servicing, a Parental Option Form will be sent to the parents to return that explains the reason for the child's absence along with age-appropriate materials parents can discuss with their children.

**PARENTS:** Information regarding child abuse and safe environment will be provided to parents and guardians annually at the time of registration.

## **CORRESPONDENCE METHOD**

Flocknote is our main method of communication using email and/or texts, so it is imperative that the Faith Formation Office has Parents' cell phone numbers and email addresses. Good communication is essential. Time is often limited before, during and after classes. Parents are asked to provide their cell phone numbers and email address on the registration form. Parents will be contacted by text, email and/or postal mail when necessary. If a parent has any questions or needs clarification, they can reach the Faith Formation Facilitator for St. Michael's at 724-588-9800 staff option #5, or by cell phone at 724-718-2061 or by email at [teia.barger@saintmichael1.org](mailto:teia.barger@saintmichael1.org), or the Assistant Faith Formation Facilitator at 724-588-9800 staff option #5 or by email at [judy.seman@saintmichael1.org](mailto:judy.seman@saintmichael1.org).

## **NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT RIGHTS**

The Faith Formation Leader needs to be informed by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent with regards to picking the child up from any Faith Formation class or event. Also, the custodial parent is expected to give all necessary information to the non-custodial parent unless a special request is made to the Faith Formation Leader to also send information to the non-custodial parent. If the circumstances should change at any time during the year, you need to contact the Faith Formation Leader with the changes.

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