



St. Anthony of Padua Parish Children's Faith Formation ~ CFF

Inspiring a new generation of disciples.

260 Forest Ave. Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002 215-646-6150 x 2200 CFF@saintanthonyparish.org

St. Anthony of Padua Religious Education Parent & Participant Handbook 2024-2025

THIS HANDBOOK CONTAINS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA CFF PROGRAM (HEREIN KNOWN AS THE PROGRAM). THE PROGRAM MAY CHANGE ANY OF ITS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NEEDED AND APPLY THEM AS CIRCUMSTANCES DICTATE.

IN THE EVENT OF SUCH A CHANGE PARENTS WILL BE GIVEN PROMPT NOTIFICATION AND PROVIDED WITH AN ADDENDUM IF NECESSARY.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT A PARTICULAR POLICY OR PROCEDURE, PLEASE CONTACT THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

STUDENTS AND PARENTS MUST ACCEPT AND ABIDE BY THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONTAINED IN THIS HANDBOOK IN ORDER FOR THE STUDENT TO ATTEND THE PROGRAM.

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St. Anthony of Padua Mission Statement

We, the parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua, believe that here the merciful heart of Christ speaks a loving word to our hearts, forging a communion of love. It is this grace which draws us to gather on the Lord's Day for Eucharist, proclaim his Good News and give ourselves in service to those in need.

We commit ourselves to share our faith in the Lord Jesus with those we meet and to pass on our Catholic faith to the next generation. In the spirit of Saint Anthony, we welcome any who have lost their way in life so that together we may hear Christ speak to our hearts.

St. Anthony Religious Education & Teaching of the Catholic Faith

"The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity." (St. John Paul II)

"Catechesis describes the essential ministry of the (Catholic) Church through which the teachings of Christ have been passed on to believers throughout the ages...Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults which includes the teaching of Christian doctrine" of the Roman Catholic Church. (*National Directory for Catechesis*, no.1, USCCB) Keeping in mind that all the baptized have a right to catechesis, every person, however limited, is capable of growth in holiness (*General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 189). Catechetical and sacramental programs are inclusive of parishioners with disabilities and may need to be adapted for some parishioners with disabilities.

Program Philosophy & Principles

The community of Saint Anthony of Padua Parish affirms the Second Vatican Council teaching which states, "...Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators (*Gravissimum Educationis* 3.10)". Faith formation begins at home and through their Catholic witness, parents give their children their first experiences of God and the community of faith called the Church.

Your family's involvement in the St. Anthony Religious Education Program is a partnership. We are here to support you in teaching your children about the faith and your support in the areas below will allow us to work in a unified way to make your child's Religious Education experience positive, productive, and meaningful:

- To nurture and develop the dignity of the individual as a unique child of God who is created in His image and likeness and a reflection of His goodness.
- To instill in each individual a faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and foster a committed response to His love as intentional disciples.
- To present the doctrine of the Catholic faith as both knowledge to be learned and as life to be lived.
- To live in awareness that sacramental life is central to expressing our love for God that the Mass and Real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist is the source & summit of our faith.
- To seek the Lord's infinite mercy, love, and the very gift of Himself in the sacraments of Penance (Reconciliation) and Eucharist (Communion).

- To cultivate a reverence for God's Word & understanding of how God uses His Word to speak to us.
- To seek the example of Mary and the Saints as they model for us how we can become the Saint God has called and created each of us to be.
- To develop the individual's moral life through sound catechesis that properly forms the conscience through the practical application of the Gospel message, Commandments, Beatitudes, and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.
- To embrace the virtues as the key to living our daily life as Catholic Christians.
- To foster communion with God through prayer, and devotions that are experienced through participation in our programs.
- To realize the profound truth that God has created all things for His glory and honor, that the dignity of creation and especially the human person need to be respected accordingly.

By enrolling your child in the CFF program you are agreeing to abide by all requirements in this handbook.

FORMATION AND ACADEMIC LIFE

Faith formation begins at home and through their Catholic witness, parents give their children their first experiences of God and the community of faith called the Church. This influences the way in which the St. Anthony Religious Education Program walks with children on their faith journey, instills in them the knowledge of the faith, and prepares them for the reception of the sacraments. The Director of Religious Education (Director), Pastor, & Catechists support this development as well. Your help in the areas listed below will allow us to work in a unified way to make your child's faith formation experience positive, productive, and meaningful.

Parent/Guardian and Student Participation & Responsibilities

- Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.
- Teach your child to pray in their own words as well as to learn the prayers required at their level (as well as review previous learned prayers)
- Help your child be conscientious of assignments given to them.
- Have your child come prepared for class with their homework, textbook and class materials.
- Join your child in participating in activities offered in his/her grade.
- Attend all required meetings.
- Stay in close contact with the Director and Catechists by checking email and reading the CFF newsletters, website & Church bulletin for important program information & updates. If you are not receiving emails, please contact the Director & update your Parish Giving account.

Our catechists have spent time preparing their classrooms, their lessons, and their hearts. To demonstrate support of these dedicated members of our parish, we ask students to observe the following:

- Participate regularly in Sunday Mass and Penance & Reconciliation with their families.
- Cooperate with the catechist & volunteers to maintain a Christian atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Participate fully and appropriately in your group's activities.
- Treat others, and the property of others with respect.
- Please note, the following is unacceptable behavior:
 - 1.) Disrespect for any adult by word or action

- 2.) Disrespect for any student by word or action
- 2.) Leaving the premises without permission from the office and parent.
- 3.) Excessive talking or calling out in class.
- 4.) Fighting
- 5.) Defacing books, desks, walls, bathroom, etc. or removing items from classrooms.
- 6.) Repeated failure to complete homework assignments.

Enrollment

St. Anthony of Padua is structured around incremental learning. That is, each year builds upon and expands the learning of the previous year. Therefore, it is essential that participants remain enrolled in the program consistently from year-to-year.

Any student who does not re-enroll in the program for a period of one year or more and who does not enroll in another CFF, PREP, or Catholic School during that period will be placed in the grade level they were scheduled to attend prior to their leaving the program (e.g., after completing 3rd grade a student does not re-enroll in any program until 6th grade. The student has missed two years of formation and will therefore be placed into a 4th grade class upon re-enrollment).

Any student who does not complete the program year due to voluntarily withdrawing from the program, being dismissed from the program because of a disciplinary incident, or failing to meet the program requirements will be required to repeat the grade level upon re-enrollment.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia REQUIRES a minimum of two consecutive years of formation prior to a child receiving a sacrament. Students who leave the program following First Holy Communion in grade 2 and re-enroll in grade 7 to receive Confirmation DO NOT meet this requirement. Therefore, their reception of Confirmation will be deferred until they satisfy this requirement.

Students are expected to attend the class for which they registered. Requests for any changes require a meeting with the DRE. Class changes due to sports schedules are not acceptable.

Curriculum

The curriculum for the Program follows the religion guidelines established by Archdiocese of Philadelphia. These Guidelines may be viewed on our website for every grade level.

In addition to the religion guidelines, the Program will follow the Archdiocesan scope and sequence. The scope and sequence will direct learning objectives and the sequence that core concepts are presented to students. The scope and sequences can also be found on our Saint Anthony of Padua website.

Sacramental Preparation

Preparation for the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation is incorporated into the program curriculum and is in addition to said curriculum.

To be eligible to begin sacramental preparation a student must meet the following criteria:

- The family is registered in the parish.
- The family participates with their children in Sunday Mass

- Have an appreciation and understanding of the sacrament appropriate for the age level.
- The student has had 2 years of religious instruction prior to receiving the Sacrament.
- Students must be in Level 2 or above for Penance and/or Eucharist.
- Students must be in Level 7 or above for Confirmation.
- ALL SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION ACTIVITIES (meetings, retreats, service, practices, etc.) is MANDATORY.

Parents of students in Level 3 and above who have not received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and/or Eucharist should contact the Director for support in preparing their children for these sacraments.

Completion of Assignments

Students must successfully complete all required chapters and assessments to be promoted to the next religious education level. Students in Sacrament Years (levels 2 & 7) must complete all sacramental preparation & assignments to receive their sacraments.

Assessments

Students need to exhibit proficient mastery of the required material for their grade level to be considered for promotion at the end of the year. Assessing student progress provides feedback to students, parents, and catechists alike, and allows corrective measures to be taken when indicated to help ensure that proficient mastery is attained.

The Program's goal is to help students not only come to know their faith and the teachings of Christ Jesus and his Church, but to also enable them to live their faith as a disciple of Christ Jesus. To help achieve these goals, catechists will administer formal assessments to students at the end of each semester. During the semester oral or written quizzes, and class discussions are used to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback to catechists and students to improve learning. Specifically, quizzes help students identify their strengths and weaknesses so that they and catechists can target areas that need work. They can also enable catechists to take immediate steps to address areas of student struggle once identified. The assessment process allows the program to provide objective feedback on and evaluation of the students' mastery of the material presented.

In the event of a formal assessment, catechists will provide a minimum of one week's advanced notice to students. Modified assessments may be provided to those students with documented learning challenges.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports are issued **three** times a year, November, January, and March. The progress report is an instrument designed to provide feedback on a student's mastery of the required material for their grade level as well as the student's conduct, effort, and attendance in the program.

November and January Progress reports are required to be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the catechist the week after they are received. If a student is found to need additional assistance in attaining proficient mastery, the Director will reach out to the parents to schedule a conference so that working together we may ensure the student's success. Parents may also request a conference using the feedback space provided on the progress report.

CFF Program Calendar

Families will receive a yearly program calendar containing all pertinent dates and happenings for the CFF program, sacramental preparation, and parish events. The most up-to-date calendar will always be available on the CFF page of our parish website: <https://www.saintanthonyparish.org/childrens-faith-formation-home/>. This online calendar is a Google Calendar and will allow parents to easily add events to their personal calendars. The CFF Program Calendar is subject to change. Any changes will be conveyed to parents by the Director.

CFF Level Lesson Plans

In addition to the program calendar, you have access to your child's level lesson plans. This table will contain the chapters and assignments for each Session. If a student is absent, or if the program is cancelled due to inclement weather, etc., it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to complete the assigned chapter and homework for that week at home with their child.

Class participation

Students are expected to come to class ready to participate in the planned activities. No lesson or activity will prove worthwhile if students do not participate in them. Participation also means that students come to class with all assigned work, projects, and homework complete so that they may fully engage in class discussion and learning.

Students will be provided with a bag, textbook, and communication folder. Basic classroom supplies (pencil, crayons, etc.) will be available in the classroom. Additional supplies may be required and will be conveyed by catechists.

Textbooks

The textbooks used in the program are approved by the Office for Catholic Education. Every student will be assigned a textbook. This textbook is a necessary tool in helping the catechist achieve the required learning objectives. Therefore, students must bring their textbooks to class every week. Parents should exercise caution in making sure that the textbook is secured in a set place within the home, so it is not lost during the academic year. Lost textbooks will need to be replaced. Parents assume full responsibility for all costs associated with the replacement textbook including any taxes, shipping, and handling fees.

If a student reports to class without his or her textbook, parents will be notified via phone by the Director and provided with an opportunity to bring the textbook to school for the student. If a parent cannot be reached or if a parent is unable to bring the textbook to school, the student will be required to rent a textbook. A \$5.00 rental fee applies, which will be billed to the family. Unpaid rental fees at the end of the program year will be applied to a family's program fee for the following program year.

Homework

Homework is a vital part of the formational and instructional component of the program as it helps students reinforce and bring to life classroom learning. As such, all catechists are required to assign homework each week. Homework assignments will be used to reinforce the day's lessons and should be reviewed by

parents for quality and completeness. Homework may consist of take-home assessments, worksheets, completing assignments in the textbook, study and memorization, projects, web activities, or any other means deemed appropriate by the catechist to reinforce and review the material presented during class.

Families can view homework details on the website under Level Lesson Plans for their grade level. Failure to complete homework assignments will warrant a conference with parents to remedy the situation. Should parents have any questions concerning homework assignments or need assistance, they may email the Director at mstumpf@saintanthonyparish.org.

Promotion

To be eligible for promotion to the next level at the end of the program year, a student must exhibit proficient mastery of the material required of them. Mastery lists are provided by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for each grade level on corresponding scope and sequence charts. Mastery is evaluated through the administration of a formal mid-term and final assessments provided by the Archdiocese but modified by our program. In addition to assessments, the timely completion of assignments and homework, classroom participation, and overall attendance are also considered when evaluating a student's eligibility for year-end promotion.

Progress reports provide feedback to parents on a student's progress in the program and allow for early intervention if a student needs assistance in mastering the required material. If needed, a conference between the Director, parents, catechist, and student will be scheduled to address the situation and develop interventions to help the student achieve success. Final decisions for promotion and retention are made at the end of the program year by the Director.

Non-parishioner families

Archdiocesan sacramental policy stipulates that sacramental candidates receive the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation in the parish where their family is registered. Non-parishioner families who desire to have their child receive these sacraments at St. Anthony of Padua Parish must obtain a letter of permission from the pastor of the parish where they are registered in order for their child to receive the sacrament at St. Anthony of Padua Parish.

COMMUNICATION

Calendars

The latest and most up-to-date program calendar will always be available on the parish website at <https://www.saintanthonyparish.org/childrens-faith-formation-home/>. This calendar will contain all pertinent dates related to CFF and sacramental preparation. The online calendar supersedes any yearly calendar distributed at the beginning of the program year.

Important reminders, updates, and program related news, including calendar changes, will be conveyed to parents **via the email address provided at the time of student registration**. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the Director of changes to this email address to ensure effective communication of program related matters. The Program is using the Flocknote system for general communications. A few families have had issues receiving messages from this system. If you are not receiving email, please contact the Director.

Communication Folders

Every student will be issued a two-pocket folder at the beginning of the program year. This folder will serve as the Communication Folder for weekly assignments and other important papers. Parents should check this folder after each weekly session to view any fliers, bulletins, assignments, etc., that may be sent home. Parents are also to use this folder to send any notes to their child's catechist or program staff. In addition, this folder is specially designed so that the student's class calendar may be found on the back of the folder. This allows parents easy access to class work and assignments due in the event of an absence of program cancellation. We have added a parent review check sheet to our folders. Parents are to sign the folder after you have reviewed it with your child each week. If folders are not reviewed weekly, families will be contacted.

Snow Emergencies & Program Cancellations

In the event of inclement weather, classes will not gather at the discretion of the Director. If classes do not gather, a notification will be sent via email and posted on the St. Anthony Children's Faith Formation Website. The Program *does not* follow a specific school district for weather related cancellations. Parents may be responsible for completing that week's lesson at home with their children to be checked the following week by the child's catechist. Parents can reference the child's Lesson Planner.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Registration, Tuition, & Fees

- *All program families must be registered parishioners of St. Anthony's.* Under special circumstances & with pastor's permission, families outside the parishes may register.
- CFF registration is on-line through Parish Giving. An email link is sent to current families and is available on the website for new families.
- Baptismal certificates must be uploaded or given to the Director's office at or soon after registration for new students not baptized at St. Anthony of Padua Church.
- **If not returning to the St. Anthony CFF program for any reason, please notify the Director.**
- Program Fees are a necessary part of our program to defray the cost of materials and provide children and families with the best and most current resources for their formational journey.
- Payment is requested in full at the time of registration, **however, those who are facing financial or personal difficulties should contact the Director to make other arrangements. A financial concern should not prevent you from registering your children in the program.**
- Families are asked to register by July 15th to allow sufficient time to prepare family and student materials. Registrations after this date will incur an additional fee.
- **If your child has not completed the assignments from the previous year or if there is an outstanding tuition balance, they may not be enrolled in the next formation level until those assignments are completed/payment is remitted.**
- Tuition Refunds: All tuition refunds incur an immediate \$20 deduction per child. Requests after August 1st incur a \$50 deduction per child. No refunds after September 1st. If a student voluntarily or involuntarily leaves the Program, no refund will be made. Sacrament fees are not refundable.
- A Sacramental fee is applied for Reconciliation/Communion at the time of registration to cover sacrament specific preparations.

2024-2025 Program & Sacrament Materials Fees		
Number of Children	Program Fee (Prior to 7/5)	Program Fee (After 7/5)
1	\$190	\$215
2	\$340	\$365
3+	\$430	\$455
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacramental Fee for Penance and First Holy Communion - \$100 Per Child • Textbook Replacement Fee - \$30 		

Arrival Procedures

Students are to report to St. Anthony of Padua Education Center Multi-purpose room 5-10 minutes prior to the session's start time to avoid lateness. Families should pull into the church parking lot to drop off children. If you choose to walk your child to the entrance, please park in the Church lot and walk your child/ren across the street to the Education Center. For safety, families are asked to use the designated Pedestrian crosswalk.

For the Safety of our students and staff, and to comply with the Safe Environment Policy of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, parents are not permitted to enter the school building during arrival time unless on official business with the program, in which case a visitor's pass must be obtained from the front desk.

Students may only enter the Education Center via the outside Multipurpose Room stairs. A monitor/the Director will be posted there during arrival. Students are to report to their classroom if an adult volunteer is present - a bulletin board in the Multipurpose Room (MPR) will inform students if their catechist/adult classroom assistant is present and they can proceed to their classroom. If their catechist has not yet arrived, they will wait in the MPR under the observation of volunteers. *Parents are not permitted to accompany their children into the MPR or to their classrooms.* Arrivals after 4:30 or 6:30 on Tuesdays or 9:00am on Sunday are considered late.

Dismissal

Parents are asked to park their cars in the Church parking lot and walk to the main entrance of the Education Center. On arrival, highlight your name on the dismissal sheet. If you are participating in a car pool, please write in the last names of the families you are taking with you. A Carpool permission form must be on file. The Director must be informed the day prior if someone other than a child's parent will be picking them up. The person will have to show ID if they are not involved in the program. If there are carpool arrangements every family involved will complete a carpool permission form (found on CFF webpage under registration).

Custody Policy

The Program will not become involved in adjudicating the rights of parents in relation to the custody of their children. Therefore, if a parent is separated, divorced, or unmarried, it is the responsibility of both biological parents to provide the Director with the latest, most up-to-date Custodial Order or Custody Agreement. The Program will request these documents at the time of registration. If either Custodial Order or Custody Agreement changes during the course of the year, it remains the responsibility of both biological **parents to provide the revised** document to the Director immediately. This is also true in the event that such an agreement is issued after the time of enrollment. In the absence of such documentation the program will and must assume that parents share legal custody.

Our program abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, our program will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the records and other program related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the Director with an official and the latest copy of the court order.

If a court order prohibits our releasing a child into the custody of a non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the Director with an official copy of the court order or custody section of the divorce decree.

In situations with shared legal custody, the parish program expects the cooperation of both parents, especially regarding sacramental preparation and celebrations.

Dress Code

St. Anthony of Padua has no formal dress code; however, we expect students to dress in a manner that

reflects the virtue of modesty. General guidelines to which all students are expected to adhere are listed below:

- Students should dress comfortably according to the weather, but modesty in dress must always be maintained.
- Short shorts, bare midriffs, t-shirts with inappropriate images or sayings are not permitted.
- No roller sneakers are permitted.

The Director reserves the right to exclude students from class until dress code violations have been addressed. The Director will make the final determination as to what is and is not appropriate attire.

Electronic Devices

The Program realizes that devices such as cell phones and smart phones have become a necessary and convenient tool in maintaining communication between parents and children. To prevent such devices from becoming a distraction while in class we have established the following policy:

- Students who bring cell phones or smart phones to school must keep these devices turned off and out of sight in book bags. At no time during the session are students permitted to use such devices.

The Director reserves the right to revoke this privilege for any student who uses the device during the program. Any misuse of an electronic device during program hours will result in the student leaving the device in the CFF Office until dismissal time or the loss of permission to bring the device to the program.

Other electronic devices such as video games, iPods, iPads, mp3 players, etc., may not be brought to the program and are considered contraband. These items will be confiscated and returned to parents only. The Program is not responsible for damage to or loss of any electronic device that a student brings to the program.

Snack Free Zone

In response to the many CFF students with food allergies, the Program is making every reasonable accommodation to lessen the possibility of exposure to food allergens by designating all classrooms as Snack Free Zones. This policy is to be followed before, during and after CFF time.

If there is an occasion for a special celebration, which includes special foods or snacks, the event shall be held in a communal CFF setting, such as the Parish Education Center MPR. A parent or guardian of a student with a food allergy must be present at such gatherings or provide a snack for his/her child(ren).

Please provide information regarding allergies or other medical conditions in your registration information.

Student Attendance Policy

Faith formation is an ongoing and foundational process of academic and community learning. It is essential that your child be present at religious education and Faith and Family sessions to build their relationship in faith with God, family & others and effectively learn to articulate their faith and role as disciple of Jesus and member of the Catholic Church.

If an absence occurs, please notify the Religious Education Office as soon as possible and your child's teacher will be notified. If your child does not report to his/her session and a phone call or email is not received, the absence will be recorded as unexcused unless a doctor's note is received at the next session.

A minimum of 35 hours of religious instruction are required by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Office of Catechetical Formation. It is also recommended that a child repeat the grade if frequent absences occur. Our attendance policy therefore is:

- When a child misses a class, the parent should supervise the review & completion of the missed lesson. The content being covered is listed on the website under the lesson plans for their grade level calendar. The child should read what was covered in class and complete chapter activities in the workbook and any other assignments listed on their lesson plan. This needs to be shown to the catechist the following week.
- Students absent from 3 or more weekly classes during the program year may be required to complete additional study and/or take special assessments if it is determined that their absences are affecting their performance in the program.
- Students who attain 6 absences may be dismissed from the program and required to reenroll in the following year's program and repeat their current grade.
- An extended absence due to illness is defined as an absence that spans three or more consecutive weeks. Parents should be in regular contact with the Director during an extended absence so that we may work in partnership to ensure that missed assignments and class work are completed during the extended absence, and to keep the student's formation and instruction up to date. Parents are responsible for working on missed assignments and class work **with** their children as outlined under the "STUDENT ABSENCE" policy. A student's mastery may be assessed through appropriate reviews to ensure proficient mastery has been achieved for prolonged absences due to illness. In addition, a doctor's note will be required upon the student's return to class.
- Since the curriculum is presented in developmental sequence, children may not arbitrarily skip grades. If children register with no previous religious instruction, they may or may not be placed in the same grade level they are in school. This matter must be discussed with the Director.
- **Family vacations** during the school year present difficulties for students & catechists. Should a family elect to take a vacation during the school year, The Program will be under no obligation to provide materials, lessons, assignments, homework, and/or projects in advance of such an absence. Vacation absences are unexcused, and parents are responsible for consulting the calendar & making up missed work with their children.
- The program is scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, September through April. While the program recognizes the difficulty in scheduling various appointments, the scheduling of doctor and other appointments should not be made during program hours except for cases of emergency, in which case the parent agrees their child will complete any missed work and lessons at home. Late arrivals or early dismissals due to medical appointments are strongly discouraged, and **early dismissals due to extracurricular or sports related activities are not permitted.**

Late Arrival/Early Dismissal

Two late arrivals/early dismissals are equivalent to one absence. It is extremely disruptive to the class if a student arrives late or leaves early. On the rare occasion that a student needs to leave early, no student is permitted to leave the building or program site prior to the appointed time without the expressed permission of the Director and prior verbal and/or written notification from a parent. If for some reason a child needs to be excused early, please send a written note/email with your child to be given to their catechist at the

beginning of class with the reason for dismissal. The parents must come into the building to pick up their child. No child may leave the building alone. Chronic lateness or early dismissal may require a conference with parents and may interfere with promotion to the next faith formation level/reception of sacraments. Children will not be permitted to arrive late or leave early on a regular basis. Please register for a session time that will ensure on-time and full attendance.

Classroom Management & Disciplinary Policy

The Program is designed to assist parents with the faith formation of their children, as well as foster values and behavior that are in accord with Catholic Church teaching and a life of discipleship. The program has NO TOLERANCE for behaviors that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals, or the Gospel, including but not limited to ongoing acts of obstinacy, improper language, fighting, physical, emotional, or psychological intimidation, bullying, vandalism, demeaning behavior such as name-calling, obscene language or gestures, and harassment (including but not limited to social media posts, texting, emails, etc.). Such behaviors violate the central teaching of our faith and will not be tolerated in any form from students or their family members.

These categories do not cover every possible situation. The Director makes the final determination of what is considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior, both in and out of class, in the Program generally, and outside the Program, where such improper behavior affects the Program community. The Director will make the final determination as to what behaviors warrant disciplinary action.

Conduct by students or parents/guardians, or anyone acting on their behalf, incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the parish is grounds for disciplinary action, including but not limited to, immediate dismissal of the participant, as well as reporting the incident to the appropriate legal authorities where appropriate.

In addition, in the case of threats of violence or harassment, in any form, including oral, written, or electronic (including but not limited to social media posts, texting, emails, etc.), by a student against any member of the program community, the student, if suspended but not dismissed, may be required to have psychological or psychiatric clearance before returning to the program.

In the event a student engages in any of the above listed behaviors or any other inappropriate conduct:

1. The child will receive 2 warnings during the session.
2. If after 2 verbal warnings a student has failed to respond to a catechist's attempt to stop or correct the behavior, the student will be removed from the classroom.
 - a. The Director will meet with the student who will stay in the office until the end of the session.
 - b. Parents will be contacted after the session.
3. Depending on the nature and severity of the incident the Director may:
 - a. Schedule a conference with the parents/guardians, student, and catechist to address the incident.
 - b. Suspend the student from the program. If a student is suspended from the program due to a disciplinary incident, the parents/guardians will be required to complete missed classroom assignments with their child at home in accord and submit them weekly for review by the catechist. These assignments must be completed by the time the student returns from suspension. Failure to complete missed assignments during the suspension may result in dismissal from the program.

- c. Dismiss the student from the program. In the event that a student is dismissed from the program due to a disciplinary incident, the parents/guardians will be provided with the option of having their child repeat his or her current grade level the following school year, opting to enroll in another CFF Program at a neighboring parish, or completing the program year by home schooling their child in accord with the home schooling policies of the Program and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. No refund of tuition or material fees will be made regardless of which option is selected by parents.

The Director reserves the right to supersede the forgoing course of action depending on the circumstances of any given situation.

Bullying

A safe, secure, and respectful environment is necessary for participants to learn, achieve, and build appropriate relationships with others. The Program refuses to accept any behaviors that hinder or undermine such an environment. Therefore, acts of harassment, hazing, intimidation, and bullying (including cyber bullying and the like) are unacceptable behaviors and are prohibited in our programs. Program personnel cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under their direct supervision. However, to the extent such conduct affects the environment of the Program, and the rights and welfare of the students, and is within the control of the Program in its normal operations, it is the Program's intent to prevent bullying and thus, will take action to investigate, respond, discipline, and remediate any acts of bullying. Administration and the catechetical staff are to demonstrate appropriate behavior by treating others with civility and respect, and being aware of and not tolerating harassment, intimidation, hazing and bullying, etc. If incidents do occur, students should be able to report and know that inappropriate behavior will be dealt with promptly and effectively. There will be no retaliation against a victim, reporter, or witness.

Bullying involves actions or words against another for the purpose of inflicting physical or emotional harm or discomfort or damage to a person's reputation that is intimidating or threatening and affects the learning and program environments. The following describes types of bullying but is not an exhaustive list.

- Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, hair pulling, or throwing something
- Getting another person to hit or harm a student.
- Teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks or threatening in person or by other means.
- Demeaning and making another the victim of jokes
- Making rude and/or threatening gestures
- Excluding or rejecting the student
- Intimidating (bullying), extorting or exploiting
- Spreading harmful rumors or gossip

If the bully is threatening harm, a student should tell a catechist, adult volunteer and/or the Director immediately so that action can be taken to remediate the situation.

Parents/guardians and the pastor will be notified of the situation, and Law Enforcement Officials may be contacted if warranted (e.g., someone threatened with a weapon, terroristic threats, etc.).

Contraband

BRINGING CONTRABAND TO PROGRAM SESSIONS IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED AND WILL BE CONFISCATED AND RETURNED TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS ONLY! Depending on the contraband confiscated, the proper legal authorities could be notified.

- Items considered contraband include, but are not limited to gum, toys, electronic games, iPods, iPads, mp3 players, weapons, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products.
- It is unlawful for minors to be in the possession of alcohol or tobacco products. Students found to be in the possession of such products may be immediately suspended from the program. Depending on the contraband confiscated, the proper legal authorities could be notified.
- Students may be immediately dismissed from the program and all proper and necessary authorities could be notified if they or their family members bring weapons, drugs or drug paraphernalia of any kind onto parish property.

Search and Seizure

It is the policy of the Program to respect the privacy of its students. However, in the event that a student is suspected of having weapons or drugs in his/her possession or is believed to be a threat to himself/herself or others, the Director will be notified immediately. The Director will conduct a search with an adult staff member as a witness. Refusal on the part of the student to cooperate will result in the parents/guardians being contacted and asked to assist with the search. Parental refusal to cooperate will result in the student's immediate dismissal from the program.

Vandalism

The Program shares space with St. Anthony of Padua Pre-school and Day Care community. As such it is imperative that a healthy relationship be maintained between the two programs. All students are expected to respect parish property, which includes the school facilities and all items in the classroom.

At no time are CFF students permitted to use, touch, or borrow any material or items from the desks of the Pre-School and Day Care Community. Catechists are provided with classroom supplies and other essentials and will make them available to students when needed.

Incidents of vandalism to parish property, including school facilities, and the property of our Pre-School and Day Care will be taken most seriously. The parents of any student who is found to be responsible for an incident of vandalism will be required to make restitution for the damage inflicted.

Safe Environment Program

St. Anthony of Padua's religious education programs participate in and adhere to the Safe Environment Program (SEP) mandated by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. This policy has been in effect in all Archdiocesan parishes, schools, and children's programs since 2002, and has undergone several revisions as the SEP and State Law have evolved.

All program employees, staff, and volunteers who have direct contact with children are subject to State Police Background and Child Abuse History Clearance Checks prior to their serving in ministry. They are also required to participate in several training programs, including training on PA State Law concerning the mandated reporting of child abuse. These training courses are designed to help adults provide for a safe environment in which young people can learn, and to inform volunteers of their obligations and rights as a mandated reporter of child abuse.

Clearances must be completed prior to working in an environment with children. Training sessions must be completed within 90 days of beginning service with children.

In addition to the above requirements for employees and volunteers who have direct contact with children in a parish setting, all students in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia take part in grade appropriate lessons on the topic of personal safety. These lessons have been completely revised in 2019 and are now known as "KidTalk." Catechists in the Program are responsible for administering these lessons, the curriculum for which is provided by the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education in conjunction with the Office for Children and Youth Protection. These lessons are presented to all students during the last week of February and are noted on the yearly calendar that is provided to the parents of program participants. The lessons are available for review in the CFF office upon parental request. They are also available for viewing on the Office for Catechetical Formation's website: <https://bit.ly/2Z4T8nK>.

Parents who wish to preclude their children from participating in these lessons must submit a written request to the Director, which will become part of the student's permanent record. A copy of the parental request will also be submitted to the Archdiocesan Office for Children and Youth Protection per their policy. Such written requests must be renewed yearly.

Volunteers

(We recommend all parents participate in training to be able to assist with the program)

Volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to share their gifts of time and talent in service to the program. We are always seeking additional volunteers to assist with the arrival and dismissal of students, to serve as hall monitors or classroom aides, and to serve as catechists. All parents/guardians are required to abide by the Safe Environment Program of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, which includes the following:

Required Training

- ***Safe Environment Training session.*** This training is mandated by and provided through the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The training session is about two and a half hours long and must be completed by new employees and volunteers within 90 days of beginning service with Saint Anthony CFF. This training needs to be completed one time only.
- ***Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries (SMBB).*** All volunteers and employees must agree in writing to abide by and uphold the SMBB, which will be presented at the *Safe Environment Training Session*.
- ***Mandated Reporter Training:*** This training is required by PA State Law and is provided by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. It consists of three 20-minute training modules, which can be completed online. This training will be updated from time to time as PA State Law requires. Volunteers will be notified when this training requires updating. The entire training must be completed within 14 days of beginning service with Saint Anthony of Padua. **Required Background Checks**
- ***PA State Police Criminal Record Check.*** To be completed prior to beginning service with Saint Anthony CFF (free for volunteers). Must be renewed every five years.
- ***PA Child Abuse History Clearance.*** To be completed prior to beginning service with the Saint Anthony CFF (free for volunteers). Must be renewed every five years.
- ***Federal Background Check (Fingerprinting):*** Required only of volunteers who reside outside of Pennsylvania or who have resided outside Pennsylvania any time within the last 10 years (fee paid for by the volunteer and reimbursed by the parish once the processed clearance and receipt for payment have been submitted). To be completed prior to beginning service in Saint Anthony

CFF. Must be renewed every five years until 10 years of PA residency is attained. Thereafter, the volunteer must submit a *Disclosure Statement Application* every five years (see next bullet point).

- ***Disclosure Statement Application.*** To be completed every five years by volunteers who have resided in PA for at least 10 years.

Health & Safety Protocol & Emergency Procedures

The St. Anthony Religious Education DRE, Catechists and Volunteers prioritize the safety and well-being of all children present in the building during all Sessions and events and procedures have been implemented to provide safety in the event of a fire or internal or external threat. Cameras have been installed in both the church and rooms in the Education Center for security purposes. Evacuation and lockdown procedures are in place in the event of a fire or internal/external threat to the St. Anthony Education Center. All procedures are subject to review and revision by safety officials.

We ask parents/guardians to agree to the following terms and conditions and that they will abide by them regarding the safety and precautions necessary for CFF.

- Parents will abide by the drop-off and dismissal instructions as stated in the handbook.
- Students will use their CFF bag for materials which travel to and from the home. The bag must be clearly identified with their name.
- A student may not attend CFF or a CFF event if he/she is running a temperature over 100 degrees, experiencing symptoms of chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

Visitors to the School Building

To provide for and maintain a safe environment for our students, no one is permitted to enter the school building without the permission of the Director or her designee. **THIS INCLUDES ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES.** Parents/Guardians or relatives who need to drop off materials or contact program staff must report to the Parish Education Center Main Door.

NO ONE IS PERMITTED TO ENTER ANY OTHER AREA OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING with the exception of the multipurpose room during student pick-up WITHOUT THE EXPRESSED PERMISSION OF THE DIRECTOR OR DESIGNEE AND A VISITOR'S PASS.

No visitor is permitted to allow another person to enter the school building unless directed to do so by the Director or another member of the program staff.

Contact Information

Director of Religious Education

215.646.6150 x2 cff@saintanthonyparish.org

Parish Website: www.saintanthonyparish.org

CFF Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/stanthonyreligioused

