



# St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy

"A Faith Filled Future"

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# St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy Volunteer Handbook

## Welcome

Welcome to St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy and thank you for offering your gifts of time, talent, and treasure in the service of our school community!

Catholic Education has a long and rich history and foundation in parent voluntarism. Through the exercise of parental choice, Catholic schools have educated scores of students with the knowledge of the Catholic faith, a zeal for Christian service and myriads of academic and social skills. It is the parents who are the first educators of their children and it is the generosity of the parents who share their time and talents so that the torch of education can be shared with the professional educators in the Catholic Schools. Voluntarism is a natural outgrowth of a sense of involvement in the school.

Volunteers at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy have assisted in every area of education to facilitate the learning process for the students. They have assisted with mind, heart and spirit in the everyday functioning of the school as well as in special events that have enabled the administration and teachers to perform their work with competence and Christian concern in an atmosphere that fosters academic excellence and Christian leadership.

## Volunteer Activities/Programs

There are many activities in which volunteers are needed at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy. Each activity has a variety of responsibilities. Volunteers need to familiarize themselves with the duties of any given service in order to execute their services with

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reasonable care and ability. These responsibilities are noted within this handbook under “Volunteer Responsibilities” and “Responsibilities for Specific Programs/Assignments.”

## Volunteer Rights

As a St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy volunteer, you have the right to:

- be welcomed as a valued member of our school community;
- be assigned to a volunteer area where you feel comfortable and confident;
- the respect of our school community;
- receive necessary information and orientation;
- have your questions answered clearly and promptly;
- volunteer as long as you and the administration agree.

## Volunteer Responsibilities

It is important for all volunteers to understand and appreciate the following responsibilities and/or conditions for volunteering at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy:

- Every activity in St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy needs to be performed in an atmosphere of Christian kindness and concern for one another.
- Volunteers are expected to support the Catholic teachings of the Church and refrain from expressing any opinion that varies from Church teaching.
- Volunteers must always be positive role models. Children model a great deal of their behavior on their experiences with their own parents and other adults. Actions truly speak louder than words and these actions are often copied and repeated by children.
- Volunteers need to be physically and mentally present to the students if they are volunteering in a supervisory capacity. The health and well-being of the students, especially the younger ones, depends on this consistent vigilance. Children may never be left unsupervised and care should be taken that parents situate themselves when volunteering so that the safety and care of the children is maximized. If parents have volunteered to be of service in a situation of supervision, such as the cafeteria, classroom, gym or playground, they are committed to a serious responsibility. Any parent unable to fulfill an assigned

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supervisory responsibility needs to inform the office with sufficient notice so that a replacement can be obtained.

- Any form of corporal punishment is not permitted at St. Francis de Sales. Corporal punishment is any punishment that can be construed as punitive, including shaking, pushing, hair pulling, etc. Volunteers need to refrain from any touching that could be considered punitive.
- Children work best in a fair, consistent Christian environment. Volunteers are asked to consider what is in the best interests of all the children when volunteering at St. Francis de Sales .
- Volunteers are encouraged to enhance the professional atmosphere of the school by dressing appropriately and modestly for the activity at hand.
- Every word spoken to an adult or child needs to bespeak language that is uplifting and reverential. There is never a place or time at St. Francis de Sales where foul, demoralizing language or curse words are permitted. If children use inappropriate language they need to be immediately told that it is unacceptable and instructed in a better way to express themselves. Verbal interaction with children should always be positive and Christ-like.
- All volunteers must support the authority of teachers, staff, and administrators.
- Volunteers must arrive on time and stay for the agreed-upon time. If a volunteer is going to be absent or late for their assigned position, he/she should notify the appropriate persons/school office.
- **Volunteers must be aware of all emergency procedures.**

## School Security

All students, staff members, parents, volunteers have the right to a secure environment. Security takes on many facets at St. Francis de Sales . Volunteers are asked to sign-in at the Main Office when providing service and to wear a “Visitor” badge. This will alert anyone who does not know the parent/volunteer that he/she has administrative approval to be in the building or on the grounds. All parents/volunteers who volunteer are required to participate in the Diocesan-wide Virtus – Protecting God’s Children Program. Adequate adult supervision also increases the possibility for optimal child security and safety. Care should also be taken to secure the property, clothing, books, etc. of the children. Activities that foster a clean, well-managed facility also add to the security of the children.

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## Confidentiality

In the course of your volunteer work, you may learn confidential information about students and staff. As a volunteer, you are expected to keep this information confidential in any setting inside or outside the school, just as you would want your own privacy rights respected. Calling another parent to report what occurred at school is inappropriate and is not accepted.

However, there may be times when confidences cannot be kept. If a student confides that he/she is being abused or has a desire to hurt someone or him/herself, that information must be reported to the administration immediately. Simply put – Any information, which, if shared with parents and/or administrators, may save someone from harm, must be shared.

## Health and Safety

Advocates for children, especially those who volunteer their services in Catholic education, need to be vigilant that every child’s “health, education and welfare” are maintained at the highest level. The following are key points of health and safety for our volunteers:

- Volunteers in any type of supervisory capacity are asked to be vigilant that children are acting in a Christian manner that bespeaks Christian respect for body, mind and soul.
- Volunteers are asked to visibly display a visitor’s pass so that the children know immediately that they have permission to be with them.
- Volunteers are asked to survey the surroundings of an activity to assure that the area is physically safe (no harmful obstructions are present) for the children.
- Volunteers are asked to report to administration, or its delegated authority, any person that they feel has no permission to be in the building or on the grounds when children are present.
- Volunteers are asked to protect children by assuring that safety mechanisms are in place, such as, locked doors or unobstructed paths.
- Volunteers are asked to accompany any student who is hurt or feels sick to the school nurse. If a student appears too sick or hurt to go to the nurse, the nurse should be summoned to come to the child.
- Volunteers should give the nurse a description of what happened to a sick or hurt child and the names of others who were present, so that the incident can be documented and, if necessary, followed up.

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- If more than one volunteer is involved in an activity, the volunteers should spread out to maximize the field of vision and safety for all students.
- Volunteers should not administer first aid other than trying to make a child comfortable. The nurse is designated for any first aid treatments. The nurse or administration (not a volunteer) is also responsible for contacting a child’s parent if notification is necessary.
- Volunteers should never allow themselves to be alone with a student or to physically touch them. This maximizes protection of the child as well as the reputation of the volunteer.
- Volunteers are never allowed to drive students to any destination without the expressed permission of the child’s parent/guardian.
- Volunteers are never allowed to take pictures of the students while volunteering.

## **Responsibilities for Specific Programs/Assignments**

### **Cafeteria**

- • Each volunteer is responsible for being in attendance on time according to the scheduled list. If a parent is unable to fulfill this responsibility, advance notice should be given to administration so that a substitute can be contacted in time.
- • Volunteers are asked to situate themselves throughout the cafeteria so that supervision is maximized.
- • Children are expected to speak in a conversational tone at the table and display acceptable table manners.
- • Assistance is needed, especially with the younger students, with opening of milk containers, juice boxes, lunch boxes and wrapped food items or utensils. Volunteers need to go to the child, not the child to the volunteer, so that the child can remain seated. This will enhance the order in the cafeteria and prevent drinks or food from being spilled.
- • Volunteers are asked to assist the students in the clean-up effort. Children should be encouraged to clean up after themselves and instructed to place everything disposable at their places in waste baskets before being dismissed from the cafeteria.
- • Volunteers are asked to take a prayerful stance when Grace After Meals is recited. Children are expected to be reverent at prayer.
- • Volunteers are asked to assist with the lining up of the children when it is time to leave the cafeteria.
- • Volunteers need to follow the list of rules given to the students regarding their behavior in the cafeteria. These include:
  - Students may talk softly during lunch, however, talking is not permitted after prayers.

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- Students must raise their hands to ask permission to use restrooms located in the cafeteria.
- Students must be respectful at all times to adults in the kitchen and cafeteria.
- Students must sit properly with both feet on the floor.
- All students must remain seated unless they are using the restroom, or throwing out their trash.

## **Chaperones on Class Trips**

- Class trips are planned for the educational value they offer and for the enjoyment of the students. Volunteers are asked to facilitate the work of the teacher and tour guides so learning in a setting outside of the classroom is maximized.
- Each volunteer is responsible for being in attendance on time according to the scheduled list prepared by the teacher. If a parent is unable to fulfill this responsibility, advance notice should be given to administration so that a substitute can be contacted in time.
- Each volunteer will be assigned approximately five-six students to chaperone and supervise on a trip. The parent needs to be physically and mentally present to these assigned students during the course of the trip. If the parent is not familiar with the students, he/she should keep a list of the names of students and do frequent head counts throughout the day. Teachers will prepare lists prior to the trip to facilitate the chaperone’s job.
- Volunteers are asked to remind children to be seated when on the bus and to speak in a conversational tone. Everyone’s good behavior is expected so that the bus driver can drive safely to the trip’s destination and return home safely.
- If a volunteer or a student needs to leave the group, use a restroom, get medical attention, etc., the volunteer needs to partner with another volunteer or teacher so that no child is ever left alone. Volunteers need to partner with another volunteer when there is a scheduled rest stop. One parent should go to the restrooms while the other watches the remainder of the group in an adjacent area.
- The volunteers need to assist the teacher at the end of a trip when the children should be escorted to busses. A headcount must be done before any bus leaves an area.

## **Class Captains**

All class captains are given an additional guidelines at the beginning of each school year.

## **General Events/Fundraisers**

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Every special event or fundraiser has its unique responsibilities. In preparation for these events, chairpersons and committee members are asked to meet with administration in advance of the event to decide the various roles needed by volunteers in order to make the event safe and successful. All volunteers need to be apprised of their duties so that they can adequately perform the tasks needed. Since coverage is important to the success of any event, parent volunteers are asked to make every effort to be on time and perform the assigned tasks.

## Playground

- Each volunteer is responsible for being in attendance on time according to the scheduled list. If a volunteer is unable to fulfill this responsibility, advance notice should be given to administration so that a substitute can be contacted in time.
- Volunteers are asked to situate themselves throughout the playground so that supervision is maximized.
- Volunteers are asked to facilitate good sportsmanship on the yard and encourage the children to play appropriate group games that are inclusive of all of the students.
- Volunteers are asked to encourage the children to take turns where it is appropriate.
- Games that require excessive running or body contact should not be permitted. Volunteers are asked to encourage the children to choose games that are reasonably safe and age-appropriate and able to be played considering a large number of children are on the yard.
- **Volunteers are asked to immediately report any infraction of the rules or disciplinary issues to the classroom aide or teacher. Volunteers are NOT to take discipline into their own hands.**
- It is an expectation that children act with respect, in word and action, toward the adults and other children present on the yard.
- Volunteers are asked to assist the children in lining up at the end of recess and expect a modicum of quiet as they prepare to return to classes.

## Supervision of Volunteers

The principal is responsible for the total school operation; thus, he or she supervises or delegates supervision of all who serve in any capacity in this ministry.

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## **Right to Amend**

The principal reserves the right to amend this handbook. Volunteers will be notified promptly of any changes.

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