

# St. Robert Bellarmine Religious Education



Parent/Student Handbook  
2011 - 2012

**St. Robert Bellarmine Religious Education  
11900 Pacific Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68154**

**The Mission of St. Robert Bellarmine Religious Education Program is to partner with parents to provide opportunities for children in our parish to grow in their relationship with Jesus and their understanding of the Catholic faith.**

**How to reach us:**

**Phone:**

Religious Education Office	402-333-1959
Parish Office	402-333-8989
Fax	402-333-7188

**Email:**

Debbie Poledna	<a href="mailto:dpoledna@stroberts.com">dpoledna@stroberts.com</a>
Mary Mornin	<a href="mailto:mmornin@stroberts.com">mmornin@stroberts.com</a>

**Staff:**

Pastor	Fr. Don Shane
Associate Pastor	Fr. Michael Voithofer
Director of Religious Education	Debbie Poledna
Administrative Assistant	Mary Mornin

**Teachers:**

First Grade	Ms. Kathy DeBoer
Second Grade	Miss Kwin Kunkle
Third Grade	Mrs. Denise Podjenski
Fourth Grade	Mr. Dan Podjenski
Fifth Grade	Mrs. Traci Osuna
Sixth Grade	Mrs. Laurie Gillespie
Seventh Grade	Mrs. Kelly Vazquez
Eighth Grade	Mrs. Karen Owens
Specials	Miss Cassie Dalrymple
Specials	Mrs. Diane Mohatt



All persons wishing to be enrolled in Religious Education classes will be joyfully welcomed into our program and our community. We hope that all participants will choose to become full and active members of the parish. If you have not yet registered in the parish, please call the parish office at 402-333-8989 to register. All students in the program must be registered parishioners of St. Robert Bellarmine.

### **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL**

To ensure the safety of your child(ren), they should not arrive for class more than 5 to 10 minutes early. Teachers come early to prepare their classroom and there is not adequate supervision for children who arrive 15 to 30 minutes before their scheduled class time. Students will gather in the main school hallway immediately before class for opening prayer, parents are welcome. At dismissal, students will be dismissed from the main hallway. Parents are encouraged to pick up from the hallway.

### **ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESSES**

In case of an accident or illness during Religious Education, the student will be sent to the office where care will be given and a parent notified. When a parent cannot be contacted, the person listed as the emergency contact will be called. Current information is extremely important. When professional assistance is required, the rescue squad will be summoned and will provide transportation to a medical facility as necessary. The costs shall be the parent's responsibility.

### **ATTENDANCE INFORMATION**

For absences, a written note signed by the parent prior to the absence, a phone call to the office at 402-333-1959 from the parent, or an email Mary Mornin at [mmornin@stroberts.com](mailto:mmornin@stroberts.com) is requested. If we have no prior notice, we assume that the child should be in class. We will call you to determine the child's safe whereabouts.

Students must be in their classrooms when the class begins. Any student who is late will report to the Religious Education Office for a tardy pass. No student may leave the parish premises during class time or during a parish activity (see early dismissal of a student).

### **CELL PHONES**

Cell phones are not permitted during Religious Education hours. The use of cell phones **during class time** is prohibited. If a teacher finds it necessary to remove the cell phone, it will be sent to the office and remain there until a parent has an opportunity to pick it up. If you need to contact your child during class time, call the office at 402-333-1959 and a message will be delivered to your child in the classroom.

### **CLASS TIME SCHEDULE**

First Class - 4:30 – 5:45 p.m.  
Second Class - 6:00 – 7:15 p.m.

Students will enter the building through the flagpole doors. The hallway between the two gyms is where all students will gather before class. See traffic pattern, attachment A.

### **DISCUSSION OF CONCERNS – RESOLUTION OF CONCERNS**

Parents are asked to contact the appropriate teacher about any concerns they have regarding their child/children's education. If the parent's concerns are not resolved through discussion with the teacher, the Director of Religious Education will meet with both parents and teacher to assist in resolution of the concern. Concerns are most effectively addressed and resolved when parties to the concern speak from first-hand knowledge of events, remain open to and respectful of others' viewpoints, and focus their discussion on establishing the factual basis of the concern. Teachers are encouraged to be sensitive to and responsive to the

concern parents have for their child/children. Parents are encouraged to be trusting of the teacher's professional competence and supportive of the teacher's role as an authority essential to effective instruction of groups of students.

The Religious Education Director is responsible for the operation of the Religious Education Program, and in accord with that responsibility, has authority to make final decisions relative to resolution of concerns. The Religious Education Director also addresses concerns of parents relative to operations of the program. In the event that a parent feels that his/her concern has not been given due attention or that the resolution of the concern is not in accord with the mission, he or she may request further discussion from the pastor.

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Students with a condition which may be passed on to others in the classroom must be excluded from attending Religious Education classes until no longer contagious. Including but not limited to:

1. Chicken pox – students may return after pox has scabbed.
2. Fever – students should remain home until 24 hours after a fever breaks.
3. Antibiotics – students should be kept home for a minimum of 24 hours after starting on the medication.
4. Head Lice – students may return after treatment with head lice shampoo.
5. Vomiting and diarrhea – students should remain home until 24 hours after an episode.
6. Pink Eye – students should remain at home until 24 hours after an episode.

Some conditions may require a doctor's attention and note before returning to Religious Education classes.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL OF A STUDENT**

Whenever possible, medical and other appointments should be made outside of Religious Education class time. However, if it is necessary for a student to be excused during class, a note from a parent or guardian stating the exact time of leaving and the reason must be given to the student. The student must give the note to his/her teacher who will send it to the office. The parent and student must stop in the office before leaving the building through the main doors. These measures are in place to ensure the safety of each student.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL OR CLOSING**

The Religious Education Department recognizes the right and responsibility of parents to keep children at home when class is in session if they believe that bad weather poses a safety threat. Please call the school to inform us of such a decision. If weather is questionable, an automated phone call from our office and an email will be sent as a first line of communication. Closing of Religious Education will also be posted on the on the website ([www.stroberts.com](http://www.stroberts.com)) and television stations. When, because of inclement weather, it is deemed necessary to close school during regular class time, such notice will be given via automated phone call, email, website, and television. If public schools are cancelled for that day due to weather, Religious Education classes will also be cancelled.

### **FIRE, CRISIS, AND TORNADO DRILLS**

In accordance with regulations of the State Fire Marshal's office and the Omaha Fire Department, fire drills and tornado/disaster drills are held regularly.

All school personnel are versed in the defined procedures for emergencies, and students will always be protected and under close supervision.

Plans of action have also been developed for a variety of crises that may develop during Religious Education. The safety of the students and staff is always the highest priority.

## **FOOD**

Food, drinks, and gum are **not** permitted in the hallways or classrooms. Most classrooms have been renovated and the upkeep of our building is a high priority. Please make sure that your child has eaten his/her snack before entering the building. Special consideration is given to children with medical conditions.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework will be assigned according to individual teachers. This will require that books sent home be returned to class the following week.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

Items of personal adornment, which could be a distraction to the learning environment, will not be permitted in school. Any garment advertising drugs or alcohol or contains reference to put downs or glorified destruction are inappropriate. Office personnel have the authority to decide when clothing and accessories are inappropriate, distracting to the learning environment, or pose a threat to safety and they may instruct the student to remove such articles.

## **PICTURES**

Occasionally we have requests for photos of students to be used in various publications such as the Omaha World Herald or the Catholic Voice. If you object to your child/children having their picture published, please inform us in writing within the first week of classes.

St. Robert Bellarmine Parish has adopted a policy which includes pictures of students on the parish website. If you do not wish to have your child/children's pictures included, please inform the Director of Religious Education in writing no later than the first two weeks of classes.

## **SMOKING**

The school provides a smoke-free environment. Smoking is not permitted in the school building or on the grounds by any school representative or visitor during any school activity. Possession of tobacco products by students is a violation of the law and will be treated as a very serious offense.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

St. Robert Bellarmine Religious Education is a program with a mission to develop leaders of all to Christ. The program has adopted three guidelines for success. When a student chooses not to follow these guidelines, the teacher will implement the classroom discipline cycle. If the classroom discipline cycle does not remedy the situation, a Four Step School Discipline Cycle may be put into action.

Guidelines for Success:

1. Respect yourself and others as children of God.
2. Contribute to the learning environment.
3. Follow school and classroom procedures.

Occasionally, serious infractions occur that threaten the safety of our students. The infractions include but are not limited to physical/psychological danger, severe disrespect, and out of control behavior. If possible, the

adult who removed the student will work together to redirect the inappropriate behavior. If regaining control does not happen or the action warrants more serious attention, the student will be sent to the director's office and the Four Step Discipline Cycle will be set in motion.

### FOUR STEP SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CYCLE

- Step One:** The student and director develop a personal plan for the student to use in changing inappropriate behavior.
- Step Two:** If a student is sent to the director a second time within a two month period, a conference with a parent will be scheduled. A contract may be drawn up listing actions that will be taken by the parent, director, teacher, and student.
- Step Three:** If a student is sent to the director a third time within a two month period, or in extreme cases when the director determines the seriousness of the action warrants starting at Step Three of the Discipline Cycle, a parent conference will be scheduled and the student will be suspended for the next class. Depending on the severity of the situation, the conference would take place over the phone or in person. Step Three can be repeated as long as a student is able to demonstrate satisfactory improvement.
- Step Four:** The director will recommend expulsion.

An office referral will result in the implementation of the Four Step Discipline Cycle. Office referrals include, but are not limited to:

- The classroom management plan has not remedied a situation.
- Physical or psychological threat or assault.
- Theft of valuables.
- Public defiance or disrespect.
- Out of control behavior.
- Repeated exhibitions of offensive conduct and/or harassment.
- Any medications brought to school.
- When punches are thrown and a student is not quickly able to gain composure.
- Talking about and/or threatening to use a weapon.

The following infractions will always result in an immediate move to step three or step four:

- Serious physical or psychological threat or assault.
- Illegal possession or use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs.
- Leaving grounds without permission.
- Serious violence to a person or property.
- Weapons brought to school. This includes any kind of knife or "weapon like" instrument.
  - Weapons: Students are forbidden knowingly and voluntarily to possess, handle, transmit or use any instrument in school, on school grounds, or at school events that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon. Any object which could be used to injure another person and which has no school-related purpose will be considered a weapon for the purpose of this code.
  - The following are examples of instruments ordinarily or generally considered weapons: knives of all types, guns, lead pipes, chains, chuck-sticks, throwing stars, darts, metal knuckles, blackjacks, unauthorized tools, fireworks, matches, explosives or other chemicals. No toy weapons of any kind are allowed at school.
  - Police will be contacted when there is suspected violation of criminal laws concerning weapons.

Any other very serious infraction, in the judgment of the director, could result in an immediate move to step three or four.

\*\*If your child has been suspended from his/her 5-day school, the Director of Religious Education must be notified.

## **THE W.I.R.E.**

As an extra form of communication, the W.I.R.E. will be emailed to you on various Wednesdays. It is important that you check backpacks for extra mailings and read them in order to be informed about events in our parish.

If you or your organization has an item for inclusion in The W.I.R.E., please contact the office.

## **TRAFFIC**

St. Robert Bellarmine Parish has, because of its location and size, special problems that necessitate particular driving and parking patterns on our property. It is imperative, for the safety of the children, to follow our traffic pattern directions. It is the responsibility of the parents to comply completely with all parking regulations. All students will be dropped off at the flagpole doors with everyone following the one way traffic pattern. Students must exit on the passenger side of the car closest to the doors. All will gather in the main hallway until class time. At dismissal, all parents are to back into parking stalls in the south parking lot. For the safety of our students, ALL cars must be parked into a stall for pick up.

## **UNAUTHORIZED ARTICLES**

Common sense and consideration is the best guide in determining whether to bring personal possessions to class. In general, students should NOT bring toys or unusual items to class unless they are intended for a specific purpose in the classroom. Cell phones, IPODS, video games, or other electronic equipment are NOT permitted in class. If a teacher finds it necessary to confiscate any item, it will be sent to the office and remain there until a parent has an opportunity to pick it up.

## **VANDALISM**

Our school and school equipment is parish property. Willfully damaging or destroying this property is vandalism and is cause for immediate suspension and possible expulsion. It is the student/parent's responsibility to repair or replace any damaged property. If a student accidentally causes damage, it should be reported to a teacher immediately so that the damage is not misconstrued vandalism.

## **VISITORS**

For security reasons all outside doors will remain locked and closed at all times. All visitors are required to report to the office upon entering the building. Please enter through the Flag-Pole doors, ring the buzzer that is located to the right of the main flagpole doors. Then proceed down the hallway to the next set of locked doors. The buzzer is located to the left of these doors. Upon check-in, each visitor will be issued a pass. All staff has been instructed to report anyone who has entered the building and is not wearing a pass. In order to be consistent, this includes all visitors, even parents. Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the school and classrooms, at the same time they are considered visitors and must report to the office first.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

Parents and children registered in the Religious Education Program are asked to sign and return the acknowledgement form indicating that they have received and agree to support the policies and procedures in the Religious Education Parent / Student Handbook.  
(Updated 08-15-2011)

# St. Robert Bellarmine Acknowledgement of Religious Education Handbook Form

This is to acknowledge that I/we have received the St. Robert Bellarmine Religious Education Handbook. We understand and agree to support the policies and procedures.

Please return this signed **Acknowledgement of Religious Education Handbook Form** to the Office of Religious Education by October 5, 2011

Please Print Family Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature

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Date

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Child Signature

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Grade / Date

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Child Signature

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