

SAINT MARY MAGDALEN PARISH  
2400 N. PROVIDENCE ROAD  
MEDIA, PA 19063

2022

## SMM PREP PROGRAM HANDBOOK



### **Forming Disciples in Jesus Christ**

“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ” (Catechesi Tradendae #5).

# **Building a Family of Faith in Jesus Christ**

## **through Catholic Worship, Formation, and Charity**

**SAINT MARY MAGDALEN  
OFFICE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
PREP FAMILY HANDBOOK**

THIS HANDBOOK CONTAINS CERTAIN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SAINT MARY MAGDALEN PREP 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 PROGRAM DIRECTOR.

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.

# **MISSION STATEMENT & PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

## **Saint Mary Magdalen Parish Mission Statement**

We, the faithful of St. Mary Magdalen parish, are a Catholic Christian community committed to the Gospel message that Jesus Christ is our Savior. Our mission is to spread the Good News of Salvation. We strive to accomplish our mission by welcoming all to be a part of our worshipping community through prayer, the Eucharistic celebration, and other sacraments by witnessing the Truth in word and deed; teaching and proclaiming God's Word; loving our brothers and sisters; healing and serving those in need. We pray to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through the intercession of Mary, our Mother, Saint Mary Magdalen, and all the saints to grace and guide us.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Canon Law, the law of the Church, states that “parents above others are obliged to form their children in the faith and practice of Christian life by word and example (Can. 774 §2). The General Directory for Catechesis, the National Directory for Catechesis, and many other Church documents resound this sentiment. At your child's baptism, you accepted "the responsibility of training your child in the practice of the faith" and acknowledged "your duty to bring your child up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor" (Rite of Baptism). St. Mary Magdalen Parish recognizes and affirms parents in their role as the primary catechists of their children. Its parish religious education programs exist to assist parents in fulfilling their obligation by providing them with a formal, structured, and planned program of catechesis and formation.

## **SMM PREP MISSION STATEMENT**

Saint Mary Magdalen Prep exists solely for the purpose of evangelizing the students and their families in the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to deepen their awareness and understanding of God's loving presence in their lives, to strengthen their relationship with God as Father, Son, and Spirit, to provide them with opportunities to live and give witness to their Catholic faith and to form them in a life of intentional discipleship. The challenge of being an intentional disciple is central to the development of each student, family, and staff member.

## CORE PRINCIPLES

To achieve our mission, the core principles listed below form the foundation and strength of our Religious Education Programs. Through the application of these core principles, it is our hope that we assist parents in cultivating their hearts, minds, and souls, and those of their children in order to become the person God has called and created them to be.

- 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 life to be lived.
- To live in the awareness that sacramental life is central to expressing our love for God and that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist is the source and 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 and an 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 growth in the individual's spiritual life through the Mass, Rosary, personal 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 and that the dignity of creation and especially the human person, need to be respected accordingly.

In addition, the Religious Education Programs assist parents in their God-given role as educators in the faith life of their children by:

- Providing religious education classes for children.
- Providing opportunities for prayer, adoration, service, liturgy, and stewardship within the program for students, parents, and families.

- Providing opportunities for families to participate in liturgies, seasonal activities, and works of mercy.
- Providing regular opportunities for families to become involved in participant assignments and projects.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Students are to report to St. Mary Magdalen School, located at 2400 N. Providence Rd, Media, Pa., no earlier than 4:45 PM and no later than 5 PM (for levels 1,3,4,5,6). For students in the Sacramental years of 2 and 7, please report to the school after the 9:30 am Sunday mass which would be around 10:30 am. When dropping off and picking up, please enter the school by the furthest entry point driveway of the school. The children will be dropped off and picked up from the school's back parking lot.

**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.**

When available, the Upper Providence Police Department will provide a police presence to us during arrival and dismissal. We ask that all families comply with the arrival and dismissal procedures established in this handbook in order to ensure the safety of students. Please follow the direction of police officers and those volunteers who are assisting in the parking lot.

### 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 program 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 program 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 program 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 program 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 in regard to sacramental preparation and celebrations.

## **DISMISSAL**

Unauthorized adults (which includes parents and guardians) are not permitted to enter the school building at dismissal time for the safety of our students and staff. Adherence to the dismissal procedures outlined below will help to allow all students to exit the building in a safe, orderly, and timely manner.

### **STUDENT PICK-UP PROCEDURES:**

- All cars must enter the driveway closest to the school
- Parents are permitted to meet their children at the back entrance of the school building and escort them to the parking lot. However, parents are not permitted in the school building during or prior to dismissal.
- Parents are asked to make sure that their children know who is picking them up and where to meet them. Remind them not to go home with anyone else and not to start walking home if they are running late.
- If you are running late, your child will be brought back into the school building and remain under the supervision of staff until you arrive. Please report directly to the school building when arriving late to pick up your children.

Staff will be on hand to help supervise the students as they dismiss. Parents and those responsible for picking up their children are expected to follow the directions of staff members in the parking lot. They are there to help ensure the safety of your children and should be respected by both adults and students alike.

**PARENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER THE SCHOOL BUILDING DURING DISMISSAL.  
PARENTS ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS ARE TO USE THE FRONT SCHOOL ENTRANCE.**

## **DRESS CODE**

Saint Mary Magdalen Prep has no formal dress code in that uniforms are not required. However, we encourage students to wear their normal day school uniform to the program. In lieu of a school uniform, 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 be maintained at all times.
- Short shorts, bare midriffs, t-shirts with inappropriate images or sayings are not permitted.
- Heelys skate shoes are not permitted.

The program director reserves the right to exclude students from class until dress code violations have been addressed. The program 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 smartphones have become a necessary and convenient tool in maintaining communication between parents and children. In order to prevent such devices from becoming a distraction while in class, we have established the following policy:

- Students who bring cell phones or smartphones 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 program 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 school 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.

## ENROLLMENT

Saint Mary Magdalen Prep 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 CCD, 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 3<sup>rd</sup> grade a student does not re-enroll in any program until 6<sup>th</sup> 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 due to 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 in order to receive Confirmation DO NOT meet this requirement. Therefore, their reception of Confirmation will be deferred until they satisfy this requirement.

## FAMILY VACATIONS

We understand that work schedules and family finances may preclude families from taking vacations during the summer months when school is not in session. While family vacations during the school year may be relaxing and rewarding for students and their families, they present difficulties for some students and catechists. Please make every effort not to plan family vacations during the school year.

Should a family elect to take a family vacation during the school year, The Program will be under no obligation to provide materials and lessons, including assignments, homework, and projects, in advance of such an absence. However, parents are responsible for making up any missed class work with their children prior to their return to the program. Parents are to consult with their child's Class Calendar for information on assignments. See **Student Absences** for details on parental expectations with regard to missed class work and assignments.



## **LATENESS**

Classes begin promptly at 5 PM (Levels 1,3,4,5,6) and 10:30 am(Levels 2 and 7). We allow students to report to their classrooms as early as 4:45 PM and 10:15 am, respectively. Any participant arriving after 5:15 PM or 10:45 am will be considered late. Students arriving late are to report to the main entrance of the school building. They will sign in, receive a late slip, and then report to class. Excessive or chronic lateness will be addressed with parents by the program director.

## **PROGRAM FEES**

Program fees are a necessary part of the Program and help ensure that the Program can provide students and their families with the most current and best catechetical resources for their formation needs.

The PREP Program fee is due in full at the time of registration. However, being sensitive to the needs of our families, a deferred payment plan is available upon request. Anyone who cannot pay the fee in full at the time of registration or who has difficulty making payment due to hardship should contact the program director to discuss other possible arrangements.

In the event that a student voluntarily leaves the Program during the program year or is dismissed from the Program for any reason, including, but not limited to poor attendance, a disciplinary incident, or the possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, or a weapon on parish property, no refund of tuition or material fees will be made to the family.

In addition, there may be certain material fees associated with sacramental preparation that are in addition to the Prep Program fee. These material fees cover incidentals associated with sacramental preparation, including, but not limited to, sacramental enrichment packets, retreat experiences, guest speakers, certificates, etc. These fees have separate due dates, which will be provided to families of sacramental candidates under separate cover.

## **SNACK FREE ZONE**

In response to the many Prep 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 time.

If there is an occasion for a special celebration, which includes special foods or snacks, the event shall be held in a communal PREP setting, such as the parish auditorium. 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).

## **STUDENT ABSENCE**

Regular and consistent attendance in the Prep program is essential in helping students master the knowledge of their faith. Attendance is one of several key factors considered when determining student eligibility for promotion.

Poor attendance can negatively impact a student's ability to attain proficient mastery of their faith. The following policies have been adopted to ensure that students succeed in mastering knowledge of their faith and the core content for their grade level.

- Students absent from 4 or more classes during the program year may be required to complete additional studies 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 a) finish the school year via home-based catechesis with parents, or b) reenroll in the following year's program and repeat their current grade. Students that elect option a) must successfully complete the program's home-based catechesis program established by the Program to be eligible for promotion at the end of the program year.

### **EXTENDED ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS**

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 program 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 completing 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.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM**

Saint Mary Magdalen 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 trainings 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 CCD office upon parental request. They are also available for viewing on the Office for Catechetical Formation's website.

Parents who wish to preclude their children from participating in these lessons must submit a written request to the program 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.

## **SNOW EMERGENCIES & PROGRAM CANCELLATIONS**

In the event of inclement weather, an email will be sent to all parents/guardians indicating the cancellation of PREP classes by 3 pm (Levels 1,3,4,5,6) or 7:30 am (Levels 2 and 7).

**IF PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED OR ARE DISMISSED EARLY DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER, THEN CCD CLASSES WILL BE CANCELLED FOR THAT DAY AS WELL.**

### **COMPLETING ASSIGNMENTS DURING PROGRAM CANCELLATIONS**

In the event of a program cancellation, parents are responsible for implementing that week's lesson at home with their children.

## VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING

In order to provide for and maintain a safe environment for our students, no one is permitted to enter the school building without permission from the program director or his designee. **THIS INCLUDES ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES.** Parents/Guardians or relatives who need to drop off materials or make contact with program staff must report to the front desk and sign in. If a parent/guardian stays in the building for a longer period, a visitor's pass will be required.

- ***NO ONE IS PERMITTED TO ENTER ANY OTHER AREA OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING WITHOUT THE EXPRESSED PERMISSION OF THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR OR HIS 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 program director or another program staff member.

## VOLUNTEERS

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 Mary Magdalen PREP. 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 minutes 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 Albert the Great CCD.

## REQUIRED BACKGROUND CHECKS

- **PA State Police Criminal Record Check.** To be completed prior to beginning service with Saint Albert the Great CCD (free for volunteers). Must be renewed every five years.
- **PA Child Abuse History Clearance.** To be completed prior to beginning service with the Saint Albert the Great CCD (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 Mary Magdalen PREP. 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.

## FORMATION & ACADEMIC LIFE

### 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 come to know their faith and the teachings of Christ Jesus and his Church and enable them to live their faith as a disciple of Christ Jesus. To help achieve this goal, catechists will administer various formative assessments to students over the course of each semester. Formative assessments are used to monitor student learning and provide ongoing feedback to catechists and students to improve learning. Specifically, formative assessments help students identify their strengths and weaknesses so that they and catechists can target areas that need work. Formative assessments 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 student's mastery of the material presented.

Assessments will be administered at the discretion of the catechists and may be formal (such as a quiz or a chapter/unit review) or informal (such as a classroom debate, review games, class/group discussion, etc.) In the event of a formal assessment, catechists will provide a minimum of one week's advanced notice to students. All catechists are expected to administer a minimum of three assessments for each marking period. Modified assessments may be provided to those students with documented learning challenges.

As a tool, the assessment will provide feedback to students, parents, and catechists on topics and concepts that require further review and study. When indicated, help will be provided to students, and parental involvement may be required to ensure successful outcomes.

## CALENDARS

### PREP Program Calendar

Families will receive a yearly program calendar containing all the pertinent dates and happenings for the PREP program, sacramental preparation, and parish events. The most up-to-date calendar will always be available on the PREP page of our parish website: <https://www.stmarymagdalen.net/prep>.

### N.B.

The PREP Program Calendar is tentative and subject to change. Any changes will be conveyed to parents by the Program Director.

## CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students must 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 prepared for class. Students must ensure that they have the proper materials for class, including, but not limited to, their textbook, writing implement, and copybook. Students that report to class without a textbook may be required to rent one for the session. See **Textbooks** for additional details. Additional supplies may be required and will be conveyed by catechists.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum for the Program follows the religious guidelines established by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. These Guidelines may be viewed and downloaded by parents at: <http://phillyocf.org/prep-resources/>.

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. Therefore, it is important for parents to note that in order to meet the objectives outlined in the scope and sequence for a particular grade level, a catechist may not be teaching chapters sequentially. The scope and sequences of the Archdiocese may also be obtained using the link above.

## DISCIPLINE

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 by students or their family members.

These categories do not cover every possible situation. The program director determines 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 program 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 and has failed to respond to a catechist's attempt to stop or correct the behavior, the student will be removed from the classroom, and the student's parents/guardians will be immediately notified by the program director. Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, the program director will

1. Schedule a conference with the parents/guardians, student, and catechist to address the incident.
2. 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 according to our attendance policies. 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.

3. 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 CCD/Prep Program at a neighboring parish, or completing the program year by homeschooling their child in accord with the homeschooling policies of the Program and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. No tuition or material fees refund will be made regardless of which option is selected by parents.

The program director reserves the right to supersede the forgoing course of action depending on the particular 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 behaviors that hinder or undermine such an environment. Therefore, acts of harassment, hazing, intimidation and bullying (including cyberbullying 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. The 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, bullying, etc. If incidents do occur, students should be able to report and know that the 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.

- o Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, hair pulling, or throwing something
- o Getting another person to hit or harm a student
- o Teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks, or threatening in person or by other means
- o Demeaning and making another the victim of jokes
- o Making rude and/or threatening gestures
- o Excluding or rejecting the student



- o Intimidating (bullying), extorting, or exploiting
- o Spreading harmful rumors or gossip

If the bully is threatening harm, a student should tell a catechist, adult volunteer, and/or the program 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 program director will be notified immediately. The program 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. Mary Magdalen School 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 PREP students permitted to use, touch, or borrow any material or items from the desks of St. Mary Magdalen School students. 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 St.

Mary Magdalen School students, will be taken most seriously. The parents of any student found responsible for an incident of vandalism will be required to make restitution for the damage inflicted. The school and parish will prosecute violators to the fullest extent of the law and take appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal from the program for serious acts of vandalism.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is a vital part of the formational and instructional component of the program as it helps students reinforce and broaden 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 online 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

## **PROMOTION**

In order to be eligible for promotion to the next PREP 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 various formative assessments throughout the course of the program year. In addition to assessments, the timely completion of assignments and homework, classroom participation, and overall attendance is 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 mastering the required material. If needed, a conference between the program director, parents, catechist, and the student will be scheduled to address the situation and develop interventions to help the student achieve success. The program director makes final decisions for promotion and retention at the end of the program year.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

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

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

- Student must be enrolled in CCD/PREP and/or Catholic School for two consecutive years.
- Student must be in Level 2 or above for Penance and/or Eucharist

- Student must be in Level 7 or above for Confirmation.

### **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. Mary Magdalen 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. Mary Magdalen.

## **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.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **CALENDAR AND COMMUNIQUEÉS**

The latest and most up-to-date program calendar will always be available on the parish website at <https://www.stmarymagdalen.net/prep> . This calendar will contain all pertinent dates related to CCD 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 program director of changes to this email address in order to ensure effective communication of program-related matters.

### **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 communiqués 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.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Parents should feel free to contact the program director regarding any concerns or problems that may develop during the course of the year. The program director may be contacted using any of the means listed below. However, the quickest response will be obtained via email.

**Deacon Joseph Boyle:** 610-566-8821 ext 125

**E-mail:** [prep@stmarymagdalen.net](mailto:prep@stmarymagdalen.net)

**SMM Website:** [stmarymagdalen.net](http://stmarymagdalen.net)

## UPDATING CONTACT INFORMATION

The contact information you provide at the time of registration will be used as the primary means of contacting you. Updating changes to this information, especially changes to email addresses, is your sole responsibility. In order to receive necessary and vital information pertaining to your child's participation in our program, you must notify the program director of any changes in address, phone number, or email.

