



Volunteer Handbook

2010-2011

**Saint Joseph School
159 West Main Street
Meriden, Connecticut 06451
203-237-6800**

**Website: www.sjs-meriden.org
Email address: SJS@sjs-meriden.org**

Right to Amend

Saint Joseph School reserves the right to amend this handbook at any time. Such changes will be noted in a communication to the volunteers.

Dear Volunteers,

*“I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you,
you should also do.”
John 13:15*

May this letter serve as a sign of my gratitude for your willingness to share your time and talent with the faith community of Saint Joseph School.

The faculty and staff look forward to working with you to promote the value of service as you join in the teaching ministry of the Church. I encourage you to ask for help, direction, or advice as you participate in the numerous opportunities to volunteer.

Together let us pray that God, who began this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

I thank you for your priceless gift of gratuitous service.

In gratitude,

Mrs. Kathy Spencer
Principal

Volunteer Handbook Mission Statement

“For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve...” (Mark 10:45)

Research indicates that parent/grandparent volunteerism in schools enhances student self-esteem, increases academic achievement and improves student behavior and attendance. We appreciate the priceless service that you provide us and we have created this Volunteer Handbook to assist you. We want to make sure that you are well informed on all aspects of volunteering at Saint Joseph.

Mission Statement

Saint Joseph School is a K-8 Catholic educational community, which has served generations of families in Meriden and surrounding towns since 1915.

Our caring and dedicated staff creates a welcoming atmosphere and prepares students to meet the future with a foundation of faith, skills and knowledge.

Understanding the changing lifestyles of today, we provide each child with the opportunity to reach his/her potential emphasizing the two great commandments of the Church:

Love of God and Love of Neighbor

Archdiocese of Hartford Vision Statement

The fundamental purpose of Catholic schools is to advance the educational mission of the Church! Catholic schools educate diverse student bodies to form Catholic, person-centered learning communities; provide quality teaching through traditional and innovative educational programs infused with Catholic Social Teachings; involve students to serve and support parish life and the local civic communities; graduate students who are critical thinkers, productive moral citizens, and spiritual leaders; and recognize and appreciate parents as the primary educators of their children.

PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Volunteer Pledge

Volunteers are asked to complete the Volunteer Pledge found at the end of this handbook.

Background Check

Depending on the nature of the responsibility, volunteers may be subject to the Archdiocesan background check.

Virtus Program

Depending on the nature of the responsibility, volunteers may be required to attend a Virtus Training Program. The VIRTUS programs empower organizations and people to better control risk and improve the lives of all those who interact with the Church.

Signing in and out

Visitors and volunteers to the school are to sign in and out at the school office. They will be required to wear badges for identification during their stay. The badges will be returned to the office when the visitors and volunteers sign out.

Dependability

The school relies on your support. We ask that you follow through on tasks by attending to scheduled times and please give notice of absence whenever possible.

Confidentiality

A volunteer operates in a position of trust. Personal information pertaining to students must be kept confidential. Children's actions, responses, progress or problems at school are not for sharing in the community. Conversations between parents, teachers and students in the school are confidential. Volunteers should not discuss these conversations outside of school. Refer any concerns to the Administration. All volunteers will be required to sign the Volunteer Pledge.

Volunteer Dress

Saint Joseph School has very detailed expectations for student dress. Although volunteers do not have a dress code requirement, it is expected that volunteers reflect the image of Saint Joseph School and wear modest clothing while working in the school or during school activities.

Responsibility

The Administration of Saint Joseph School is accountable for facilitating, monitoring, evaluating and providing continuity for the success of the volunteer program. The staff is committed to welcoming volunteers, informing them about their tasks, encouraging their initiatives and celebrating their efforts. Volunteers are expected to adhere to school rules and procedures, perform assigned tasks to the best of their ability, work cooperatively with all staff and seek clarification when necessary.

In the event of a crisis situation, a volunteer who is watching a group of students in a classroom should bring the Crisis Folder (found by the door of each room) with him/her when he/she leaves the room with the students.

Inclement Weather

If it should be necessary to close the school because of weather conditions, an announcement will be made over television. School closing will also be posted on the website www.sjs-meriden.org.

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**The following sections (Child Safety & Legal Issues) derived from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops guidelines regarding the Protection Of All God's Children encompasses both school and church.*

CHILD SAFETY & LEGAL ISSUES

Guidelines for the Supervision of Minors

Guidelines include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Church personnel are responsible for releasing minors in their care at the close of activities only to parents, legal guardians or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians in writing.
2. Programs for minors should not be administered by only one adult without additional adult supervision.
3. Church personnel should report uncontrollable or unusual behavior of minors to parents as soon as possible.
4. Facilities should be monitored during church services, and all school and other activities.
5. Parents should be encouraged to be part of all services and programs in which their children and young people are involved.
6. Parental permission should be obtained, including a signed medical treatment authorization form before taking minors on trips. Have minors use a "buddy system" whenever they go on trips away from church property.
7. Always obtain parental approval before permitting any minor to participate in athletic or other activities that involve potential risk.

Code of Conduct

It is essential that anyone who undertakes a position of leadership or ministry in the Church be constantly mindful of the trust they have been given. To faithfully discharge the responsibilities that accompany our work requires constant prayerful reflection since we must be sustained and supported by God's grace. Our obligations also require each of us to periodically undertake a personal inventory. It is hoped this Code of Conduct will assist us in this task.

These statements do not presume to provide answers to all ethical questions. They present a set of general ethical standards to help guide our day-to-day actions and form a framework for developing policies and discussing ethical questions. It is anticipated, however, that Church personnel in the Archdiocese of Hartford do agree to abide by these principles and understand that disregarding them may lead to remedial action.

PRINCIPLES

Church personnel of the Archdiocese of Hartford shall:

- Actively embrace the teachings and precepts of the Catholic Church and work to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Demonstrate their respect for the rights, dignity and worth of each person from conception to natural death.
- Conduct their relationships with others free of deception, manipulation, exploitation or intimidation.
- Ensure just treatment for colleagues, employees, volunteers, parishioners and others who may be affected by the administration of their ministries.
- Provide a professional education and work environment that is non-discriminatory, free of all forms of physical, sexual, psychological abuse including written or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- Accept personal responsibility to protect, to the best of their ability, children, youths, and adults, especially those who are physically or mentally challenged, from all forms of abuse or neglect.
- Provide counseling for individuals or groups in a way that protects and respects each person's rights and advances their welfare without benefit to themselves as counselor.
- Keep all information received in the course of counseling, spiritual direction or other professional or ministerial contact, in the strictest confidence except as mandated by law.
- Refrain from making false accusations against another or revealing the faults and failings of another to those who have no right to know.
- Be responsible stewards of Church resources, human and financial, observing canon and civil law and making decisions regarding the disposition of resources, which reflect Catholic Social teachings.
- Maintain a high level of competence in their particular ministry. Prudently attend to their own physical, spiritual, mental and emotional well-being.
- Avoid accepting or conferring an office, position, assignment or compensation, which may present even the appearance of a conflict of interest.
- Examine their own actions and intentions objectively to ensure that their behavior promotes the welfare of the community and exemplifies the strong moral tradition of the Church.
- Promptly report incidents of ethical misconduct by other Church personnel to the proper Church and/or civil authority.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Lunch/Recess Duty

11:50-12:30 to supervise students at recess and lunch to allow teachers to have a lunch break.

Hot Lunch

Count money, distribute lunches, and sell snacks.

Library/Media Center

Assist Mrs. Pomeroy with library and/or computer classes. Help catalog, sort, and snack books. Times vary.

School Store

Help in school store on Fridays from 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Junior High Dances

Organize and chaperone dances for students in grades 6-8. Monthly dates on calendar.

Building and Grounds Committee

Serve on committee to improve and maintain building and grounds. Times vary.

Computer Committee

An advisory committee to evaluate and service the school's computers. Meeting dates vary.

Parade Committee

A committee to plan and organize the participation of Saint Joseph School in various parades.

Athletic Program and/or Athletic Association

Assist with the sports programs. Dates/times vary.

Annual Musical Production

Assist with the Meriden Catholic Schools annual musical. Dates/times vary.

Room Leader

Work with classroom teacher and Home and School Association to improve communication and organize activities. Dates/times vary.

Multicultural Luncheon

Assist with decorating Rosary Hall and serving students during the Multicultural Luncheon during Catholic Schools Week. Last week in January.

Advisor Family

Invite new parents to school events, be available to answer any questions that the new parents may have and help to make new families feel that they are an important part of the Saint Joseph School community. Dates/times vary.

General Mills Box Tops for Education

Collect, organize and submit box tops to support Saint Joseph School. Create own schedule.

Campell's Soup Labels

Collect, organize and submit soup labels to support Saint Joseph School. Create own schedule.

** Saint Joseph School relies on parent volunteers to help with recess duty at lunch time. This allows the teachers the opportunity to have a lunch separate from their students. Any time that anyone can give is very much appreciated. Below is a breakdown of the times and duties.

Recess Duty

11:50 a.m. - 12:35 p.m.

- * Walk the length of the playing area.
- * Watch for minor accidents.
- * Send students in to the school if there is a problem.
- * Expect respect from the students.
- * Students are not to leave the play area or go beyond the orange cones.
- * Grades use the court area - (Running is allowed in the court area.)
- * Running in the play yard is not allowed. Only students who are in the “court area” are allowed to run. Students may hop, jump, or skip in the play area.
- * Balls are used at the discretion of the teacher/volunteer on duty. Students in grades kindergarten through 4 will be allowed to use Nerf style balls only. The game of football is not allowed.

Rainy/Snowy Days

Students remain in their classrooms. Volunteers are to walk between classes to be sure that the students are in their seats. Students must have your permission to leave the classroom.

Problems

Please notify the office if any child is disrespectful, does not follow your directions or uses improper language. Volunteers are expected to use their own judgment and common sense. Termination of an activity is at the discretion of the volunteer on duty.



VOLUNTEER PLEDGE

I pledge to volunteer my time and talents in service to the children of Saint Joseph School.

I will uphold the expectations of the role of volunteer by observing guidelines outlined in the Volunteer Handbook and by being committed to my duties.

I promise to respect the confidentiality of the students, faculty and staff.

I have read and understand Saint Joseph School's mission statement and will follow the rules, policies and procedures outlined in the Volunteer Handbook to the best of my ability.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Please sign and date, and return to the Principal's Office. If you are required, by the nature of your volunteer duties, to submit to a background check, the principal will send you the materials and answer any questions you may have.