



17 May 2019

Dear Families,

I am writing to inform you of important policy changes regarding registration for Religious Education classes. This policy will take effect beginning in September of 2019.

We do our best to grant requests for siblings/family members/friends to be placed in classes together. Similarly, we also try very hard to accommodate requests for students to have a particular teacher. At present, classes are arranged in the following ways:

1. Working to ensure that every student who makes a request has at least ONE friend in their class.
2. Working to grant teacher requests.
3. Working to make class sizes between 10-12 students. (Note: Sunday classes tend to be on the smaller size because of the number of students registered for Sunday mornings). To do this, it often requires that we have at least 3 teachers/grade (sometimes more, particularly in grades 1 and 2, 9 and 10 where students are preparing for a sacrament)
4. At the elementary level we work to create classes so that if a student has not made a specific friend request, he or she is placed in a class with other students from their elementary school. Sometimes this means there are 5 students from one school and 5 students from another in the same class. On occasion we have situations where a student is the only child registered from a particular school for that day/time. **This year we will randomly assign students to classes in grades 1-5. This may mean that your child is in a class with 1-2 people from their school and then a combination of students from the other area elementary schools. We have found that grouping students together by school sometimes creates a level of comfort among the students that can prove to be disruptive to the classroom environment. We will continue to do our best to see that students are in a class with at least ONE friend (if a request is made) and/or at least 1-2 other students from their elementary school if possible.**
5. At the middle and high school levels we work to grant friend and teacher requests and then aim to create classes that are between 10-12 in size and a combination of both male and female students. Again, to ensure class sizes of 10-12, it requires at least 4 teachers per grade at the middle school level and approximately 6-7 teachers in grade 9. Students who join us in grade 10 from an area Catholic school are grouped with other Catholic school students.

In recent years we have seen a surge of late registrations with requests for a particular friend or teacher. These registrations are often received after the deadline and after class lists have been made. This puts us

in the uncomfortable position of having to tell a child they cannot be with a friend OR having to ask a volunteer teacher to accommodate extra children at the last minute.

To that end, all registration forms for 2019-2020 need to be submitted by August 1<sup>st</sup>. Forms received after the August 1<sup>st</sup> deadline will be accepted **BUT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT FRIEND OR TEACHER REQUESTS WILL BE GRANTED. Registrations received on the first day of classes (or after) will continue to be accepted BUT your student will be placed wherever there is space. This means that he or she MAY NOT be in a class with other students from their elementary school, with a friend, or with a specific teacher. Essentially, requests made on the first day of classes WILL NOT BE GRANTED.**

### **First Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation**

Preparation for First Penance/First Communion is a TWO YEAR program. Students must complete **both** first and second grade in order to make First Penance/First Communion.

Preparation for Confirmation is also a TWO YEAR program. Students must attend classes in both ninth and tenth grade in order to be Confirmed. (Exception: Students who attend Catholic high schools need only attend the program in 10<sup>th</sup> grade.)

If you have a second grade student, please be aware that he or she MUST be registered for the program within the first three classes of the year. **Students who enroll after the first three classes WILL NOT be permitted to make First Penance or First Communion that year but will need to complete TWO years of second grade. \***

If you have a tenth grade student, please be aware that he or she MUST be registered for the program within the first TWO classes of the year. **Students who enroll after the first two classes will not be Confirmed that year and will need to complete TWO years of tenth grade. \***

These changes have become necessary and will help us to create equitable class sizes, understand the number of teachers we need at each grade level, help us order accurate numbers of materials for each class, assist in making classroom management easier for our volunteers, and ensure that students who are preparing to receive a sacrament are adequately and fully prepared.

A registration form for the 2019-2020 Religious Education year is enclosed with this letter. Forms will also be available at the entrances to the church and on our parish website at [www.stcatherinenorwood.org](http://www.stcatherinenorwood.org) under the "Education" tab. Forms are also available at any time by contacting us directly at [ymindirector@gmail.com](mailto:ymindirector@gmail.com).

We thank you for your time and attention to this important matter!

Sincerely,

Leah C. Ramsdell  
Director of Religious Education and Youth Faith Formation