

CHRSM Policies and Procedures

“If you learn everything except Christ, you learn nothing. If you learn nothing but Christ, you learn everything.”

-Saint Bonaventure

Our Vision:

Our ministry motto comes from the wise words of St. Bonaventure. With this insight, we seek to set our ministry focus on the opportunity to come together as Christians and to encourage each other on our path toward Heaven.

While academic classes play a significant role in the ministry’s offering, they are but a single element of our mission. We hope and pray that CHRSM becomes a sanctuary of sorts for us all— a place where our children can learn and grow together in a community of faith. A home where this group of amazing mothers and fathers can go for inspiration and support, and where our love for each other becomes a light to our community. We hope to accomplish that vision by focusing on creating a multidimensional ministry that offers the following benefits:

- 1) A community of families who celebrate the liturgical year together through the sacraments of Mass and Penance, feast days and solemnity observances, and recognition of the lives of the saints.
- 2) A support network that endeavors to wash each other's feet, just as our Savior once did. Through service and fellowship, we routinely come together for efforts like providing meals for new moms and the sick, prayer intentions, social time, book clubs, Rosary walks, retreats, etc.
- 3) A comprehensive offering of supplemental classes that both honor and align with our core values to promote homeschooling beginning with preschool and continuing all the way through high school, during the most informative and critical years of a child’s life.
- 4) A social calendar with frequent opportunities to fellowship and connect with our community, such as daily lunches, high school swing dances, Autumn Hoedown, Father/Daughter Dance, and other occasional events to celebrate the liturgical year, etc.

Academic Calendar:

We will be meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the upcoming academic year. There will be no classes during Thanksgiving week. We generally take three weeks off for Christmas/New Year break and two weeks for Easter break. New for the 2023-2024 school year, we have added a 1 week winter break in February. Please visit sfchrsm.com for the full calendar and specific dates.

Class periods are generally 60 minutes long (with exceptions mostly at the upper school level), starting at 9:15 and ending at 3:15. Lunch for the elementary level begins at 11:25 and ends at 12:05; middle school and high school lunch begins at 12:25 and ends at 1:05.

Students should not be late to class following the lunch break. These disruptions compromise quality instruction for all students. It is the responsibility of parents to send their student(s) to class on time!

No Drop-Off Policy:

CHRSM is unique in that it is not a “drop off” program for any students enrolled in pre-K through middle school classes. Students in high school-level classes may be dropped off, but they must remain in the classroom or Study Hall at all times if they are not accompanied by a parent.

There are several reasons for this: being together helps to foster the sense of community which is a primary focus of our ministry, and it gives the children a visible familiarity and recognition not only with peers but with other parents as well, and it helps to maintain order. It also gives us moms the chance to participate in opportunities we rarely get otherwise— time for personal prayer, book studies, building friendships, tutoring other children without interruptions, etc.

If you would like your child to participate in CHRSM, but you cannot be physically present on an ongoing basis due to a special family circumstance or full-time employment, you must designate another adult prior to the start of classes, who will be responsible for your child. The “*Plan for Responsible Adult*” form must be completed and signed by both the parent and the designated responsible adult, approved by the CHRSM team, and kept on file. That person must be on-site and present at all times while your child is participating. This person should be familiar to you and your family and should be willing and able to step in if disciplinary measures with your child should become necessary.

If you cannot be physically present at CHRSM one day due to a one-time event, illness, or family emergency, you must designate another adult prior to the start of classes, who will be responsible for your child and must contact the CHRSM Directors by email to communicate who your Responsible Adult will be for that day.

If you are on-site at CHRSM, but an unforeseen event or family emergency requires you to leave temporarily, you may designate a temporary Responsible Adult by writing their name and cell phone number next to your child(ren)'s name(s) on the sign-in sheet at the front desk and making your children, your Responsible Adult, CHRSM Directors, and the front door greeter aware of your departure.

Please note that CHRSM Directors have specific duties in the event of an emergency and cannot serve as anyone else's Responsible Adult.

Parents of middle school or elementary-aged children who leave the Saint Francis Campus (i.e. the buildings and parking lot area) without establishing a "responsible adult" and notifying the front desk and CHRSM Directors of that arrangement will be given written notice. **This violation puts the entire ministry at risk and may result in immediate dismissal from the program.** CHRSM is not a school and cannot accept the legal ramifications of being responsible for minor children who are not capable of handling themselves in the event of an emergency situation. We appreciate your understanding and your cooperation.

Volunteer Hours:

You are critical to achieving our vision and program goals. As part of your CHRSM membership, all families made a commitment to volunteer a gift of their time or talent to ensure this ministry continues to be fruitful, safe, and fun. These roles within the ministry include welcome desk, classroom aide, lunch monitor, Study Hall monitor, clean up staff, etc.

The volunteer requirement varies per family based on the family's total class enrollment. The requirement is as follows: If your family is enrolled in 1-5 class hours, a commitment to 1 hour of volunteer service per week is required. For 6+ hours, the requirement is 2 hours minimum per week.

For example, if you have 2 children in 3 hours of CHRSM classes (6 total hours), you should volunteer for a minimum of 2 hours of time per week.

If your situation makes it difficult to help during CHRSM hours, there are many jobs that can be done at home on your own time. We trust that you will be as generous with your time and assistance as you are able. By doing so, you help to build our vision of a family-oriented community. We will utilize SignUpGenius to post the available positions; for any family that does not sign up for a job, we may assign one to you.

The commitments you select are for the full school year and we rely on volunteers to be dependable and present for the position which they have selected. If you cannot serve in your volunteer position one day due to illness or other reasons, please find a floater/substitute to fill your slot, and then contact the CHRSM Volunteer Coordinator and CHRSM Directors to make us all aware of the change.

Child Protection:

All CHRSM staff members and teachers are background-checked and required to participate in the diocesan Child Protection program called Virtus, which requires a four-hour training seminar on keeping children safe. In order to provide the highest level of safety, we must all make certain that students are never alone with a non-parent adult. Please be assured that the protection of your child is our greatest concern.

In order to be compliant with diocesan requirements, we may be asked to participate in periodic emergency/safety drills, including evacuation/fire drills, lock-down drills, or lock-out drills (evacuation to another location). Parents will be notified of upcoming drills with plenty of time to discuss them with and prepare their children.

Absolutely no medication will be administered to a minor child by any person other than the child's legal parent or guardian, except in cases of imminent life-threatening emergency. If a drop-off student (high school classes only) requires medication while on site, CHRSM staff must be made aware of this via the family medical form, and an arrangement made for the medication to be safely stored during CHRSM hours.

Medical Form:

The Medical Consent, Emergency Contact, and Liability Waiver form is required of all participants. Families may not participate until this form is completed and on file.

Policies and Code of Conduct:

We have put many long hours of prayerful consideration into our Policies and Code of Conduct. They are not arbitrary or open to interpretation. All participants, including students, parents, and teachers, are required to read, sign and agree to abide by, the CHRSM Policies and Code of Conduct. If you do not understand a policy or require clarification, please contact a staff member before joining our community.

If CHRSM staff determine that the Code of Conduct and Policies are not being adhered to, we reserve the right to remove a participating family from the program at our discretion, at any time, and with no refunds.

Behavioral Expectations:

One of the purposes of this ministry is to provide a resource to those who are undertaking the immense responsibility of homeschooling. We recognize that it is extraordinarily helpful to parents to have a classroom setting available, especially for those children who might struggle with attention at home. However, it is a delicate

balance to accept students with learning, attention, or disciplinary difficulties. As all families are paying for classes, a certain level of classroom decorum must be maintained for the sake of the teacher and the other students. If your child cannot sit and attend respectfully for the allotted class time, if they have difficulty with peer interactions or any other issue that may be a potential disruption, please prayerfully consider whether academic classes are the best fit for your child. Participating in group lunchtime, PE, prayers, Masses, and liturgical year celebrations are a wonderful opportunity for children who might otherwise struggle in the classroom environment.

Please note our disciplinary policy and no refund policy. Students who cause class disruption on more than two occasions may be removed from the program with no refunds given.

Classroom Visits:

It is our general policy that only students and classroom aides may attend class. Allowing parents to routinely attend or visit classes creates a disruption to the continuity of the class dynamic. Exceptions may be made in certain circumstances and at the discretion of the CHRSM leadership. If you would like to sit in on a class, please contact us and we will make arrangements with the teacher.

Respect for Building and Safety:

This is our parish home. We ask that everyone have the same respect for our facility as they would if they were guests in someone's house or in the sanctuary. Students may not climb on upright stowed bleachers, run in hallways or up and down the stairs, or congregate in bathrooms. No student is permitted to use the elevator unless they have an approved handicap. Teachers may utilize the elevator to transport large loads to their upstairs classrooms. Students are not allowed in any of the supply closets, the gym closet, or the kitchen.

No student should ever be left unsupervised. All students should be in one of three places:

1. With their parent or responsible adult
2. In their scheduled class
3. In an adult-supervised study hall or adult-supervised gym

We have a state-of-the-art gym facility, which we are welcome to continue using under certain conditions:

- No students are allowed entry into the gym supply closet or kitchen areas.
- No student may ever raise/lower the basketball hoop mechanism. Only parish staff or CHRSM staff may adjust hoop heights.
- Absolutely no hanging from the rim or pulling on the nets will be tolerated. The glass backboard is very heavy and the electronic mechanism is very costly. If it came down, it could cause serious injury or worse.

Any student seen pulling on the nets or hanging from the rim may be immediately and with no refunds, removed from the program. The parish is very serious about this issue— please make it clear to your teens.

Any student found vandalizing church property will be required to reimburse the parish for any damages. In addition, and depending on the circumstances, the child may be immediately and permanently removed from the CHRSM program with no refunds.

All teachers, parents, and students must sign in as they arrive and sign out when they are leaving the church grounds. This is important to ensure we know at any given time, who is in the building in case of a fire or other emergency in which all CHRSM members would need to be accounted for. If you are going to be in the Chapel, go for a walk, or sit in your car, please note that on the sign-in sheet so we are aware that you are present at CHRSM but are not actually in the building or on the patio.

All entry and exit should be through the front main doors of the building. The side hallway doors are not to be used except in the event of an emergency. No child should ever be outside the building without supervision. Please do not send students out to retrieve things from the parking area, nor should they be allowed to play outdoors without an adult present.

Dress Code:

In order to promote an environment of mutual respect for ourselves and others, we require students to adhere to a dress code. On Tuesdays, all students must wear navy blue polo shirts. Boys may wear solid colored slacks or dress shorts. Girls may wear solid-color slacks, dress shorts, or skirts/skort of modest lengths (to the knee or just above the knee). No t-shirts, jeans, leggings/jeggings, short shorts/skirts, or athletic wear.

Tuesdays: navy blue polo shirts and solid pants/shorts/skirt

Thursdays: any color or pattern COLLARED shirt with solid pants/shorts/skirt

During the cold weather months, layering pieces are acceptable, but must be a solid cardigan, half-zip or crew neck sweater, or sweatshirt so that collars are visible. Please ensure no large graphics on layering pieces. No hooded sweatshirts (hoodies) are permitted.

Children participating in PE classes may change clothes for PE but must change back into the dress code unless it is the last period of the day.

On Spirit Days, the dress code may be relinquished, but ONLY if the student is participating in Spirit Day. Otherwise, students must wear the usual dress code. Jeans may be worn along with the day's theme, but they must be free from rips and holes. Leggings/jeggings, high heels, ripped jeans, political messages and athletic wear are

not permitted on Spirit Days, unless the theme specifically calls for it, such as athletic wear on Sports Teams Day, etc.

Parents, we understand that our dress code may cause issues at home. However, we ask that you as the parent ensure your student abides by it. Repeated and blatant disregard for the dress code may result in dismissal.

Electronics:

No cell phones are permitted to be visible in ANY student's possession during CHRSM hours. Students younger than high school should not need a cell phone at all as their parent will be present. If high school students should require one, it **must** remain turned off and stored in a bag or backpack during classes. Unfortunately, although this policy has been in place since CHRSM's inception, cellphone use by students is becoming increasingly blatant and problematic. Therefore, if a director, teacher, or parent sees one, he or she will confiscate the phone and hold it until the end of the school day or until that student is ready to leave. In order to return to classes the next meeting day, a form must be signed and returned by both the student and the parent acknowledging the violation of policy. The signed form will be kept on file. Three or more violation forms on file are grounds for dismissal from CHRSM. Please do not put any teacher or director or other parent in a difficult situation by allowing your child to bring a cell phone or not speaking to them about keeping the phone in the backpack.

The use of laptops will be considered on a case-by-case basis and **may ONLY be used by high school students during supervised Study Hall for academic purposes.** Students will need a signed Electronics Permission form on file from the parent which acknowledges that the student may use the laptop only for schoolwork. The student will then be given a Laptop Pass which must be displayed at all times while using the laptop. This communicates to the study hall monitor that the student does in fact have permission from the parent to use the laptop. The student is the one responsible for their Laptop Pass. If the student does not have their Laptop Pass, they will not be permitted to use the laptop and will be asked to put it away. No email, games, videos, internet surfing, etc., or permission to use the laptop will be revoked. The violation policy for cell phones is also relevant to laptop usage.

Parent volunteers are asked to keep their ringers in silent mode while assisting in a class or serving as a hall monitor and to make certain that any internet surfing is done silently or with headphones.

Disciplinary Policy:

Our teachers all subscribe to the belief that our children are beautiful blessings, but they are not saints (yet). They are in need of patient molding and loving direction. Therefore, our teachers will follow Biblical advice for handling correction. Initially, they will use a firm but kind attempt at addressing the behavior directly. If the misbehavior continues,

the teacher may remove the child from the hallway monitor, who will locate the parent. A second occurrence will require a discussion between the teacher and parent as to how best to move forward with the child in the classroom. **Further difficulties may result in the child being removed from the roster with no refunds.**

Corporal punishment of a child is prohibited. For a discussion of this prohibition, see Section 2.5 (2) of the Diocesan Child Protection Policy.

Students with Challenges:

We all have challenges that are God-given and are intended to strengthen us. It is our desire to be an inclusive family that does not turn anyone away. However, we also recognize that within the classroom setting, there are certain situations best handled by professionals with appropriate training. If you have a child with any type of behavioral, cognitive, social, learning, developmental, or other delays or disabilities, please be very frank with us so we can determine whether CHRSM is the right fit for your child. Please note that a no-refund policy applies to students who are determined to be a disruption to the classroom beyond what can be reasonably managed.

Application:

In order to register for classes, all interested families must apply for CHRSM membership and be approved first.

For new families to apply:

- Visit www.sfchrsm.com and click 'Join' in the upper right-hand corner.
- Read the Mission Statement, Statement of Faith, Code of Conduct, and Policies.
- Complete the application form and enter data for all children who wish to be enrolled in CHRSM.
- After you submit your online application, it will be reviewed by the CHRSM staff. You will be notified by email once your application is accepted.
- Once your application is accepted, you will have access to the secure side of our website, but your membership will be 'parked' until we receive your application fee in full.
- After your application fee is received, your membership status will become 'Active,' and you may proceed with registering for classes according to your registration tier.

For current families to apply:

- Update all family information on your sfchrsm.com account family page.
- Read the Mission Statement, Statement of Faith, Code of Conduct, and Policies
- After your application fee has been paid, your membership status will become 'active' and you may proceed with registering for classes according to your registration tier.

Application fees may be submitted by check, which may be dropped off at the parish office or CHRSM drop box in the education center or mailed to Saint Francis de Sales Catholic Church, Attention: Amy Harrison, 37730 Saint Francis Court, Purcellville, VA 20132. ****NOTE: We CANNOT accept any cash payments.**

Registration:

Once you have been approved for membership and your application fee is received, you will become an Active Member and may proceed to register for classes according to the following registration tiers:

- Coordinators and Teachers
- Current Saint Francis de Sales parishioners
- Current Arlington Diocese families
- Other Current CHRSM families
- New applicants from diocesan parishes
- New applicants from the community

Fees and Tuition:

Application Fee:

All families are asked to submit a non-refundable application fee of \$50 per child with a maximum of \$150 per family. Since CHRSM is entirely self-supported, these funds go toward ministry operating costs such as insurance, supplies, and background check fees.

Tuition:

Tuition is determined by each individual teacher, all of whom recognize that this is a ministry and have priced their classes to be as affordable as possible. Tuition payments will be made in three installments. 1/3 of the tuition balance is due on May 15th, the second third is due on July 15th and the final third is paid by September 1st.

Facility Fee:

CHRSM is required to pay an annual fee that covers our use of the building, support staff, supplies, etc. For Saint Francis parishioners (who already support the parish with their tithes), thus the fee is \$25 per class, with a family max of \$150. For non-parishioners, this fee is \$50 per class, with a family minimum of \$100 and a max of \$300. This fee is due by September 1st, along with the final tuition payment.

If this schedule poses a financial difficulty such that a family would not otherwise be

able to participate, the CHRSM staff is willing to assist with a payment plan that is manageable. Families must communicate the need for a payment plan prior to the deadline for payments.

Additionally, limited need-based financial assistance opportunities may be available. If you would like to apply, please email sfchrsm@gmail.com for more information or you may speak personally to one of the Directors.

Refunds Policy:

- 1) If an instructor's class minimum is not met and the class is canceled, a full refund of tuition and the facility fee for that class will be given.
- 2) Prior to the start of the year, if an instructor is no longer able to offer a class, and a replacement cannot be found, a full refund of tuition and the facility fee for that class will be given. If the instructor can no longer teach a class after the course has begun, and no replacement can be found, a prorated refund of tuition and facility fee will be given.
- 3) Prior to July 15th, families may drop classes with no penalty by utilizing the drop feature on the website.
- 4) From July 15th -September 14th, all drop requests must be emailed to the Registrar at chrsmregistrar@gmail.com. Each class dropped will be assessed a \$25 processing fee. If a class has a standing waitlist with another student willing to take the spot immediately, a full refund of tuition and the class facility fee will be given. If the dropped spot cannot be immediately filled with a waitlisted student, a 50% refund of tuition and a full refund of the facility fee will be given. Please allow up to a week for drop requests to be processed. They can be very time-consuming.
- 5) From September 15th onward, no refunds of tuition or facility fees will be given.
- 6) If a family applies for membership and pays the application fee, but they are unable to secure a spot in any of their desired classes, a full refund of the application fee will be mailed after September 15th.

Thank you for understanding that we must be firm on these scenarios. We are an all-volunteer organization, and it is tremendously time-consuming to process drop requests, make account updates, and manage refund requests. Teachers prepare and plan for the year based on enrollment numbers, so this policy is a courtesy to all who would be negatively affected by offering refunds beyond this window.

Inclement Weather:

We will monitor and take into consideration the decision of LCPS regarding inclement weather.

- If LCPS has a two-hour delay, CHRSM will begin ON TIME.
- If LCPS is closed, we will make a decision by 7 am regarding CHRSM. - **Please note that we do NOT follow LCPS for calendar days off, such as Teacher Work

Days. For example, we WILL have class on Election Day in November.

Communication:

Each one of the three directors also serves as the coordinator for a specific age group. For any questions regarding certain age groups, please contact the corresponding director

Pre-K/K and Elementary School Level: Emily Lauderback

Middle School Level/Registrar: Holly Smith

High School Level: Amy Grady

****When communicating via email to any of the Level Coordinators above, please always email the CHRSM account at sfchrsm@gmail.com. NOT personal emails.**

It is very important to us that you feel comfortable communicating with us. We are very approachable, so please feel free to let us know what is working, as well as what is not working. Your comments are valued and welcome!

Most importantly, we ask that you please remember that ***this is an entirely volunteer run organization***. The directors are all homeschooling moms ourselves. We are doing the best we can to manage it all, so thank you in advance for your mercy and grace.

Support Staff:

Molly Smith - Advisor

Stacey Tuman - Advisor

Christina Skaggs - Operations Assistant & Volunteer Coordinator

christinar.skaggs@gmail.com

Nan Gingras - Administrative Assistant