

## **Mission Statement**

We, the students, faculty, and parents of the St Robert Bellarmine Parish School of Religion recognize the mission given to us by Jesus at his ascension, to make disciples of all nations. As a community of believers we dedicate ourselves daily to full, conscious, and active exploration of the lessons he taught us and those given to us in the lived tradition of the Church. By participation in prayer and worship we expect to enter into a closer relationship with our God and each other, to reach out in service, and to hold each other accountable to a moral life.

## **Philosophy**

It is our responsibility as Catholic educators to assist parents and priests in handing down our faith. We recognize the parents as being the primary educators of their children, in forming a meaningful relationship with God, self, and others.

At all times, parents are invited and encouraged to be active within the School of Religion, as aides, visitors to the classroom, and especially, participating in various forms of liturgy and special events and activities.

Catechists are committed to providing a loving atmosphere, teaching the message of the Gospels and the traditions of the Church through personal witness and example, developing a sense of belonging to the Family of God, and providing opportunities and encouragement for Christian service to others.

We hope that our efforts are beneficial to parents as they strive to raise children with strong moral values and social attitudes resulting in responsible citizens, concerned for the material and spiritual needs of themselves and others.

## **Program Goals**

- To instruct the children in the Catholic faith, with respect for individual needs and differences, and to provide an atmosphere of acceptance of each child at his or her own level.
- To develop a welcoming community of faithful disciples, fostering our relationship as brothers and sisters in God's family.
- To develop a nurturing atmosphere in which children can grow in self-knowledge, self-discipline, and discernment, discovering and respecting their own unique talents and abilities as well as those of others.

# Priorities for Religious Education

## To Teach the Message

- To present authentic Catholic teaching through the catechists and textbooks. In order to be able to do this, teachers are provided ongoing opportunities for personal growth and enrichment.
- To help our students to articulate that teaching to the best of their ability.
- To provide our teachers with resources, current reading material, and activities to use in the classrooms.
- To provide parents with resources for prayer and activities to be used in the home.
- To encourage parents to attend the Adult Faith Formation opportunities offered in the parish.

## To Form Community

- To commit ourselves to relationship in and with Jesus Christ so that we may serve him and each other in this world.
- To encourage support and participation in parish activities designed to bring us closer together as family.

## To Worship

- To be rooted in liturgical catechesis and sacramental formation
- To encourage participation in Sunday worship
- To invite parents to receive the sacraments with their children when they are offered during class time.

## To Pray

- To foster spiritual formation in order to help discern God's will for each of us and enable us to respond to that will as individuals and community.
- To provide opportunities for various forms of prayer experience during PSR sessions.

## To Serve

- To integrate the social justice teachings of our Church in the classroom lessons
- To develop a sense of "reaching out" through service at each grade level in a way that is appropriate to the age of the students.
- To develop an awareness among parents of the various service ministries taking place at St Robert's in the form of assistance to St Joachim and Ann's Care Service, and in our very busy St Vincent de Paul Society and the parish's new Health Care Ministry; and to encourage participation and support of these and other service opportunities as they arise.

## To Foster Moral Formation

- To teach in a way that helps each student develop a conscience according to Catholic tradition enabling students to make decisions in the spirit of Jesus.
- To teach personal responsibility in daily living.
- To help students understand and accept the consequences of their own decision making and actions.

## Parental Witness Statement

Through the ages, the Church has consistently called on its parents to understand and appreciate their special dignity as instruments of His love to their children. In recent years, the Church, in its official teaching, has given even greater prominence to the importance of this truth.

The Second Vatican Council, in its "*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*", stressed the importance of parents providing the first experience of faith to their children:

They (Christian husbands and wives) are the first to communicate their faith to their children and to educate them; by word and example they train their offspring for the Christian and Apostolic life. (Par. #11)

The Council Fathers even more emphatically expressed the irreplaceable role of the Parents in communicating the faith to their children in its "*Declaration on Christian Education*":

Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. (Par. #3)

Therefore, it is with a complete awareness of the Catholic Church's vision of my vocation as a Catholic Parent that I enroll my child in the Parish School of Religion. In doing so, I acknowledge and accept my privilege and responsibility to be the primary educator of my children. I understand that the Parish School of Religion is a way in which my Church seeks to share and assist me in my vocation. However, I know that no matter how clearly or effectively the Parish School of Religion communicates the truths of our faith, unless my children see these Truths take flesh in our family, there is little hope that faith will take root in their hearts. I believe that the Parish School of Religion can deepen, enrich, and reinforce a faith that my children experience in their home. I understand my own witness as essential to the religious development and growth of my children.

Aware of the dignity of my call from God and with a reverent awe for the responsibility which is mine, I commit myself to be in word and deed the first teacher of my children. Practically, I understand this to mean:

- ✠ I will participate consistently and actively in the Sunday Eucharist.
- ✠ I will speak to my children about the things of God, and to make prayer an integral and important part of the environment of our home.
- ✠ I will participate and cooperate, as the Parish School of Religion requests, in the religious education and especially in the sacramental preparation of my children.
- ✠ I will accept my responsibility to support the moral teachings of the Catholic Faith in order not to contradict in my home what is proclaimed in the PSR.
- ✠ I will teach my children by work and example to have a love and concern for the needs of others, especially the poor.
- ✠ I will do my share in financially supporting St Robert Bellarmine Parish and the Parish School of Religion.

# Curriculum

## **TEXT AND PROCESSES**

Grades 1-8 use the Faith First series, published by RCL (Resources for Christian Living). The series uses a spiral approach to teaching. This means that the basics of sacred scripture and Church doctrine will be taught at the earliest years, and enriched, expanded, and clarified each year thereafter. Repetition and reinforcement have long been recognized as aids to remembering. There is strong emphasis on worship, formation and continual development of community, and service. At the junior high level, the program stresses liturgy and worship, Creed and Church history.

During sacramental preparation, additional materials are provided for the use of parents and children, and for Confirmation sponsors.

In addition to becoming familiar with the textbooks being used, families are encouraged to visit [www.faithfirst.com](http://www.faithfirst.com). The website offers specific support for parents as well as teachers and directors, offering further information as well as activities for families at home and interactive games for the children to increase knowledge.

## **CHASTITY**

The Archdiocese of St. Louis has approved only one human sexuality program for use in its schools and parish schools of religion. The program is God's Own Making, authored by our Catholic School Office and now published for nationwide use by Sadlier. This program addresses respect for our gifts and our differences, taught from a Catholic moral perspective. Physical biology is not included in the lesson plans. The program available to children in grades 4-8 *only* after the parents have attended an information meeting and granted written permission. The program is taught only by teachers who have met the guidelines given us by the Catholic School Office of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Children whose parents prefer not to have them participate will be offered alternative lessons in another classroom on those evenings specified for human sexuality.

## **LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR CHILDREN**

At the 9:30 Mass on Sunday mornings all children in grades one through six are invited to participate in the Liturgy of the Word for Children. The children begin the Eucharistic Celebration by sitting with their parent(s) during the Gathering and Penitential Rites. Before the reading of Scripture the children are called forth with their teachers and dismissed to nearby classrooms to hear the Word from

the Children's Lectionary at their own level of understanding. The children recite the Apostle's Creed together and offer petitions to God asking for his help in their daily living. After the Liturgy of the Word is completed, the children rejoin the rest of the family for celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

### ***SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION***

The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are normally received by children in the second grade. Children must have an adequate understanding of the sacraments and be properly disposed to their reception. Normally, this means that a child will have had at least one year of formal training in a religious education program prior to the year that the sacraments are to be received. In the event that a child enters the parish school at a later time, an evaluation can be made to assess readiness. If it is determined that a child will need extra attention, the Director will work with the parents in coming to a decision about the best way to help the child.

Regular attendance at class, completion of required work, and full participation in activities is necessary for reception of the first sacraments.

At least one parent must attend all meetings concerning sacramental preparation. Classroom instruction is not enough to help children prepare to receive the sacraments and so parent meetings are held to help parents in their role as primary educator at home.

Confirmation is normally received in the spring of the eighth grade year. Normally, this means that a child will have had at least one year of formal training in a religious education program prior to the year that the sacraments are to be received. In the event that a child enters the parish school at a later time, an evaluation can be made to assess readiness. If it is determined that a child will need extra attention, the Director will work with the parents in coming to a decision about the best way to help the child. Parents and sponsors share an active role in the preparation process. Interviews will be conducted to determine the readiness of the student.

Parent involvement in sacramental preparation is essential and not an option. Being a Catholic in the world today calls us to daily conversion in response to our baptismal call. Parents are challenged to take seriously the time and commitment involved in sacramental preparation and in the ongoing commitment to help children grow in a sacramental life for years to come.

### ***RECONCILIATION***

The sacrament of Reconciliation is scheduled twice each year during class time, once in Advent and once during Lent. Families are encouraged to receive the

sacrament more frequently for spiritual growth. It is only when we recognize our own sinfulness that we can begin to make an effort toward change and new life.

### ***SUNDAY LITURGY***

As Catholics we depend on regular participation in the Eucharist for spiritual nourishment. We come together to offer ourselves and to receive the most precious gift of God's own life. Mass attendance is central to our practice of the faith. Children are taught that they are to attend Mass every Sunday. Parents are expected to make the Sunday Mass a key part of the family's religious practices each week.

Eucharistic liturgies will also be offered during the course of the catechetical instruction process in order to offer opportunities for the students to participate in the various ministries of the altar and to highlight catechetical instruction on the Mass.

# Policies and Procedures

## **ADMISSION**

St. Robert Bellarmine Parish School of Religion welcomes any parishioner regardless of race, national or ethnic origin to participate in the religious education programs offered. Every effort will be made to provide students with special needs into the religion programs and sacramental celebrations of the parish and parish school of religion.

## **REGISTRATION**

The registration process includes:

- Registration forms must be completed annually and forwarded to the Religious Education Center. Registration for returning families is due no later than May 31 each year, along with a \$25.00 non-refundable deposit. *This deposit is applied to the year's tuition. It is not a separate fee.*
- **No registrations are taken on the first night of class. When registration is not timely, placement in a class may require a delay of up to seven days after registration.**
- A copy of an official Certificate of Baptism should accompany new enrollments.
- Where applicable, verification of custody arrangements in which the parents of the student are divorced.

## **TUITION**

- Students who have delinquent tuition from the previous year will not be allowed to register for the next year until their account has been settled.
- Registrations received after May 31 will incur a \$25.00 late fee, except in the case of newly registered families. Late fees collected will be used to cover tuition payments for families experiencing financial difficulty.
- Tuition should be paid in full by August 31. If this presents a hardship for a family, the Pastor should be notified and arrangements should be made for payment. In some instances, tuition may be waived. **No child will ever be denied admission because of the family's inability to pay.**

Tuition for grades 1 through 8 is as follows:

One child	\$150.00
Two children	250.00
Three or more children	300.00

A book fee of \$15.00 per child is also assessed.

**BINGO** is held in the parish hall every Friday night. The proceeds of BINGO help to subsidize religious education, so we ask parents who are able to help on a team once every eight weeks. Please contact Karen Vossenkemper to volunteer at 636-936-1206 or Lori Ule at 636-441-4643. Tuition charged covers about 25% of the actual cost of operating the PSR program.

### ***ANNUAL CALENDAR & WEEKLY SESSIONS***

**Classes will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. except as noted on the calendar.**

A copy of this year's calendar is found at the end of this handbook. Parents are asked to make note of liturgies and special events and to plan to attend these with the children. Active involvement of the entire family reinforces classroom teaching and sends a powerful message to the children as to how truly important religious education is.

Younger children, through grade five, will have a break to use restrooms and to get a drink of water approximately halfway through the class. Parents are asked to be sure that children have eaten something before they arrive.

### ***ATTENDANCE***

Students are expected to attend ***all classes and activities*** scheduled for them by the Parish School of Religion. Each child is important to the life of the whole community and brings a special contribution to the St. Robert's PSR program.

At the same time, a child who is ill, will not be able to focus on the activities and endangers the health of all the others in the class. Children with fever or communicable disease should be kept at home. If a student becomes ill during class, the office will contact parents to come and take their child home.

**In the event of absence**, please notify the school office before 5:00 p.m. This information is passed on to individual teachers. It may sometimes be necessary to leave a message for later pick-up. The phone number is 636-946-6461.

When children are absent it is the responsibility of the parents to check with the catechist to ensure that missed work will be made up. Parents should expect to receive a phone call from one of the office personnel if a child has missed more than one class if the office has not been notified.

**Tardiness** is disruptive to the class. ***A student is tardy who arrives late for the scheduled class or activity time.*** In the event of tardiness, children are to report to the office to obtain an admit slip before proceeding to class. This is to ensure the security of the child in the event that the class may have moved to another location for an evening, or be participating in a field trip.

When tardiness is excessive parents will be contacted by the PSR office to try to find a solution. Sometimes carpooling arrangements can be made to help alleviate the problem.

### ***EARLY DISMISSAL***

Early dismissal should be arranged with the office personnel before the beginning of class. A signed note will be required from the parent stating time and reason for dismissal. Children will be brought to the office for pick-up. Parents will be required to sign a log when children are released. Teachers may not release students from the classroom. This procedure is required under diocesan insurance policy procedures.

### ***BOOKS AND SUPPLIES***

Books are provided for all students at the beginning of the year. Children are given Bibles in fifth grade. Each student is expected to take his/her book home each week so that the family has the opportunity to complete the “at home” segment. Consequently, each student is also expected to bring these books to class each week.

Books that have been lost or damaged beyond use must be replaced at cost to the parent of \$15.00

All other supplies including paper, pencils, crayons, etc. will be provided in the classrooms. Children are asked not to bring extra items to class unless a teacher has requested it in writing.

### ***CLASSROOM GUESTS***

Visitors (children at same age or grade level) are welcome in the classrooms provided that their behavior is not disruptive to the class. Please make arrangements with the teacher in advance of class time. All visitors other than parents must sign in at the office and receive a pass ten minutes before class time. Teachers reserve the right to deny admission of visitors to a classroom on a particular evening.

## **PARENTS IN CLASSROOMS**

Parents are always welcome in the classrooms, as observers *and* participants. In fact, parents are encouraged to be a “presence”. Remarkable differences in behavior have been noted when parents are in the room. In light of the restrictions placed upon us by our child safety programs, however, we must ask that visits be arranged with the Religious Education Center at least one week in advance.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, OR FAMILY SITUATION**

Because communication with the family is a priority, please notify the Religious Education Center of any change of address, phone number, or any other change that could affect performance in class during the year.

## **DRESS**

Student attire must be neat, clean, and modest. Any dress or wearing of an insignia which conveys the message of gang membership, supports the belief of hate groups, makes sexual innuendos, or promotes drugs, alcohol, or tobacco is inappropriate.

## **CLASS CANCELLATION**

In the event of inclement weather or other emergency, classes may be cancelled. Cancellations will be determined by 2:00 p.m. and will be announced by:

- School of Religion Answering Machine: 636-946-6461
- Telephone call to student’s home by teacher or room parent.

*We have found that, even though it may be necessary to cancel public school sessions in the morning, we are often able to hold class in the evening. Classes will be cancelled only by this stated method.*

## **REPORT CARDS**

Progress reports are issued three times a year. The first is to be picked up at parent/teacher conferences. The second is mailed to the homes and parents pick up the third on the last night of class. Any other arrangements should be made with the PSR Director.

Reports are based on understanding of material, class participation, and behavior. Absences and tardiness are also recorded. Report cards are not meant to be a measure of a child’s faith, only a measure of data learned.

## ***PROMOTION***

In the event that a child has not adequately mastered the primary concepts taught during a year, a meeting will be called so that parents, teacher, and the PSR Director may discuss appropriate remedial activity.

## **Christian Behavior Policy**

St Robert Bellarmine's Parish School of Religion strives to build an environment for learning which respects each individual.

It is the right of every family enrolled in the Parish School of Religion to have their children learn in an atmosphere conducive to Christian growth and development. It is also the right of every teacher to expect and require an attitude of respect and cooperation from every student. This respect extends to all teachers and adults, other students, and the property of St Robert Bellarmine and others.

Appropriate Christian conduct is expected at all times. This applies to worship, academics, and arrival and dismissal. Children are not allowed to bring food, gum, toys, etc., to class unless a teacher has made a specific request.

This policy will be implemented in an age specific manner: for younger children, reward and punishment; for older children, consequences for their actions.

## ***ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS***

Each student is expected to perform to his/her highest ability and to allow and encourage other students to do the same. Each student is expected to:

1. Come to class prepared.
2. Be attentive in class.
3. Raise hand to speak.
4. Listen when others are talking.

Children in grades five and eight are required to take the ACRE test. (Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education). These tests are to provide data for the parish to assess the total outcome of the PSR program and make improvements where needed.

## ***DISCIPLINE EXPECTATIONS***

An atmosphere conducive to learning must be maintained in the classroom. All discipline is to be firm, fair, and consistent. Teachers will set clear expectations for the students.

It is expected that each student will show respect for self, others, teachers, and parish property by:

1. Coming to class with a desire to learn about God and the message God wants all of us to hear.
2. Accepting classroom guidelines and rules established by the teacher with a positive attitude.
3. Being sensitive and respectful of the feelings and ideas expressed by others.
4. Attentively listening to the person speaking.
5. Properly caring for parish property and the property of others.

Good discipline requires the establishment of guidelines and consequences for the classroom.

The consequences of appropriate behavior will result in:

1. Special recognition and positive reinforcement from the teacher.
2. Communication to the parent recognizing the student's behavior.

The consequences of a student's choice to behave inappropriately are:

1. Warning
2. Second warning is followed up by a note to the parent.
3. Constant disruption in class, the student is sent to the office with work for completion and parent is phoned.
4. Conference with DRE, parents, student and teacher to determine alternatives.

All children deserve to learn about and explore their faith but the rights of one or of a small group cannot be allowed to interfere with the rights of the whole class. A teacher that allows bad behavior to continue without consequences commits an injustice to the rest of the class. Teachers must have the support of parents and parish leadership in order to solve problems.

## **Harassment Policy**

The Parish School of Religion shall maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment. No student in the PSR shall be subject to any type of harassment.

**Harassment is defined as any unwanted and unwelcome behavior that interferes with a student's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment. Harassment includes physical, visual, verbal, and sexual forms of behavior. Instances of harassment should be addressed using appropriate disciplinary consequences, counseling methods, and**

**parental/guardian contact and involvement in accordance with the nature and frequency of the offense.**

The Parish School of Religion will investigate every harassment complaint thoroughly and promptly. All investigations will be conducted in a sensitive manner and, to the extent feasible, confidentiality will be honored. The investigation and all actions taken will be shared only with those who have a need to know.

If, after investigation, the PSR determines that a student has engaged in sexual or other forms of harassment, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion, will be taken.

## **Violence Policy**

The Parish School of Religion shall provide a safe learning environment for all members of the PSR community. The climate of the PSR shall reflect the Gospel values including an emphasis on the dignity of all persons which is necessary for respect, the interdependence of all persons which is the basis of community, and the rights and responsibilities of all persons which are the foundations of justice.

Violence is inconsistent with the dignity of and respect for all people. It contradicts unity and peace, which are essential to living the Gospel in a Catholic faith community. In addition, violence, or the threat of violence, inhibits human development and successful learning. *Therefore, the school will maintain a no tolerance policy on violence.*

**Violence consists of words, gestures, and actions that result in or have the potential to result in hurt, fear, or injury. Violence includes threats of injury, harassment, assault, and/or use of a weapon; and includes theft or vandalism of property. A weapon is anything used or intended to be used to threaten, intimidate, or harm a person(s).**

All observed instances or threats of violence must be reported to the classroom teacher and the Director. The safety of students, faculty, and staff will be given paramount consideration when making decisions regarding the discipline of person(s) who violate this policy.

## **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

The St. Robert Bellarmine Parish School of Religion's goal in using the Internet is to improve communication among diocesan and specific parish personnel. However, the Parish School of Religion does provide a website to disseminate information regarding the Parish School of Religion to a larger audience including

parents and students. Additionally, the St. Robert Bellarmine Parish School of Religion endorses the use of the internet as a source for information for personnel, parents, and students as may be appropriate.

The Internet should be viewed as a tool to further the purposes and goals of the Parish and diocese, which is the work of the Roman Catholic Church. It is therefore imperative that members conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner while using the Internet. The intent of the Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that all uses of the Internet are consistent with the purposes of the parish and diocese. The policy does not attempt to articulate all required or proscribed behavior by its members. The Internet is an open network in both implementation and spirit. In any specific situation, each individual's judgment of appropriate conduct is relied upon. Outside of school, families bear responsibility for the same guidance of Internet use as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, radio, movies, and other possibly offensive media.

## **Safety Considerations**

### **ARRIVAL**

Parents of children in grades 1-4 are asked to park and accompany the children to the classrooms no more than ten minutes before class time.

Older children may be dropped off at either of the double doors off the upper level parking lot no more than ten minutes before class time. Children are to proceed directly to their assigned classrooms.

If it is necessary to drop children before 6:20 p.m., they should be accompanied to the office by a parent to wait for the teacher's arrival.

*Children will not be allowed to tour the building before class or to visit in any classroom other than the one to which they are assigned.*

### **DISMISSAL**

All children in grades 1–8 will end the evening in the church for announcements and prayer. Parents are welcome to be seated in the back of the church until this time is completed. They will then come down the center aisle to pick children up from individual teachers and exit by one of the side aisles. Parents may enter the church early and wait there but they are asked not to wait in the hallways as this has proven to be disruptive to the classes still in session. For safety's sake no child will be allowed to leave the building without adult supervision.

If a teacher is unfamiliar with the person picking up a student, he/she may ask for a picture ID with address. Please introduce yourselves to teachers at your earliest opportunity. Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent without written notice.

*If a parent is late for pick-up, children will be waiting in the School Office. It will be necessary to ring the bell on the First Capitol side of the building for admittance.*

### **HALL PASSES**

Teachers will issue bright green passes to students with reason to be outside the classroom. Two students will be sent to the office with messages. **No teacher will leave a classroom unsupervised at any time.**

### **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

For the safety of all children in the PSR there will be random emergency preparedness drills for fire, tornado, and earthquake during the year.

## **Protecting God's Children and Safe Environment**

The national sexual-abuse prevention program "Protecting God's Children" was adopted by the Archdiocese of St. Louis in November 2002 and is provided at no cost to parishes, schools, and archdiocesan agencies. All archdiocesan employees and volunteers who work with children on a regular basis are mandated to attend a presentation of the program. Priests in the archdiocese also participate in the program, and pastors are encouraged to be present at sessions that are offered in their parishes.

Additionally, all persons working with or around children on three occasions or more per year are required to sign a **Code of Ethical Conduct** and submit to screening through the **Family Care Registry**. Parishes are required to keep these records on file and to enter information into the archdiocesan database in an effort to prevent perpetrators from infiltrating programs that involve children.

**All parents are strongly encouraged to participate in this training and screening process in order to benefit from the information provided. Although the subject matter may be unpleasant at best, it concerns a problem that has been around for a long time and can only be brought under control by the concerted efforts of all communities to understand it and to take proactive measures for our children's safety.**

Workshops are scheduled regularly. Schedules are listed at [www.archstl.org](http://www.archstl.org). Persons without internet access may feel free to contact the Religious Education Center.

## **Safe Touch**

The Archdiocese of St Louis instituted a program for all students in full-time Catholic schools and Schools of Religion in 2005 called "Safe Touch". There is a training session for all parents so that they know what is being taught.

The program strives to give children the tools to recognize that they are in control of their bodies and that no one has the right to disrespect them.

Children are taught that they have the right to tell anyone, even adults, if they are uncomfortable with attention they are receiving, particularly if it involves touch. They are taught that they are to get away from the situation and to tell an adult that they trust about the situation so that action may be taken to protect them and other children from future advances.

In the parent training there are recommendations for contacting various agencies to report incidents and to acquire help for victimized children and their families.

The archdiocese mandates the implementation of this program in our schools. Children may be exempted only by written parental notification.