**St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church Youth Ministry Policies/Procedures and Code of Behavior**

The *Youth Ministry* *Code of Behavior* has been developed as a way of helping participants understand what is expected of them during Confirmation Class, Youth Nights and other activities, to make the experience a healthy and edifying one for all involved. Please read through the *Policies/Procedures and Code of Behavior* carefully, as you will be expected to honor and uphold it throughout your time with us.

* **Drop-off/pick-up Procedures**:
	+ **Confirmation Class is from 9:00AM-10:20AM and takes place in the parish hall/youth room (below the church).** *Parents are responsible to ensure students arrive* on time, and *no sooner than 10 minutes early* *in the parish hall* where the leaders will be gathered to greet the teens (they should not be in the parking lot or other areas unattended by parents). When class ends at 10:20AM, adult leaders will walk the group up to the children’s chapel of the church. It is ideal that parents will accompany their child to the 10:30AM Mass following the class. **Please meet your son or daughter in the children’s chapel at 10:20AM to accompany them to Mass.**

\*If you attended a different Mass than your child, your child may attend the 10:30AM with the Core Team, but should be picked up immediately following Mass (please arrive by 11:30AM, and be prepared to wait patiently, if Mass goes longer on certain days) in the children’s chapel (dismissal from Mass is after the final song is completed). Similarly, if your child and you both attended a different Mass (Saturday Vigil for instance), please pick them up at 10:20AM in the children’s chapel. If you have not picked them up by 10:25AM, they may wait for you in the children’s chapel, but **please be aware that they will be unattended from 10:25AM on, as the Core Team adult leaders will be attending Mass, so please be on time.**

* + **Youth Nights are the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the Month from 6:00PM-7:30PM in the parish hall.** Youth Nights may also utilize the church and/or parking lots spaces during the meetings. *Parents are responsible to ensure students arrive* on time, and no sooner than 10 minutes early *in the parish hall* where the leaders will be gathered to greet the teens (they should not be in the parking lot or other areas unattended by parents). Pick up time after Youth Night is at 7:30PM in the parking lot. Please do not be late, as the leaders are not able to leave until every teen has been picked up.
	+ If you are **allowing your teen to walk or ride their bike home, a written note must be provided** stating that your child is given permission to ride or walk to and from youth nights or confirmation classes at St. Vincent’s.
	+ **Off campus events** will have an **additional permission slip** with specific drop-off and pick-up instructions.
* **Cell Phone Policy**: Cell phones must be turned off or on silent and put away for the duration of Confirmation Class so as to allow participants to focus without distraction and without distracting others. If your cell phone is seen at all, it will be taken and held by the teacher and received back at the end of the class or youth night.
* **Dress Code:** Modest dress for all youth events (Youth Night, Confirmation Class, Mass, Special Activities) is important and expected. Dress for Youth Night is casual, yet modest--no short shorts/skirts, halter tops, tube tops,—if you are wearing something that reveals cleavage, mid-drif, back or underwear you will be asked to change into something more modest. Dress for Mass and Confirmation Class should be a little more dressed up in order to commemorate the Lord’s day.
* **Respect:** All attendees are expected to treat one another with mutual respect—not talking over one another, listening to and respecting the order of the class per the leaders’ instructions. Positive and up-building speech is to be used toward others. Putting others down or gossiping is not acceptable (in person or online), and will be met with appropriate consequences including potential dismissal from the program. Participants are also expected to refrain from any use of foul language, especially God’s name in-vain (including “Oh, my G--“.
* **PDA:** PDA (Public Display of Affection), while not inherently bad, is not appropriate during the Celebration of the Mass, Confirmation class time (or before or after on church grounds), Youth Nights or other youth events. These are times to focus on your relationship with God, not with a boyfriend/girlfriend. Sitting close, holding hands during session, etc. is not appropriate in these settings.
* **Laws of the Land:** The purchase, possession or consumption of alcohol or drugs by participants will result in immediate dismissal from Confirmation Class, Youth Night or any other youth activity. Parents will be called and ask to pick up their child. Major infractions of the *Code of Behavior* will meet with the same consequences, and may result in the termination of your Confirmation prep for the year.
* **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality within small groups is important—we all agree to honor and respect personal information that people may share within the group. However, if information shared reveals that the person sharing and/or another person known to the youth coordinator, teacher, adult or students is in a potentially harmful situation, this information will need to be shared with parents and, potentially, with appropriate authorities in order to get the help needed.

**Adult Volunteers and Staff Interactions with Youth**

**Core Team Members**

Core Team Members are adult volunteers/catechists/teachers/chaperones for the Youth Ministry program at St. Vincent’s. Each of them has completed the diocesan required background check and Safe Environment training as well as St. Vincent Parish-specific training and vetting. These are adults who volunteer their time to minister to our youth. They are dedicated disciples to of Jesus and His Church and generously give of their time and talent to share the gospel with our young people. These volunteers are here to pastorally care for, instruct on the teachings of the Church, mentor in discipleship, and look over the well-being and safety of our young people. It is appropriate that they share their personal faith-journey with the teens and listen to and respond to the young people in their care. They are aware of and will adhere to appropriate boundaries as outlined below:

-**Core team members are NOT to have the contact information of any teen and vice versa** (phone numbers, email, social media, etc.), or communicate with teens except at scheduled church events (i.e. no social media, text, phone, email, etc.).

-There is a **safe-environment friendly system called flocknotes.com** that allows for group chats, and also texting to the admin (Peggy or others authorized by Peggy) via a flocknotes number, with conversations recorded by the system. Flocknotes.com can be used for communication from teens to the admin about things like being late, absent, etc. but is not to be seen as a means for pastoral care or longer conversations. Teens are welcome to make appointments, with parent permission and knowledge, with Peggy, Fr. Alex, and/or core team members for pastoral care. Pastoral care and conversation may also take place in the Youth Night and Confirmation Class setting, and disciple-mentorship meetings.

- There is a **St. Vincent Youth Ministry Instagram** through which announcements may be made and parents and students are invited to follow us there (stvincentyouthministry).

-**Core team members are NOT permitted to drive teens to and from events**, unless it is an event with a permission slip that allows for Core Team drivers (in which case, drivers will have completed the safe-driver training and are sanctioned by St. Vincent’s and parents will have signed a permission slip). Please do not ask a Core Team Member to drop off or pick up your child for class or youth night, or at any other time. \*\*If a core team member is a family friend that has always had permission to drive your child, babysit, etc. then please provide a written note releasing that particular core member to continue to act in this capacity.

**Disciples in Mission Team (DIM)**

Disciples in Mission Team members are already confirmed, high school students, who applied and dedicated themselves to serve as peer mentors and leaders for the Confirmation and Youth Ministry program here at St. Vincent’s. They too are growing in their faith, and striving to commit their lives more fully to Jesus’ way of life. They generously give their time, and commit to regular meetings and prayer lives in order to become better disciples for their own sake, as well as to help the mission to minister to their peers at the parish.

-**Disciples in Mission Team Members ARE permitted to have text, phone and social media communication with the youth** who are also in high school, if desired by the parties involved and in accord with parent rules. Group chats and other DIM Team communication is not required for the students, however. As is the rule for class and youth nights, conversations are expected to be appropriate and “seasoned with salt,” if it comes to the attention of a parent, leader or teen that there is inappropriate online/text, etc. communication or gossip going on by a student or peer leader, please bring this to the attention of the Youth Coordinator and appropriate follow-up will occur.

-Once a student is confirmed, they will have the opportunity to apply for the Disciples in Mission Team.