

Saint Rita Catholic School

“Know Before You Go”



Handbook for New Families

Curated by the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

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I. 2026 – 2027 School Year – Introduction & Welcome

Dear Fellow St. Rita Families:

Welcome to Saint Rita Catholic School, a small but very mighty Catholic school in the Classical tradition in the Diocese of Arlington. We are so thrilled you have selected St. Rita School for your child's education. You will find our school rich in tradition and community, and we hope you will start to feel at home among new friends and faculty you will soon get to know well.

Starting at a new school is exciting and overwhelming so in this “Know Before You Go” guide, put together by the St. Rita School PTO, we hope to help alleviate some of those first day and week jitters and be a resource for you and your family. In this guide, you will find helpful tips and tricks and answers to the most frequently asked questions from families who have just completed their kindergarten year here and from families who are graduating from 8th grade this year, all families who have experienced the same first day questions and apprehensions, at some point.

Keep in mind that the “Know Before you Go” parent guide does not replace the School Parent and Student Handbook, but is more of an informal resource for you to reference as you begin this journey with us at St. Rita.

Please also know that you can contact the Saint Rita PTO at PTO@SaintRita-School.org any time with questions, comments or concerns. We look forward to sharing what we love the most about our wonderful school community, the ins and outs, policies, procedures, acronyms and more that make us so special.

Thank you for choosing Saint Rita School in the Classical Tradition; we wish you all the best here!

God bless you and your family,

The Saint Rita School PTO

II. About the PTO

St. Rita School benefits from a very active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Our goals are to support and assist the faculty and staff in their mission educating our children, to raise money for the school, and to create a strong sense of community among all our families.

The PTO is led by an Executive Board, including a president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. The PTO organization and operations are described in the [by-laws](#).

Volunteering, Virtus Training & Stewardship Hours

To accomplish our goal of supporting the school, the PTO oversees the Family Stewardship Program and asks all families, as part of our school community, to volunteer their time, talents, and/or treasure to the school.

ALL families are required to participate by giving 25 shares of service, or 12 shares for single-parent households, to the school over the course of the academic school year.

Shares can be earned by completing one of the three options listed below:

1. Complete one hour of volunteering for the school or the PTO (on-site or off-site)
2. Donate an item in the value of \$30 or more. Purchasing and supplying food or event supplies for a class event, monthly faculty lunch, or any school event should be documented on ParentSquare to be counted for Stewardship shares. Every \$30 equals one share.
3. Volunteering for PTO Board or Committee Chair positions will automatically satisfy your families' Stewardship requirements. Additionally, other PTO Volunteer positions are worth a specified number of shares and will allow families to earn more at one time.

Opportunities to sign up for various volunteer activities and programs are listed at the start of the school year and are added as needed throughout the year. They can be found on our school communication app, *ParentSquare*, under the Sign-ups and RSVPs section on the right-hand side of the home page. Please see the Appendix for more information on how to sign up and log your hours!

There are many options for fulfilling service hours during the school day, at home, and by participating in weeknight and weekend activities. Families may choose to pay a fee in lieu of service. Please see the following [Family Stewardship Program policy](#) for details.

Our children reap numerous benefits from the generous offering of time and effort by our many active families. The PTO is always looking for enthusiastic participants and new ideas, and we welcome you to join us!

Commitment per Family:

25 shares per two parent family

12 shares per one parent family

We want to make sure these volunteer requirements are manageable and do not provide a hardship. If your family situation makes fulfilling this commitment a hardship, either in time or financially, please contact the PTO President for a confidential exemption for part or all your family's stewardship commitment.

Any exemption is only permitted for one school year. Additionally, families with a deployed parent will automatically receive an exemption of 50% of their family stewardship commitment, but you must inform the PTO President upon immediately learning of your family member's deployment.

Please also note that stewardship hours cannot be donated or contributed to a family or parent from a family or parent who has done more than the required number of hours for the school year. However, grandparents are allowed and encouraged to volunteer their time and those hours do count towards a family stewardship commitment.

Virtus Training:

Parents who volunteer directly with the students must be Virtus compliant as required by the Diocese of Arlington. Becoming compliant is a two part process. First you must go to [this link](#) and complete the online background check application. Once that is completed, Debbie Beck, our Business Manager, will receive notice and finalize your application. You will then receive an email with the Virtus training sessions being held within 45 days from submitting your application, which is the timeframe for completing the training. You must sign up for one of the sessions within the 45 days. Parents who are Virtus trained are able to volunteer for field trips, in-class celebrations, sports practices, etc. It is a process and worth getting started as soon as possible so you don't miss out on these opportunities.

PTO Meetings

PTO Meetings take place on the first Tuesday of each month from September through June, unless otherwise noted. They take place in the School Hall and via Zoom link for those unable to attend in person. An agenda and Zoom link will be sent out schoolwide from the PTO prior to the meeting. This is a great way to receive school, faculty and committee updates, connect with other parents, and ask any questions of our Principal and PTO Board. Meetings begin promptly at 7:30 PM with the Uniform Closet open at 7:15 PM, also in the School Hall. Meetings usually last from one hour to one and a half hours. Parents who attend these meetings will receive one stewardship hour for attendance.

III. School Overview

School Calendar and Daily Schedule:

Each month the school will send out the monthly calendar for you in the Thursday e-newsletter, in ParentSquare. You can print this out from your phone or computer. This has key dates throughout the month including days off, half days, and key celebratory days that may affect the uniform dress code for that day.

School drop off begins at 7:50 AM and ends at 8:10 AM. Arrivals after 8:10 AM are considered and marked tardy. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, unless otherwise noted, dismissal is at 3:10 with a later car line at 3:20. On Wednesdays, school is dismissed at 2:10 with a later carline at 2:20. Before school and afterschool care is offered every day unless also otherwise noted.

Before school care begins at 7:00 AM.

After school care or Extended Day begins at dismissal and pick up is at 6:00 PM.

Snack and First Recess:

Kindergarten: 10:15-10:30 AM

1st-4th Grades: 10:00-10:15 AM

5th-8th Grades: 9:40-9:55 AM

Lunch and Second Recess:

Kindergarten: 11:40 AM-12:30 PM

1st-4th Grade: Noon-12:45 PM

5th-8th Grade: Noon-12:45 PM

Fees are billed via FACTS, rounded up to the nearest 15-minute increment, at the following rates:

■ \$13/hour for 1 child ■ \$16/hour for 2 siblings ■ \$18/hour for 3 or more siblings

Note: Morning Care fee will be charged as one hour.

Extended day is also available on half days when students are dismissed at 11:30 AM, unless otherwise noted.

Please find the registration form for Extended Day if you know you will be needing it [here](#). A \$30 registration fee will be charged to your FACTS account when registering.

IV. School Policies & Procedures

Drop off & Pick up:

Drop off in the mornings takes place from 7:50—8:10 AM, (unless you go to before school care). The route is as follows: Enter the carline on Russell Road between the Church and the Parish Center/Preschool. The preschool line is on the left-hand side of the cones and the K-8 carline enters on the far right hand side of the cones. Our wonderful school maintenance team directs traffic, so you'll know where to go on your first day. Proceed and follow the cars around the back side of the Church rectory and enter the black gates on the right. The carline will be clearly defined and there are lots of student and faculty helpers letting you know where to stop and let your children out of the car. Once successfully dropped, you will proceed out the gate towards Mt. Vernon Avenue, with one way traffic down to the exit, and you can take a left or right hand turn onto Mt. Vernon Avenue. See the white arrows below. **Please note placards are **required** to enter morning and afternoon carline.**



Dismissal is at 3:10 PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and 2:10 PM on Wednesdays. You will enter the carline in a similar fashion as drop off, but you will enter the circle on the black top and form three semi circles. Follow the car in front of you and park. The gate typically opens to allow parents to begin entering the carline at 2:45 PM, or 1:45 PM on Wednesdays.

Parents tend to congregate on the black top within the designated areas and wait for the whistle to blow for their child(ren) to run to them, this is a wonderful opportunity to get to know other parents. Once you have collected your student(s), you can head to your car and the St. Rita faculty will direct you when it is safe to exit.

Exits at this part of the day can be towards Mt. Vernon Avenue once again, or you can leave onto Russell Road between the big school and the church (also one way traffic). This can be a little chaotic until you get it down and then it's second nature! See the white arrows below (dotted arrows show the option to exit toward Russel Road).



If you are later than 3:10 for pick up, you will be put into the second carline where you will have to wait for the first carline to leave and then you will be able to enter the circle to pick up your students.

Please note that the gates to the parking lot are closed during the school day to ensure students' safety. If you need to pick your child up early, you'll have to find parking around the school. Parking in the apartments across from St. Rita on Russell Road is ***prohibited***, but street parking is available on Mt. Vernon Avenue and additional parking is available in the Birchmere parking lot across the street on Mt. Vernon. When coming to school during the day you must enter and ring the doorbell at the entrance on Glebe and Russell Roads.

Be sure to bring your ID if you plan to enter the school building. If you are just dropping something off, you can use the window near the door. If you are picking up a child early or dropping a child off late, you will not need to enter the building.

Absences & Tardies:

If your child will be out sick or you know you'll be missing or late to school, please email attendance@saintrita-school.org If you plan to pick your child up early, you can do so before 2:40 PM or you will get stuck in the regular dismissal carline. If doing so, please also email attendance@saintrita-school.org

The Uniform:

This can also be a stressful thing to plan for as a new parent starting at St. Rita, but rest assured, this is another thing you will get down in no time.

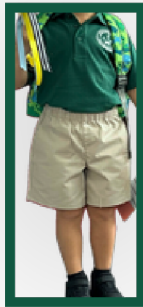
Summer Uniform: Worn pre-Columbus Day and post-Easter Break, except Mass Days and Physical Education (PE) Days.

Formal Uniform: Year-round uniform; required Columbus Day to Easter break and all Mass Days.

Boy's Uniform:

SUMMER UNIFORM:

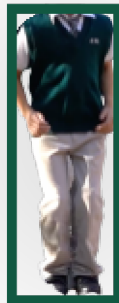
- Green polo shirt & uniform khaki shorts or uniform khaki pants with a belt (for bottoms with belt loops).
- All-white sneakers with all-white socks OR all-black sneakers with all-black socks.
- Uniform PE sweatshirt can be added as needed.



Boy's Summer Uniform

FORMAL UNIFORM:

- White collared button down oxford-style shirt (long or short sleeve) with uniform khaki pants.
- Uniform plaid tie
- Uniform green vest or sweater
- Black belt (for pants with belt loops)
- All black socks and all-black dress shoes or all-black sneakers.



Boy's Formal/Winter Uniform

Girl's Uniform:

SUMMER UNIFORM:

- Green polo shirt & uniform khaki skort or uniform khaki pants.
- All-white sneakers with all-white socks OR all black-sneakers with all-black socks.
- Uniform PE sweatshirt can be added as needed.



FORMAL UNIFORM:

Girl's Summer Uniform (shown with skort option)

- White Peter Pan collar blouse (K-5) or collared button-down blouse (6-8) (long or short sleeve).
- Uniform plaid jumper (K-5) or uniform plaid skirt & green vest/pullover sweater (6-8).
- Dress shoes should be at heel loafer/Oxford/Mary Jane style.
- Girls can also wear white blouse with green vest, uniform khaki pants, belt, and dress shoes.
- Black bike shorts worn under jumper/skort (should not extend below hem)
- All-black socks (knee highs preferred) or tights with all-black dress shoes or all-black sneakers.



Girl's Formal/ Winter Uniform (6-8)



Girl's Formal/ Winter Uniform (K-5)

PE:

PE UNIFORM:

- Green mesh shorts or green sweatpants
- Gray St. Rita t-shirt or Squad Locker spirit wear
- All-white sneakers with white socks or all-black sneakers with black socks.



PE Uniform - warm weather



PE Uniform - cold weather (gardening equipment not required)

PE is Thursday for grades K-4 and Monday for grades 5-8.

- **Dress UP Days:** As announced, but possibly including Epiphany, May Crowning and more! **Sunday Best:** Dress or blouse with skirt (or similarly dressy); flat/low heel(less than 1 inch) dress shoes for girls and dress slacks and shirts, or suits for boys.
- **Dress Down Days (DDD):** As announced, but they are usually on 11:30 dismissal days and are often to support a cause so students pay a few dollars for the DDD.

Please note the difference between the dress codes (dress *up* versus dress *down*). The difference is real!

See the [Uniform Link here](#) for full details and information.

Uniforms can be purchased, when available, from the used Uniform Closet, for \$1.00 per item before all PTO meetings at 7:15 PM or purchased new from our uniform vendor, Flynn O'Hara Uniforms online here: [Saint Rita Catholic School \[VA037\] - FlynnO'Hara Uniforms](#) or at their store located in Fairfax, VA.

You can also exchange your lightly worn and used uniforms for larger sizes, at no cost, so hold onto any uniforms you have outgrown and exchange them before PTO meetings!

V. Communication Tools & Staying Informed

There are many ways you will receive information from the school, from regular ParentSquare communication from your teachers, our Principal and PTO, to logging into PowerSchool and Schoology for grades 4—8 to stay on top of assignments and grades. Below is a list of our go-to technology and communication tools St. Rita uses throughout the year for you to stay up to date and informed about your students' progress and volunteer hour status.

- **ParentSquare:** ParentSquare is the most widely used communication tool at St. Rita. You will receive updates from your students' teachers about tests, class events, field trips, and weekly activities here. This is also where school-wide updates, holidays, feast days, and any updates you'll need to be made aware of will be announced. This is also where the PTO will share the weekly newsletter (see below), PTO meeting agendas and minutes, volunteer opportunities and sign-ups. You will also use ParentSquare to self-report your volunteer hours, which is critical as we near the end of the school year and stewardship hours are tallied, and balances are charged to your FACTS account. You can download the app or receive email notifications from ParentSquare with weekly or daily updates. You can set preferences to receive notifications as often or as little as you like.

Note that ParentSquare has a digest setting that will consolidate any messages sent throughout the day into a single notification at your preferred time. If you believe you are missing announcements, please check the digest setting to ensure you receive the notifications you want.

- **Schoology:** Schoology is for grades 4—8 and where your teachers will update class materials, study guides, spelling words, and more. This is a great resource when you need reminders of what homework is due and when and deadlines for upcoming tests and quizzes.

- **PowerSchool:** This is also used for grades 3—8 and is your one stop shop for all grades, absences and tardies for each trimester. Teachers will post grades, missing or uncompleted work from your child, and you can track their progress throughout each trimester. This is a great way to stay on top of your children when they need some extra nudging or also a great way to applaud their progress throughout the year.

- **Weekly Thursday PTO e-Newsletter:** Each Thursday a school wide e-newsletter will go out from the PTO with a note from the principal, an aggregate of updates from school highlighting the exciting school events, monthly virtue, and happenings around the parish and the diocese. This is also a great way to stay on top of upcoming school wide events and special days, such as dress-up or dress down days. Don't miss this weekly newsletter, it will be your weekly link to what's happening at the school and will have the most current calendar of events.

- **Thursday folders:** Thursday folders will be distributed throughout the year when schoolwide forms need to be sent home, such as interim reports, report cards, permission slips, etc. These are sent home with your youngest child in the big school unless otherwise noted by contacting the school office.

•**Emergencies & Snow Days:** In the event of a school emergency such as a safety protocol or a snow day, the school will call each family and leave a recorded voicemail. In the event of a snow day, the school will make the determination of the snow day as soon as possible, paying close attention to pending weather, and with Father Christensen's approval, will leave a voicemail the evening prior to the snow day or at the very latest, early morning, on the morning of the anticipated snow day.

• **The school calendar:** You can find the school calendar in ParentSquare. This calendar will be updated regularly, and each month it will go out in the Thursday school e-newsletter in ParentSquare.

VI. Annual Events & Fundraisers

St. Rita thrives because of generous involvement and contributions from many school families and local businesses that donate to our major events. Volunteering and donating to our major events and fundraisers is a major way to provide the best learning experience and resources for our most valuable assets, our children. Below is a list of annual events and fundraisers to mark your calendar for each year. Dates vary, but these events remain consistent throughout the year.

Fall Annual Events:

- **Back to School Mass and Picnic:** The weekend between the start of school and the first full school week, come celebrate as a school community Sunday Mass at 11:00 AM followed by a catered picnic. A wonderful way to start the school year off in fellowship together!
- **Back to School Night:** A fun weeknight meeting new families and seeing familiar faces, learning about groups and activities you can get involved with and seeing the school in full swing. Learn about the various volunteer opportunities to fulfill your service hours. You will also visit your child's classroom and meet with their teacher and hear an overview of the lesson plan for the year. Parking can be tight, arrive early, if you can.
- **Grandparents Day:** Save the date early and let your grandparents, and other family members/special friends know when the date is published. This is a fun breakfast "show and tell" to get to show your family exactly what makes St. Rita so wonderful. Each grade will present a song, poem or recitation to showcase our talented students. It's a heartwarming morning to share our school community with family.
- **All Saints Day:** This festive school wide day is an opportunity to honor all the Holy Saints of Mother Church. All students are encouraged to dress as their favorite saint and share a fact(s) about their pick with their class. Then students parade by class to the sounds of the school choir. Enjoy the saints as they march in and remind us that holiness is our final destination!
- **The Book Fair:** Typically the same week as parent-teacher conferences, the annual book fair allows students to purchase books and other reading materials and accessories for themselves, others, and their teachers. Students and teachers make their own wishlist. Parents can shop at appointed times that week and/or between parent-teacher conferences. Or you can send your child(ren) into school with money so they can purchase items for themselves. This event stokes the joy of reading in our children and is a great opportunity to start Christmas shopping while benefitting our school. Volunteers are needed and welcome to help run this all school affair.

Winter Annual Events:

- **Baby Jesus Blessing & Christmas Break:** The half day before school lets out for Christmas break begins, children are encouraged to bring their baby Jesus from their mangers to carline a special blessing. It's an honored tradition at St. Rita that unofficially marks Christmas break.
- **Epiphany Parties:** We continue to celebrate our Lord's birth with our annual class epiphany parties following Christmas break. Room parents and teachers take the planning lead, but there are many ways to volunteer and support the parties and a delightful way to earn your hours.

- **Epiphany Lessons & Carols:** Depending on your children's grades these carols take place as either Advent Lessons and Carols or Epiphany Lessons and Carols. Each grade performs their seasonal songs they memorize and the performance is followed by hot chocolate and treats in the school hall. These events make for a magical and beautiful evening.
- **Catholic Schools Week:** This diocesan wide celebration is a festive week at school that will run from January 31-February 6, 2027. Each day of this fun week, students dress in different themes, from favorite sports teams' jersey day, to crazy hair day and more. We also celebrate our amazing teachers and faculty with special breakfasts, lunches and festivities.

Spring Annual Events:

- **School Musical:** You will know about the musical by the time it approaches as the buzz leading up to it is felt throughout the school for months prior as the musical for the year is usually announced the week after the 5K. Try-outs take place in December and rehearsals run from January until show time. This is an all hands-on deck event, usually in March, and it's not to be missed whether you have actors in the play, stage crew or you want a night out at the theater. There are two performances, one Saturday evening and a Sunday matinee. The production is held at Bishop Ireton High School. The Sunday matinee is followed by an all cast and crew party. It's always an impressive endeavor and there are multiple opportunities to accrue volunteer hours!
- **Easter Break:** This always takes place with a half day starting on Spy Wednesday (Holy Week Wednesday) and takes place the entire week after Easter returning on the following Monday. This break is determined by when Easter falls on the calendar.
- **Teacher Appreciation Week:** This week is an annual tradition honoring and celebrating our amazing teachers and faculty. This week takes place when the National Teacher Appreciation Week takes place, and we celebrate this in our Preschool and K-8 school. There are many events and celebrations to honor our teachers and more. This week is full of volunteer opportunities which you will see as we get closer to this time of year, in ParentSquare.
- **Battle of the Books:** This diocesan tradition is open to grades 5 & 6 and is an annual competition between other diocesan schools. St. Rita is always a fierce competitor and celebrates the joy of reading with a competition among schools on twelve books teammates are required to read and prepare a presentation.
- **Field Day:** This time-honored tradition like no other, is a staple at St. Rita that students look forward to all year long. Students arrive in their PE uniform and are divided into teams comprised of one student in each grade led by the 8th graders and the morning is a festive competition of field day games, and kicks off the unofficial countdown to summer at St. Rita. This day is a 1:00 PM dismissal day usually the Friday of Memorial Day weekend and is enjoyed by all grades and parents alike. It wouldn't be such a smashing success if it weren't for the amazing parents who help put this on-- please be on the lookout to volunteer for this amazing event.

- **House Games & House Sort:** Middle schoolers are divided into 3 houses, named in honor of archangels: House of Michael, House of Gabriel, and House of Raphael. Each house has its own set of responsibilities throughout the year. Middle schoolers really enjoy house games, a mini-field day just for them. The House Sort is a special breakfast for 5th-8th graders to welcome in the outgoing 5th graders who will learn what house they will be assigned the following year.
- **Kindergarten and 8th Grade Graduations:** Kindergarteners and 8th graders receive special graduation send offs as they enter 1st grade and high school! These two grades also get out of school earlier than grades 1—7 by roughly a week and is a special way to celebrate these graduates as they embark on their next chapters.
- **End of Year Ceremony:** This ceremony takes place the last day of school and honors families who are leaving the school and officially marks the end of the school year with a snow cone truck party, as we embark on our summer vacations.

Annual Fundraisers:

- **St. Rita 5K:** This annual fundraiser is one of our most important fundraisers. This run will be held November 14, 2026 and is run on Main Line Boulevard in Del Ray. This race attracts fundraising from local businesses and St. Rita families and attracts run clubs from across the DMV. There are many ways to get involved, volunteer for, and support this school-wide event. For the younger siblings or not so avid runners, the fun run, one mile race takes place on the same day. There are many pep rallies, fundraising incentives and class competitions leading up to the 5K that drums up the excitement for the starting line.
- **PTO-sponsored Restaurant Nights:** St. Rita partners with local restaurants each month to offer discounted dining and incentives on special nights throughout the year. St. Rita receives a percentage when you order out or dine in on designated restaurant nights. We will actively promote these evenings and it is a great way to see other St. Rita families dining out or picking up take out while raising money for our school. Make sure to mention St. Rita when ordering!
- **St. Rita Auction Dinner & Gala:** This is a parents' night out not to be missed! This is a beautiful evening with dinner and cocktails, silent auction items, followed by a live (and always lively) auction. There are various items to bid on such as amazing trips around the world, vacation home stays, and various school-led events to bid on including popular outings with our teachers. This top fundraising event has become exceedingly popular and always attracts a very generous crowd. The Auction has a very active committee and is always looking for more volunteers!
- **St. Rita Feast Day & Day of Giving:** This annual day of giving supports our efforts to better and beautify our school and is the final major fundraising push of the year. The school administration targets specific projects they'd like to take on over the summer and the donations of many parents and supporters of the school help make these ideas become realities.

VII. Parent Resources & Support

St. Rita is a community like no other and whether you are looking for support in your faith formation or need additional resources for your family or your student's education, there is support and resources for you. Listed below are a few top resources and community driven initiatives for families and students. You can take a deeper dive in the Parent Resources tab on the school website to learn more, or reach out to the PTO Board if you'd like to get involved with any of these initiatives.

Real Presence Collective: St. Rita School's Real Presence Collective (RPC) is a partnership among St. Rita families, administration, faculty, and clergy that fosters a culture of presence within our community. This initiative responds to a pressing cultural challenge—the pervasiveness of ever-more addicting and isolating technology use—that robs children of their innocence, wreaks havoc on their social and emotional health, and encourages destructive habits of disconnection, distraction, and vice. In emulation of Christ, who entered the world not virtually, but in the flesh, to walk with us, speak with us, and form us in love, RPC members affirm the deep and irreplaceable value of real, face-to-face, human connection and take a collective-action approach to creating and maintaining a healthy childhood culture.

Specifically, RPC families pledge not to introduce personal internet capable devices or social media to their children while at St. Rita School—and even beyond—and the administration, faculty and clergy support this effort by facilitating enriching, in-person social alternatives for RPC students designed to cultivate the imagination, and focus on the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty. The school also assists families by educating students and the broader school community about the dangers of unmitigated technology use and the life-giving value of incarnational living.

For a complete discussion of the motivations and goals of the RPC, please read the [RPC philosophy](#).

To join the RPC, parents sign the [RPC pledge](#). Upon joining, families will be included in RPC discussions and events. Hard copies of the philosophy and pledge will also be shared in the July information packet.

Trinity House Committee: This committee holds various Trinity House gatherings among our community members throughout the year. Creating, strengthening and deepening your family's faith foundation is life's most meaningful investment. Join like minded families for evenings of practical wisdom, genuine connection and spiritual growth. Whether you are a veteran family with high schoolers, you're navigating the middle school years, or just starting out at St. Rita, come one, come all, this is a wonderful supportive community where you will be sure to make connections and lasting friendships.

Classical Mission PTO Committee: When a student enrolls at St. Rita School, we seek to instill in him or her, not just knowledge and skills, but wonder and appreciation for God's creation, a desire for goodness, truth and beauty, and a sense of how to live a virtuous life. This philosophy, based on our understanding of the unique dignity of the human person and his relationship to his Creator and all creation, underscores our motto, that the "the soul of education is the education of the soul". This committee will assist SRS's review and approval of classical education materials and resources. Join this committee to help support the mission of this committee in strengthening our classical education.

Faith and Family Enrichment Committee: This is a parent-led committee that weaves spiritual development into every aspect of school life. This comprehensive approach ensures that faith isn't just taught but lived daily by hosting family formation programs and feast day school celebrations, as well as supporting the faculty and staff in implementing various faith initiatives as they arise.

Parent Partnership: At Saint Rita, parent partnership is what makes our school so special. From our earliest days, true education begins at home—and parents are the first and most important educators of their children. The school offers a true partnership, walking alongside parents in forming children who are academically strong, spiritually grounded, and growing in virtue.

As we affirm in our Philosophy: “We partner with our parents to develop the academic potential of our children and help them become the saints God made them to be.” That formation includes more than academics—it’s about shaping character, cultivating virtue, and nurturing a life rooted in faith. Also noted in our Philosophy, Saint Rita School is “a place where school parents actively participate in the education of their children”. Throughout the year, our calendar is filled with seasonal events, fundraising efforts, service opportunities, and coffee with the principal, among many other activities—all intentionally infused with meaningful “nuggets” of personal and family formation.

Resource Support at St. Rita: St. Rita aims to welcome and support all students, including those with learning differences. We are blessed with the support of our Resource department who can assess your child in their needs and provide support as needed. For more information, visit the Parent Resources tab on our website that is full of information for new and returning families alike. Feel free to contact the resource team with any questions at any time.

VIII. “Things I Wish I Had Known About St. Rita Before Enrolling” from Current SRS Parents!

- Label EVERYTHING—all uniforms. *Mabels Labels* seems to work well and stay on in the wash. Everyone has the same uniforms, so this is especially important in keeping track of your children's clothes
- Buy used uniforms from the Used Uniform Closet. The closet is open each month before the PTO meeting (at 7:15 PM) and is located in the School Hall, where the PTO meetings take place. Every article of clothing is \$1.00 or can be exchanged for free when handing in outgrown uniforms. “I wish I had known this rather than spending \$500 on new uniforms our first year!” The used uniform closet is cash only!
- Come to PTO meetings! They are fun and relaxing (adult beverages provided!) and are a great way to get to know other parents and hear first hand what is happening at school from the Principal, faculty rep and PTO leadership.
- For middle schoolers—when you are purchasing your “House” sweatshirts, which are the three houses or clubs your child will be a part of from grades 6–8, be sure to purchase more than one house sweatshirt as they are only available for purchase once per year and can get pretty run down by the winter and spring. We recommend buying two or three!
- Every Wednesday is PRETZEL DAY, where your students can buy soft pretzels for \$1.00 each week or sign up for pretzels throughout the year by asking to bill your FACTS account. Make sure to send your child to school on Wednesdays with \$1.00 if they want pretzels or order online for the whole school year.
- Attending school Mass on Wednesdays is a great way to feel connected with the school community. Parents are encouraged and welcome to attend. You can drop your child at carline and park along the numbered fence on the blacktop to attend Mass. You will then check in at the side door and receive a "visitor" name tag. Make sure to arrive on time as doors are locked once children enter the church. Mass begins at 8:15 and ends around 9:15 AM.
- Parking during the school day is “tricky”. If you need to pick your child up early for any reason, parking is available at the Saint Rita House across from St. Rita School on Glebe Road. Parking early in the Preschool spots between the church and preschool can work, but remember preschool pick up and carline starts around 11:30 AM and ends around 11:45 so you may get blocked in if you park there at that time, so beware. There is street parking available along Mt. Vernon Avenue.
- The St. Nicholas Market, run by the parish, is always a fun Christmas time event. Vendors sell festive items, food; mulled wine and beer is available for purchase and many students also sell their wares. Be on the lookout for this event on the calendar, usually taking place on one of the first Saturdays in December and be sure to attend.
- “As a new parent, I wish I had a list of the room parents in the summer so I could reach out and introduce myself and ask any questions.”

Noted! We have included a list of room parents and committee chairs, along with their email addresss, in the appendix.

- “I wish there was access to a school directory.”

We do too, however for now, the only directory we have is available through ParentSquare. We highly encourage parents to share their email addresses and phone numbers by opting into the Directory in ParentSquare. You must do so on your computer or laptop and not on your phone's app. It's easier this way. Please see the appendix for a step-by-step guide on how to make your contact information visible.

- Morning arrival can get congested with traffic on Russell and Glebe roads, traffic lights, public-school buses, etc. Make sure to drop off on the earlier side to avoid stress and a tardy.
- Make sure to send your child to school with a labeled re-usable water bottle. Water isn't available during the day, except at the water fountains for refills.
- All students are required to complete a math packet and read a book or books from the reading list, over the summer. During the first few weeks of school students are required to do a book report and dress as a character from their book. Make sure to think of this over the summer and come back to school prepared.
- As part of the 8th grade's preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation, all recipients are required to complete volunteer service hours, (much like parents at St. Rita and stewardship hours) so make sure to get these hours done early to avoid scrambling at the end of the year. (This is also a good rule of thumb for parents and stewardship hours-don't wait until May).
- Here is something to note for preschool parents—having a child in the St. Rita Preschool does not automatically grant you a spot in the big school. St. Rita has become more and more popular as Classical education is becoming a more desired form of education. As a result, enrollment is competitive. Make sure to inquire early if you are interested in enrolling in the “Big School” as K-8 is affectionately called.
- If you have a child with learning disabilities, make note that St. Rita doesn't have a large Resource team, but you can seek additional support at Mt. Vernon Elementary School or local public schools.
- The PTO Directory of Officers and Committee Chairs will be published as soon as all committee chairs are in place. You can see the PTO Officers and by laws online under the Parent Resources tab on the school website under “Volunteering & PTO.” Please feel free to reach out to PTO Officers or Committee Chairs directly, if you have a particular volunteer interest.
- Signing up to volunteer for a school event does not automatically get credited to your stewardship shares. You MUST self-report your hours in addition to signing up for volunteer opportunities. We wish there was an easier way, but for now you must sign up for volunteer opportunities and separately self-report the hours you served in those opportunities through ParentSquare.
- Unless specified otherwise, all events at Saint Rita's are tagalong friendly. We love having younger siblings join us at school events!

Please reach out any time to the PTO with questions, comments, or feedback at pto@strita-school.org. We are so happy you are here and look forward to welcoming you in person soon! Thank you!

APPENDIX



St. Rita School PTO

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

PASTOR & PRINCIPAL

Fr. Christensen & Mrs. Busekrus

PTO BOARD

pto@saintrita-school.org

ROOM PARENTS

KINDERGARTEN

Bridget Edwards & Allison Moen
bridget.tansey@gmail.com · allison.cloran@gmail.com

FIRST GRADE

Mitzi Parmentier
parmentier.mitzi@gmail.com

SECOND GRADE

Aly Beley & Caroline Stansberry
alymbeley@gmail.com · cstansberry14@gmail.com

THIRD GRADE

Cierra Fisher
cierraannfisher@gmail.com

FOURTH GRADE

Beth Kaczmarek
beth.kaczmarek@gmail.com

FIFTH GRADE

Erin Kasen
erin.kasent09@gmail.com

SIXTH GRADE

Sarah Swango
sgswango@gmail.com

SEVENTH GRADE

Mark Burns
mburns72@gmail.com

EIGHTH GRADE

Karen Hart
karenjmhart@gmail.com

COMMITTEE, EVENT & ACTIVITY

LEADS

CYO TRACK & FIELD

Mary & Matt Walker
stnitatrack@gmail.com

5K CO-CHAIRS

Aly Beley (Finance); Melanie Krause & Greg Wolf (Ops)
Saintrita5k@gmail.com

BOOK FAIR

Asqual Woubshet
asqualm3@icloud.com

STREET SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

TEACHER LUNCHESES

Martha Picarello & Christina Silvers
m.g.picarello@gmail.com · CMSilvers16@gmail.com

AUCTION DINNER

Elizabeth Fitton & Emily Pinette
StRitaDinnerAuction@gmail.com

RESTAURANT NIGHTS

Robbie Minnich
rminnich@cotton.org

UNIFORM CLOSET

Becca Lynch & Natalie Co
rebeccalynch@gmail.com · natmmich@aol.com

FAITH & FAMILY ENRICHMENT

CLASSICAL MISSION

Michael Promisel
mpromisel@mac.com

CYO BASKETBALL

Paul Hamm
paulg.hamm@gmail.com

TRINITY HOUSE

Rosemary Eldridge
rosemaryeldridge91@gmail.com

PTO BOARD

pto@saintrita-school.org

President - Adria Tayrani

pto@saintrita-school.org

President Emerita - Sarah Swango

sgswango@gmail.com

Vice President - Katie Collard

kcollard1116@gmail.com

Treasurer - Melanie Krause

srsptotreasurer@gmail.com

Secretary - Stephen Ford

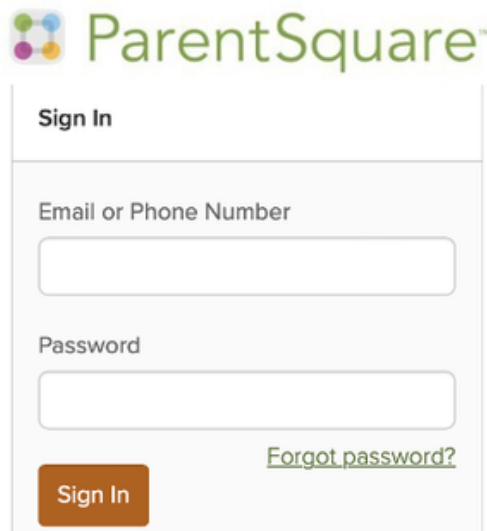
stephen.ford.j@gmail.com

Faculty Representative - Haley Quintanilla

hlangc@saintrita-school.org

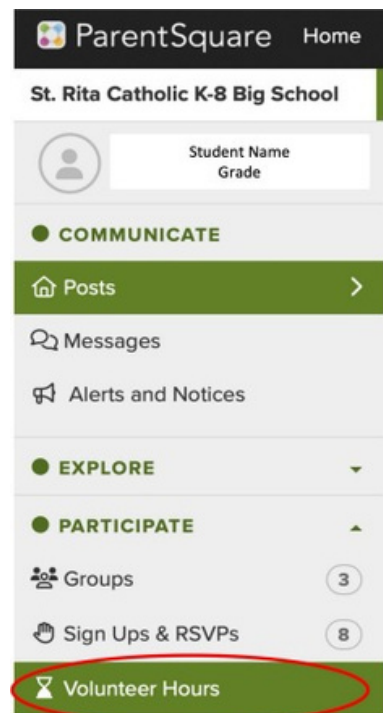
How to Log Stewardship Shares on ParentSquare Website

1. Login to Parent Square at: <https://www.parentsquare.com/signin>



The image shows the ParentSquare sign-in interface. At the top is the ParentSquare logo. Below it is a 'Sign In' header. The form contains two input fields: 'Email or Phone Number' and 'Password'. Below the password field is a 'Forgot password?' link. At the bottom left is an orange 'Sign In' button.

2. Click Volunteer Hours in the left sidebar under the Participate section.



3. Complete the “Volunteer Hours” form.
 - a. Select Month
 - b. Select an Activity (category)
 - c. Enter description of the activity
 - d. Select duration of hours completed
 - e. Click Save

Volunteer Hours

Record volunteer hours for the current school year for

Note: You can record multiple entries for each month.

a

For the month of

September

b

Activity

Select Activity

c

Any additional details

d

Total time

hours

:

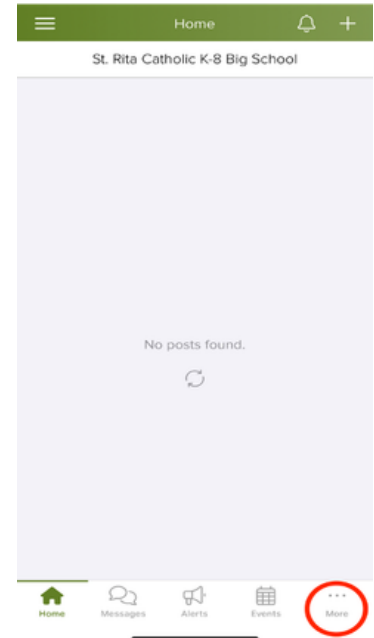
minutes

e

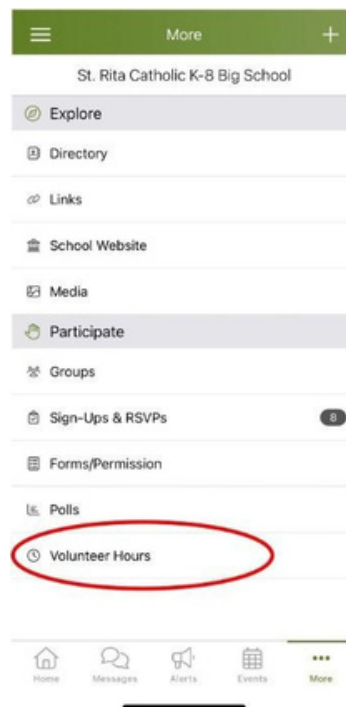
Save

Log Stewardship Shares on Parent Square Mobile App

1. Login to Parent Square app.
2. From Home, tap “More” in the bottom menu.



3. Tap “Volunteer Hours” at the bottom.



4. Tap “+” in the top right corner to add your volunteer hours.



5. Complete the “Record Volunteer Hours” form.

- a. Select Month.
- b. Select an “Activity” (category)
- c. Select duration of hours worked**
- d. Enter the description of the activity
- e. Click Save



Cancel Record Volunteer Hours Save

e

For the month of

a September

b School Operational

c 1 Hrs

d Enter description of volunteering. |

****NOTE:** Entry on the mobile app is limited to 8 hours. If you volunteer more than 8 hours for one activity, make multiple entries. Website (accessed on phone or computer) has no limit on hours.

Make Contact Information Visible in Parent Square

As of Oct 2024

Parent Square is the best way to find contact information for parents. To make your contact information available to other parents for playdates, birthday parties, general communication, etc... follow the directions below.

Note: This functionality is not yet available on the ParentSquare mobile app. Please log in to ParentSquare using a browser to show or hide your contact information.

1. Login to Parent Square at: <https://www.parentsquare.com/signin>

The image shows the ParentSquare sign-in page. At the top is the ParentSquare logo. Below it is a 'Sign In' section with two input fields: 'Email or Phone Number' and 'Password'. There is a 'Sign In' button at the bottom left of the form and a 'Forgot password?' link at the bottom right.

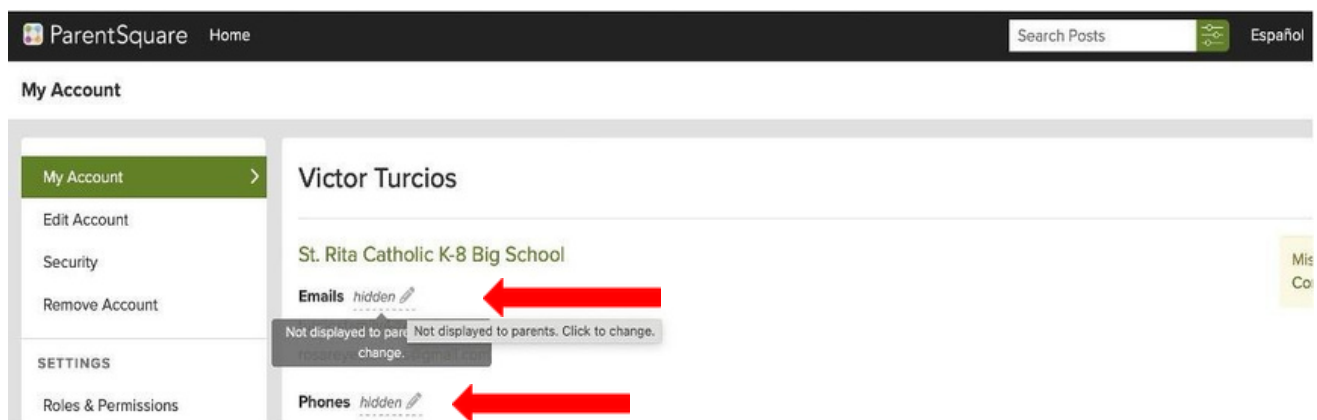
“My Account”

2. Open your ParentSquare profile by clicking on your name in the directory, or you can click on your name in the top right corner and click on



3. To show your email or phone number, click on “hidden” and the status will change to “visible”. To hide your email or phone number, click on “visible” and the status will change to “hidden.”

3.



4. If you need to change your contact info, please contact St. Rita School at 703-548-1888.

Saint Rita Homeroom Program K-8th Grade

What is the St. Rita's Homeroom Program?

- Every year, the PTO collects donations from parents (through FACTS) to fund the Homeroom Program. **These funds pay for class parties** (at least two per school year) **and teacher gifts: Christmas, birthday, Teacher Appreciation, and end-of-year.** We suggest a donation of at least \$30 per child. It helps us show appreciation all year round!
- The PTO will forward all proceeds to the respective **Room Parents** at the beginning of the school year. A full accounting of all expenditures will be furnished to parents as expenses are incurred.
- In order to simplify the process, this year the \$30/K-8 student Homeroom Donations will be billed to your FACTS account on September 19. If you do not want to participate in the Homeroom Program, please email mbusekrus@saintrita-school.org and we will not charge you this fee. If you would like to contribute more than \$30/child, please email the amount you'd like to contribute to mbusekrus@saintrita-school.org.

Thank you for your generous support!