



HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

8802 Braddock Rd
Annandale, VA 22003



PARENT SCHOOL SERVICE COMMITMENT (PSSC) HANDBOOK

School Year 2023-2024

****SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON THE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL
AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY****

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OVERVIEW

Holy Spirit Catholic School ("School") is a wonderful place for your children to grow both spiritually and academically! The School Administration and Parent Teacher Organization ("PTO") continue to believe that parent involvement and participation in School activities is not only a means to show our support for the Faculty and the School, but is absolutely necessary in order to maintain and expand many of the academic and extracurricular services offered by the School to our children. Educational research also demonstrates that children achieve at higher levels if parents are involved in their child's education.

Beginning with the 2008-2009 academic year, the School instituted the Parent School Service Commitment ("PSSC") program. Under this program, the parents or legal guardians of each student registered at the school are required to complete a minimum of 22 service hours per family, or 11 service hours for single parent families, each school year. Single parent families include families with a deployed spouse. **The school year is defined as the day after the last day of school to the last day of school for the next year.** Committee chair and primary opportunities to earn service hours are outlined and described in this Handbook, and additional opportunities, such as to participate as a class trip chaperone, are offered throughout the school year through the Connect1 web-based application.

Two hours (1 day) of PSSC hours are required to be served by each family through Recess Duty, as described in the Recess Duty Policy. Only unpaid Recess Duty hours which occur after the mandatory first instance of Recess Duty count towards PSSC requirements.

Hours are tracked as points in Connect1. Each point is ½ hour, therefore the annual family requirement is 44 points (22 points for single parent households).

If a family has extenuating circumstances that might prevent them from fulfilling their PSSC service hours, make an appointment to discuss with the Principal, who has the discretion to excuse or reduce a family's commitment.

****Please note that all volunteers coming in contact with students are required by the Arlington Diocese to undergo a personal background check, be fingerprinted, and complete a VIRTUS child safety training course. To register for an upcoming VIRTUS class entitled "Protecting God's Children," please go to www.VIRTUS.org. VIRTUS training, fingerprinting, and background checks must be completed and paperwork submitted to the Arlington Diocese Office of Child Protection, via the Holy Spirit Church Child Protection Coordinator.****

GUIDELINES

The goal of this program is to give our children the best education possible through the gift of your time and talents to the School, faculty, and students. Thank you for your participation. The PTO and PSSC Coordinator(s) always welcome suggestions to make this program clear and effective.

Earning PSSC Service Hours

Service hours are earned by supporting school and classroom activities, including participation in any of the Volunteer Opportunities listed in this Handbook. This list describes the PTO committees. It describes the activities and responsibilities of each committee. Every attempt has been made to include all activities; however, additional activities inevitably qualify for PSSC hours throughout the year and are communicated through Connect1 and emails. Please contact the PSSC Coordinator(s) to determine if other activities fulfill PSSC requirements, especially if the activity is not listed in Connect1.

The described time commitments and the number of people needed for chairpersons and volunteers are guidelines; some activities may require more or fewer people or time than listed. Volunteers serving as PTO Executive Board Members, Committee Chairpersons, and Homeroom Parents will receive 20 hours (40 points) for their service, provided they fulfill the term of their commitment and they submit their final report.

Tracking and Reporting PSSC Service Hours

PSSC hours are tracked and reported through the Connect1 application. Volunteer opportunities will be posted in Connect1 by Homeroom Parents, Committee Chairs, Teachers, or PTO board members. In the case that the number of points is incorrect, families need to send corrections to: [Points Adjustment - Google Forms](#)

At the end of the school year, all unfulfilled hours, by on or about June 1st, will be assessed a predetermined dollar amount (currently \$20) per missing hour (or \$10 per point). This assessment is a penalty for failing to fulfill the service commitment and should not be considered a substitute for service. Families are required to pay the assessment to the school front office. Any hours over the required amount are not carried over to the following year and are not transferable to another family. If your PSSC account is not settled at the end of the year, report cards and transcripts will be withheld until the balance of the money or hours have been reconciled.

Differentiating between PSSC Hours, Fundraising, and Parish Service

Participating in fundraisers, making donations, and providing a service to the Parish are valued greatly, but are not considered PSSC service hours. PSSC service hours are not earned for: time spent selling items for Parish-sponsored extracurricular activity fundraisers, e.g., going door-to-door selling chocolates, popcorn, mulch; service to Parish ministries listed on the Parish webpage, such as providing liturgical assistance (e.g., greeter, reader, Eucharistic minister); or participating in service through the Food Ministry, Scouting, CYO Sports, Good Samaritan Society, etc.

In order to comply with current tax laws, the monetary value of donations of money or goods to the School or PTO CANNOT be equated to fulfillment of PSSC hours, i.e., \$20 cash does NOT equal one (1) PSSC service hour. PSSC hours offered for donating food, supplies, or other items must be based upon the amount of time spent to purchase and/ or make the donated item(s).

SIGNED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Parent School Service Commitment (PSSC) Handbook

I acknowledge that I have been provided access to the PARENT SCHOOL SERVICE COMMITMENT (PSSC) HANDBOOK. I understand that it is my responsibility to fulfill my obligation of 20 PSSC service hours and 2 hours of Recess Duty per family or 10 PSSC service hours and 2 hours of Recess Duty per single parent family. Failure to fulfill this obligation will result in report cards or transcripts being withheld until such time as my account has been reconciled. I understand that it is my responsibility to register my family in the Connect1 application, to use Connect1 to sign up for PSSC-eligible service hour opportunities, and to use Connect1 to monitor my family's completed hours throughout the year.

Please initial each item:

I understand that:

___ Unfulfilled hours will be assessed \$20 per hour or \$10 per point, paid by check to the front office made out to "Holy Spirit School"

___ All volunteers coming in contact with students are required by the Arlington Diocese to undergo a personal background check, be fingerprinted, and complete a VIRTUS child safety training course.

___ My family requires a Connect1 account to track our PSSC hours.

___ All family members who will perform service must be individually registered as part of our family's Connect1 account.

___ PSSC hours are awarded for supporting school activities. This does not include CYO Sports, Scouts, or other Holy Spirit Church sponsored activities.

Child/Children's LAST NAME: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Holy Spirit PTO has many committees that provide a myriad of activities throughout the year. To volunteer for any of these activities, please contact the committee chairperson listed in the school directory; additionally, all sign ups will be posted in Connect1. The other major volunteer opportunity category is classroom support. Homeroom parents and teachers set up events in Connect1 to request assistance and donations for parties, class trips, and special events. PSSC-eligible volunteer opportunities are focused on supporting the school; they do not include activities sponsored by the Church, such as CYO or Scouting.

Committee Chairperson Responsibilities:

- create and manage Connect1 event(s) to publish volunteer and/ or donation requests
- attend at least two PTO board meetings per year to highlight the committee's plans (in advance) and provide an event summary (after completion)
- negotiate budgets with the PTO Treasurer in advance of the school year and/ or in advance of an event (as applicable; budgets may vary)
- turn-in all receipts and requests for reimbursement properly and promptly (as applicable)
- submit reports to the PTO which record the committee's activities and lessons learned to help future chairperson(s) be successful

Volunteers must be child-protection compliant if children will be present during events.

Committee or Position	Description
Art Show	This committee is led by the school's art teacher. Parent volunteers photograph children's artwork all year before the online show event in May. Volunteers must be child-protection compliant and work closely with the art teacher in the school. This committee may also solicit and organize artwork to be displayed during the Talent Show, typically held in April.
Book Fair	The Scholastic Book Fair is run in February for approximately one week at the school. The chairperson(s) work with the school librarian to plan, run, and close the book fair. The co-chairs begin working with the librarian at least two months prior to the fair. Work is performed at school and at home. Chairs recruit parent volunteers to work at the sale itself the week it is held. The librarian coordinates the daily deposits of money from the sale.
Boosterthon	This is the school's main fundraiser held each October. It is a week full of fun activities, culminating in a big event at the end of the week. Students seek pledges and flat donations from family and friends. It requires two co-chairs who do the overarching planning in September/October. Additionally, 2-3 parent volunteers are also needed to handle other efforts that may be part of the event. Most of this role occurs at home or outside of school hours (possibly more in-school the week Boosterthon is held).

Bulletin Board	This committee is responsible for decorating the birthday bulletin board in the school, usually on the first day of each month, and supporting teachers with volunteers to set up classroom bulletin boards. The chairperson receives a monthly list of children's birthdays from the school registrar and a parent volunteer designs and decorates the bulletin board with a monthly theme, highlighting each child's birthday. Faculty, staff, and Holy Spirit priests and deacons may also be featured. One board is needed for summer month birthdays, and September – May birthdays (10 boards total). The chairperson assigns months to volunteers, who must be child-protection compliant.
Christmas Boutique	This event is conducted in December. Volunteers assist students to "shop" for Christmas gifts for their families. The chairperson coordinates with the principal to sign a contract in the Spring for the following year, coordinates volunteers to support the event, and works with the PTO board for advertising.
Christmas Tree Sales	Christmas tree sales start Thanksgiving weekend and go until all trees are sold. Chairperson(s) interface with the vendor, organize delivery and volunteers, develop schedules and pricing, work with school principal for vendor payment and contract approval, work with clergy to obtain permission to set up the stand, collaborate with Men's Club for creche decor, and other volunteer committees for space. Volunteer Fair attendance is crucial. Most of these responsibilities occur at home or outside of school hours.
Community Meals Coordinator	This committee is responsible for planning food/restaurant related fundraisers. There are 3 meal events proposed for this school year: November, March, and May. May also coordinate with other committees for joint events. Chair is responsible for contacting restaurants and food vendors, arranging and advertising events, and ensuring earnings are delivered to the PTO Treasurer. This role occurs at home or outside of school hours.
Crafting	This committee organizes fun events for parents and/or children. Past events have included cookie decorating and making gingerbread houses. There is no required number of events per year, and the committee is not designed to be a PTO fundraising committee. The chairperson shall propose a budget in advance of each event and seek Principal and PTO board approval.
Directory	This committee develops the School Family Directory for publication by the end of September, using data provided by the Registrar and a document template provided by the PTO. This role occurs at home.
Field Day	Field Day occurs in May, in close coordination with the school Physical Education (PE) teacher to plan the event. Coordinators adhere to a budget, create teams of students and parents, order t-shirts, and provide breaks, water, snacks, and lunch during the event for all participants. Volunteers must be child-protection compliant.

Health Screenings	In October, the school nurse conducts health screening of students at the school. Committee volunteers should have some professional medical background or experience to participate, though it is not required. All volunteers must be child-protection compliant.
High School Grant	This committee coordinates the annual high school grant program. The Chair works with the Principal on a writing prompt for students, and coordinates with volunteers on the reading of the essays, etc. The process begins in February/March and culminates in May. Work is done outside of school.
Homeroom Parents	Each homeroom teacher has 2 homeroom parents to help coordinate support to the classroom and communicate PTO activities to their classes.
Hospitality	This committee is on-call to provide home baked goods, paper products, drinks, etc. for various school events throughout the year, including monthly teacher luncheons, the National Junior Honor Society induction ceremony reception, and other events as needed. Volunteers who enter the school when children are present must be child-protection compliant. There is no budget - this committee relies on the time and generosity of parent volunteers.
New Family Coordinator	This committee welcomes families who are newly enrolled at Holy Spirit School with a picnic function prior to the start of school in August, in the late afternoon or evening. The committee ensures that each new family is paired with an experienced Holy Spirit family, ideally with children in matching age groups – elementary or middle school. The “buddy families” introduce themselves to the new families and check-in to ensure a smooth transition at regular touch points throughout the year. The committee sends regular emails to all new families, beginning in July prior to the school year starting, advising of upcoming events, explaining nuanced happenings throughout the year that may seem unfamiliar, and connecting new families with other PTO Committee Chairpersons as applicable. The committee watches the Holy Spirit Families Facebook page for questions and concerns and responds as appropriate with insights and suggestions. The chairperson(s) attend a PTO meeting at the end of the previous school year to discuss their plan and the first PTO meeting of the new school year to offer a report summarizing the August New Family Event. In the spring, the committee solicits experienced families who are willing to serve as mentor families for the next school year’s New Families.
Outdoor Classroom	Works with designated faculty member to coordinate help to upgrade and maintain the school's outdoor classroom.

PSSC	This committee tracks PSSC hours completion for Holy Spirit Families. Chairperson(s) serve as Connect1 administrators, provide system training to new families and teachers, and ensure that user questions are answered, whether directly or by securing responses from the Connect1 customer service. The PSSC handbook must be reviewed every year, and updated accordingly at the discretion of the Principal and PTO Board. The PSSC Coordinator is expected to attend all PTO meetings once/month and make a report three times per year to the board. S/he also formats and sends letters home to families who are in danger of not meeting their commitment at least once/year, prior to the end of the school year. The coordinator responds to questions sent to their Holy Spirit email account promptly.
Publishing	The committee chair coordinates classroom support for publishing or other classroom type work to help free up the teachers' time.
Recess Duty	This has tended to be a committee of one coordinator. S/he manages the Recess Duty Sign Up and coordinates short notice substitutes when a volunteer cannot make their scheduled day at the last minute. The coordinator responds to questions sent to their Holy Spirit email account promptly. The coordinator updates the PSSC handbook and Recess Duty policy in coordination with the PTO Board and the Principal.
Restaurant Coordinator	This committee plans food/restaurant related fundraisers. These can be held every other month, depending on other PTO activities. Coordination can also be done with other committees for joint events. Chair is responsible for contacting restaurants and food vendors, arranging and advertising events, and ensuring that earnings are delivered to the PTO Treasurer.
Reward Program	This committee only requires one chair. Coordinate with various vendors that provide rewards back to school (Amazon Smile, digital Box Tops, Mabel's Labels, and grocery stores); set up new fundraisers as needed. Track rewards; submit checks to the school that have been mailed to you (where applicable, such as for Mabel's Labels). Periodically send out messages via the PTO weekly newsletter and the Families of Holy Spirit School Facebook group. Look for other ways to advertise (for example, have a flier available at the new family social and at the used uniform sales). This committee role can be fulfilled on one's own time and does not require coming to school.
Science Fair	This event occurs each year in the March timeframe, in close cooperation with the middle school science teacher. Volunteers must be child-protection compliant, and may help with printing and organizing programs, guiding visitor parents, judging projects, set-up and clean up.

SONShine	This is an on-call committee that helps provide discreet assistance to school families due to a family circumstance: new baby, illness, death, etc. This includes, but is not limited to, providing meals, cleaning services, or babysitting. The chairpersons work closely with the PTO Board and the Principal to identify families in need. Volunteers must be available on short notice to provide all kinds of assistance.
Spirit Gear	This committee sets up at least one sale per year in early September, scheduled to receive orders not later than the second week of October to support the October Spirit Gear Day. This committee will also work on other school promotional items, such as magnets, to raise funds.
Talent Show	This is a much-anticipated event each April. Auditions take place in late February. Volunteers are needed for both events. The Show includes a dinner, set-up, clean-up, judging, and marshaling students as they wait to perform. Volunteers must be child-protection compliant.
Teacher Appreciation	This committee chooses a theme in coordination with the Principal and makes faculty and staff feel special during the nationally recognized Teacher Appreciation week in May. The chairperson consults with the board and principal on the activities and the anticipated expenditures. Volunteers must be child-protection compliant for events where children are present.
Trunk or Treat	This event usually occurs on the Friday or Saturday evening closest to Halloween. It requires extensive coordination with the Principal, the Parish, and the PTO with regard to budget, food trucks, set up and clean-up, and facility use requests. The event may have a “rain date” and has sometimes been held indoors with tables in the gym instead of trunks. The committee is responsible for ensuring that parking spots for cars are filled, and that there is a candy admission “fee” from each family attending the event.
Used Uniforms	The chair coordinates at least three used uniform sales each year (beginning of the school year, prior to winter uniform change over, and prior to spring uniform change over). This includes coordinating volunteers and collecting, sorting, and advertising for events. In addition to school uniforms, the committee sells used spirit gear, shoes, and other items during each sale.

Connect1 Point Guidelines for Donations

Purpose: To provide clarity and consistency to the way that points are assigned for the PSSC opportunities associated with donating goods to classroom or school events.

Problems These Guidelines are Intended to Address:

- Connect1 requires someone to create events and project/ assume point values in advance. No one can change the points allotted to someone for a specific task “after the fact.” There are workarounds in place to correct point allotments, but these should be minimized.
- Connect1 events are created by many different people: PTO Board members, Committee Chairs, Homeroom Coordinators, and Teachers. Creators may not be familiar with PSSC policy, and may not be comfortable making potentially ambiguous point determinations on their own.
- The time necessary to execute donations will vary between homemade products and store-bought items, and it’s not always possible to predict in advance which way a parent may choose to fulfill a goods or food donation request. The PTO doesn’t want to dissuade parents from taking the time to make homemade donations.

Policy: The Holy Spirit School PSSC Handbook provides the following policy:

...In order to comply with current tax laws, the monetary value of donations of money or goods to the School or PTO CANNOT be equated to fulfillment of PSSC hours, i.e., \$20 cash does NOT equal one (1) PSSC service hour.

Connect1 Point Guidelines: Point allotments must be based upon time expended, so base the point allotments upon whether something will definitely be purchased (low points), may be purchased or homemade (medium points), or definitely needs to be homemade (high points).

1. **For those goods that can only be purchased, assign 1 point (30 minutes) for each item.**
Examples: utensils, napkins, other non-edible items, or edible items which are specifically requested to be store-bought (e.g., for allergy avoidance). Rationale: Store-bought items generally do not take more than 30 minutes to procure. They can be purchased in advance, concurrently with when families are shopping for personal needs, or can be bought in a few minutes via online shopping. They can be delivered when dropping kids off at school.
2. **For those goods that could be purchased or homemade, assign 2 points (1 hour) for each item.**
3. **For those goods that would definitely need to be homemade, assign however many points you believe it would take to make the quantity of items requested.**

Post-event point corrections - Positive and negative adjustments can be requested by either the creator or volunteer using the Google sheet managed by the PSSC Coordinator. Additionally, point increases can be self-reported using the “Point Correction” event in Connect1 for the respective trimester. Creators should remove people that don’t complete the event; this can be done even after the event closes. When someone is removed from an event, their points are also deducted.