

ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC CHURCH

(Note: this policy applies for the parishioners of St. Matthew, Catholic families from other parishes are encouraged to talk with their pastors about the process the local parish follows to grant subsidy for their children).

Catholic Education is an expression of the mission entrusted to the Church to preach the Gospel. This is our task and joy and Catholic schools “*afford the fullest and best opportunity to realize the purpose of Christian education among children and young people*” (USCCB, *To teach as Jesus did*).

Realizing that our School is most important to the life of the Parish and understanding that a Catholic school education is a privilege, the following pastoral policies and procedures concerning subsidy apply for the parishioners of St. Matthew who apply for subsidy.

The Pastor and Parish Administrative Council believe that in order to be financially responsible to all contributing members of this parish, a consistent and fair policy and procedure concerning subsidy for parishioners of St. Matthew is important.

In accordance with the Archdiocesan requirements for qualifying Catholic students in the parish, families of St. Matthew Parish who request subsidy will strive to be active parishioners in order to enjoy the privilege of subsidized education. **Active parishioners are to be understood as those members by formal registration who participate in the parish’s life by attending Sunday Mass regularly, being spiritually active, and by contributing to the support of the parish through their identifiable financial contribution.**

An active family will have the cost of their child’s education at St. Matthew School subsidized in part by the parish. Each family must request the subsidy in writing, using the *St. Matthew Parish Subsidy School Registration Form*. This form must be submitted before the end of the current school year (through the school office) to the pastor for his signature for verification. After the form is reviewed, the family will receive a letter from the parish notifying them of the decision made, and the parish office will submit the signed subsidy form to the school to make the necessary adjustments.

The Archdiocesan requirements are that a) the family must be registered with the parish, be involved and attend church at St. Matthew; and b) that the family must give identifiable financial support to the parish, i.e. using parish contribution envelopes.

To enforce this policy we are further explaining what the expectations are at St. Matthew Parish for those families requesting subsidy.

1. They must be registered in the parish at least 6 months before the school year begins. Exceptions will be made to families who are new to the area.
2. Be spiritually active in the parish. That means participation in the catechetical, liturgical, community and service opportunities that the parish offers, as well as those that are School related.
3. They must participate regularly in the Sunday Eucharist: One of the reasons for sending a child to a Catholic school is for the child to grow in faith and worship. Children need to experience their family living and growing in faith if they are to live and grow in the faith. Participation in Sunday Mass is tracked through use of the parish envelopes for collection.
4. Identifiable financial support of the Parish using Church envelopes and according to the financial means of the family: Families seeking a school subsidy for the current school year are required to have made a commitment by filling out the *Commitment of Treasure Offertory Program pledge form* during the Fall, a program recommended by the Archdiocese for parish contributions. If a family is seeking subsidy for the first time, our records should reflect a consistent financial contribution to the parish for at least 6 months prior to the time of the request. If a family is new to the parish, they will be asked to make a pledge.

In order to maintain tuition subsidy, a family must remain a participating parishioner throughout the entire year. The parish office will review each family twice a year and tuition will be pro-rated if there is a change in the status. If a family has not fulfilled some of the above requirements and has an extenuating circumstance, the pastor or his delegate will meet with the family to determine the eligibility for continued subsidy.

The purpose of this policy is not to ask families to pay more for the cost of tuition or to encourage families to donate more money in the collection. **The reason for this policy is to assist our families in understanding that their responsibility in the education of their children does not cease at the door of the school. They must be living their faith if they wish to have the privilege of a subsidized Catholic School Education.**

The Parish School is by far the most expensive ministry to which St. Matthew Parish has made a commitment. The whole parish community has assumed a substantial financial cost to provide a Catholic Education while keeping the cost for each school family as low as possible, and for that reason St. Matthew Parish rightly expects a commitment to the parish from the parishioners who benefit from the school. The above policy reflects an attempt to be as fair as possible to all members of the parish, and at the same time, to strongly support Catholic education.

If you have any questions about our Parish subsidy policy, please feel free to contact Fr. Juan Jose Gonzalez, MSpS, at (503) 648-1998 ext. 249.