



**Jubilee Year
Handprint Rainbow
"Hope Does Not Fade"**
Pilgrims of Hope – St. Pius Tenth School

Greetings St. Pius X School Families!

There is a great deal of information in this week's communication, which is our **main tool for sharing information** with families. Therefore, we ask that you take the time to read it, in its entirety, to keep up with what is happening in our school. Thank you in advance for your time and attention!



Please note the following important **calendar dates**:

Mon-Fri, February 17-21		Presidents Day – Mid-Winter Recess – No School
Wednesday, March 5	9:30 AM	School Liturgy – Ash Wednesday
Friday, March 14	9:30 AM	School Liturgy
Friday, March 28		Teacher In-Service Day No School for Students



Registration for the 2025-26 School Year

Registration is now open for the 2025-26 School Year for all families, both current and prospective. Please submit completed registration packets as soon as possible to ensure enrollment, as classes are beginning to fill up. Thank you!



Intramurals

I know several people have been asking, and here it is...

Intramurals will be starting on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, for those students interested in participating.

The schedule will be as follows:

- **Grades 4 & 5 – Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 7:45 – 8:45**
- **Grades Kindergarten and 1 – Wednesday afternoons from 3:30 – 4:30 PM**
- **Grades 2 & 3 – Wednesday mornings from 7:45 – 8:45**

The permission / participation form is included in this week's communication. We **MUST** receive a signed form for any student to participate.

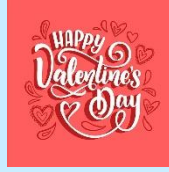
Students should be prepared with appropriate footwear in order to participate. They may wear their PE uniform or other clothing but will be required to change into their uniform following intramurals if it is not a PE day.

Group sizes will be limited to 20 to ensure that it is a fun and safe experience, so please return forms as soon as possible. If there are multiple students from the same family, we may be able to have them both attend the same session, but that will depend on the age difference. Final decisions will be made by Mr. Davis AND Mrs. Cahill.

This year, in lieu of a registration fee, we are asking that each student bring in a box of tissues and/or unscented baby wipes. Thank you!



This week's communication includes information on the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA), which is a proposal before the United States Congress that would allow for privately funded scholarships for children in grades Kindergarten through 12. Please see the flyer included.



All students are invited to dress down this Friday, February 14, in celebration of Valentine's Day.



Our Grade 5 class won the "Soup"er Bowl Challenge, coming in with 217 items! They are invited to dress down this Thursday, February 13 and will be enjoying a pizza lunch on Friday.

We had an amazing 780 non-perishable food items donated and being packaged up for delivery to those in our community who are less fortunate. Thank you so much for your generosity!



Wow! We're up to \$873.20 for the year, having earned almost \$100 in the last week alone!

Second grade has taken a commanding lead with 668 box tops. We have four classrooms that have already exceeded 100 box tops this month! Just keep scanning!



St. Pius Tenth School Talent Show

The next Talent Show rehearsal is Friday, February 28, from 3:30 – 4:30 PM.

The Talent Show is scheduled for Thursday, March 20 at 6:00 PM.

CASE (Creating a Safe Environment) for Volunteers

All volunteers coming into the school must complete the online Diocese of Rochester's Creating a Safe Environment (CASE) for Volunteers Training. This training must be completed before volunteering at any event where students are present. Information is provided below:

Diocese of Rochester Volunteer Requirements

Catholic school system or in its parishes and related ministries fulfill the following criteria:

1. Participate in or complete online a Creating a Safe Environment Training course (<https://www.dor.training/home.aspx?pagename=volunteer-training>).
2. Complete and sign a Diocese of Rochester Volunteer Code of Conduct Form.
3. Complete the Criminal Record Check process.
4. If driving children, complete the Volunteer Driver Information Form and have driving record checked. This must be completed every year.

This is required to work with children in any capacity in our school - room parent, assisting in classrooms, clubs, lunch volunteers, chaperone/drive on fieldtrips, athletic coach, and/or assistant at any social event where students are participating. All volunteers must participate in a renewal of training as determined by the Diocese of Rochester.

“Be Who God Meant You to Be and You Will Set the World on Fire!”

-St. Catherine of Siena

**St. Pius Tenth School
Intramurals Program
Registration 2024-2025**

Grade Level _____

Student Name _____

Parent Name _____

Parent Preferred Phone Number _____

Parent email address _____

- I/we, intending to be legally bound, hereby for myself and on behalf of my minor child, waive and release St. Pius Tenth School, and its officers, agents, employees, and representatives from any and all claims, demands or damages which may be sustained and/or suffered by my student(s) in connection with my/our association with or entry into this intramural program. By signing this form, I understand and accept the conditions set forth.
- If any injury should occur through participating in this intramural program, I/we agree that neither St. Pius Tenth School nor its employees will be held financially responsible for the emergency treatment and/or transport of my child if such a need should arise.
- In the event that reasonable attempts to contact me/us parent(s)/guardian are unsuccessful, I (We) the undersigned parent/legal guardian do authorize any hospital, clinic, or licensed physician to treat my/our child and administer medical attention. It is understood that every effort shall be made to contact the parent/legal guardian prior to rendering treatment, but it is further understood that treatment will not be withheld if the parent/legal guardian cannot be contacted.
- We (parents/guardians and children) will support the philosophies, rules, and guidelines in spirit, attitude, and action, of safe and healthy sportsmanship.
- Families with students in more than one grade level may be able to participate on the same day, depending on the age difference. Final decisions will be made by Mr. Davis AND Mrs. Cahill.

I have read and understood the information as stated above, and I give permission for my child(ren) to participate in the intramurals program at St. Pius Tenth School.

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

*****We are asking that in lieu of a registration fee, each student bring in a box of tissues and/or unscented baby wipes. Thank you!**



Educational Choice for Children Act

Proposed in the U.S. Congress

Generates privately funded scholarships for children in K-12 education

The *Educational Choice for Children Act* ([ECCA](#)), would generate private charitable donations to fund scholarships for use in K-12 education. As many as two million students across all 50 states would benefit. ***The ECCA will be reintroduced in the House of Representatives and Senate with new bill numbers in early 2025.***

During the previous session of Congress, the House ECCA bill was passed by the Committee on Ways and Means in September 2024, which amended the original ECCA that had more than 150 House [co-sponsors](#) and more than 30 Senate [co-sponsors](#). This is the most congressional support ever for a bill to enact parental choice in education, including from the Republican congressional leadership. President-elect Donald Trump also has [voiced](#) his support. Specific features of the ECCA include the following:

- **Tax provision.** A non-refundable 100 percent federal income tax credit would generate up to as much as \$10 billion in annual donations to not-for-profit scholarship granting organizations (SGOs), which would financially enable parents to pay tuition to enroll their children in the best, most suitable school available or pay expenses to access education services for their children, akin to a 529 plan. There is no role for the U.S. Department of Education and no new federal spending or government mandates on states, school districts, private schools (including faith-based), or families.
- **Eligible students.** Students in grades K through 12 from both low-income and middle-class households in every state are eligible for a scholarship for every school setting, including homeschool; i.e., children in households with incomes up to 300 percent of the median gross income level by region as [determined](#) by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.
- **Protects religious liberty and school autonomy.** Prohibits governmental control or encroachment over SGOs that receive tax-credited contributions, schools that enroll scholarship recipients, or parents who instruct their children at home. The ECCA use of private donations, not public funds, further protects against government infringement of religious liberty or operational autonomy, pursuant to U.S. Supreme Court [case law](#).
- **Coalition Support.** There are more than 150 national and state-based organizations and influencers that have endorsed the ECCA, listed [here](#).

For more information about the *Educational Choice for Children Act* and how your organization can help make this a reality, please contact Peter Murphy at pmurphy@investineducation.org.



CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT



Teaching your kids how to be home alone safely

By Jane Sutter

So many things can go wrong unexpectedly when kids are home alone. How can parents teach their children to respond to a variety of emergencies, like an overflowing toilet or a burn from a spilled cup of hot chocolate? Not to mention the dangers of strangers coming to the front door.

Lynn Fulmore teaches classes for kids ages 7 to 12 about how to make smart decisions when they are home alone, or home with siblings and the parents are not. Fulmore is the founder and master instructor of EPIC Trainings: Emergency Preparedness Instruction and Certification.

A retired paramedic, Fulmore and her associates (many are retired teachers) teach these classes at area recreation centers and at gatherings of church youth groups, Boy and Girl Scout troops, etc.

Topics covered include basic first aid, handling strangers at the door, answering the phone, internet safety and reacting to emergencies like power outages and fires. What follows here is just a portion of what Fulmore teaches in class.

Knowing first aid

Usually the younger kids (such as ages 7-8) in the class are not going to be home alone, but with an older sibling, Fulmore said. Knowing basic first aid is a popular concern for parents of younger kids, Fulmore said, because what if the older sibling gets injured? Would a younger child know what to do?

Fulmore said parents should make sure the children know where the first aid kit/box/drawer is in the house and that it be accessible to the kids, not up on a high

shelf where kids can't reach it. Parents should check the first aid kit periodically, such as when they set the clocks forward or back, to make sure it is well stocked with bandages and other items.

Phone connections

Nowadays, many homes no longer have landlines. Parents have cell phones, but if the child doesn't have a cell phone, how can he or she call 911, a parent, a neighbor, etc.? Fulmore says sometimes a parent will say "I don't feel my 9-year-old is old enough to have a cell phone." Fulmore counters that with: "If you think they're not old enough to have a cell phone, then they're probably not old enough to stay home alone because it's equal responsibility. And now they're left home alone

Continued on page 2

without a means of communication. That is really concerning, whether it's calling 911 because someone's injured, calling 911 because there's a fire or someone's at the door and they're scared."

On the topic of cell phones, Fulmore recommends that parents program not just their cell phone numbers into their child's phone, but also their office numbers. Other numbers to include might be the movie theater if the parents have gone to the movies; stores such as Walmart or Target if a parent is shopping there because calls might get dropped; the phone number of a trusted neighbor.

For example, if there's a power outage in the home, if the child has a neighbor's phone number, he can call there to see if they have power. Those phone numbers should also be posted somewhere accessible, such as on the refrigerator, Fulmore said. This could include a list of any allergies a child might have, which is important information if there is a medical emergency.

Who can a child trust?

Fulmore recommends that parents teach their children the difference between someone they know versus someone who is a family member or a trusted family friend. For example, the mail carrier may be someone the child knows, and that can give the child a false sense of familiarity. Even if a child has been instructed not to answer the door when home alone, she may think: "Oh, I know that's the mailman, so if he's ringing the bell (and holding a package), I'll open the door."

Fulmore tells her students: "No, you really don't know the mail carrier. He can leave the package outside."

Even if a parent is home — whether awake or sleeping — the child should be instructed to not answer the door but get the parent and let them know someone is at the door.

Fulmore also expressed concern about



the service that allows packages to be delivered inside a home's garage via electronic access. For example, say a child home alone goes out to the garage to get something out of a freezer. The garage door could be open and a stranger could be inside delivering a package. "It's another layer of security that you shouldn't let lapse for your convenience," she said.

What is a child's greatest fear when home alone?

Fulmore asks her students that question. "Their No. 1 fear is that their parents will get hurt and not make it home," Fulmore said. She finds that answer heart-breaking and a good reminder that kids really do love their parents. If parents are running late and won't be home at the expected time, they should call their children so as to relieve any uncertainty or anxiety for them.

If a fire breaks out:

Of all the topics that Fulmore and her associates cover in class, Fulmore said the

most difficult concept for children to grasp is what to do if there is a fire in the house where there are siblings. Fulmore tells the children that if the house is on fire, "You get out. That means you leave everything and everyone, and you get to the (designated) meeting place, and your job is to call 911 and let them know who's left inside the house. That is the hardest concept for them to grasp, that they would not get their sibling or look for their brother or sister."

Of course, if a child's sibling is in the same room, "grab hands and go," Fulmore said. But if a sibling is upstairs or downstairs, she wants the child to yell upstairs on the way out the door to grab their attention but do not go upstairs for them. "We explain to them how heartbreaking it would be for them if both of their parents did not come home. How horrible it would be. If one came home, at least you have the one. That's how your parents would feel about a fire."

She said kids don't like hearing this and sometimes they get emotional, but they understand why Fulmore is telling them this. She emphasizes to them: "This is terrible, but this is the responsibility, and if you don't feel like you are ready (to be home without a parent), be honest with your parents. It doesn't mean that you are not mature, it means that you are responsible and you are mature to say that I don't think I'm ready for this quite yet."

Cooking while alone

Due to concern about fires and burns, *Continued on page 3*

SAFE AT HOME CLASSES:

EPIC Trainings: Emergency Preparedness Instruction & Certifications offers two-hour classes to help kids be prepared to be home alone safely. It also offers classes for children, adults, professionals and lay responders on CPR, first aid, babysitter's training, coach's safety, internet safety, OSHA trainings and "Just Yell FIRE," a self-defense awareness class for females ages 11 through college-age.

For more information, go to <https://www.epictrainings.com/> or call Lynn Fulmore at 585-615-4379 or send an email to email@epictrainings.com.

Fulmore teaches kids not to use the stove or the microwave or any kitchen appliance when home alone. She said the two top things that kids burn themselves is microwave popcorn (due to the steam coming out of the bag when a child tries to open it) and spilled hot chocolate. Often microwaves are mounted high up and under a cabinet, at eye level for an adult, but not for a child. So the child in taking a cup of hot chocolate out of the microwave could spill it on themselves and suffer a burn.

"There are so many things to consider that are second nature for us (parents) because we've done it for so long, but for kids there are so many things that can go wrong," Fulmore stated. Even a tiny piece of foil left on a microwavable snack container can start a fire in a microwave, for example.

To help kids think of snacks or meals that don't require cooking, Fulmore asks each child in class to share one idea, and the kids will come up with a long list of ideas.

What if the toilet overflows?

That's one topic that most parents don't think of as they prepare their child or children to be home alone, Fulmore said. When she asks her students what they would do if the toilet overflows, she most often hears "shut the bathroom door and wait for the parent to come home."

Of course, that could result in a parent coming home to a real mess. If the toilet



is plugged and overflowing, Fulmore instructs, "Don't flush again" no matter how embarrassed the child may feel. An older child might be able to use a plunger. Most kids don't know how to shut off the water flow, so Fulmore takes her students into a restroom and shows them where the shut-off valve is for the toilet.

When are kids ready to be left alone?

In New York State, there is no law regarding at what age children can be left alone at home. "That is for a reason, because ev-

ery child is different," Fulmore said.

Her son at age 8 was able to stay home for short periods of time, such as his mother going out to pick up a prescription and coming right back, Fulmore said. Her daughter was quite different and was not mature enough to stay home until age 12. "So, knowing your children, knowing their strengths" is important for parents to make that decision.

Fulmore said she's finding that more parents are leaving their children home alone on days when schools are closed for superintendent conference days or holidays. "Parents just don't have that many days off" available to stay home. Her classes are especially popular in May and June prior to schools closing for the summer and parents are deciding if their kids are responsible enough to be home on their own, even for part of a day.

Her classes also are popular with parents (including teachers) who need to leave for work early in the morning before the child's school bus arrives. So the child is alone and responsible for getting ready for school. Or sometimes a parent may be home but because they work a night shift, they are sleeping or napping, so they want their kids to be safe.

While parents do not attend the classes with their children, Fulmore does ask parents to arrive 15 minutes before the class ends to hear directly from their children about what they have learned. After the class, she emails out a workbook to the parents as a follow-up tool.

Jane Sutter is a Rochester-area freelance writer.

TIPS ON KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AT HOME:

Here are additional ideas from HomeAdvisor Powered by Angi:

Flashlights and emergency kits: Show children where the flashlights are kept and make sure they are always loaded with fresh batteries. Separate from your First Aid Kit, put together an emergency kit containing things like a wind-up radio and important family documents. Show the kids where to find it and what to do with it should a sudden disaster take place.

How to work the alarm system: If you have a security alarm system, practice interacting with it so the kids are comfortable setting it, turning off certain features, and manually triggering it in case of an emergency. It's best not to show them how to disable it fully and allow unexpected visitors or intruders.

Put away hazardous items: Remove

or securely lock away items and weapons that can cause accidental harm like lighters, matches, guns, ammunition and knives. Safely put away any alcohol, medications and household cleaners that can be poisonous if swallowed, like detergents, bleach, pesticides, cleaning products and flammable liquids.

Internet, game and TV limits: Put restrictions on the internet and TV to make sure your kids do not have access to content that would be inappropriate. Put away adult content like violent video games or R-rated movies that you'd rather they not see. With you not there to monitor their access, they may — intentionally or not — stumble across material that could cause them distress.

For more tips, go to <https://www.homeadvisor.com/r/child-safety-guide-home-alone/>

Watch for These Warning Signs of Abuse in Minors

No longer wants to see a **particular person** they had been close to

Declining **academic** performance

Tries to hide use of **technology**

No longer interested in **activities** they used to enjoy

Changes in **personality**

Demonstrates **aggressive behavior** or constantly angry

Tries to get minors **alone**



Commits physical and emotional **boundary violations**

Withdraws from family or friends

Keeps **secrets** with minors

Gives lavish **gifts** to minors

Allows or encourages minors to **break laws** or rules

Is overly interested in **spending time** with minors

Has **inappropriate** or suggestive conversations with minors

Does not believe the **rules** apply to them (or, does not follow rules or protocols)

Takes **photos** without approval, or asks minors to send them photos

... and These Warning Signs of Perpetrators



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

Creating a Safe Environment Newsletter

is published quarterly by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester with the aim of helping all of us keep children and vulnerable adults safe at home, at church and in all places in our community.

Comments can be directed to:
Tammy Sylvester,
Diocesan Coordinator
of Safe Environment Education
and Compliance,
585-328-3228
or Tammy.Sylvester@dor.org.

Victims of sexual abuse by any employee of the Church should always report to the civil authorities.

To report a case of possible sexual abuse and to receive help and guidance from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester, contact the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator:

Deborah Housel
(585) 328-3228, ext. 1555;
toll-free 1-800-388-7177,
ext. 1555
victimassistance@dor.org.

All photos in this newsletter are commercial clip art for illustrative purposes only.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY RESOURCES

ONLINE SAFETY RESOURCES

CHILDREN & TEENS' SAFETY SITES:

Webonauts Internet Academy:

<http://pbskids.org/webonauts/>

PBS Kids game that helps younger children understand the basics of Internet behavior and safety.

NSTeens:

<http://www.nsteens.org/>

A program of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that has interactive games and videos on a variety of Internet safety topics.

FOR PARENTS:

Common Sense Media

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/parent-concerns>

A comprehensive and frequently updated site that is packed with resources. Dedicated to improving the lives of kids and families by providing information and education

Darkness to Light organization:

www.d2l.org

Darkness to Light is a non-profit committed to empowering adults to prevent child sexual abuse.

Family Online Safety Institute:

<http://www.fosi.org/>

iKeepSafe:

<http://www.ikeepSAFE.org/>

Resources for parents, educators, kids and parishes on navigating mobile and social media technologies

LOCAL RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Bivona Child Advocacy Center

(Monroe, Wayne counties):

www.BivonaCAC.org

585-935-7800

Chemung County Child Advocacy Center:

607-737-8449

www.chemungcounty.com

Child Advocacy Center of Cayuga County:

315-253-9795

www.cacofcayugacounty.org

Finger Lakes Child Advocacy Program

(Ontario County):

www.cacfingerlakes.org

315-548-3232

STEBEN COUNTY: Southern Tier Children's Advocacy Center:

www.sthcs.org

716-372-8532

NYS State Central Registry

(Child Abuse Reporting Hotline):

1-800-342-3720

NYS Child Advocacy Resource and Consultation Center (CARCC)

866-313-3013

Tompkins County Advocacy Center:

www.theadvocacycenter.org

607-277-3203

Wyoming County Sexual Abuse Response Team:

585-786-8846

Yates County Child Abuse Review Team:

315-531-3417, Ext. 6