

Policy Manual for Catholic Schools



Diocese of Bridgeport Office of the Superintendent

Effective Date August 30, 2025

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OFFICE OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT
OF SCHOOLS

DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

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August 30, 2025

Dear Colleagues in the Spiritual Ministry of Catholic Education:

The Diocese of Bridgeport Policy Manual for Catholic Schools serves to provide guidance for the operation of our elementary and high schools to ensure they are communities where faith and learning come together. The policies outlined in this manual provide direction for school administrators who are entrusted to work in partnership with teachers, pastors, parents, board members, and other school constituents to educate and evangelize students and build a spirit of communal trust and understanding in our schools.

We encourage you to reference the electronic manual when possible, to make certain you are utilizing the most recent policies. This Policy Manual for Catholic Schools is posted on www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicschools.com and found on My Portal. Updates will be shared electronically as needed and the electronic version takes precedence over any print copy.

We are grateful for your continued dedication and commitment to the mission of Catholic school education. May God continue to bless all of us in our unified mission and spiritual leadership.

In Christ,

The Office of the Superintendent of Schools

Mission of Catholic Schools

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport are Christ-centered communities which embrace the dignity and uniqueness of every child and challenge all students to develop their God-given gifts and talents. Young people in our Catholic schools are formed by Catholic faith and Gospel values, are informed by the Truths of Revelation and the truths of our world and are transformed to become educated and articulate citizens of the world with a commitment to serve Jesus Christ as missionary disciples.

Mission of the Office of the Superintendent

The Mission of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, guided by the Holy Spirit, is to care for the education and faith formation of our Catholic School Communities through leadership and service while advancing sustainable, thriving school models centered in the excellence of Christ.

We Believe Statements

1. We believe our role is to provide vision, leadership, and support for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport.
2. We believe that evangelization and formation in Catholic schools is based on the explicit and intentional integration of faith and the teachings of the Church into the entire life of the school community.
3. We believe that learning in Catholic schools is based on a rigorous curriculum integrated with ever-evolving technologies and the application of 21st century skills.
4. We believe that Catholic schools are called to respect ethnic and cultural diversity so that students may think critically and globally in order to contribute to the betterment of their communities as they become good stewards and virtuous citizens of our world.
5. We believe Catholic schools thrive when parents, administrators, teachers, clergy, and parishes collaborate. We seek support and appreciate community participation from those who share our vision, mission and goals.
6. We believe in the advancement of sustainable school models to ensure the continued legacy of Catholic education.

Scope and Purpose

The Policy Manual is the operational guide for Catholic elementary and high schools regulated under the ecclesial power of the Diocese of Bridgeport. In this manual, *diocesan* schools signify schools under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Bridgeport; *diocesan-sponsored* schools signify that the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Diocese of Bridgeport exists with fiduciary responsibilities placed on the individual school and its Board of Directors. This manual serves to provide guidance and direction for the day-to-day activities of those schools.

Chapter 1 – Organization

The manual is comprehensive but not all-inclusive since it cannot anticipate all issues that may emerge in a school setting. Therefore, the Office of the Superintendent reserves the authority to intercede in circumstances not referenced in this manual.

All policies, promulgated by the Superintendent of Schools, shall be binding upon all administrators, teachers, and staff members assigned to all Catholic elementary and high schools. Local school policies may not supersede such procedures. Furthermore, due to the fundamental religious mission of Catholic schools, it is explicitly noted that the Office of the Superintendent may take action in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the school, the Diocese of Bridgeport or the Roman Catholic Church.

This manual supersedes all policy manuals previously issued by either the Office of the Superintendent or other offices. The Office of the Superintendent reserves the authority at its sole discretion to rescind, modify, amend and/or supplement this manual, in whole or in part, at any time.

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1.100 Ecclesiastical Authority

POLICY

Catholic schools are governed by Canon Law, the law of the Catholic Church. Canon Law gives the bishop the jurisdiction to approve schools, exercise vigilance over them, and implement policies and procedures governing them.

The bishop has sole ecclesiastical authority to approve or revoke the designation of a school as “Catholic” within the Diocese of Bridgeport. The bishop must recognize a Catholic school by means of a written document. All Catholic schools are subject to the bishop in matters of faith and morals, and in all other matters prescribed by the Code of Canon Law.

“The diocesan bishop has the right to watch over and visit the Catholic schools in his territory, even those which members of religious institutes have founded or direct. He also issues prescripts which pertain to the general regulation of Catholic schools; these prescripts are valid also for schools which these religious direct, without prejudice, however, to their autonomy regarding the internal direction of their schools” (Canon 806 §1). The bishop coordinates this ministry through the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

1.101 Superintendent of Schools

POLICY

The Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the bishop, represents him in Catholic educational matters and acts as his liaison to the schools.

“Directors of Catholic Schools [superintendents] are to take care under the watchfulness of the local ordinary that the instruction which is given in them is at least as academically distinguished as that in the other schools of the area.” (Canon 806 §2)

The superintendent, under the authority of the bishop, is responsible for all aspects of Catholic school education in the diocese, including the governing of personnel and the development and implementation of policies which are designed to ensure a quality Catholic education. The superintendent also ensures that the Office of the Superintendent of Schools effectively provides guidance and support services to Catholic schools in the diocese.

The superintendent shall implement diocesan policies and develop administrative procedures and directives in order to implement such policies.

1.102 Office of the Superintendent of Schools

POLICY

The Office of the Superintendent of Schools coordinates support and services to Catholic schools within the diocese. The superintendent has administrative authority over the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

The superintendent, with the consultation and approval of the bishop, reserves the right to name other administrators to serve in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. These administrators must be practicing Catholics in good standing and must exhibit spiritual leadership in the schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Administrators in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools are directly responsible to the Superintendent of Schools and represent the superintendent as his/her designees in all matters involving the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

General responsibilities of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools:

1. Set diocesan policies on instruction (includes academics and discipline), finances, and facilities;
2. Recruit, screen, assess, and provide professional development to administrators;
3. Recruit teachers;
4. Design, develop, and monitor curriculum standards;
5. Coordinate international students;
6. Coordinate technology infrastructure within schools;
7. Provide schools with best practices in marketing, enrollment, and development;
8. Review and take action on ongoing school accreditation process including NEASC self-study and strategic plans;
9. Review and approve school budgets;
10. Review, in consultation with the bishop, resolutions and membership of all diocesan and diocesan sponsored school boards;
11. Set faculty, administrators, and staff contracts, agreements, salaries and benefits.

1.103 Pastor and Episcopal Chaplains

POLICY

The pastor of each parish where a diocesan elementary school is located and the Episcopal chaplains of the schools collaborate with the principal to support the spiritual and liturgical life of the school community. A spiritual director may be designated to provide for the daily spiritual needs of the school.

Pastors serve on the School Advisory Board, may serve on a Board of Directors of a diocesan-sponsored school, may be a Member of the school, and support the Catholic identity of the school.

The pastor collaborates with the principal regarding the physical plant of the school. The pastor is responsible for supporting the school's mission by providing spiritual leadership and partnering with the school principal with funds to assist with the financial needs of the school building and grounds.

1.104 Principal/Head of School/Chief Administrator

POLICY

The Principal/Head of School/Chief Administrator:

-is the educational and spiritual leader of the school community and is appointed by the bishop. In a diocesan school, the principal reports to the Superintendent of Schools and works collaboratively with the pastor, School Advisory Board (SAB) and Parent Organization.

-reports to the Superintendent of Schools and, if a diocesan-sponsored school- reports to the Board of Directors and works collaboratively with the Superintendent, as well as other stakeholders. In matters relating to curriculum and instruction, the Superintendent retains oversight in all schools.

-builds a Christian community of faith that provides for the spiritual, moral, educational, intellectual, aesthetical, emotional, social, and physical needs of the students in the school.

-has the authority, resources, and time to perform the responsibilities of this leadership position and is free of classroom responsibilities. Assistance with secretarial work is to be provided.

-engaged in a school conducted by the Roman Catholic Church for the express purpose of education in the academic, social, moral, and religious values promulgated by the Catholic Church.

Overview:

The Principal/Head of School/Chief Administrator:

-provides effective leadership in fulfilling and communicating the mission of the school to all constituents.

-collaborates with the school's pastor and is the overall leader and facilitator of the community of faith and bears responsibility for the integrity and practice of the spiritual life of the school.

-responsible for maintaining and developing a school strong in academic achievement, as well as providing ample programs to meet the faith formation and co-curricular and extra-curricular needs of the students.

-has the general charge and control of personnel and budget, business affairs, and facilities and works collaboratively with the business manager and bookkeeper.

-has the general charge of advancement programs as agreed upon with the advancement team and school Board and is ultimately responsible for enrollment, fundraising and the school's financial sustainability.

In a diocesan school, the principal is evaluated by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools (OSS) with input from key school constituents including the chair of the advisory board, and the faculty and staff. In a diocesan-sponsored school, the OSS works with the board chair to facilitate the annual evaluation of the Chief Administrator.

Responsibilities of the Principal:

Faith Community/Catholic Identity

1. Acknowledge his/her role as the Minister of faith for the school community.
2. Articulates and acts in accordance with the philosophy of Catholic education, diocesan policies related to the religious dimension of the Catholic school, and the school's mission statement;
3. Acts in accordance with Gospel values;
4. Participates in building a faith community;
5. In collaboration with the parish, takes responsibility for evangelization and sacramental preparation of the students; and
6. Takes responsibility for personal and communal spiritual formation opportunities in an effort to build a faith community.

Administration and Leadership

1. Demonstrates effective instructional leadership;
2. Knows current trends and direction in Catholic school education;
3. Promotes innovation and change effectively;
4. Carries out initiatives and programs as directed by the OSS in a timely manner;
5. Oversees school finances and budget in conjunction with school board, OSS, and finance managers;
6. Oversees enrollment management and advancement (annual fund) activities;
7. Implements personnel policies and procedures effectively; and
8. Follows guidelines and expectations regarding the ongoing accreditation (NEASC) of the school;

Communication and Interpersonal Relationships

1. Exhibits cooperation with local school and diocesan administrators;
2. Exhibits cooperation with teachers and other colleagues;
3. Communicates regularly with the pastor and works in collaboration with him regarding the spiritual formation of student in the school facilities;
4. Works collaboratively with school boards;
5. Communicates effectively with and maintains appropriate relationships with students;
6. Communicates effectively with and maintains positive relationships with parents;
7. Builds strategic constituent relations including alumni, grandparents, alumni parents, and friends of the school; and
8. Exhibits effective professional communication skills.

Professional Responsibilities and Professional Development

1. Demonstrates a sense of professional responsibility;
2. Actively responds to total school needs;
3. Engages in continuous professional development;
4. Responds in a timely manner to all requests from diocesan administrators and the OSS;
5. Ensures that all employees and volunteers are in compliance with the Safe Environment policies of the Diocese of Bridgeport; and
6. Successfully achieves agreed-upon annual goals.

Note: The above description is illustrative of tasks and responsibilities. It is not meant to be all inclusive of every task or responsibility.

1.105 Principal Appointment

POLICY

Qualified stakeholders may be invited to participate in the search process at the discretion of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools (OSS). A qualified search committee approved by the Superintendent of Schools is created to begin vetting and interviewing qualified candidates.

Religious communities that have continued to serve a diocesan elementary school since its founding, and whose presence continues, will have the right of first consideration in hiring both for principals and teachers. Proposed candidates for principal must submit credentials to the Superintendent of Schools for approval.

Principals currently employed in the Catholic elementary schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport or those who have been placed on a preferential interview list due to school closings will be given special consideration by search committees formed for the selection of principals.

The bishop or the superintendent has the right to directly appoint a principal, interim principal, or expedite a search when needed.

All applicants for principal in a diocesan-sponsored school must be interviewed by the OSS. Upon the approval of the superintendent, the bishop and the superintendent appoint the principal.

1.106 Chief Administrator

POLICY

In schools where there is a president, head of school, or executive director, they serve as the chief administrator of the school and the principal is the academic leader of the school. The chief administrator and principal work together to ensure that school policies reflect the mission of the school. The chief administrator reports directly to the superintendent and/ or the Board of Directors where applicable.

In schools without a president, the principal serves as chief administrator of the school and reports directly to the superintendent, head of school, executive director and/or Board of Directors.

Administrators are engaged in a school conducted by the Roman Catholic Church for the express purpose of education in the academic, social, moral, and religious values promulgated by the Catholic Church. As such they are considered ministers of the faith.

1.107 Assistant Principal/Assistant Head of School

POLICY

An assistant principal/assistant head of school may be appointed whenever the Principal/Board of Directors has deemed it advisable based on the size of the student population and availability within the school's budget.

Assistant principals:

- focus primarily on instruction, student affairs, and discipline, as delegated by the principal
- reports to the principal and shares the responsibility for upholding the school's mission statement by ensuring that the academic practices within the school support the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, and physical development of all students.
- works with faculty to implement the curriculum of the Diocese of Bridgeport and to maintain high academic standards in all classes while preparing students for higher education.
- manages the day-to-day operation of the school.

Under no circumstances may a teacher, without administrative qualifications and/or the approval of the superintendent, be referred to as an assistant principal or vice principal.

Assistant principals/assistant head of school are engaged in a school conducted by the Roman Catholic Church for the express purpose of education in the academic, social, moral, and religious values promulgated by the Catholic Church. As such they are considered ministers of the faith.

1.108 Assistant to the Principal

POLICY

When an elementary school does not have an assistant principal, *an assistant to the principal* should be named and be responsible for managing the daily routine and policy implementation in the absence of the principal. Typically, a full-time lead teacher who is knowledgeable about the daily administrative tasks and communication channels of the school is assigned to be an Assistant to the Principal.

1.109 Governance Models

POLICY

The Diocese of Bridgeport currently has two types of governance under which its schools operate. These governance structures are the *diocesan-sponsored school* (sometimes referred to as Academy) and the *diocesan school*.

The Diocesan School

The Diocesan school is part of a centralized system in which the Diocesan Office of the Superintendent (OSS) acts on behalf of the Bishop to manage the school. The OSS is responsible for the hiring and supervision of the principal, the oversight of curriculum and instruction and is responsible to make recommendations to the Bishop in the areas of finance and operation. The Bishop appoints or removes school administrators with the recommendation of the Superintendent. The schools are generally located on the grounds of a parish and the host pastor supports the school in areas of Catholic identity and spiritual formation. Each school also has an advisory board. The advisory board supports the work of administration in the areas of fundraising, marketing and strategic planning. The OSS works collaboratively with principals, pastors and advisory board members to promote excellence at the school.

The Diocesan-Sponsored School (Academy)

The Academy model has a two-tiered board of limited jurisdiction. The primary tier is the Board of Members. The Bishop is generally the sole Member of the corporation and acts as the Sponsor of the school. In some instances, the Bishop names additional members to this tier. The Member(s) appoints a Board of Directors who make up the secondary tier. The Directors have fiduciary responsibility for the school and have been delegated with the responsibility of its success. In this model, the Member(s) retains responsibility for the Catholic identity of the school and works collaboratively with Directors on the overall strategic direction of the school. The Chief Educational Officer of the school (sometimes referred to as Head of School, Principal, President, Executive Director, etc.) reports directly to the board, is selected by the board with the collaboration of the Superintendent and is appointed by the Bishop. The OSS provides base standard requirements in the areas of curriculum and educational policy which can be exceeded by board policy. In general, teachers and staff are recommended for hire to the board and then supervised by the Chief Educational Officer. The employees participate in the same retirement and medical insurance as diocesan school employees, but salaries are set by the board. If the school is located on parish grounds, the host pastor generally sits on the board and supports the school in the Catholic identity and spiritual formation.

1.110 School Advisory Board (Diocesan Schools)

POLICY

All diocesan schools will have a School Advisory Board (SAB) comprised of administrators, clergy, and laity with skills in finance, facilities, marketing/development, and strategic planning.

The SAB represents the educational institutions of the Diocese of Bridgeport and are under the authority of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. The SAB provides leadership to foster an environment which provides underlying Catholic values, long-term strategic planning, and financial stability.

This role of the School Advisory Board complements the school's mission which is to nurture and foster the spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical, and social growth of the student through its religious and academic curriculum and extracurricular programs.

Some general responsibilities of the SAB include, but are not limited to:

1. Participating in the strategic planning and goal setting for finance, facilities, marketing, and development which should complement the curriculum and instructional strategic plan developed by the local school administration.
2. The Finance Committee of the School Advisory Board helps to review, and revise, if necessary, the annual operating budget prepared by the local school administration, and submitting it to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools for approval. Salary and other personal information should not be shared with the board.
3. Planning and facilities.
4. Establishing and maintaining effective marketing and development programs.

Employees of the school shall not serve on SABs but may attend meetings as invited guests. It is not advisable for current parents to serve on the board but they should serve on committees of the board. Under no circumstances, should current parents comprise more than 10% of a board.

Volunteers may serve on School Advisory Board committees with the approval of the school administrator, but do not require the approval of the bishop and superintendent. Potential candidates to serve on an Advisory Board must be approved by the Office of the Superintendent and are appointed by the Bishop.

Principals should submit the names and qualifications of potential board members to the Office of the Superintendent for vetting. These names will be presented to the Bishop for final approval.

1.111 Board of Directors (Diocesan-Sponsored Schools)

POLICY

Each spring, the chief administrator recommends new board members to the Bishop through the Office of the Superintendent following specific guidelines.

Only those candidates who receive written approval from the Bishop or his designee may serve as members of the Board of Directors.

The term that a board member serves is outlined in the school's corporate bylaws.

If a school is not submitting any nominees, the chief administrator must send a formal letter to the superintendent explaining the reason for no nominees.

Any exceptions to these policies must be requested in writing to the Superintendent of Schools.

All board members are expected to comply with the Diocesan Manual for School Boards and the corporate bylaws.

1.112 Parent Organization

POLICY

Each school shall have a parent organization (Home School Association or similar organization), which operates by by-laws approved by the OSS. See Appendix B. The primary objective of the Parent Organization is raising funds for the purpose of meeting budgetary goals and enhancing the education of the students.

All disbursements from income raised by parent organizations are to be determined by the school administrator in collaboration with the parent organization and may be used to offset budgeted expenses in the school's budget. All income fund-raised for a specific purpose must be disbursed for that purpose unless alternative disbursement options were set forth at the time the income was raised.

When advisable, parent organizations are to dispense and collect monies using the school procedures and shall not have a separate account that is not authorized or supervised by the school's financial office, principal, and/or Board of Directors.

1.113 NEASC Accreditation and Other Memberships

POLICY

All schools shall seek, maintain, and promote accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

All reports and forms required by NEASC must be sent in on time and must be copied to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. No school may ask for an extension without prior written approval from the superintendent.

All schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport are required to hold membership in the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) and to pay dues in a timely manner.

Schools that apply for a School Readiness Program shall seek and maintain accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

School administrators and teachers may hold other memberships, if the school budget permits.

1.114 Bishop Visits and Communication

POLICY

All requests and communication to the bishop by school administrators, teachers, staff, students, parent organizations, and boards must be made through the Office of the Superintendent.

1.115 Legal Requirements for Schools

POLICY

All diocesan Catholic elementary and high schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport shall observe the applicable legal requirements regarding the operation of schools in the State of Connecticut.

1.116 Handbooks

POLICY

All policies and regulations promulgated by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools shall be binding upon all administrators, teachers, and staff members assigned to all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport. The Policy Manual for Catholic Schools supersedes all local school policies.

Each school shall develop and distribute school handbooks for:

1. Faculty and staff;
2. Parents and students; and
3. Other (i.e. athletics, volunteer, technology) as needed or determined by school administration to communicate specific guidelines and policies.

These handbooks shall be reviewed and updated annually and shall reflect the policies established by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, as well as state the mission, beliefs, and traditions of the school.

1.117 Retention of Records

POLICY

All Catholic elementary and high schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport shall observe the applicable and required retention of school and student records as mandated by the State of Connecticut.

PROCEDURE

Types of school and student records include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Administrative Records
 - a. Registration records
 - b. Parental notification
 - c. Student portfolio work
 - d. Student teacher records
2. Child Study team records
3. Educational Information
 - a. Cumulative records
 - i. Academic achievement
 - ii. Attendance
 - iii. Biographical information
 - iv. Diagnostic test results
 - v. Letters of recommendation
4. Educational Information
 - a. Parental signed release forms
 - b. Records of immunization
 - c. Standardized group test scores
5. Disciplinary records
6. Grade books
7. Family with Service Needs Records
8. Health Information
9. Pupil Personnel Services
10. Reports to State Board of Education
11. Special Education and Related Services
12. Student Assessment Team Records
13. Transportation
14. Truancy

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2.100 Admission

POLICY

The school's admission policy shall be clearly stated on each school's website and in the parent/student handbook.

The Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic schools admit qualified students of any race, color, religion, and national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ancestry, national and ethnic origin, in the administration of educational policies, admission policies and scholarship and loan programs.

Preference in admission shall be granted to practicing members of the Catholic faith as well as siblings of currently enrolled students.

The Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic schools may not be able to provide an appropriate education to all students with special needs due to limited resources.

The age for kindergarten admission shall be that the child reach age 5 on or before September 1 of the school year of attendance. Schools may not admit students who are below the established age without approval from the Superintendent of Schools. Schools must utilize a screening process before acceptance to determine readiness. Entrance into the prekindergarten program must reflect established prekindergarten guidelines as established for ages 3 through 5.

No student shall be permitted to repeat a grade level already successfully completed without approval from the Superintendent of Schools.

By applying for admission to a Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic school, parent(s)/guardian(s) acknowledge and agree that they will support the school's mission and commitment to the Catholic faith.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall enter into a tuition agreement and agree to be bound by the policies and procedures of the school.

2.101 Registration Process

POLICY

Students are required to register annually. Parents with children enrolled in the current year shall be given priority to register for the next school year until January 31st. Parents should be informed that school viability decisions and school scheduling decisions begin February 1st, so accurate re-enrollment numbers are critical by mid-January. New students must register after being admitted to the school.

2.102 Transfers and Withdrawals

POLICY

Students transferring will only be accepted for enrollment when all official student records are received by the principal.

If a student is transferring from one diocesan school to another, the principal of the receiving school is required to inform the principal of the former school of the student's application and inquire if the student is in good standing. All financial obligations at the former school must be met before the student is accepted at the new school.

Transferring students and their parents must have reasons for enrolling consistent with the school's Catholic nature.

If a student withdraws from a diocesan school, during the school year, tuition will be refunded on a pro-rated basis. Non-refundable fees are not considered tuition and thereby will not be refunded. Parents who transfer students after the 15th of the month will be required to pay the entire month's tuition at the school they are choosing to leave. Transfers between the 2nd and the 15th of the month will be charged for (½) half month's tuition.

2.103 Academically Gifted Students

POLICY

Teachers shall identify, monitor, and foster the exceptional ability and talent of academically gifted students in schools.

2.104 Admission of a Student with Special Needs

POLICY

Students with special needs shall be given the same consideration as all applicants. However, prior to admitting a student with diagnosed special needs, a school shall make a determination as to whether or not it can provide an appropriate education for that child.

Each child must be considered on an individual basis. A school must consider:

- The severity and degree of the disability(ies);
- The level of support needed from special services and any special equipment the student may require;
- The school's resources, such as available support personnel, class size, accessibility of school facilities, etc.;
- The accommodations, if any are necessary, and the school's ability to meet those accommodations; and
- The child's individualized education plan (IEP), service plan, or 504 Plan, if one exists, and the school's ability to create an accommodation plan/modified program to meet the needs of the student.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or the public school district in which the student resides shall be responsible for any additional special education services that a student may require. All services must be in place before a student begins attending the school. Student needs should be reevaluated annually.

Parents who withhold or do not provide all appropriate documentation in a timely manner may have their child's admission revoked or be asked to withdraw their child.

2.105 Non-Catholic Students

POLICY

Schools shall admit a non-Catholic student provided that he/she and his/her parents clearly understand that the student will be required to participate in Catholic religious instruction, formation in the Catholic faith, and school activities related to the Catholic identity of the school including attendance at Mass. Parents of non-Catholic students acknowledge and agree to support the school's mission and commitment to the Catholic faith.

2.106 Student and Exchange and Visitor Information (SEVIS)

POLICY

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is an internet-based application that facilitates the electronic reporting and monitoring of international students in the United States. SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of State throughout a student's program in the United States.

All I-20 forms issued by a school for initial attendance by a new student must be created in, and issued from, SEVIS. Once a student is registered in SEVIS, the school must update the student's record and report on the events required by SEVIS.

The I-20 informs the U.S. Government that:

- The international applicant is, or expects to be, a student in a school in the United States;
- The applicant has met the school's admissions requirements; and
- The applicant will pursue a full course of study.

All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport are SEVIS approved schools under the umbrella of the Diocese of Bridgeport. All I-20 forms for non-immigrant students (F-1 student status for those aliens who are in the United States for the purpose of attending school) are issued by the Principal Designated School Official (PDSO) or an appointed Designated School Official (DSO). Only these designated officials may issue or sign an I-20.

Only students possessing a F-1 Visa may attend a school of the Diocese of Bridgeport for credit.

2.107 International Visitor Avocational Experience

POLICY

A student visiting the United States with either a B1/B2 Visa or through the Visitor Waiver Program (VWP), may participate in an avocational experience (auditing or shadowing) for a period of 30 days or less at any Diocese of Bridgeport school. Visiting students participating in the VWP or holding a B1/B2 Visa are prohibited from receiving credit at all Diocese of Bridgeport schools.

2.108 Conditional Acceptance

POLICY

All new students are admitted on a conditional basis for one year. If it is determined by the principal that the placement is not beneficial, parents will withdraw or the school may dismiss the student. Tuition will be refunded on a prorated basis. Non-refundable fees are not considered tuition and thereby will not be refunded.

2.200 Homework

POLICY

Based on extensive research, assigning homework to students validates their ability to work independently and to master the skills taught in the classroom. Homework assists students with developing self-reliance, responsibility and independence. Teachers are able to use homework to identify individual student progress and can determine if re-teaching or additional practice is needed based on how a student is able to complete their homework. Parents are encouraged to provide ample time as suggested below for a student to complete their homework and to communicate with teachers if their child is experiencing frustration or anxiety with their assigned work.

2.201 Grading

POLICY

The school is responsible for the evaluation of each student's progress through the continuum of skills or the sequence adopted by the school for each area of the curriculum. A variety of techniques and means should be utilized for placement and diagnosis as well as for demonstration of mastery or level of achievement. Teacher evaluation of each student's progress must be summarized in the standard grading and reporting system developed and approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. Schools shall follow the policy for grading as directed by the Office of Superintendent of Schools.

Teachers must keep and securely maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of students' grades in the student information system. It is the sole responsibility of the teacher to enter and maintain any grade record. Under no circumstance can this responsibility be delegated to another party. Confidentiality of grades must be maintained at all times.

Schools shall communicate to parents, in writing, the following system for grade-level weighting, established by the Office of the Superintendent.

Grades Pre-Kindergarten through 3rd Grade will utilize Standards-Based Report Cards. These report cards align with the Personalized Learning Initiative as they require goal setting, student/teacher conferencing, individualized learning plans, and personalized instruction. This approach requires that all instruction align to a student's progress toward targeted standards and skills.

2.202 Progress Reports

POLICY

Student progress reports, in conformity with the diocesan grading system, may be distributed mid-marking period. Parents should use the school's Student Information System to monitor student progress on an ongoing basis.

A progress report is issued mid-quarter to all parent/guardians. A parent-teacher conference (virtual or in person) must be made within 7 (seven) days with parents whose student is failing a subject within seven (7) school days of the issued progress report. Parents and teachers are to identify specific skills that need improvement and any academic support, home support needed so that the student may be successful.

Specific procedures for accessing progress reports using the approved School Information System will be determined by each school and shall be outlined in the school's parent/student handbook.

2.203 Report Cards

POLICY

Report cards will be distributed to grades K-8 on a quarterly basis every 90 days in accordance with the school's academic calendar days.

Pre-kindergarten Report Cards will be distributed based on the schedule determined by each school as programs vary Diocesan-wide.

Policies for distribution of report cards for grades 9-12 shall be outlined in each high school's parent/student handbook.

All financial obligations must be met prior to the release of report cards.

2.204 Honor Roll

POLICY

The use of honor rolls is optional for each school.

2.205 Semester Examinations

POLICY

Semester examinations will be administered to students in grades 6-12. The purpose of these examinations is four-fold:

1. To improve study skills;
2. To cultivate organizational skills;
3. To develop the skill of retaining information; and
4. To prepare students for continuing education in high school and college.

In the case of delinquent tuition, students shall not be excluded from semester examinations provided that mutually agreeable signed arrangements have been made with the business manager to bring account current.

High school administrators may choose to set school policies for exempting students from taking final examinations if they exemplify superior grades. Specific policies must be outlined in the parent/student handbook.

2.206 Policy on Modifications of Academic Programs and Grading

POLICY

Students who have disabilities that resulted in qualifications for 504 Plans and/or IEP (in a public school) may be considered for an accommodation plan and/or modified program after they have been accepted to a diocesan school.

2.207 Assessment Programs

POLICY

Student assessment programs are evaluated each year to ensure that they are effectively measuring student learning, informing instructional strategies, optimizing curriculum goals and driving program improvement. Schools may offer additional assessment programs for special programs.

Elementary School Testing

Rationale and Purpose:

- Provide a diagnostic – Assess student strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and skills (snapshot)
- Monitor growth/benchmark – Measure academic progress to demonstrate gains within and across school years
- Allow for comparison – Normative assessments compare student performance to local, regional and national norms
- Inform teaching – Provide teachers with immediate feedback to address specific student needs and to improve overall instructional practices
- Provide a summative evaluation – Criterion referenced tests measure a student's performance against a predetermined set of skills or knowledge base

Assessment Protocols:

i-Ready Assessments

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) in grades 1 & 5 (Measures Ability)

- Measures students' verbal, quantitative, and non-verbal reasoning abilities and assists educators in determining instructional strategies
- Results will be used to aid in differentiation of instruction for students based on individual profiles showing areas of special talent and areas which are more challenging for the student

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) in grades K-2

- Standardized reading test used to determine a student's instructional level in reading
- Administered individually to students by teachers and/or reading specialists
- Provides student reading level so teachers can plan for small group, guided reading instruction, including targeted interventions and supplemental support
- Teachers select materials that match students' instructional levels and provide appropriate instruction to challenge them.

Assessment of Religious Knowledge, (ARK) in grades 5 & 8

- Nationally normed test to evaluate and track religious knowledge, beliefs, and growth of students
- Informs instructional practices and professional development planning

- Organized into six domains and several sub-topics
- Correlates teacher knowledge with student performance and growth with comprehensive data dashboards

Interim Assessments in all grades at a minimum of twice a year

- Schools will utilize i-Ready as the learning assessment tool
- Formative Assessments in Literacy and Numeracy for personalized instructional planning to maximize individual student growth
- Adaptive Assessments give accurate insight into a student's mastery level, help teachers set individual student goals and provide a path for improvement
- Provide growth data for each student, as well as, by class and school.

Use of Data:

- Information will be provided to each parent detailing their child's results
- Teachers will use data to inform daily classroom instruction and personalized learning programs for students
- Aggregate data will be reported annually to the Diocese, School Board, and to Parents Each school will utilize a data team or PLC to review student data and create goals for school- wide planning
- The OSS will use data for diocesan wide professional development planning

High School Testing

Standardized testing increases the accountability of schools and the students they serve. Various forms of ongoing assessments help to inform instruction and ensure students can attend and succeed at the college of their choice.

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) is administered to students in diocesan high schools during sophomore and junior year. Subsequently, students may elect to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and/or American College Test (ACT) according to their own schedule as they prepare to enter college.

The ARK Test is given to juniors. Schools use the data received from the ARK test to inform and improve religious instruction.

Numerous Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered in our secondary schools and students participate in the exams for these courses as indicated by the College Board each spring.

2.208 Referral and Testing

POLICY

When students struggle to learn basic academic skills and/or appropriate school behaviors, it is often necessary to refer them for evaluation and/or counseling. Schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport will comply with Connecticut state guidelines when referring students for psycho-educational evaluation and/or counseling.

As per Connecticut State policy, the evaluation of a student is performed by the public school district in which the school resides. If services are found to be necessary, the creation of an IEP is written by the public school district in which the student resides.

Parents who refuse to have their child tested or seen by a counselor, as well as those who comply with the request for testing but refuse to share the results, may have their child dismissed from the school.

2.209 Promotion/Retention

POLICY

Students shall be promoted once a year based on their satisfactory completion of the grade requirements. If the principal and teacher agree that it would best suit the personal and academic development of the student, a student may be retained in a grade for a second year, but only with the prior approval of the Office of the Superintendent.

A student may be retained only once in grades K-8.

All K-8 homeroom teachers are required to sign or initial each student's report card certifying that the student was promoted to the next grade or retained in the current grade, defined as follows:

- *Promoted* means that the student has completed the grade's work and has attained a minimum of a "D" average in all major subject areas.
- *Retained* means that the student has failed two or more major subjects on the final average.

Major subjects include religion, social studies, math, science, and language arts.

The final decision to promote or retain a student is made by the principal, based on the student's academic performance and best interests. It should be made after discussion with the parent, teacher, and student.

2.210 Summer School

POLICY

A student in Grades 6 – 8 who fails a major subject except religion (social studies, math, science, and language arts) must successfully complete summer school or 30 hours of private tutoring by a certified teacher approved by the principal. Upon successful completion of either program and receipt of written documentation, the student will be promoted. If a student in grades 6-8 fails religion, he/she must work with their teacher to complete a summer project. A fee structure should be created and promulgated for Religion make-up.

2.211 Withdrawal

POLICY

When a student withdraws before the end of a marking term, his/her grade will be reported as of the date of the withdrawal. This grade and such notation will be indicated on the report card and the permanent student record card.

A school may require a student to withdraw if the school is incapable of meeting his/her academic needs. In this case, the conditions must be met:

- Sufficient advance notice of the request must be given in writing to the parents;
- Required progress reports shall have been given to the parents;
- Parents shall have been given the opportunity to discuss with the appropriate staff personnel the future school placement of the student;
- The school must cooperate with any receiving school in matters concerning the placement of the student in an instructional program; and
- The principal must discuss the reasoning for the withdrawal with the Office of the Superintendent prior to the withdrawal.

2.212 Student Records

POLICY

A permanent record must be maintained for a minimum of fifty years for each student enrolled in the school and retained by the school when that student transfers or graduates.

Student records are confidential and thereby only available to parents or staff members with legitimate educational interest in the student. A student record contains the educational history of the student and shall not contain clinical reports or comments about the personal life of the student.

2.213 Clinical Records

POLICY

If a student has had psychological or clinical evaluations, reports from such assessments are considered confidential and therefore shall be stored in a folder separate from the permanent student record folder. Clinical records shall remain in the school until the student leaves the school. The records shall be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) when a student graduates or transfers. Parents wishing to transfer clinical records to another school must indicate so in writing.

2.300 Student Code of Conduct

POLICY

In collaboration with the faculty and staff, the principal shall develop a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures based on the Diocesan Schools Code of Conduct, Catholic values and the dignity of the human person to which students must adhere. The purpose of the code of conduct is to develop sound moral character, responsibility, and citizenship in students.

Each school must have its code of conduct and discipline procedures approved by the Office of the Superintendent and published in the parent/student handbook.

At the beginning of the school year, the expectations of student conduct should be clearly explained to faculty, staff, students, and parents.

While students and parents are required to sign an acknowledgement that they have received and read the Handbook, failure to sign does not negate obligation for compliance.

2.301 Cell Phones/Electronic Devices by Students

POLICY

Each school is to determine a local policy governing the use of electronic devices before, during the course of, and after the school day as well as on school field trips or at other school-related activities. This policy should be clearly explained in the school's student handbook.

No school is to be held responsible for the loss/damage of these devices on school property, at school events, or on school buses.

2.302 Attendance

POLICY

Student attendance in Catholic schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport shall be in accordance with the statutes of the State of Connecticut. The responsibility for compliance with this law belongs to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child. Students must attend school punctually and regularly and conform to the attendance policies and procedures established by the school and outlined in the parent/student handbook.

A student not physically present at a school, excused or unexcused, is marked absent.

When a student is absent due to student illness, death in the family, or mandated court appearances, this is considered an excused absence. Written documentation must be provided to the school.

When a student is absent due to medical and/or dental appointment, verification of such appointments is required from the medical or dental office in order to be considered an excused absence.

When a student is absent because a parent wishes to take their child out of school for personal reasons, this is considered an unexcused absence. It is recommended that the principal discuss the student's progress with the parents and advise them of the effect such an absence would have on the student's schoolwork if there is a continuous pattern of unexcused absences.

Please note that in accordance with state law, the school may be required to report cases of habitual truancy or frequent unexcused absences to appropriate local or state authorities.

2.303 Uniform

POLICY

The principal shall establish a uniform dress code that will promote cleanliness, health, safety and the development of Christian values. Every effort should be made for reasonable requirements and costs. Comparable dress codes must be established for both boys and girls.

Gym uniforms may be worn on the day of physical education; however they should NOT be worn on days when the student will be attending Mass even if physical education is scheduled for that day.

2.304 Student Expectations Regarding the Faith

POLICY

All students, regardless of religious affiliation, are instructed in the teachings of the Catholic Church. The religion program shall present the central doctrines of the Catholic faith in keeping with the norms set by the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the National Directory for Catechesis.

The religious education in the schools of the diocese must conform to the Religion Curriculum Standards provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. Catholic social teaching shall be integrated into the curriculum. Teachers shall emphasize Catholic morality as an integral part of the religion curriculum in each school.

The subject of Religion is reserved for instruction by teachers who are practicing Catholics, in alignment with the mission and identity of the school.

Every faculty member, regardless of the teacher's subject area, is considered a minister of the faith, and is responsible for fostering the religious and moral growth of students.

All students, Catholic or non-Catholic, are required to attend Mass and other religious services with classmates. However, they shall not be required to participate in such services.

Academic marks for religion shall be based on the student's knowledge of course content and not on any kind of assessment of the student's practice of faith or personal behavior.

No awards or prizes shall be given under any circumstances for observance of religious practices.

2.305 Graduation

POLICY

Elementary schools may establish graduation ceremonies to be performed in a simple, dignified manner at the completion of pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grade 8. Elementary schools shall not name a valedictorian and salutatorian.

High schools shall establish a formal graduation ceremony to be performed in a dignified manner at the completion of the high school course of studies. High schools shall celebrate the highest achievements of the graduating class by naming a valedictorian and salutatorian. Each high school shall publish their school policies for qualification for valedictorian and salutatorian in their parent/student handbook.

High schools may publish college admittance and scholarship information to celebrate students' success. All tuition and fees owed to the school must be paid in order for a student to participate in the graduation ceremony.

The Office of the Superintendent must be notified if a school is considering excluding a student from the graduation ceremony.

2.306 Transportation

POLICY

The transportation program for all eligible students in elementary schools shall be organized and planned in cooperation with the local public-school officials.

Schools have the option to organize their own private buses at their own discretion after consultation with the Office of the Superintendent and the Office of General Counsel.

Conduct on school buses should be in accordance with the regulations drawn up by the local director of bus transportation and the school.

2.307 Provisions for Home Instruction

POLICY

When there is medical evidence that the student cannot attend school for an extended period of time and the school cannot provide the necessary instruction and make-up work, the student may be allowed to withdraw temporarily in order to obtain needed provision for home instruction through the local public school district.

All home instruction arrangements are considered temporary measures to assist the student in making the transition back to regular school attendance.

The superintendent reserves the authority to approve or deny provisions for home instruction unrelated to medical issues.

2.308 Releasing Students during School Hours

POLICY

Students shall only be released from school during school hours at the written request of their parent(s)/guardian(s) and with the approval of the principal.

Each school shall have current written emergency information on file for each student designating individuals for whom the parent(s)/guardian(s) authorize releasing the student from school. A telephone conversation with a parent is not considered an authorized change in release plans. All communication must be followed-up in writing (email will suffice).

School personnel shall not knowingly permit a student to be released during school hours with any person, agency, or organization without prior authorization and designation by the parent(s)/ guardian(s).

Students shall not be permitted to go off campus for field trips or school-sponsored events without the written permission of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

2.309 Release of Students to Police

POLICY

Police officers, juvenile authorities, or other court or law enforcement authorities are required to contact the principal when requesting an interview with a student. Generally, no such official shall be given access to a child without parental permission unless:

- There is an arrest warrant;
- The need for the requested interview is of an emergency nature such that delay would pose immediate danger or cause significant harm; and/or
- The case is one of child abuse or neglect in which the student is the victim.

2.310 Bullying

POLICY

Bullying is prohibited in all Catholic schools within the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Bullying is defined as the repeated use of unwanted, aggressive communication or behavior by one or more students to another student that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
- Creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
- Infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
- Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or a physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Bullying must not be tolerated during the school day or during any school-sponsored activities on or off school grounds. Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Any behavior deemed by the school administration to be considered as bullying shall result in disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.

Any student who retaliated against another student for reporting bullying may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.

Clarification of terms:

- "Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.
- "Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing communication between two or more individuals.
- "Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by Internet, cellular, fiber, wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic, or photo- optical system.

- "Hostile environment" means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate.
- "Outside of the school setting" means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school.
- "School climate" means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.

2.311 Harassment

POLICY

The schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport do not condone any form of harassment. All individuals are to be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment in any form is prohibited.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of decisions affecting such individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interference with an individual's work performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment.

Verbal harassment includes derogatory comments, jokes, or slurs. It also can include belligerent or threatening words spoken to another individual.

Physical harassment includes unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, and deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement.

Visual harassment includes derogatory, demeaning, or inflammatory posters, cartoons, written words, drawings, novelties, or gestures.

A student who harasses another student shall be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.

2.312 Suspected Prohibited/Illegal Substance

POLICY

No student shall possess, use, distribute, sell, or attempt to possess, use, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of a prohibited substance on school premises during any school term or off school premises at a school-sponsored activity, function, or event, or at a time and place that directly involves the school or its welfare.

A “prohibited substance” is defined as:

1. Any controlled substance or illegal or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to, marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate;
2. Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage;
3. Any abuse of glue, aerosol paint, or any other volatile chemical substance for inhalation;
4. Any other intoxicant or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior altering drug; and/or
5. Any prescription drugs used in amounts or purposes not contemplated by the prescription.

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

2.313 Criminal Gang-Like Activity

POLICY

Criminal gang-like activity is defined as membership in any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of one or more criminal acts.

Students shall not wear/display explicit gang-like symbols.

Under no circumstances shall criminal gang-like activity be tolerated on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity. Any student who is involved in criminal gang-like activity on or off school grounds will be

2.314 Weapons

POLICY

No student shall possess, use, transmit, or conceal or attempt to possess, use, transmit, or conceal a weapon, including a knife (including pocket knives, utility knives, hunting knives), firearm or electronic defense weapon while on school premises, during any school term, or off school premises at a school-sponsored activity, function or event. Students who fail to comply with this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

Schools shall publish established procedures for the implementation of this policy in the school's parent/student handbook.

2.315 Search and Seizure

POLICY

The principal is responsible for safeguarding the well-being of the students in his/her care.

Lockers, desks, and storage areas provided for student use are considered school property and thereby subject to inspection, access for maintenance, and search by school officials for any reason, at any time, without notice, without obtaining student or parental consent and without obtaining a search warrant. The privacy rights of the student regarding any items that are not illegal or against school policy shall be respected in the course of conducting a search.

As a preventative measure, local enforcement authorities, including the use of drug detecting dogs, shall be permitted to search desks, lockers, and/or storage areas on a random basis.

A student's personal property on school property or at school-related events may also be searched as long as the search is reasonable. Personal property and/or belongings may include, but are not limited to, handbags, briefcases, purses, backpacks, clothing, phones, electronics, vehicles, and other items in a student's possession.

If a student fails to submit to a search, this will constitute as presumptive evidence of substances against school policy and may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

2.316 Withdrawal of Students for Academic Reasons

POLICY

When a student is not making sufficient academic progress or if the school is unable to meet the student's academic needs, the principal may request that the student withdraw. Prior to such a request, the following conditions must be met:

- Advance notice of at least 7 calendar days of the request for withdrawal must be given in writing to the parents;
- Progress reports shall have been given to the parents;
- The parents shall have been given the opportunity to discuss with the appropriate staff personnel the future school placement of the student; and
- The school must cooperate with any receiving school in matters concerning the placement of the student in an instructional program.

2.317 Discipline

POLICY

The primary goal of any disciplinary code is to be formative and encourage self-discipline; enabling the student to internalize Catholic values and principles and to behave in accordance with those values and principles. Each student has the right to learn in a safe, caring, Catholic environment. This right must be respected and safeguarded.

2.318 Suspension

POLICY

The principal has the right to suspend students whose presence in the school becomes a serious impediment to the school's operation. Students may be suspended if their offense is of a severe nature or if prior disciplinary actions have proven ineffective.

Suspension may result from actions (physical, verbal, or virtual) occurring in or out of school or on or off school property.

2.319 Expulsion

POLICY

Expulsion of a student should only follow a period of suspension, unless the situation calls for immediate action. Expulsion shall only be considered as a last resort; if other means of discipline have proven ineffective and/or the continuation of the student in membership of the school is considered to be a hindrance to the welfare and progress of the school.

Expulsion may result from actions (physical, verbal, or virtual) occurring in or out of school or on or off school property.

Some reasons for expulsions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unauthorized absence or continued tardiness;
- Disobedience, insubordination, or disrespect for authority;
- Language or behavior which is immoral, profane, vulgar, or obscene;
- Conduct which constitutes repeated violations of school policies, rules and standards of conduct;
- Use, sale, distribution, or possession of drugs, alcohol, or any other legally controlled substance;
- Injury, endangerment, or harm to persons or property or serious threat of same;
- Assault with, or possession of, a lethal instrument or weapon;
- Serious theft or dishonesty;
- Outrageous, scandalous, or serious disruptive behavior;
- Habitual lack of effort leading to academic failure in classroom work;
- Conduct at school or elsewhere which would reflect adversely on the Catholic school and/or the Church;
- Consistent disrespect for other students such as sexual harassment of another student;
- Incident of physical or virtual assault, such as bullying or verbal abuse (threats, extortion, or violence);
- Violation of Internet code of ethics; and/or
- When other means of discipline have failed.

2.320 Appeal Process

POLICY

Parents may appeal a principal's decision in regard to the dismissal of their child. This appeal must be made to the superintendent in writing. This must be done within two (2) days of the expulsion.

2.330 Parents as Partners

POLICY

Our Catholic tradition and culture teach that parents are vital partners when it comes to school success. The Catholic Church recognizes parents as the primary teachers of their children. The essential mission of Catholic schools is to partner with parents in teaching their children to know Jesus Christ within the Catholic faith.

In this policy, “parent” symbolizes a child’s natural or adopted parent, a legal guardian, or any person or agency with the legal jurisdiction to act in lieu of parents.

When parents enroll their children in a Catholic school, they have certain expectations of the school, its teachers, and administrators. The school, likewise, has certain expectations of parents.

Parental Rights, Responsibilities and Expectations

Some parental rights include, but are not limited to:

- Having their children receive an academically appropriate education in a Catholic environment;
- Having their children taught by competent teachers who respect and care for them;
- Having their children’s safety be a priority; and
- Exercising appropriate participation in the life of the school.

Some parental responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Respecting the school, its staff, and the school community;
- Supporting the school’s mission and commitment to the Catholic faith;
- Partnering with the school administrators, faculty, and staff in the education of their children;
- Reading all communications from the school;
- Supporting school activities and volunteering assistance when possible;
- Promoting the school and speaking well of it to others;
- Meeting financial obligations in a timely manner and supporting fundraising efforts;
- Adhering to all the school policies and procedures outlined in the school handbook; and
- Discussing concerns and problems with appropriate personnel and following school protocols.

Some expectations for parents include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting and reflecting the school’s culture and Catholic values through their behavior;
- Setting a good example for students through their behavior and the way they interact with staff, students and other adults;
- Working together with staff for the benefit of their children;
- Treating staff members, students, other parents and any other individuals connected to the school with dignity and respect;

- Working cooperatively with staff members to resolve any issues of concern;
- Where appropriate, clarifying their child's version of events with the school to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue;
- Respecting and supporting the decisions made by the school;
- When necessary, supporting the school and their child to change behavior appropriately, particularly where it could otherwise lead to escalating conflict or aggressive or unsafe behavior; and
- Respecting the school's property and environment.

Parent Communication: School Responsibilities

The school is expected to treat all concerns, issues and parent complaints with respect, seriousness and diligence. The school will respond reasonably and professionally to resolve concerns promptly and effectively. The school is expected to implement sound judgment and refer to the processes outlined in the school's handbook including but not limited to communication channels, student code of conduct and parent code of conduct.

Parent Communication: Parent Responsibilities

A parent who wishes to discuss concerns about his/her child should follow the appropriate chain of communication as defined by the school. If the school addresses an issue in a manner that lacks compassion or fails to follow the school's policy and procedures as set forth by the school, then the parent may elevate the concern to the appropriate next level (i.e. the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, Executive Director).

Parent Code of Conduct

Parents/caregivers are expected to model the values of the school community at all times. This includes conducting themselves in a kind, respectful, and peaceful manner—even outside of school hours and off-campus.

Inappropriate Behavior and Actions to Address Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate behavior of parents/guardians is taken very seriously, especially when it affects the dignity, safety, or well-being of students, staff members, or other members of the school community.

The school will address all concerns raised by parents, regardless of how they are communicated. However, when those concerns are expressed in an inappropriate or harmful manner, the inappropriate behavior will be addressed separately. In such cases, meetings, phone calls, or email exchanges may be paused and resumed only once all parties are able to communicate respectfully and safely.

Level 1 Offenses

These behaviors are considered inappropriate but do not immediately jeopardize the safety of students or staff. They are typically correctable through warning and dialogue. Repeated Level 1 offenses may escalate to Level 2.

Examples of Level 1 offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Speaking disrespectfully to staff, students, or other parents;
- Using a raised voice, aggressive tone, or condescending language;
- Sending inappropriate, accusatory, or overly critical emails, texts, or voicemails;

- Bypassing school communication protocols (e.g., not following the proper chain of command);
- Publicly criticizing or misrepresenting the school or school personnel on social media;
- Disregarding school policies or procedures (e.g., speed limit, pick-up/drop-off rules);
- Causing minor disruptions during school events or meetings;
- Distributing or wearing materials on school grounds or at school functions that are suggestive and inappropriate, obscene, advocate illegal action, promote illegal substances, appear libelous, obstruct the rights of others, or are disruptive to the school program;
- Entering school property without signing in or seeking authorization.

Consequences for Level 1 offenses may include verbal warnings, written notices, required meetings with school leadership, or temporary restrictions from school events. Repeated or unaddressed Level 1 behavior will result in escalation to Level 2 consequences and will be referred to the Office of Safe Environments and Office of the Superintendent of Schools for further action.

*No restriction, however, will prevent the parent from working collaboratively with the school to meet the child's educational needs, nor will a parent/guardian be excluded from a child's PPT meeting or Parent/Teacher conference.

Level 2 Offenses

These are serious violations that endanger the emotional or physical safety of the school community or significantly disrupt the academic environment.

Examples of Level 2 offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Threatening or intimidating any student, staff member, or other parent;
- Approaching someone else's child to rebuke/chastise them;
- Using profane, vulgar, or offensive language;
- Acts of vandalism or destruction of school or personal property;
- Harassment, bullying, or discrimination based on race, religion, gender, or any protected status;
- Recording or videotaping interactions without consent, including classroom instruction or staff conversations;
- Cyberbullying or public online harassment involving any member of the school community;
- Bringing weapons or illegal substances onto school grounds;
- Engaging in physical altercations or threats of violence;
- Disrupting transportation services or confronting bus drivers;
- Repeated failure to comply with school directives after prior warnings.

Consequences for Level 2 offenses may include:

- Immediate removal from school property;
- Temporary or permanent ban from school premises and/or school-sponsored events;
- Required mediation or compliance with directives from diocesan offices;
- Legal action if criminal or civil laws are violated;

- **In severe or repeated cases, dismissal of the student(s) from the school.** Dismissal will be considered only after careful review and in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent and Office of Safe Environments. Every effort will be made to preserve the student's educational support, but the overall well-being of the school community must take precedence.

Appeal Process

Level 1 offenses are not appealable to the Superintendent of Schools.

Level 2 offenses may be appealed by submitting a written request, including any supporting evidence, to the Office of the Superintendent within five (5) calendar days of receiving notice of the consequence. Email submissions are acceptable. The Office will respond in writing within five (5) school days to either uphold, amend, or overturn the consequence. The decision of the Superintendent is final.

2.400 Health

POLICY

All students attending schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport shall comply with Connecticut state law (School Health and Sanitation, Chapter 169, Sec. 10-204a) regarding immunization requirements for students.

All students must have the required immunizations prior to the beginning of school.

2.401 School Nurse

POLICY

The school nurse shall be responsible for the health records of the students and will provide medical treatment as approved by the local public school district.

In the absence of a school nurse, the principal or teacher (but not teacher's aide) may administer and log medication. In emergencies, such as asthma attacks or anaphylactic shock, students may be allowed to self-administer medications, such as inhalers or epinephrine auto-injectors, with parental consent.

At no time may a school nurse promote or entertain any medical treatment that would be contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

2.402 Health Records

POLICY

A current health record for each student shall be requested annually and is to be kept active and up to date. Health records shall be kept in files separate from student records.

The school shall follow policies of related health immunizations and screenings as directed by local and state statutes as long as they do not violate Catholic moral teachings.

2.403 Emergency Information for Students

POLICY

Schools must request emergency information for each student enrolled in the school. This must include pertinent information in case of accident or illness.

Emergency information records must be retained until superseded, or the student leaves the school. At such time, emergency information records must be destroyed.

If a student becomes ill or is involved in an accident, the principal or his/her designee shall:

1. Immediately contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
2. Attempt to contact any other person listed on the student's emergency card if he/she cannot reach the student's parent(s), and/or
3. Call the paramedics and notify the superintendent in the event of serious injury.

2.404 Medication

POLICY

Administration of medication by school personnel should be in compliance with the city/town in which the school resides.

The school nurse shall administer medication which is necessary for a student to remain in school during school hours. In the absence of a school nurse, the principal or teacher (but not teacher's aide) can administer and log medication. Students are not allowed to carry any medication, prescription or non-prescription, on their person unless authorized in writing by a physician.

Students requiring prescription and/or over-the-counter medications in school must present a physician's authorization and written parent(s)/guardian(s) permission. Proper medical authorization forms must be used. The following over-the-counter medications may be given with written permission from the parent(s)/guardian(s) only:

- Tylenol or Ibuprofen;
- Cough drops; and
- Tums/Antacids.

All medications must be provided by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and must be in their original pharmaceutical container labeled with the student's name. Each student's medication must be in its original container clearly labeled with the following information:

1. Student name
2. Physician/dentist name
3. Date
4. Name of medication
5. Dosage
6. Directions for administration
7. Frequency and duration of administration

Glucose testing and insulin administration is to be coordinated by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), in collaboration with the school's principal.

Students who violate the medication policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

2.405 Allergy Policy

POLICY

In general, the school nurse will follow the health policies of the city/town in which the individual school is located.

Principals, with the consultation and approval of the superintendent, may adopt specific school policies with regard to food allergies. **P**

2.406 Epinephrine Administration

POLICY

Parents and school officials should cooperate in the prevention of life-threatening incidents due to allergic reactions. Schools shall encourage administrators, full-time teachers, and coaches to obtain the training necessary to administer an epinephrine auto-injector on a student with a known life-threatening allergic condition. Emergency medication shall be kept in an appropriate, easily accessible location which allows for prompt response in case of a reaction.

Each school shall maintain records that indicate which students may have a serious allergic condition. On a need-to-know basis, any and all school personnel, volunteers, coaches, etc. shall be made aware of the child's serious allergic condition.

If a student with a known life-threatening allergy suffers a serious allergic reaction which requires prompt treatment to prevent serious harm or death, a licensed nurse, administrator, teacher, or coach who has been properly trained to administer medication by injection may administer an epinephrine auto-injector to that student.

An individual who is qualified to administer an epinephrine auto-injector may do so only to students who have a written order for such injection by a qualified health care provider and written authorization from the parent(s)/guardian(s). No such injection may be given to a student who has not been identified as having a life-threatening allergy and for whom no written order has been received.

2.407 Communicable Disease

POLICY

Teachers, under the direction of the school nurse and assisted by the principal, shall be responsible for observing the daily health of students.

The principal shall report all known or suspected cases of communicable disease immediately to the local health department and the superintendent, and follow all requirements of the health department. Students suffering from communicable diseases are to be excluded from school and school-related activities for at least the minimal period required by health department school exclusion regulations. Any special requirements for re-admission mandated by the health department must be followed. Any student having a communicable disease will be dealt with on an individual case-by-case basis.

2.408 Student Pregnancy

POLICY

Acknowledging that human life at all stages including the human fetus is a sacred gift from God and that abortion is never a Catholic alternative at any stage of pregnancy, students who become pregnant deserve and need the full support of the principal, teachers, and other students. This is not to condone unwed pregnancy but rather to protect the sacred gift of life of the unborn child and to extend love and compassion to those involved.

In the event that a student becomes pregnant, a school shall arrange for counseling for that student and for the father of the unborn child. Decisions regarding the enrollment status of pregnant students will be approached with consideration for the welfare and Christian development of the individual student and the welfare of the entire student body. The best interest of the student, parents, and school will be considered at the local level and on an individual case by case basis.

The principal shall seek the advice of the superintendent in reaching a decision on these matters. Each case will be weighed on its own merits. The principal, in conjunction with the superintendent and his/her designees and the student's parents, shall determine whether it is appropriate for the student to continue participation in school.

Abortion, which disregards innocent human life, is contrary to the fundamental teachings of the Church, the mission of the Catholic school, and the values that ought to permeate Catholic education. Catholic teaching does not accept that anyone may justifiably arrange for or procure an abortion for oneself or for another person, be forced or pressured into having an abortion, or influence or coerce another person to have an abortion.

2.500 Safety of Students

POLICY

The principal shall oversee supervision of students on the school premises. The faculty shall share this responsibility with the principal.

All entrance and exit doors must be secured at all times. No school personnel or students shall open secured entrances to admit unknown persons. Such persons shall be directed to the main entrance and must register at the school office. Visitors must wear an identifying badge for the duration of the visit. No visitor is exempt from this policy.

No parents or volunteers shall be provided with keys or access to school buildings without approval from the principal. Even when parents know other adults who are waiting to be let into the school building, only authorized personnel may open the door for those waiting for entry.

2.501 School Buildings

POLICY

All school buildings and grounds shall meet the applicable standards of the Department of Health, Fire Department, and any other applicable state or municipal building code standards. The principal shall see to it that regular attention is given to the safety, sanitation, and proper maintenance of the building.

Schools must prepare, update, and have readily available a comprehensive floor plan for each school building. All rooms, including closets, restrooms, faculty rooms, etc., should be numbered. These room numbers should be entered on the copy of the floor plan, must be included in the School Safety and Crisis Intervention Plan, must be stored in the school office, must be easily accessible, and must be shared with the local safety authorities.

Guidelines for school floor plans include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copied on white letter 8 ½" x 11", legal 8 ½ "x 14" or 11" x 17" paper;
- Include a key to define any symbols;
- Note compass directions;
- Illustrate each floor on a separate page;
- Identify street names that surround the facility;
- Clearly mark and number building entrances/exits/windows;
- Note location of water, gas, and electrical shut-offs;
- Note location of existing AED (automated external defibrillator), areas of refuge/assistance, fire extinguishers, alarm panels and camera locations;
- Include exterior alpha phonetic identification of building sides, (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta) the universal language in emergency services field (Fire, Police, EMS, etc.); and
- Include the school name, address, and phone number as well as important contacts (i.e. principal, maintenance staff office, etc.) one each page of the plan.

2.502 School Doors

POLICY

All school entrances must be locked at all times. Arrival and dismissal of students should be supervised by the physical presence of personnel and, if available, closed-circuit cameras.

There should be one main entrance for visitors. Only specified school personnel may admit visitors.

Where appropriate and necessary, doors should have exterior alar

2.503 Visitors and/or Unauthorized Persons

POLICY

All schools shall establish procedures to register visitors on school property. The principal is responsible for publishing the procedures in the school's parent/ student handbook.

There shall only be one main school entrance for visitors. School entrances, including where visitors must sign in, must be clearly marked.

All visitors must report and register at the school office. The school shall maintain a visitor log with the name of the visitor, reason for visit, and the time that the visitor entered the school. The school shall provide each visitor an identifying badge designed to alert school personnel and students that the visitor has been authorized to be in the school. Visitors must wear an identifying badge for the duration of the visit and sign out when leaving the building. No visitor is exempt from this policy. Vendors must sign a contractor's log which should include the statement: "I have read the asbestos management plan and I am aware of all the asbestos containing materials in the building. These materials will not be disturbed during the course of my work." The log should include the date, company name, and the individual's signature.

Each school shall develop a method of identification for the regular school faculty and staff, so as to be easily differentiated from visitors and/or unauthorized persons. Faculty, staff, and students should not allow strangers access into the school. All visitors must be granted access by the main office so the purpose of the visit may be ascertained.

All entertainers, vendors, and guests must be in full compliance with Safe Environment policies. Short-term visitors (less than 3 hours) and one-time only guest speakers must be directly monitored by a cleared adult for the entire time they are present with students and they must be instructed to use a faculty or staff-only bathroom. A cleared adult is someone who is in full compliance with the Safe Environment requirements of the Diocese of Bridgeport and the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

2.504 Traffic Safety

POLICY

Assistance from the local police department should be sought in planning and evaluating school safety patrols and traffic arrangements for the area surrounding the school.

Each school shall formulate a policy of traffic, pedestrians, and bus safety and communicate this policy to all school personnel, students, and parents.

Regular drills for evacuating buses in an emergency should be held. High schools that have several students driving to school should carefully control traffic in and around school parking areas. High Schools should have a policy that addresses student drivers.

Playground areas should be properly supervised and sufficiently enclosed to prevent students from straying into streets. Proper signage regarding usage and trespassing should be clearly posted.

Local law enforcement agencies are to be given a copy of the school calendar at the beginning of the year and must be informed in advance about any changes in the schedule.

2.505 Parents Who Are Sex Offenders

POLICY

For the purpose of this policy, a sexual offender is defined in Connecticut General Statutes §54- 250 through §54- 261 and/or is required per these statutes to register on the state's sex offender registry.

A child of a sex offender has the same rights to attend one of our schools as any other child. Protection of all students requires that special arrangements and restrictions be placed on parent/guardian who is a sex offender. The violation of the special arrangements and restrictions may lead to the expulsion of the offender's child(ren).

The following restrictions shall be applied unless there is sufficient reason to provide for a variance:

1. The offender shall not be permitted on school premises at any time when children are expected to be present. This includes walking their child to and from school. If the offender drives a vehicle to school to pick up or drop off the offender's own child at school, the offender must remain in their vehicle at all times and shall not stay any longer than is necessary to accomplish this task. No school children, other than the offender's own child, may be picked up or dropped off at school by the offender.
2. Offenders may attend an adults-only event at the school, such as a parent-teacher conference, provided that it occurs after school hours and no children (other than the offender's own child) are expected to be present.
3. Offenders are not permitted to attend any school event or activity, on or off school grounds, at which children are expected to be present.
4. Offenders cannot volunteer or work in any capacity at school events or activities.
5. Offenders may communicate with their child's teachers, coaches or school administrators by telephone, regular mail, email, or by making an appointment to see them after-hours when no other children are present. The parent must have advance approval from the principal for any such appointment, including parent teacher conferences. Whenever possible, any conference, such as a parent/teacher conference, should be scheduled as late as possible or with the option of meeting virtually, so as to minimize the possibility of other children being in the building. If approval is granted, the offender shall be instructed to report to the principal immediately upon his or her arrival at school, and the principal or his/her designee should escort the offender to the approved meeting. The escort should remain with the offender during the offender's entire time in a school. When the offender is meeting with a teacher or other school personnel, it is appropriate for the escort to remain outside of the meeting room, to afford the offender and school personnel some privacy. The escort should be reminded that he or she must be discreet, and that the offender should be treated with courtesy.

6. Offenders have a right to review their child's educational records unless there is a court order that provides otherwise or unless the child is not the offender's biological child. In the case of the latter, written permission from the child's biological parent is required before access to the child's records can be given. An offender may review his/her child's records by contacting the principal and scheduling an appointment. Any such appointment shall be scheduled for after school hours.
7. The offender shall be told that failure to comply with these restrictions could result in the offender's child being denied the right to continued schooling at any Catholic school.
8. At the close of the meeting with the offender or immediately thereafter, or if no meeting is held, as soon as reasonable, the offender should be sent a letter by regular and certified mail outlining the restrictions set forth.
9. It is recognized that circumstances may necessitate some deviation from this policy, or that relief from any or all of these restrictions may be appropriate in a given case. Any deviation or relief from these restrictions must be approved in advance by the principal and the superintendent. In making any such decision, the school shall not rely on any representation of facts made by the offender.

School property includes all land within the perimeter of the school site and all school buildings, structures, facilities, computer networks and systems, and school vehicles, whether owned or leased by the school district, and the site of any school- sponsored activity. A parent/guardian sex offender who attempts to communicate electronically with a student other than his/her child while the student is on school property will be considered on school property without permission and will be in violation of this policy.

2.506 Fire Safety

POLICY

Proper fire exit directions must be posted clearly in each room of the schools.

All schools are required by CT State law to conduct ten (10) drills a year. There shall be a fire drill no later than thirty days after the first day of each school year and at least once each month thereafter. Once every three months a crisis response drill may be substituted for a fire drill. It is recommended to have at least one drill each semester observed by the fire department.

Each school bus must have the required fire extinguishers. Extinguishers placed in kitchens, science labs, and other school areas should be checked regularly.

2.507 Bomb Threats

POLICY

When a bomb threat is received, the primary concern of the principal must be the safety of students and employees in the building. The principal should immediately contact the local police department and the superintendent. The principal should follow directives of police and/or first responders.

2.508 School Safety and Crisis Intervention Plans

POLICY

Each school shall be familiar with the current state/town/city civil preparedness program.

Each school must have its own School Safety and Crisis Intervention Manual outlining the procedures to be followed in the event of an accident or serious injury, fire, bomb or bomb threat, intruder, incapacitated teacher, attack, bus accident, kidnapping, hostage taking, suicide, or death of an employee or student.

The plan should include, but not be limited to:

- Chain of command;
- List of all emergency contact persons and numbers;
- Emergency calling system (before and after school);
- Emergency calling system for notification of parent(s)/guardian(s);
- Warning system separate from a fire alarm;
- Designation of places to which the students shall be taken;
- Adequate instruction of personnel; and
- Lockdown protocol for internal and external threats.

The principal shall review the safety/crisis plan once every year and update/revise as needed or when a modification to the building requires a change in the procedures outlined in the safety/crisis plan. The principal must file the plan with the local emergency response agency or municipality and must forward a copy to the superintendent.

2.509 Corporal and Other Prohibited Forms of Punishment

POLICY

The use of corporal punishment in any form is prohibited in the schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Corporal punishment includes the use of physical force, verbal abuse, and/or ostracism. Corporal punishment (spanking, striking, shaking, slapping, shoving, pushing, pinching, hitting, or any touching that a reasonable person would construe as punitive) is prohibited.

Connecticut law prescribes criminal penalties and fines for “any person who, having the control and custody of any child under the age of sixteen years, in any capacity whatsoever, maltreats, tortures, overworks, cruelly or unlawfully punishes such child,” Conn. Gen. Stat. §53-20, or “[a]ny person who willfully or unlawfully causes or permits any child under the age of sixteen years to be placed in such a situation that the life or limb of such child is endangered, the health of such child is likely to be injured, or the morals of such child are likely to be impaired, or does any act likely to impair the health or morals of any such child,” Conn. Gen. Stat. §53-21.

Pursuant to CT Law (CGS Sect. 53a-18 (6)), a teacher or other personnel entrusted with the care and supervision of a minor, youth, or other vulnerable person for school purposes may use reasonable physical force when and to the extent that a reasonable person would find it necessary to:

- Remove the minor, youth, or vulnerable person in order to maintain order;
- Protect him/herself or others from immediate physical injury;
- Obtain possession of a dangerous instrument or controlled substance; or
- Protect property from physical damage.

2.510 Accidents

POLICY

All accidents that occur on school premises or off school premises relating to students shall be immediately reported to the principal. The principal is responsible for ensuring that the accident report is completed and submitted to Catholic Mutual. Input from witnesses should be included in the report. In the case of serious accidents, the principal shall notify the Office of the Superintendent immediately.

All accidents that occur on school premises or off school premises relating to faculty shall be immediately reported to the principal as well as called into The Hartford Insurance. The principal shall immediately notify the Office of the Superintendent and complete the Supervisor's Report and return to the Human Resource Department.

The principal is responsible for overseeing the completion of all necessary accident forms and contacting Catholic Mutual.

2.511 Safe Environment training for Students

POLICY

The Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools operate in full accordance with the U.S.C.C.B. Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the "Charter", and the Safe Environment policies of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Every Catholic School in the United States is required to provide ongoing education on child sexual abuse awareness and prevention for all students.

Instruction

Instructional Program

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3.100 Objectives of the Instructional Program

POLICY

The purpose of a Catholic school is to foster a learning environment centered on the teachings of Jesus Christ that provides academic excellence through rigorous curricula and prepares students to be life-long learners and contributing members of the 21st Century global community.

To achieve this purpose, each Catholic school within the Diocese of Bridgeport organizes their curriculum, staff, and physical facilities to provide a personalized learning experience so that the student will be able to:

- Know the person and message of Jesus Christ through joyful and prayerful worship which will help to nurture the growth of spiritual values, ethical standards of conduct, and moral integrity;
- Develop an understanding of the Catholic Church as a universal community of faith;
- Evolve and progress in their ability to think constructively, become independent problem-solvers through the guidance of educators entrusted with their spiritual and academic on-going development;
- Gain appreciation for the multi-cultural diversity of their school environment which reflects the world around them; and
- Develop an interest and appreciation for the Arts.

3.101 Curriculum Standards

POLICY

Curriculum standards demonstrate how our Catholic schools exceed the expectations set forth by state standards. A diocesan teams of administrators and teachers have created an exceptional approach to develop academics in a faith-based environment, which nurtures each student's unique learning potential.

The curriculum standards are developed and updated through the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. Religion curriculum standards are formulated by the Office of the Superintendent in consultation with a committee of educators and approved by the Bishop. These standards shall serve as the foundation for curriculum development on the school level.

Curriculum standards for subject areas are provided to the classroom teachers and are available for parents on the diocesan website.

3.102 Lesson Plans/Unit Planning

POLICY

Every teacher shall have documented plans for instruction aligned with the curriculum standards of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

3.103 Professional Learning Communities

POLICY

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are important because they create structured opportunities for teachers and staff to work together with the shared goal of improving student learning. Instead of working in isolation, educators collaborate, analyze data, and adjust instruction in ways that directly benefit students.

Administrators shall create a plan for staff development that improves the instruction of all teachers and increases student learning. Faculty shall be organized into Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) whose goals are aligned with those of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

3.104 Class Size

POLICY

Class size will vary in accordance with the instructional program and methodology being followed in a class, school.

Class size in grades K-2 should not exceed twenty-five (25) students and grades 3-8 should not exceed thirty (30) students without the approval of the superintendent.

Given budgeting implications, a minimum of forty (40) registered students is necessary prior to the establishment of a new grade level section without the consent of the superintendent. For any number lower than the class maximum- a school should create a waitlist protocol until the required number of students for a new section is achieved.

Creating a new grade-level section with numbers lower than 40 must have approval from the superintendent and finance.

Each PK-8 school shall determine its ability to offer more than one section of a grade level based on budget and facility. Beyond the class maximum of per grade level, the school should create a waitlist protocol.

3.105 Class Schedule

POLICY

Each school must develop an academic schedule for each class that fits the organizational model of the school. In creating the schedule, the principal must meet the minimum weekly time allotment for content areas as per the Office of the Superintendent.

3.106 Textbooks and Workbooks

POLICY

Schools shall maintain a record of textbooks, workbooks and educational subscriptions which must be readily available to the Office of the Superintendent.

Curriculum standards, not textbooks and workbooks shall serve as the foundation for curriculum development on the school level.

All Religion materials must be listed on the USCCB approval list. Any new catechetical/ religion materials must be approved by the OSS prior to use.

3.107 Instructional Aids

POLICY

The use of teaching aids, including a variety of technologies, shall be used insofar as they contribute to learning and help the teacher attain teaching objectives and goals pertinent to the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to use media "clips" rather than showing full length movies.

Teachers are responsible for reviewing all movies, video clips, and other media shown in class to ensure their appropriateness for the age, maturity, subject matter of their students and alignment with the Catholic faith.

R-rated movies are not to be shown. Any movie rated PG13 or higher must be approved by the principal and collect signed permission slips from the parents. Field excursions to such movies sponsored by the school are also prohibited.

3.108 Students with Special Learning Needs

POLICY

Once a school has admitted a student with known special learning needs, it is the expectation that the school's staff and resources will effectively meet the needs of the student (see section on Admissions process).

The school's ability to continue to provide the appropriate support must be reviewed annually.

3.109 Non-English Speaking Students

POLICY

Schools should include a home language survey in the new student application for admission form. If the survey indicates an applying student's first language is not English, the school will request that the public school district in which that school is located evaluate the student for English language proficiency.

3.110 The American Flag

POLICY

Each school shall display the American flag outside the building during school session. The American flag shall also be displayed in every classroom.

3.111 Prayer

POLICY

The school day shall begin and end with prayer. Students shall pray before lunch and snacks (or any other time a meal is consumed). Traditional prayers of the Church, as well as informal prayers, shall be taught.

3.112 Mass and Sacraments

POLICY

All students, including those who are not Catholic, are expected to attend school Masses and liturgical services as part of the school day. All students should conduct themselves with reverence, demonstrating respect for the traditions and practices of the Catholic faith.

Catholic students shall be encouraged to practice their faith and particularly to receive the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation in such a manner that they shall come to realize that spiritual growth is a matter of cooperation with divine grace.

Non-Catholic students are not to participate in the sacramental aspects of the Mass (such as receiving Holy Communion), but they are expected to be respectful, attentive, and present during the liturgy. Non-Catholic students are encouraged to join in prayers and songs to the extent that they feel comfortable, recognizing Mass as a communal experience.

3.113 Education in Human Dignity

POLICY

Elementary/middle schools shall implement the Safe Environments Program adopted by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools and Office of Safe Environments (i.e. Think First & Stay Safe Youth Curriculum, and the Netsmartz Workshop).

Education in human dignity shall conform to the teachings and spirit of the Catholic Church.

The teaching of chastity education adopted from the program issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops shall be implemented into the high school programs.

3.114 Infectious Disease Education

POLICY

Schools shall incorporate education about infectious or life-threatening diseases, including but not limited to hepatitis, cancer, heart disease, COVID, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases. The content of the education must be current and consistent with the moral teachings of the Catholic Church and must be taught in an appropriate context such as health education programs.

3.115 Field Trips and School-Sponsored Activities

POLICY

Participating in a school field trip or school-sponsored activity is a privilege and not a right. All field trips must have the enrichment of the curriculum as their core purpose and must be carefully planned as an extension of the classroom experience. The cost of field trips and activities should be such that all students have the ability to participate.

Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that this trip will continue in future years.

All grades do not always have the same number of field trips. At least one field trip and a maximum of three field trips per student are recommended.

When traveling with a school on a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation, students are expected to attend Mass in the Roman Catholic Rite and the trip should account/plan for that within the schedule.

Trips to amusement/water park areas must have an educational rationale and must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools. An abundance of caution must be used in any event or trip that may involve swimming. In all cases, a certified lifeguard must be present at all times and there must be separate showering rooms and changing areas for adults and minors. Proper swimming attire must be worn at all times.

Overnight field trips must be approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

The principal must approve any school-sponsored social activity both on and off school property. These activities must have a clear purpose, be carefully planned, and be well-supervised by staff. For such activities, all the areas of responsibility should be clearly defined.

The principal is responsible for the coordination of all activities of the school, including student activities outside the school building or school day. If delegated, it should be clearly stated to whom the responsibility for the event is delegated.

The principal is responsible for establishing clearly defined procedures to be used by student organizations for management of their funds. All funds must be deposited in the school account.

The principal reserves the authority to exclude students from field trips or school sponsored activities due to discipline issues.

3.116 Innovative Educational Programs

POLICY

Any pilot or new/experimental program or program differing from the ordinary curriculum design must be first discussed and approved by the Office of the Superintendent before announcement or implementation.

Administrators and staff members are expected to support all approved diocesan and school initiatives and programs.

3.117 Equitable Services

POLICY

The students in schools sponsored by the Diocese of Bridgeport may be eligible for equitable services provided by federal, state, or locally funded programs. School administrators are expected to adhere to appropriate guidelines and deadlines to ensure maximum participation in such services. The Office of the Superintendent reserves the right to monitor and approve the equitable services provided to the schools.

Schools are not permitted to directly accept funds from federal or state government agencies for equitable services (i.e. Title money, IDEA).

3.118 Interscholastic, Extra-Curricular, and Other Activities

POLICY

For the development of the whole person, each school should develop appropriate interscholastic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities. Such activities, however, should not be scheduled in such a way that they take time from the academic program.

Participants in athletic programs must meet the standards the school sets for membership on sports team or leagues in the following areas:

- Academics;
- Attendance;
- Personal behavior;
- Conduct, appearance; and
- All school policies and regulations.

The principal is responsible for all matters pertaining to athletic activities. All athletic programs are subject to the review and acceptance of the school principal. His/her decisions shall be in concert with diocesan policy. Athletic directors, whether voluntary or paid, report to the principal and are directly responsible for overseeing the athletic program.

In addition to their skills in coaching, coaches shall be chosen for their moral character and willingness to abide by school policies and adherence to all Safe Environment Standards and Rules of the diocese. Coaches shall be directly accountable to the athletic director, except in cases where there is no such position. In all cases, coaches are ultimately accountable to the principal.

Athletic programs in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport must be so designed that no games or practices occur before 12 noon on Sundays.

It is the policy of the Diocese of Bridgeport that students may not practice or attend games on Good Friday.

3.200 School Calendar

POLICY

Each school is required to follow the official diocesan calendar, approved and issued annually by the Office of the Superintendent.

Schools must make up any days lost due to inclement weather either in June or during scheduled vacation breaks. The principal must comply with the makeup calculation form, approved by the Office of the Superintendent.

3.201 School Day

POLICY

Each school shall follow Connecticut state law which requires at least 180 days of actual school sessions for kindergarten through grade 12 and a minimum of 900 hours of actual instruction per year for a full-day kindergarten program through grade 12.

In order for an early dismissal day to count as a full school day, it must be in session for at least three hours.

A school's virtual school day policy must be approved by the Office of the Superintendent.

3.202 Inclement Weather Decisions, Early Dismissal and Days Off

POLICY

In the event of inclement weather, Catholic schools will follow the local public schools for emergency delayed openings, early dismissals, or school closings. If the local public school is open but the principal feels it is unsafe for students, he/she may close school for the day. They may not, however, open on a day the public school is closed due to inclement weather or hazardous conditions.

If deemed necessary, the principal, with the approval of the superintendent, reserves the authority to delay, dismiss early, or cancel school.

3.203 Summer Programs

POLICY

All summer programs must comply with basic diocesan requirements for on-site activities. These include, but are not limited to:

- Minimum insurance coverage at appropriate levels for the activity (the diocese requires that each vendor provide an insurance certificate that confirms coverage);
- All vendors must provide their services under some form of written agreement;
- Schools may not host activities or camps taught or managed by teachers or staff of the school unless camp is done either under the name and sponsorship of the school or some other corporate entity provided by the staff member (this requirement results from IRS wage regulations);
- All vendors must be in compliance with the Safe Environments Handbook; and
- School administrators should always be aware of the planned activities on campus and should provide the Office of the Superintendent updates to the ongoing activities.

Accredited schools may offer summer school to students for either make-up work or for enrichment. The principal is responsible for setting the criteria for admission and completion of a summer school program.

3.204 Professional Meetings, Conferences, and Conventions

POLICY

Professional meetings, events, and conferences shall be scheduled and approved by the principal/president or department chairperson.

All administrators and educators shall be required to attend the annual conferences and other diocesan meetings, conventions, or professional in-services as requested by the superintendent or his/her designee.

3.300 Technology

POLICY

Students shall be instructed in the integration of technology in the curriculum with an understanding of the implications of technology in furthering the mission of the Church, in spreading the Gospel to all people, and as a tool of communication, analysis, and research.

The school must provide a network that shall allow for the availability of the Internet within the classroom. Each school shall educate students in the proper use of the Internet and shall provide appropriate supervision and monitoring of student use.

Each school shall include technology in its long-range strategic plan that provides for the integration of technology into the curriculum and for the purchase and maintenance of equipment. The plan must also provide for the depreciation and replacement costs of all equipment.

3.301 Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

POLICY

Technology is an essential educational tool whose use must be grounded in the values and mission of Catholic education. All users, faculty, staff, administrators, and students are expected to exhibit high standards of behavior at all times when using the Internet, email, and other technology. Technology use should recognize and support the unique Catholic mission of the school by speaking, acting and instructing, consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The use of the school's network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. The use of computer systems and the Internet at school must be in support of the educational mission and objectives of the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools. Inappropriate use may result in cancellation of those privileges. Based upon the Acceptable Use Policy guidelines in this document, as well as all applicable policies, handbooks, guidelines and rules as determined by the school, the school administrator(s) will deem what is inappropriate use and his/her decision is final. In addition, the school administrator(s) has/have the right to close an account at any time. The administration, faculty, and staff may request the school administrator(s) deny, revoke or limit specific user access. Additionally, the cost of any repairs caused by inappropriate behavior will be the responsibility of the student and his/her family.

Transmission of any material in violation of any United States or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. Use for commercial activities is not acceptable. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited unless approved by the administration.

Non-academic activities on devices during school hours are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, downloading music, games, video clips and personal material. Students may not be on websites that are unrelated to school work during school hours. A violation of this rule may result in disciplinary measures determined by school administration based on the offense.

Prior to being given access to the school's devices and Internet, all students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must return the signed technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy. These agreements will be completed every year. Students in grades PK-8 will use school accounts only to access Google Apps and other software applications used by the school.

System users at school have no right to privacy and should have no expectation of privacy in materials sent, received, or stored in school-owned devices or systems. All communications (including email) and information accessible via the network is school property.

Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to authorities. The technology coordinator or system administrator supervises the use of the network by students and school personnel. He/she has access to all files and email and may authorize access as necessary. Security on our computer system is a high priority. Anyone with reason to suspect a security problem on the school network must notify an appropriate school authority.

At school, the faculty and staff blend thoughtful use of computers and Internet throughout the curriculum and provide guidance and instruction to students in their use. The school provides controls and filtering protection on the school's network. However, no tool is foolproof, and users may accidentally or incidentally encounter inappropriate material. If this does happen, the user must end the connection immediately and report the incident to a teacher or school administrator.

Outside of school, families bear responsibility for the education and monitoring of their students in Internet and computer usage. Neither the child's school nor the Diocese of Bridgeport is responsible for inappropriate materials that may appear on the Internet.

Each student will receive a full copy of the Diocesan Acceptable Use Policy and the Bring Your Own Device Policy (where applicable) from their school. This must be reviewed and signed by both student and parent before students use school devices and/or network.

3.302 Rights of Access and Review

POLICY

All material, including electronic mail, which is electronically stored on a school's computer, is the property of the respective school.

The principal/president and the superintendent or his/her designee retain the right to access, review, edit, and delete all user files and any material stored on any system.

Catholic school administrators have the right to monitor student or employee use of school computers and computer accessed content.

3.303 Electronic Grade Books

POLICY

Schools shall implement policies and procedures for the use of electronic grade books by teachers and the access to progress reports by parent(s)/guardian(s).

Grades should be posted in a timely manner – within two (2) weeks of submission.

3.304 Information Technology Administrative Access

POLICY

For the stability and security of all schools, the Office of the Superintendent of Schools shall have the highest administrator access for all educational support applications and licensing when multiple administrators are permitted. This policy exists for the purpose of assured access for all students and employees.

The Principal/Head of School shall also be granted the highest administrator access for all educational support applications, purchasing and licensing when multiple administrators are permitted for the purpose of assured access for their students and employees.

The Principal/Head of School or President/Executive Director shall also be provided an updated list of administrative logins and passwords for educational support purchasing, applications, and licensing on a quarterly basis to ensure access.

Educational Support Purchasing, Applications and Licensing shall include but not be limited to:

- Mobile device management and related service(s) and software (ex. Mosyle, Apple School Manager)
- Learning management system(s) (ex. Google Classroom, Exact Path, SeeSaw) Cloud computing, productivity, and collaboration tools(s) (ex. Google Workspace, Microsoft 365)
- School and Student information system(s) (ex. Rediker, Teacher Evaluator)
- Security service(s) and software (ex. Securly)
- Assessment services and software (ex. NCEA IFG/ACRE, i-Ready, IXL)

3.305 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

POLICY

It is recognized that artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as chatbots, content generators, and automated assistants, are becoming widely available. While these tools can support learning, they must be used responsibly and ethically.

- **Permitted Use:** AI tools may be used for educational purposes when specifically allowed by the principal/teacher (e.g., brainstorming ideas, practicing skills, or receiving study support).
- **Prohibited Use:** Students may not use AI to generate completed assignments, essays, or projects that are submitted as their own work. Doing so will be considered academic dishonesty.
- **Transparency:** If a student uses AI to assist in their work with teacher approval, the student must acknowledge its use (e.g., a note at the end of the assignment).
- **Privacy and Safety:** Students may not input personal information, peer information, or school data into AI platforms.
- **Consequences:** Misuse of AI tools will result in disciplinary action consistent with the school's academic integrity policy.

Advancement

Advancement

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4.100 Advancement

POLICY

Each school shall develop, maintain, and support a comprehensive advancement program encompassing marketing, constituent relations, and fund development with primary emphasis on the annual fund.

4.101 Annual Fund

POLICY

Schools may establish and promote tax-deductible annual giving to support the school's operating expenses each year in the form of an annual fund program.

4.102 School Raffles

PROCEDURE

If there are any questions or concerns with the policy outlined below, please contact the Diocesan CFO.

1. Register raffle with State of Connecticut. Elementary schools must use the School's LLC tax ID#.
2. Reportable winnings on Forms W-2G if:
 - a. \$600 or more, and
 - b. At least 300 times the amount of the wager,
3. For all prizes valued at \$600 or more, prepare Form W-2G before disbursing prize
 - a. Obtain Form W-9 from winner along with copy of drivers' license.
 - b. Prepare Form W-2G and obtain winner's signature on forms.
 - c. Give Copy 2, Copy B, and Copy C of Form W-2G to winner.
4. For prizes valued at \$5,000 or more, calculate and collect taxes
 - a. If prize is valued at \$5,000 or more, federal and state taxes must be collected from winner. For cash prizes, deduct the taxes and disburse the balance to winner. For non- cash prizes, winner must provide a payment of taxes at time winnings are disbursed.
 - b. Federal tax calculation if winner is paying taxes: Federal taxes = (Prize value less Ticket cost) x 25%.
 - c. Federal tax calculation if school is paying taxes as part of the prize: Federal taxes = (Prize value less Ticket cost) x 33.33%.
Note: if school is paying taxes as part of prize, you must add the tax amount to the fair market value of prize and report that total as the prize value in Box 1 of Form W-2G.
 - d. Connecticut state tax calculation = 6% of prize value.
5. Tuition Raffles
 - a. If the tuition raffle is paid to a party other than the winner (university or school), the school must provide Form 5754 to the recipient to complete and return to the school with the winner's relevant tax information.
 - b. Tuition raffle awarded is more than \$5,000, a Form W-2G must be furnished to the recipient by January 31st of the year after the year of the raffle. Calculate and collect taxes as in #4 above.
6. Pay taxes
 - a. School business manager will enroll the school in the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS) and obtain a login pin number. Once the pin is received, the school must pay the federal tax online. This should be done at the same time winnings are disbursed to winner.
 - b. School business manager will enroll the school with the CT Department of Revenue and obtain a login pin number. Once the pin is received, the school must pay the CT tax online. This should be done at the same time winnings are disbursed to winner.

7. School business manager prepares consolidated federal and state tax forms at year end.
 - a. Form 945 and Form CT-945 by January 31st
 - b. Form 1096 with Copy A of Form W-2G by January 31st
 - c. Form CT-1096 with Copy 1 of Form W-2G by January 31st

4.103 Capital Campaigns (non-scholarship)

POLICY

A capital campaign is a planned effort to solicit major gifts for a specific goal or objective within a specified period of time. Capital campaign plans are to be presented for approval by the Bishop and Diocese of Bridgeport Building and Sacred Arts Committee.

4.104 Endowment Funds

POLICY

Endowment funds are defined as gifts and bequests that are restricted and designated for a specific purpose by donor intent. Endowment funds shall be established with the approval of the appropriate diocesan offices, (the Bishop, School Superintendent, Finance, Legal, etc.) and, if applicable, the Board of Directors and Pastor.

4.105 Planned Giving

POLICY

Planned giving is a method of supporting our schools that enables donors to make larger gifts than they could make from their income. A planned gift is any major gift made in lifetime or at death as part of a donor's overall financial and/or estate planning. There are many kinds of planned gifts, including, but not limited to:

- Simple bequests in a will or trust or within an estate plan;
- Charitable gift annuities;
- Charitable remainder trusts;
- Charitable lead trusts;
- Non-cash assets; and
- Assets transferred using pay-on-death or transfer-on-death documents. Each school shall establish a planned giving program.

4.106 Marketing and Enrollment Management

POLICY

Each school shall develop and implement a marketing strategy that makes the school known to families with school age children in order to increase and/or maintain enrollment levels and enhance the school's viability.

Prospective student data will be saved electronically in a database.

Schools shall work with their board to develop a marketing plan each year.

4.107 School Websites

POLICY

Schools shall maintain a website that is current and promotes the school, provides information to prospective parents and the wider community, and acts as a communication tool between the school and home. It is essential that the website of each school be kept current.

Schools shall have signed media release forms from the parent(s)/guardian(s) before posting photos and videos on the school's or any diocesan website.

If advertising is used for a site, a disclaimer must be included on the site indicating that the school does not endorse any advertiser on the website.

Content submitted to the site should comply with state, federal, and international copyright law, and must have appropriate permissions as needed.

4.108 School Social Media Pages

POLICY

When posting photos of students on a field trip, all photos must adhere to Diocesan policy on Consent to Use Pictures. None of the photos should be posted while students are actively present on the field trip, for their safety. Posts with or without photos may be posted once the field trip is complete and students, personnel and volunteers are back safe.

Schools shall maintain a school Facebook page that promotes the school, provides information to prospective parents and the wider community, and acts as a communication tool between the school and community. It is essential that the Facebook page of each school be kept current.

Schools shall have a signed media policy from the parent(s)/guardian(s) before posting photos and videos on the school's Facebook page or any other social media page.

Content posted on all social media pages should comply with state, federal, and international copyright law, and must have appropriate permissions as needed.

The following guidelines shall be followed with regard to social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter; Linked-in, Snapshot, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Tumblr, Vine, Flickr, Ask.fm, YouTube, or any other social media).

1. Social media websites must be established under the name of the parish, school, or youth program.
2. Two *cleared adults* must serve as administrator or moderators of all social networks used to communicate with youth and must ensure that the social media vehicle complies with this Code of Conduct and all diocesan policies. It is suggested that a faculty member be an administrator.
3. All information displayed on a school, parish, or diocesan sponsored social networking site must reflect the Catholic faith and should not call any teaching of the Church into question. This includes, and is not limited to, language, photos, songs, videos, bulletins, blogs, podcasts, and applications.
4. No students under the age of 18 or still in high school should be on the "friends" list of any employee or volunteer's social network site. Family members or other adults who are specifically listed on a minor's emergency contact list are the only exception.
5. Site must have privacy settings in place. Site must be regularly checked to be sure that privacy settings did not change due to system updates.
6. Social networking sites used to communicate with minors should have the "no tagging" option selected.
7. Blogs should not be used to conduct or promote outside business and/or personal activities, and should not divulge any personal information regarding those being ministered to.
8. Information obtained through online communication concerning illegal activity involving minors must be immediately reported to the appropriate civil and diocesan authorities in accordance with diocesan reporting policies and Connecticut mandatory reporting laws.
9. Parents(s)/guardian(s) will be provided with the opportunity to exclude their children's photo and personal information from any public posting.
10. Site must adhere to diocesan policy on consent to use pictures.

11. When posting photographs of minors/young people, use only a first name whenever possible.
12. All information posted on an approved social network (written as well as photos) should be in accord with the teachings of the Catholic Church.
13. The diocesan, parish or school logo, seal, or name cannot be used on any electronic medium without prior permission from the respective authority.
14. Passwords must be complex and frequently changed to avoid phishing and spam.
15. Employees and volunteers should understand that there is no expectation of privacy on official diocesan, parish or school email accounts. School employees are always expected to use official email accounts to communicate with minors and are expected to follow the school policy.
16. Personnel shall not communicate with minors through personal electronic mediums. This does not refer to an approved and monitored social network site that is established by a school or parish or if the settings are consistent with an official school or parish social networking site. The distinction is public vs. private.
17. Personnel are specifically prohibited from:
 - One-on-one video (FaceTime) or other personal chat room interaction between adult personnel and minors with the exception of interviews with prospective international students;
 - Private messaging on any personal website belonging to or hosted by a student; and
 - Posting private messages to a minor or student on a personal website that is not an official school or parish e-mail account, discussion board or website.

4.109 Strategic Plan

POLICY

To improve student outcomes, build a positive school culture and effectively manage its resources, every Diocesan and Diocesan affiliated independent PK-12 school shall prepare a formal written, long-range three/five-year strategic plan. The plan shall include the mission and vision of the school, goals, action plans, evaluation methods, and involve all stakeholders. The school administrator is responsible to ensure that the plan is updated each year and to report such updates to its Board members and communicate updates with all stakeholders. This plan should align with the Diocesan Strategic Plan and the school's NEASC accreditation goals.

4.110 Corporate and Foundation Support

POLICY

A proposal for corporate/grant/foundation support from an individual school must be submitted to the superintendent for approval prior to submission. This guidance serves as a “clearing house” for solicitations of corporate and foundation support.

4.111 Charitable Fundraising for Other Organizations

POLICY

Charitable causes supported through school fundraising should be examined to ensure the organization reflects teachings of the Catholic Church. Principals are expected to confirm that selected causes are appropriate for a Catholic elementary school. *Catholic Relief Services*, *Catholic Charities*, and *Missionary Childhood Association* are causes worthy of school community support.

4.112 Non-Discriminatory Policy

POLICY

Schools are required under federal law (Rev Procedure 75-50) to “include a statement in its charter, bylaws, or other governing instrument, or in a resolution of its governing body, that it has a racially nondiscriminatory policy as to students and therefore does not discriminate against applicants and students on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin.”