

Policies and Procedures 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 Policies and Procedures 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 and procedures 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 Policies and Procedures 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 Policies and Procedures 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.

PROCEDURE

A school that desires to be designated as a “Catholic” school should write a formal letter to the Superintendent of Schools requesting this designation. Specific guidelines for the process will then be shared with the prospective Catholic school.

After meeting all diocesan requirements, the bishop may formally designate a school as “Catholic.”

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 and procedures 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.

PROCEDURE

A candidate may only be appointed principal/head of school if he/she meets the qualifications of the position as indicated in the specific position posting, and the diocesan procedures for approval and appointment have been followed. Any of these qualifications may be waived by the Superintendent of Schools except that of being a practicing Catholic in good standing.

The principal shall be evaluated according to the process and procedures developed by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

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.

PROCEDURE

In a Diocesan school, an administrator from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools facilitates the process. The search committee recommends a candidate to the Superintendent of Schools. The superintendent, in turn, recommends a candidate to the bishop for final approval.

In a Diocesan-Sponsored school governed by a Board of Directors, the Chair of the Board will work with the Office of the Superintendent to select a candidate to recommend to the Superintendent of Schools who will then make the final recommendation to the bishop for appointment.

A one-year contract shall be offered to the principal. By signing the contract, the principal accepts employment with the school.

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.

PROCEDURE

The chief administrator of a school is responsible for implementing school policies and procedures established by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

A candidate may only be appointed chief administrator of a school if he/she meets the qualifications of the position and the diocesan procedures for approval and appointment have been followed. Any of these qualifications may be waived by the Superintendent of Schools except that of being a practicing Catholic in good standing.

The chief administrator shall be evaluated according to the process and procedures developed by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

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.

PROCEDURE

A candidate may only be appointed assistant principal of a school if he/she meets the qualifications of the position and the diocesan procedures for approval and appointment have been followed.

Any of these qualifications may be waived by the Superintendent of Schools except that of being a practicing Catholic in good standing.

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.

PROCEDURE

The name of the individual assigned as Assistant to the Principal must be submitted to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools and shared with all members of the faculty and staff.

Assistant to the Principal:

- must possess sound judgment and leadership ability including clear communication to all constituencies as well as daily routine;
- must understand the emergency procedures of the school and be knowledgeable about appropriate action to fulfill the role of the principal.

Although typically no additional compensation is given to the individual who takes on this responsibility, it is the discretion of the school principal and its Board to determine if additional compensation such as a stipend is affordable and necessary due to the length of time the individual is assigned as Assistant to the Principal. Proper communication and processing of paperwork should be done with the diocesan finance and human resources departments.

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.

PROCEDURE

School administrators work collaboratively with the School Advisory Board to fulfill the board's responsibilities in the areas of: strategic planning, finance, facilities, marketing, and development.

Please see the MANUAL for SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS for additional information.

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.

PROCEDURE

Specific guidelines for the recommendation of new members can be found in Appendix A.

Once a board member is approved by a majority vote of the board, a formal letter from the Board Chair and addressed to the Bishop should be sent to the Superintendent no later than June 1 of each school year. The letter should attest to the quality of the candidate(s), their understanding of the mission of the school, and their role in supporting it. The submission for each candidate must include a current resume or a personal statement about how they will contribute to the Board as well as the candidate's home address, telephone number, and email address. Final approval of school board candidates is made by the Bishop.

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.

PROCEDURE

Parent organizations are required to follow the fiscal policies and procedures outlined in the finance manual. Parent organizations shall not have a separate account that is not authorized or supervised by the school's financial office, principal, and/or Board of Directors. Any additional restricted bank accounts must be approved by the Office of the Superintendent. All banking materials must be kept in the school building.

It is recommended that whenever funds are raised for a specific purpose, administrators should report the results of the fundraising and how the funds will be spent to the parent community.

The parent organization is expected to support the school's annual fund by raising funds to offset school expenses and contributing to the needs of the school as expressed by the school principal and its 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.

PROCEDURE

The Office of the Superintendent of Schools arranges all official school visits and school liturgies with the bishop in collaboration with the Office of the Bishop.

On the occasion of a significant school anniversary or spiritual celebration, a school community may request the presence of the bishop through the superintendent. This request should be made in writing to the superintendent at least eighteen months in advance of the occasion.

Once visits are arranged, there is no need to send invitations or announcements to the bishop.

Out of respect and courtesy to the bishop, members of a school community should not request that private events with the bishop be included as part of a school fundraiser.

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 Policies and Procedures 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 and procedures established by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, as well as state the mission, beliefs, and traditions of the school.

PROCEDURE

The Policy and Procedures Manual for Catholic Schools is accessible online at www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicschools.com.

Each administrator shall sign and acknowledge that he/she has read the Manual and will incorporate the policies into the local school's handbooks.

All faculty and staff must sign and acknowledge that they have read the faculty/staff handbook.

By enrolling their child(ren) in school, parents automatically agree and acknowledge that they are to adhere to all school policies and procedures. Parents and students are expected to sign and acknowledge that they have read the school's parent/ student [handbook](#).

A copy of all school handbooks shall be submitted each September to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools and should be made available to parents and students using parent and student web portals.

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

See Appendix C for a complete listing of required retained records and the minimum retention required.

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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.

PROCEDURE

Priority for enrollment shall include those who are committed to practice in their Catholic faith and:

1. Currently enrolled students;
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students; and
3. All others.

In the case where the student had been previously enrolled in another school, public, Catholic, or private, parent(s)/guardian(s) shall sign an authorization form permitting the principal to consult with teachers/administrators of applicant's former school.

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.

All schools will utilize a standardized screening/placement tool for incoming students in order to ascertain the applicant's readiness and ability to succeed in the school's instructional program. Records necessary for admission include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. School admissions application;
2. Official birth certificate;
3. Transcripts from transferring school (if applicable);
4. Baptismal certificate (for Catholic students); and
5. Health records (immunization data and updated health examination) in compliance with State and town health requirements;
6. Parent declaration indicating any prior IEP, 504 or other Accommodation Plan.

It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that the school follows the Diocesan nondiscriminatory policy regarding students and publishes the policy in the school's parent/student handbook.

Applications for admissions should include a media release authorization for the school, the diocesan and its related entities.

Schools are expected to track prospective student data as well as overall student enrollment via Rediker, the student information system (SIS), and to keep enrollment data accurate and current.

All students new to a school will be subject to a 1-year probationary period to determine if the fit is appropriate. During this time the student may be dismissed at the school's discretion for any reason.

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.

PROCEDURE

Parents shall submit a re-registration for the next academic year along with a nonrefundable deposit and/or fee. If this submission is not returned to the school by the specified date outlined, the student may be removed from the class list for the upcoming school year and their spot is no longer guaranteed.

Parents shall also register for any appropriate tuition payment plan through the appropriate diocesan vendor.

Tuition accounts must be current to secure a student's registration for the subsequent academic year.

In the case where a student withdraws from the school, parents shall:

1. Notify the school of the withdrawal via a note with a copy sent to the principal; and
2. Make certain all financial obligations are met before records are released to receiving 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.

PROCEDURE

The receiving school shall request the student records from the former school in writing.

A student transferring from another school or district may be admitted conditionally for the (1st) first year of attendance. Continued attendance is at the discretion of the principal.

Based on testing, observation, and other assessments, the principal reserves the authority to decide on the placement of transfer students from non-accredited schools, home schooling, public, or other state-approved, non-public schools.

2.103 Academically Gifted Students

POLICY

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

PROCEDURE

If a teacher identifies an academically gifted student, he/she may create a personalized learning plan to appropriately challenge the student. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a formal evaluation by the public school district to determine giftedness. Connecticut public school districts are mandated to identify gifted students but are not mandated to provide services.

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.

PROCEDURE

A principal shall engage the services of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools to assist in making a determination of whether a student's educational needs can best be met in that school environment.

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.

PROCEDURE

While the non-Catholic student shall be required to participate in religious instruction, teachers should be sensitive to the student's foundational knowledge of the Catholic faith, and should be respectful of his/her personal religious convictions.

Non-Catholic students shall be required to attend Mass and other religious services with classmates. However, they shall not be required to participate in such services. Under no circumstances shall a non-Catholic student be permitted to receive the sacrament of First Holy Communion, Reconciliation, or Confirmation.

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.

PROCEDURE

Student acceptance at a diocesan school is determined by the individual school. Once a student is accepted, the school should request the student to complete an I-20 application form (for those students who are not in the U.S. and who are applying for initial status to study in the U.S). If a student applicant is already in the U.S. on an I-20 issued by a non- diocesan school, the student should submit an I-20 transfer form to request a "transfer" to a diocesan school. Once that form is submitted, the PDSO or DSO will contact the transferring school and agree upon a transfer release date, at which time the student's SEVIS file will be transferred to the diocese. Before any international students are accepted, the Principal must review eligibility with the PDSO or a DSO.

School administrators shall promptly process all submitted materials pertaining to an international student's application for admission and shall inform the student and his/her family/agent as soon as possible when documents are not in order.

A school may make a preliminary review of the qualifications of a student prior to formal review of an application. The school shall be clear that the preliminary review is not binding.

Once a school is in receipt of all required materials, including forms required by the school for application to it, the school's administration shall promptly make its admission decision and notify the student and parents/agent. If the student has been accepted, the school administration shall submit a copy of the acceptance letter to the Office of the Superintendent.

The school administration shall not allow a student to attend school unless:

1. The student or parent has all required government approvals;
2. The student has met, or has acceptable plans to meet, all requirements for immunization as may be established by the United States or State of Connecticut;
3. All tuition and fees have been paid for the school year on or before the first day of school; and
4. The parents and host family/U.S. guardian have agreed, in writing, to be bound by the school's policies.

Under no circumstances shall schools approve or contract directly with host families or agencies to provide homestay placements. It is up to the international student applicant and his/her family to make the necessary arrangements and provide the appropriate documentation to the appropriate agencies – government and private. The student/family and host family must sign a contract which delineates rules and responsibilities.

Set forth below are the steps that must be taken in the process to become an international student attending a school in the Diocese of Bridgeport, also known as an "F-1 Non-Immigrant." In many instances, several of the steps may be taken at the same time or before a previous step is completed. The following steps shall guide and assist those who are participating in the process of obtaining approval for an international student:

1. The student applies for acceptance at a Catholic school in the Diocese of Bridgeport.
2. The school and PDSO or DSO determines the status of the student's visa. Refer to SEVP Publication Non-immigrants: Who Can Study?
3. The school gives the international student packet to the parent(s)/guardian(s) (or agent) to include the following:
 - Diocese of Bridgeport I-20 Application Form
 - Diocese of Bridgeport I-20 Transfer Form (only if the student is transferring to a diocesan school from another SEVP approved school)
4. Parent/guardian (or agent) completes I-20 Application Form or I-20 Transfer Form and submits it to the school or directly to the DSO.
5. The school sends a copy of the acceptance letter to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.
6. The DSO will issue an I-20 to the student applicant/guardian to enable the student to obtain an F-1 visa. The completed I-20 will be mailed by regular U.S. Mail to the accepting school for distribution to the student or to the local family sponsor or agent.
7. The DSO will also send a copy for all new I-20s or transferring in I-20s to the PDSO.

8. The parent(s)/guardian(s) (or agent) will ensure that the I-901 fee is paid to the government.
9. The school shall notify the DSO of the arrival of the F-1 (non-immigrant) student for every international student within 30 days of the beginning of each semester.
10. The school shall notify the DSO of any student who has been issued an I-20 who has failed to report to the school within 30 days of the student's scheduled program start date as printed on the student's I-20.
11. The school shall notify the DSO within 15 days when an international student transfers to another school or departs the United States.
12. When an F-1 (non-immigrant) student transfers to another SEVP approved school outside of the Diocese of Bridgeport, the DSO shall execute a transfer of the I-20 record in active status so that the student may maintain his/her status with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). It is ultimately the parent's/legal guardian's (or agent's) responsibility to request the transfer of the I-20 record.
13. The school shall report to the DSO any change in name, address, or guardianship of an international student within 10 days.

When a student begins classes at the beginning of each semester, schools shall notify the DSO appointed for that school to confirm the student's attendance. The DSO shall then electronically register the student.

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.

PROCEDURE

A visiting student wishing to participate in an avocation experience (or their guardian) must complete the following steps:

1. Complete and sign the Avocational Experience Agreement
2. Provide documentation required by the school at which the visiting student will be participating
3. Adhere to all policies required by the school for participation
4. Determine and fulfill any financial obligations (determined by the school)

Any school with visiting students wishing to participate in an avocational experience shall provide a completed and signed copy of the Avocational Experience Agreement to the Office of the Superintendent prior to the visiting student beginning their experience.

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.

PROCEDURE

While students' ability and concentration will vary, general minimum suggested time allotments for homework in schools are as follows:

- Grade 1 – 10 minutes
- Grade 2 – 20 minutes
- Grade 3 – 30 minutes
- Grade 4 – 40 minutes
- Grade 5 – 50 minutes
- Grade 6 – 60 minutes
- Grade 7 – 70 minutes
- Grade 8 – 80 minutes

Catholic diocesan high schools shall define reasonable time allotments for homework in each school.

Each school shall publish local procedures for the implementation of this policy in the parent/student handbook.

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 and procedures 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.

PROCEDURE

The grading system for the elementary schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport shall be as follows:

MARKING CODES

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

- | | |
|---|---|
| M | Meets grade-level standards consistently |
| W | Working toward mastery of the standard or is inconsistent |
| N | Not yet meeting grade level |
| X | Not assessed at this time |

KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 2

E	Exceeds grade-level standards
M	Meets grade-level standards consistently
W	Working toward mastery of the standard or is inconsistent
N	Not yet meeting grade level
I	Insufficient evidence provided usually due to lack of attendance or effort
X	Not assessed at this time

GRADES 3 & 4

4.0	Distinguished: Student demonstrates knowledge which exceeds grade level standards
3.5	Student demonstrates some understanding beyond grade level standards
3	Proficient: Student demonstrates mastery on grade level standards- This is the target/goal for student success.
2.5	Student demonstrates partial success on grade level standards
2	Developing: Student demonstrates basic understanding and is partially proficient at meeting grade level standards
1.5	Student demonstrates partial success on foundational skills or made major errors on grade level standards
1	Emerging: With help, the student demonstrates some understanding of foundational skills and grade level standards
0.5	With help, the student demonstrates some understanding of foundational skills.
0	Deficient: Even with help, the student is not successful.
I	Insufficient evidence provided for demonstration of mastery when assessed- usually due to lack of attendance or effort
X	Not assessed at this time

GRADES 5-8 (ALL SUBJECTS*)

A	94-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-93	C	74-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-73
B	84-86	D	66-69
B-	80-83	F	65 and below

Conduct/Effort for Grades 6-8

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Improvement needed
4. Unsatisfactory

In certain extenuating circumstances, the Grades of S (Satisfactory), and U (Unsatisfactory) may be used after consultation with the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee(s).

Only official diocesan report cards generated through Rediker, the student information system (SIS) for Catholic elementary schools, are to be used in pre-kindergarten through grade eight.

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.

PROCEDURE

Honor rolls are only applicable for grades 6-12.

The honor roll in elementary schools will be a two tiered system:

High Honors: No grade lower than an A- including only 1s or 2s in conduct and effort. All major subjects are included in calculating High Honors.

Honors: No grade lower than a B including only 1s or 2s in conduct and effort. All major subjects are included in calculating Honors.

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.

PROCEDURE

Elementary Schools

The following guidelines apply to semester examinations:

1. Time allotment for each exam will not exceed seventy-five (75) minutes.
2. The first semester exam will include all materials and work covered in the first and second marking periods.
3. The second semester exam will include all materials and work covered in the third and fourth marking periods.
4. First semester exams are to be given one week before the second marking period ends.
5. Second semester exams are to be given within two weeks prior to the closing of the fourth marking period.
6. First semester exam grades are averaged in with the first and second marking period grades to determine the midyear (first semester) grade. The exam grade alone will NOT affect the honor roll status of a student.
7. Second semester exam grades are averaged in with the third and fourth marking period grades to determine the second semester grade. The exam grade alone will NOT affect the honor roll status of a student.
8. Exams must be given in all of the major subjects: religion, mathematics, English, social studies, science, reading/literature. Exams in all other subjects are optional and at the discretion of the principal.
9. The format of the examinations will be left to the discretion of the teacher and submitted for review by the principal. The teacher must assure that the exam is comprehensive in nature, of a format appropriate to the academic subject, and is of sufficient length and scope to cover the semester's work.

10. Exam grades are to be reported separately on the report card.
11. The semester exams will be weighed according to the following weight schedule:
 - Grade 6 - Exams count as 4% of the semester average.
 - Grade 7 - Exams count as 6% of the semester average. Grade 8 - Exams count as 10% of the semester average.
 - Grades 9-12 – Exams shall not exceed 10% of the semester average.

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.

PROCEDURE

The Student Study Team (SST) is often the first step a parent can take when they have a concern about their child's progress in school. The purpose of the SST is to design a support system for students having difficulty in the regular classroom. The SST is a group formed within the school to further examine a student's academic, behavioral, and social-emotional progress. The team usually consists of a teacher, principal, and support personnel including but not limited to the school nurse, school counselor, appointed special education professional from the public school district.

In order to qualify for modified academic programs, students must have learning differences that are:

- Identified by means of a formal psycho-educational or educational evaluation or report from a medical doctor, therapist, or clinical counselor which is considered by the school's SST and described clearly to the parents in a meeting with the evaluator, principal and classroom teacher(s).
- Presented to the parents in writing on a form seeking informed consent.

The development of an accommodation plan for the student based on the disability is the responsibility of the SST with the assistance of the Office of the Superintendent. Teachers are responsible for implementing the plan.

Teachers are authorized to make only those accommodations/modifications that are recommended by the school SST and learning specialist and/or administrator. Such accommodations/modifications may include, but are not limited to, extended time testing and/or oral testing, differences in content expectations, etc. Only those students who have modified programs are eligible for modified grading, and all students with modified programs will receive modified grades.

Report cards and permanent record cards of those students who have modified programs with modified grading will reflect these modifications. An "*" will be used to indicate that the specific programs has been modified. Thus, a report card grade of "A*" indicates that a particular student has done very well, but that this grade was earned with some modification, and therefore, is not the same as that of a student who earned an "A" without modification.

Upon graduation, students with modified programs who successfully complete the required course of studies will receive a diploma. High schools may not be able to provide the same accommodations/modifications that an elementary school is able to provide.

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.

PROCEDURE

Each school will have a standing Student Study Team (SST), comprised of the principal and one teacher from each level served in the school—primary, intermediate, middle school. The SST is responsible for recommending:

- Curriculum accommodations;
- Classroom accommodations; and/or
- Alternative interventions.

Teachers are responsible for implementing the recommendations of the SST and documenting the student's progress, or lack thereof, through the assessment procedures outlined above.

If the recommended accommodations do not result in sufficient student progress, the principal will inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the student should be referred for a further evaluation which may include psycho-educational evaluation and/or counseling. When conducted by the public school district, a psycho-educational evaluation is available at no cost to the parents. Parents who elect to have the child evaluated by a private provider are responsible for payment.

When counseling is needed, this is available at no charge in schools where a social worker and/or counselor is on staff. In schools where no such service is available, parents will be responsible for taking the child to a private provider.

When students fail to learn with traditional teaching methods, curricula, and social controls, it is imperative to learn whether the school is an appropriate placement, and if so, how best to instruct the student. Parents should be assured that psycho-educational reports are kept in a separate, confidential file to which only the principal has access.

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.

PROCEDURE

If consideration is being given for a student to be retained, the parents shall be notified in writing no later than the end of the third marking period. Teachers shall remain in frequent contact with the parents and principal to discuss the student's difficulties or progress. In all cases concerning retention, teamwork between school and home is essential.

Written notification of the determination to retain a student shall be sent to the parents by principal no later than May 1st of the school year.

Factors used in determining to retain a student include, but are not limited to:

1. Qualitative and quantitative sources of assessments, student responses to strategies implemented for intervention, teacher input, and consultation among faculty, administration, and parents;
2. Standardized testing; and
3. Psychological evaluations and medical exams on hearing, eyesight, physical and social wellness.

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.

PROCEDURE

If a student withdraws from a diocesan school, tuition will be refunded on a prorated 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.

Some schools may offer an opportunity for parents to enroll in their tuition insurance program which provides the ability for parents to receive full or prorated tuition reimbursement.

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.

PROCEDURE

The permanent record shall be the official record for each student. These records are maintained in the student information system (SIS). At the end of each school year, the school should print and retain the final report card in a locked, fire-proof cabinet in a secure location in the principal's office or in the main office safe from potential vandalism or other damage.

In accordance with Federal law administered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), custodial and non-custodial parents shall have rights with respect to their child's education records unless the school is provided with evidence that there is a court order or State law that specifically provides to the contrary. These records shall be available to others only with written authorization of the parent, or where appropriate demands are made for such records by courts or other agencies through the issuance of a subpoena.

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

1. Electronic record generated from student information system;
2. Permanent record folder which includes application, achievement/aptitude screening test scores, attendance record;
3. Student file;
4. Health records;
5. Special Records which can include records provided by the public school district such as speech and language reports, psychological evaluation, PPT reports, occupational therapy, and physical therapy reports (these records belong to the public school and are either returned to the parent or destroyed when the student leaves the school); and/or
6. All additional records maintained in accordance with the mandate of the city/town. When a student transfers to another school, a written release of records is required. Original records will be mailed directly to a Diocese of Bridgeport school and copies of records will be mailed directly to the non-Diocese of Bridgeport schools. All financial obligations must be met prior to the release of records.

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.

PROCEDURE

If a student's performance shows signs of need for necessary psychological or clinical evaluation, then the principal shall set up a conference with the student's teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s). If necessary, the parent/guardian shall be asked to contact proper agencies. The principal reserves the authority to request that the student undergoes clinical evaluations as a condition of continued enrollment.

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.

PROCEDURE

Students and parents will be required to sign the parent/student handbook signature page. The school must keep the signature pages on file for each school year.

By enrolling your child, parents/guardians acknowledge and agree that enrollment constitutes acceptance of the school's policies, rules, and procedures as outlined in this manual. A signed acknowledgment form is not required for these policies to be binding. Continued enrollment and attendance indicate agreement to adhere to the standards and expectations established by the diocese and school.

If a student's conduct is repeatedly disruptive of the educational process and is not adhering to a behavioral policy of the school, or negatively impacts the school or any persons at the school or on school property, this may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

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.

PROCEDURE

The principal shall submit the policy to the Office of the Superintendent for review prior to publishing.

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.

PROCEDURE

The school is obliged to keep an accurate record of daily attendance for each student. This record is transcribed to the student's permanent record and kept on file permanently.

Each school shall establish a system of monitoring absences and set up procedures to follow if a student fails to report to school and no indication has been received that the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) is aware of the absence. This system must include a telephone call from the school to the parent(s)/guardian(s). A parent is required to give an explanation for the student's absences and tardiness. A written explanation from parent(s)/guardian(s) for a student's absence should be kept on file in the school office for at least one year.

By law, schools, in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, local police, and courts are responsible for enforcing the mandatory school attendance laws when parents fail to send their children to school or provide them with equivalent instruction. If a truancy problem cannot be solved by the school, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) shall be notified. Excessive tardiness may also be reported to DCF.

Students may not participate in any school-sponsored event if they are not in school on the day of the event without the express permission from the principal.

In order for students 'shadowing' or spending the day at another school to be marked with an excused absence, they must have provided prior notification to the school and the visiting school must confirm that the child was present for the day. Excused absences for school visits are not to exceed three (3) during a school year and are not to include multiple visits to a single school within one school year. Such excused absences will not affect a student's eligibility for perfect attendance recognition.

Family vacations should not take place when school is in session. Should such a vacation occur during school time, such vacation will be deemed as an unexcused absence. It is expected that all missed assignments will be made up in a period of time determined by the teacher and approved by the principal. The school is not under obligation to provide tutoring, make-up work, or special testing schedules for such a period of absence. Students are responsible for all class work, assignments, and exams missed due to absences or tardiness.

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.

PROCEDURE

Special consideration for warm weather uniform dress code can be made at the discretion of the principal. All schools shall communicate dress code regulations to students and parents as well as publish them in the school's parent/student handbook.

The principal, faculty, and staff shall enforce the standards for the students' dress code. Parents of students who are non-compliant with the established dress code may receive a phone call to bring the required uniform to school for their student. Persistent issues with dress code violations may result in disciplinary action at the discretion of the principal.

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.

PROCEDURE

Since the Catholic school provides the atmosphere for learning and living the faith in its total environment, formal religious studies classes are not the only occasion for instruction. Provisions shall be made for daily prayer and liturgical celebrations on a large and small group basis with student and faculty participation. Other types of religious programs designed to foster and exemplify the faith should be scheduled by the principal and/or teacher with the cooperation of the clergy. Parent participation at such programs shall be encouraged.

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.

PROCEDURE

High schools shall publish a written statement outlining all graduation requirements. Elementary schools shall publish a written statement outlining all graduation requirements for completion of grade eight. A copy of these statements must be available to all teachers, students, and parents.

Elementary schools shall set their 8th grade graduation date prior to the end of the previous academic school year, and submit (as part of their school calendar) to the Office of the Superintendent for approval. Graduation ceremonies may take place no earlier than the Friday immediately preceding the last scheduled day of school for Grades K-7.

Schools shall create their own promotion certificates for kindergarten.

All PK-8 schools shall issue the standardized diploma approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

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.

PROCEDURE

For attendance and legal purposes, a student who commences home instruction is temporarily transferred from the Catholic school to the public school system and is marked and noted as such in the attendance record. Upon conclusion of home instruction, the student is returned to the Catholic school and is marked and noted as such in the attendance record. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the student is registered appropriately. If this does not happen the student will be recorded as truant.

When a parent chooses to withdraw a student in order to "home-school," the principal shall direct that parent to the local public school district to complete the required paperwork. The parent shall present a release of records so the school can transfer the records to the public school district.

Tuition may not be charged while a student is enrolled for home instruction with the public school district.

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).

PROCEDURE

Students shall only be released through a specific process performed through the school's main office. The authorized individual to whom the student is being released shall be required to come into the school, show identification, and sign the student out.

In the case when it is necessary to send a student home because of illness or another reason, parents shall be notified by telephone to make such arrangements.

A student who drove to school and is dismissed for medical reasons will only be allowed to drive home with written parental permission.

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.

PROCEDURE

Other than as noted above, parents hold the right to refuse to allow their children to be questioned by legal authorities without legal representation. While at school, the principal takes the place of the legal guardian of the student. The principal may refuse to allow a child to be questioned by legal authorities.

If a police officer is permitted to interview the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not available, the principal shall accompany the student in order to ensure the student is being treated appropriately.

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.

PROCEDURE

School employees, students, and parents who become aware of any act of bullying must report the incident to the principal for further investigation. Schools shall set up a procedure for such reporting and publish the procedure in the school's parent/student handbook. Each school shall also set up a procedure so that parents of students may make written reports of acts of bullying. Reports should be submitted in a timely manner to ensure immediate action and clear recollection of facts. Students may report acts of bullying anonymously.

Upon learning of the bullying incident, the principal shall immediately begin a thorough investigation. The investigation may include interviews with students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and school staff, review of school records, and identification of family issues.

If it is concluded that bullying has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student who committed such acts and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student against whom such acts were directed shall be notified. Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the results of the investigation and include parent conferences, professional counseling, detention, suspension, or expulsion. Depending on the severity of the incident or the series of incidents, the principal may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan, separating and supervising students involved, providing staff for students as necessary, reporting incidents to DCF or law enforcement if appropriate, and establishing a supervision plan with the parents.

Bullying incidents under investigation that may result in suspension or expulsion must be reported to the superintendent. The superintendent reserves the authority to make a final decision regarding expulsion. Schools reserve the right to notify local law enforcement when appropriate.

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.

PROCEDURE

Upon learning about the harassment allegation, the principal shall thoroughly investigate the circumstances. His/her investigation may include interviews with students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and school staff; a review of school records; and identification of family issues.

If it is concluded that harassment has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student who committed such acts and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student against whom such acts were directed shall be notified. Consequences for a student who harasses others shall depend on the results of the investigation and include a parent conference, professional counseling, detention, suspension, or expulsion. Depending on the severity of the incident,

or the series of incidents, the administrator may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. This may involve reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate.

Harassment incidents that demand suspension shall be reported to the superintendent and may lead to expulsion. Schools reserve the right to notify local law enforcement when appropriate.

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.

PROCEDURE

“Use” means a student has smoked, ingested, injected, imbibed, inhaled, drunk, or otherwise taken internally a prohibited substance recently enough that it is detectable by the student’s physical appearance, actions, breath, or speech.

“Under the influence” means a student’s faculties are noticeably impaired, but the student need not be legally intoxicated.

Should there be reasonable cause to believe that a student uses, possesses, distributes, sells, or is under the influence of a prohibited substance, a team of two Safe Environment-cleared adults will notify the parents and request that the student be picked up from school and begin an investigation. As part of the investigation, the principal may request a full drug assessment including a urine drug screen to confirm or disprove the student’s use of any chemical substances.

This assessment must be done within 24 hours of the request by the school. If parents do not cooperate with the request for the above assessment and drug screen within 24 hours of the request, the student may not continue to attend school.

The principal shall request a meeting with the parents of the student prior to making a decision on the student’s re-admission to school. The principal, with the consultation of the superintendent, reserves the authority to

mandate the student seek professional counseling as a condition of continuing the student's enrollment.

An interview with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student is required before a decision is made regarding the student's readmission to school.

Schools reserve the right to notify local law enforcement when appropriate.

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 subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

PROCEDURE

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

If a student is suspected or observed to have participated in criminal gang-like activity, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The teacher or other person having the aforesaid information shall notify the principal;
2. The principal, in consultation with appropriate resources, shall gather information to make a determination of student involvement in criminal gang-like activity;
3. Upon confirmation of student involvement in criminal gang activity, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified, appropriate action shall be taken, and written documentation shall be kept on file;
4. If activity cannot be confirmed and concerns exist about student behavior, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified and written documentation of notification kept on file; and
5. Local law enforcement should be notified if a criminal act occurs.

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.

PROCEDURE

If a student is suspected or observed using, transmitting, or concealing or attempting to possess, use, transmit, or conceal a weapon, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The teacher or other person having the aforesaid information shall notify the principal;
2. The principal shall gather information to make a determination of student use, transmission, or concealment of a weapon;
3. Upon confirmation of student involvement in the aforesaid activity, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified, appropriate action shall be taken, and written documentation shall be kept on file;
4. If activity cannot be confirmed and concerns exist about student behavior, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified and written documentation of notification kept on file; and
5. Local law enforcement should be notified when appropriate.
6. When appropriate and always when local enforcement is notified, the Office of the Superintendent should also be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

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.

PROCEDURE

The school must publish a policy on the use of lockers, possession of illegal substances, rights to search and seizure, and the disciplinary action for violation of these policies in the school's parent/student handbook. Whenever possible, a search will be conducted by the principal in the presence of the student and a staff member other than the principal.

The principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for the prompt recording, in writing, of each student search, including the reasons for the search; information received that established the need for the search; and the name of the informant, if any; the persons present when the search was conducted; any substances or objects found and the disposition made of them; and any subsequent action taken.

The principal shall be responsible for the custody, control, and disposition of any illegal or dangerous substance or object taken from a student.

Schools reserve the right to notify local law enforcement when appropriate.

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.

PROCEDURE

Each school handbook shall include a code of conduct specifying behavioral expectations and consequences to be used as a guideline for each individual school's own discipline policy.

Additionally, the following guidelines apply to all:

1. A teacher should never dismiss a student from the classroom for a disciplinary reason without first notifying the principal or other appropriate administrator;
2. On the rare occasion when it is necessary to remove a student from the school for part of a school day, the principal will resolve the situation and notify the parent;
3. Direct supervision of a student who is being disciplined is the responsibility of the teacher or principal and is required in all cases. Placement in corridors, closets, or corners is never acceptable;
4. The use of corporal punishment is forbidden;
5. Discipline records shall be maintained for the academic year, separate from the student's academic file; and
6. Bullying of a student by another student is forbidden.

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.

PROCEDURE

Schools must outline and publish the disciplinary conditions for suspension in the school's parent/student handbook.

When serious disciplinary action in the form of suspension from school is deemed necessary, strict adherence to the following guidelines is expected:

1. Parent(s) are notified by the principal immediately.
2. Appropriate in-school suspension shall be used in preference to exclusion from school.
3. No student is to be sent home from the school premises until the parent(s) have been contacted. The principal will notify the parent(s) who are responsible for making transportation arrangements.
4. A conference is to be arranged immediately by the principal involving the parent(s)/guardian(s), all personnel involved, and the principal. This meeting will serve to clarify the circumstances concerning the suspension for all concerned parties as well as make clear the terms of the suspension.
5. The period of suspension shall never exceed five (5) school days, unless authorized by the superintendent.
6. The school shall document the offense and the terms of the suspension. A copy of the document shall be provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
7. Academic work will be provided during the time of suspension.
8. Students are responsible for making up all tests and assignments that could not be completed during the period of suspension.
9. The teacher shall not lower the student's grade due to suspension although they may report their conduct as unsatisfactory.

All questions or clarifications regarding the suspension of students shall be referred to the superintendent or his/her designee.

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.

PROCEDURE

Schools shall outline and publish the disciplinary conditions for expulsion in the school's parent/student handbook.

When serious disciplinary action in the form of expulsion from school is deemed necessary, strict adherence to the following guidelines is expected:

1. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee must be consulted prior to an expulsion.
2. Parent(s) are to be contacted by the principal and a conference involving all parties concerned shall be immediately scheduled.
3. A written report on the situation and circumstances involved in the expulsion shall be tendered to the superintendent immediately.
4. Parents may make a request to appeal of the principal's decision. The final decision for expulsion rests with the Superintendent of Schools and shall be rendered within five (5) school days of the incident. The superintendent's decision to deny the request for an appeal or to confirm the expulsion is final.
5. Students expelled from one diocesan school may not enroll in another diocesan school.

All questions or clarifications regarding the expulsion of students shall be referred to the superintendent or his/her designee.

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.

PROCEDURE

It shall be within the sole discretion of the superintendent to determine whether to review the decision or designate another person to hear the appeal and to render a decision on his/her behalf. The superintendent reserves full authority to determine whether the principal's actions were consistent with policies and procedures. The final decision will be based on these findings and shall be binding and shall conclude the appeal process. There shall be no right to further appeal.

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.

PROCEDURE

Schools shall use official forms provided by the local board of health.

A health assessment record is required every year for students participating on sports teams.

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.

PROCEDURE

Under state law, each city/town which provides health services to students attending a public school must provide the same health services to students attending a non-public school.

The school nurse is to maintain a daily record of health-related incidents, illnesses, or complaints, as well as a daily medication log.

The school nurse is responsible for sending to the receiving school health records for students who transfer/withdraw.

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.

PROCEDURE

All health records should be stored in a secure and fireproof file designated by the principal and school nurse and safe from vandalism or other damage.

When a student graduates, transfers, or withdraws from the school, the school nurse may provide copies of the student's health records to his/her parents. Written permission from the parent(s)/guardian(s) is required in order to transfer the original health record information directly to another school.

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.

PROCEDURE

Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall update their emergency information annually prior to the beginning of the academic year. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must send changes to emergency information throughout the school year as they occur.

Schools are responsible for making sure that the emergency information is updated annually in the student information system.

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.

PROCEDURE

All medication, including over-the-counter medications, are to be delivered to the school by the parents (not students) with all the required medical forms. If the medication is liquid, it must be accompanied by a calibrated medication dispenser which has legible numbers on it. Only medication prescribed by a licensed physician or dentist and labeled by a registered pharmacist shall be administered during school hours.

Medication shall be dispensed by the school nurse. The administration of all medication must be documented by the nurse. In the absence of a nurse, the principal or teacher (not aide) may administer and log medication.

No medication which has expired shall be given. At the end of each school year, all medication shall be returned only to the parents by the school nurse or his/her designee, or disposed of in an appropriate manner.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school of any changes to the original prescription.

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.

PROCEDURE

All school nurses and principals should have a copy of the State of Connecticut Guidelines for Food Allergies and should be familiar with them.

It is the responsibility of the principal to call a meeting with the school nurse at the beginning of the school year to discuss the food allergies of specific students. The school nurse will formulate an Individual Health Care Plan for each student with a food allergy and discuss this plan with the appropriate school staff members and the student's parents.

It is the responsibility of the family to:

1. Notify the school of the child's allergies;
2. Work with the school to develop a plan to accommodate their child's needs;
3. Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by the child's physician;
4. Provide properly labeled medications and replace medications after use or when expired;
5. Provide the school with at least two (2) epinephrine auto-injectors for school or student use;
6. Educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy including: strategies for avoiding exposure; safe and unsafe foods; symptoms of allergic reactions; how to tell an adult when they are having allergy symptoms; how to read food labels (age appropriate);
7. Review procedures with the school, the child's physician, and the child after a reaction has occurred; and
8. Provide up-to-date emergency contact information.

It is the responsibility of the student to:

1. Not trade food with other students;
2. Not eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain the food allergen;
3. Be proactive in the care and management of food allergies and reactions (age appropriate); and
4. Notify an adult immediately if they believe they have eaten or been exposed to the food allergen.

It is the responsibility of the school to:

1. Notify parents and the student that the school cannot guarantee an allergy-free environment;
2. Ensure that all staff members understand food allergies; can recognize symptoms; know what to do in case of an emergency; and work with other school staff to eliminate the use of allergens in the student's meals, educational tools, arts and crafts projects, etc.;
3. Create and review the Food Allergy Action Plan before an allergic reaction occurs to ensure the plan is efficient;
4. Ensure that medications are appropriately stored and be sure that an emergency kit is available containing the physician's standing order for epinephrine;
5. Designate and properly train school personnel to administer medications;
6. Call 911 and the parents if a student needs an epinephrine auto-injector;
7. Ensure that a trained staff member is available during school operations;
8. Discuss field trips and other special activities with the family of the child to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy;
9. Discourage children from "trading" food;
10. Ensure all surfaces such as tables and toys are washed clean of contaminating foods;
11. Designate a specific table in the lunchroom for children with food allergies (if needed); and
12. Encourage all students to wash hands after handling food.
13. Due to student or personnel allergies, pets from home are not permitted inside school buildings except in the case of service animals with appropriate documentation and approval from the principal.

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.

PROCEDURE

Immediately after a student has been administered an emergency epinephrine auto-injector, 911 shall be called. The medicated student shall be immediately transported to the nearest hospital emergency room. If needed, school personnel may travel in the ambulance. The parent(s)/guardian(s) shall then be notified and shall be instructed to meet the student at the receiving hospital.

Epinephrine auto-injectors may be allowed to accompany the student throughout the school only after it has been determined to be necessary by the school nurse on a case-by-case basis and with both written permission from the student's parents and physician. In addition, the student's physician must document the following:

1. That there would be a risk to the student if the student were not able to personally carry the medication;
2. That the student has been instructed on the indications for use of the medication, on the administration of the medication, on the possible side effects, on the student's responsibility not to share the medication with anyone, and the student's responsibility to notify the teacher of the use immediately after such use.
3. Any administrator, teacher, or coach shall not be held personally liable for administering medication in accordance with the law and may be held liable for ordinary negligence. There is no immunity for acts or omissions that constitute gross, willful or reckless negligence.

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.

PROCEDURE

In all cases, due consideration will be given to the needs and well-being of the student(s) involved, those with whom they have contact, and the broader school community being served.

Information will be conveyed on a need to know basis only. Where required by law, the school will report a communicable disease to the Department of Health and Human Services.

The right to privacy of the infected individual, student or employee, shall be respected at all times.

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.

PROCEDURE

The principal of the school, in conjunction with the superintendent or his/her designee, will make every effort to provide pastoral support that will enable the student to complete the school year.

The principal shall meet with the pregnant student and her parents immediately after the school becomes aware of the pregnancy. The principal shall offer the student appropriate professional counseling consistent with Catholic teaching.

If the father-to-be is identified and is a student in a Catholic school, the principal shall meet with him and his parents immediately after the school becomes aware of the pregnancy. The principal shall offer the student appropriate professional counseling consistent with Catholic teaching.

The school shall assist the pregnant student in completing her education by allowing her to continue attending classes, or by referring her to an appropriate alternative program, or homebound instruction.

If the student is to remain in school, she shall be allowed, with a physician's permission, to participate in all activities to the extent that her condition allows. Appropriate and reasonable accommodations shall be made to the pregnant student including but not limited to, uniform compliance.

If it becomes known to any member of the school community that a student is contemplating or planning an abortion, he/she should encourage the pregnant student to save the life of her unborn child. In all circumstances, the pregnant student must be treated with compassion and respect.

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.

PROCEDURE

If a person has no legitimate reason or written authorization to be on school property, school personnel shall ask such person to leave the school grounds. If the person does not leave, the principal reserves the authority to call local law enforcement.

Faculty and staff must be aware of their own and others' vulnerability when working alone with students. The Diocese of Bridgeport Code of Conduct suggests using a team approach by ensuring that there are always two or more adults present when managing all activities where minors and vulnerable adults are present.

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.

PROCEDURE

Security starts with establishing policies and procedures to keep our students and personnel safe. Common sense steps include, but are not limited to:

- Keeping exterior doors locked;
- Keeping classroom doors closed and locked (unless local municipalities state otherwise);
- Controlling access to the school, preferably through a single entry point, that has cameras and electronic door controls to identify those seeking entry; and
- Maintaining a visitor log at the main office to provide visitor badges to alert school personnel and students that the visitor has been authorized to be in the school.

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 alarms.

PROCEDURE

Interior doors to classrooms must be closed and locked during the school day unless local municipalities state otherwise. Teachers or students may admit into the classroom the principal, other faculty or invited visitors who have registered in the front office and are wearing an identifying school badge.

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.

PROCEDURE

A principal who has received information that a parent/guardian of a student in a Catholic school is a registered sex offender shall immediately notify the Superintendent of Schools and the Office of Safe Environments. The superintendent shall take appropriate steps to ascertain whether the information received is accurate. If the information is determined to be accurate, the principal, in consultation with the superintendent and diocesan legal counsel, shall determine the restrictions that will be placed on the offender. The principal shall then attempt to meet with the offender to explain the restrictions that will be imposed upon the offender. These restrictions will also be provided in writing to the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian does not attend the meeting, a letter indicating the restrictions shall be sent to the offender, via regular and certified mail.

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.

PROCEDURE

All schools must conform to the requirements of the current city/town fire code. Monthly fire drills are required in all schools.

The principal is responsible for ensuring that all teachers, staff, and students are made aware of the procedures to be followed in case of fire.

There shall be a written log readily available in the school office for the fire inspectors and the Office of the Superintendent of Schools regarding monthly fire drills. The log should include the date of the drill, the location of the pulled alarm, and the time it took for full evacuation. If there are any special circumstances, i.e. blocked exits, it should be noted.

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.

PROCEDURE

Each school shall conduct a crisis response drill (emergency evacuation and/or lockdown) every three months and shall develop the format in consultation with the appropriate local law enforcement agency. A representative of such agency may supervise and participate in any such crisis response drill so they can offer recommendations and become familiar with the school and the school's procedures.

The principal should always keep copies of student and staff emergency information with them. Teachers should always have emergency information for their class as well as all contact information for their principal with them.

A copy of the school safety and crisis intervention plan must be submitted to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools at the beginning of each school year.

During an active threat, including an active lock down drill, parents may not be permitted to pick up their child(ren) early from school unless the principal and local authorities deem it appropriate and safe to do so.

The school shall communicate through email and blast text notifications to keep parents updated on lockdown status throughout active lockdowns. After an incident has occurred, the principal shall communicate a summary of what occurred and procedures that were followed to be provided to the parents and the office of 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.

PROCEDURE

All school personnel must exercise pastoral care in the discipline of a student and must follow carefully articulated discipline procedures.

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.

PROCEDURE

Safe Environment training is coordinated annually through the Office of Safe Environment. Training takes place onsite in age-appropriate groups using Kidsmartz.org and Netsmartz.org. Principals must ensure that every child has the opportunity to attend this presentation, and parents are encouraged to review the information with their child in advance. Parents are permitted to opt-out their son or daughter from Safe Environment training by sending this to the Principal in writing. This must be done on an annual basis.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that any student who is absent on the day of the Safe Environment presentation receives the training video and materials which correspond with their grade level. www.bridgeportdiocese.org under the heading Safe Environment for Parents.

The Principal must provide the Office of Safe Environment with any opt-out forms and the number of students who are in attendance.

Instruction

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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.

PROCEDURE

All schools shall follow curriculum standards adopted by the Office of the Superintendent.

Teachers and administrators shall receive ongoing professional development to continuously evaluate the implementation of the standards.

Each school shall consider the needs of the students, staff resources, and time allotment requirements according to the diocesan and applicable state regulations when implementing the standards. If the implementation could affect a substantial shift in the educational program in the school, the principal shall consult with the superintendent.

Committees of administrators and teachers may be established for purposes of curricula revisions under the direction of the superintendent or his/her designee.

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.

PROCEDURE

The principal, department chair, or appropriate administrator shall review these plans on a regular basis. This review shall be included in the process of the teacher observation and/or performance appraisal.

The lesson plans are the property of the school and contain a record of the curriculum covered by the teacher. As such, the plans (either in paper or electronic format) must be turned into the school's office at the end of each academic year.

Lesson plans may be returned to the teacher at the discretion of the principal at the beginning of the next school year for comparative purposes.

Care should be taken by the principal to ensure that each teacher constructs lesson plans that address the instructional needs of their current students. Teachers are expected to provide lesson plans for substitute teachers.

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.

PROCEDURE

The principal should establish an agenda and schedule of meetings for PLC's and should maintain a record of Minutes for each PLC meeting.

It is suggested that schools collaborate to increase participation in PLC opportunities.

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 (Appendix D).

PROCEDURE

The principal shall be responsible for compiling a master schedule which must be readily available to the superintendent, the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, and members of the Crisis Response Team.

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.

PROCEDURE

The principal, in consultation with the faculty, is responsible for the selection of textbooks, workbooks, instructional programs, and educational materials.

Schools shall continuously update instructional materials. No school should use instructional materials with copyrights dating back 10 or more years.

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.

PROCEDURE

All media must be age-appropriate and pertinent to the curriculum. All media must be previewed by the faculty member wishing to show the film and by the principal if there is any questionable content.

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.

PROCEDURE

The principal and/or the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, shall make the final decision regarding the admission, placement, or continuation of the student.

Teachers shall differentiate instruction to meet the learning needs of all students accepted into the school. They shall follow the provisions of an Accommodation Plan or Modified Program provided for a student with learning differences. If the student is entitled to a Service Plan with services provided by the local school district, the Catholic school and parents will make efforts to obtain the services.

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.

PROCEDURE

Instruction for English Language Learners (ELL) may be differentiated, and the student will be eligible for an Accommodation Plan. The Catholic school may request ELL services from the public school district in which it is located.

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.

PROCEDURE

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag shall be included in the opening exercises of each day.

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.

PROCEDURE

It is recommended that each class begin with a prayer. This allows the students to recognize that Jesus is the reason for the community's existence as a Catholic school.

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.

PROCEDURE

Efforts should be made to encourage attendance at Mass and the sacraments, but students should not be intimidated by or embarrassed about such matters.

Ordinarily, the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation shall be provided to students by the school in collaboration with local parish(es) during the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent.

Ordinarily, well-planned liturgical experiences in accordance with approved liturgical norms shall form an integral part of the religious education programs. At a minimum Mass shall be celebrated monthly and on Holy Days of Obligation.

Attendance at Mass may be used as a substitution for one religion class weekly that would normally meet on that school day. Schools should strive to create additional opportunities for students to attend mass, i.e. weekly mass attendance.

It is the responsibility of all school administrators, moderators, and coaches to provide an opportunity to attend Mass with all the students from the school who are participating when traveling with a school on a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation. No student should be expected to pay an additional cost to attend Mass- meaning that there is no mandatory collection.

While this primarily applies to overnight trips, schools are to make every effort to ensure that students traveling fulfill their obligation to attend either a vigil Mass on the prior evening or on the Sunday/Holy Day.

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.

POLICY

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should be made aware of the curriculum content of education in human dignity and be appropriately involved at all levels. The decisions of parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding the developmental readiness of their children for any aspect of this program must be respected.

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.

PROCEDURE

The following procedures are to be followed for all field trips:

1. Overnight field trips must have written permission from the Superintendent of Schools. Principals are to submit a written proposal to the Superintendent of Schools requesting permission for overnight trips. This request should include an explanation of how all Safe Environment guidelines will be met. This request must be sent at least 3 months in advance of any trip and prior to any public announcement of such trip.
2. It is the responsibility of all school administrators, moderators, and coaches to provide an opportunity to attend Mass with all the students from the school who are participating when traveling with a school on a Sunday or Holyday of Obligation. No student should be expected to pay an additional cost to attend Mass. While this primarily applies to overnight trips, schools are to make every effort to see that students traveling only on a Sunday know that it is their obligation to attend a vigil mass on the prior evening.
3. Field trip permission forms that are signed by parents are required for all field trips. Official diocesan field trip permission forms must be signed by parent(s)/guardian(s). Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be informed of the date, purpose, destination, means of transportation, and estimated time of return. See Appendix.
4. Except in extenuating circumstances, parents and teachers are not permitted to transport students in private vehicles on field trips. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and teachers should be aware that the school's insurance policy does not cover them and that they can be held personally liable in the event of an accident.
5. Administrators are advised to contact the Claims/Risk Manager for the Diocese of Bridgeport for any clarifications on insurance coverage for field trips.
6. Chaperones should be made aware of their responsibilities prior to departing for the trip. All chaperones must be in full compliance with the Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of Bridgeport including being Virtus Trained. At all times there must be two cleared adults and the appropriate ratio as described in the Safe Environment guidelines.
7. A student who does not have a signed, official diocesan permission form may not go on the planned trip. Parent phone calls and/or handwritten notes are not acceptable forms of permission. A faxed/emailed copy of a permission slip is allowed.
8. The principal always reserves the right to exclude a student from participation in a field trip due to concerns regarding behavior. A student is not to be excluded from day trips due to delinquent tuition.
9. The original permission slip should remain in the school office during the trip. The teachers in charge of the trip should carry "copies" of the permission slips as well as copies of emergency forms for each child on the field trip.
10. Permission slips should be retained in the school office for one year after the trip. If a charter bus is used for transportation, principals must keep a copy of the signed contract on file in the school office.
11. Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the proper form. Students who do not attend a field trip are expected to report to school. Those who remain at home will be marked absent for the day.
12. Students who are participating in the field trip must ride the bus to and from the field trip with their class. Parents are not allowed to pick up their child from the field trip location. Students not on the bus may not participate in the field trip and will be counted absent for the day.

13. Connecticut law prohibits transportation of Pre-K students on school buses.
14. All monies collected for the field trip or activities are non-refundable.
15. Guidelines for cell phone use on a field trip or an activity are determined by the principal.
16. The principal should consult with the school nurse to ensure that all aspects of student safety are considered, and specific needs of individual students are met on field trips and school-sponsored activities.

Every event where minors, youth and vulnerable adults are present should go through a review process in order to determine cleared adult to minor ratios. An activity that is open to the public or held in a public space may require a smaller ratio and increased supervision than may be needed for a closed venue with adults monitoring doorways and hallways.

The minimum required ratio of cleared adult/minor is:

- 1:7 for high school students (always at least 2 cleared adults)
- 1:5 for middle school students (always at least 2 cleared adults)
- 1:10 large single space gatherings and events where all entrances and exits are securely monitored: 2 cleared adults for every 20 students (i.e. school dances) (always at least 2 cleared adults in each hallway)

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).

PROCEDURE

School administrators should follow the guidelines of the Office of the Superintendent in regard to the appropriate use of these funds.

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.

PROCEDURE

Students participating in school athletic activities are required to have a yearly physical on file in the school office.

Each player must be covered by adequate insurance coverage.

Team Eligibility Rule

Members of all Catholic elementary school teams must:

1. Be enrolled as a student in that Catholic school;
2. Meet behavioral and academic eligibility requirements;
3. Not have completed eighth grade;
4. Be under fifteen years of age before Dec. 31st of the school year; and
5. Have a current medical release form on file.

School administrators, athletic directors, and coaches are expected to emphasize the importance of our student athletes attending Mass on Sundays. If a practice or game is scheduled for a Holy Day of Obligation, it is essential that provision be made for the athletes to attend Mass. Under no circumstance may practices or athletic games be held on Good Friday.

Diocesan Policy for League Participation by Catholic Schools

An elementary Catholic school basketball team can play in one league and participate in no more than three (3) tournaments excluding league playoffs and the diocesan and New England tournaments.

All high schools shall abide by local conference and Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) rules and regulations. If any rules or regulations that are in contradiction with Church teachings are promulgated by CIAC, the school principal must immediately notify and seek direction from the Office of the Superintendent.

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.

PROCEDURE

Each school will develop its calendar in conjunction with calendars from the local public school (for transportation purposes) and the superintendent.

Prior to publication, individual school calendars must be approved by the superintendent or his/her designee. Schools shall publish the annual school calendar on the school's website.

The calendar is in conformity with Connecticut state law and therefore can only be changed with the authorization of the superintendent or his/her designee.

The principal is responsible for submitting certification that his/her school completed the required 180 days of instruction to the Office of the Superintendent before the end of the academic year. This certification shall list all days that school was canceled along with the corresponding make-up days.

Schools should build three potential inclement weather days into their calendar.

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.

PROCEDURE

If a delayed opening is on a scheduled early dismissal day, school should be cancelled for the day.

No holiday or early dismissals other than those designated on the approved calendar may be given without prior authorization of the superintendent.

The principal is responsible for ensuring that any instructional time lost from school cancellation is made up. The principal must comply with the calendar makeup calculation form approved by the Office of the Superintendent.

The principal is responsible for submitting certification that his/her school completed the required 180 days of instruction to the Office of the Superintendent before the end of the academic year. This certification shall list all days that school was canceled along with the corresponding make-up days.

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.

PROCEDURE

Agenda from all professional meetings must be kept on file in the principal's office. This includes agendas from meetings such as, but not limited to:

- Faculty meetings;
- Professional Learning Community meetings; and
- Department meetings.

Fees for professional in-services, conventions, and conferences are to be paid for by the school or local school district, pending budget approval or allocation of Title IIA funds.

Salaries for hourly employees for professional in-services, conventions, and conferences are to be paid for by the school, pending budget approval.

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.

PROCEDURE

All purchases of computers, tablets and related equipment must be made in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent of Schools to ensure compatibility with the diocesan network. Minimum specifications for hardware can be found on the principal portal. All technology contracts must be approved by the superintendent.

It is impossible to control access to all controversial or potentially inappropriate materials or to predict with certainty what information the user might locate on global information networks such as the Internet/Intranet. Such electronic information does not imply endorsement of the content by the school or the Office of Superintendent of School or the Diocese of Bridgeport nor of the use of such information by students and staff. Due to the evolving nature of technology, the Office of the Superintendent reserves the right to amend or add to this policy at any time without notice.

Appropriate and reasonable measures should be taken by each school to ensure students' safety and privacy regarding technology, social media, and use of electronic devices.

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.

PROCEDURE

The school reserves the right to monitor the use of and/or restrict access to any electronic information resources. Users of any school electronic or technological equipment have no expectation of privacy in the use of any school electronic or technology equipment. School computers, e-mail, voicemail, the web, etc., may be monitored for appropriate use and anyone found using such equipment inappropriately may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.

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.

PROCEDURE

On-going training shall be available to teachers on the use of electronic grade books.

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.

PROCEDURE

School principals may adapt AI guidelines to align with their school's mission, academic goals, and community expectations as well as have the authority to establish specific procedures, permissions, and consequences regarding the use of AI within their school.

All school-level AI policies must remain consistent with the overarching values, educational standards, and integrity expectations of the diocese.

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.

PROCEDURE

The schools' advancement programs shall encompass public relations, student recruitment, constituency relations, and fund development with primary emphasis on the annual fund.

Advancement programs require that the school administrators have an understanding of both the advancement concept and the philosophy of Catholic school education. The leadership must be committed to the advancement concept and lead the entire school community in its implementation and execution.

Schools are expected to participate in advancement workshops offered by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Schools are expected to implement a comprehensive marketing plan each year.

Schools are expected to maintain and manage a donor management software system in support of their advancement programs in order to effectively reach out to and steward their donors and donor prospects.

The principal assumes primary responsibility for the implementation, execution, and enhancement of the school's advancement program. In cooperation with the school board, advancement staff, and team volunteers, the principal ensures that the program succeeds in advancing the school towards fulfilling its mission and goals.

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.

PROCEDURE

If a school plans on establishing an annual fund, it should be done in consult with the Office of the Superintendent and its Board.

The annual fund should solicit support from alumni, alumni parents, current parents, grandparents, friends, and local businesses that have been properly cultivated.

The school's annual fund program should not be suspended during a school's capital campaign to maintain essential support for operating expenses.

The Office of the Superintendent is available to consult on all aspects of annual fund, major gift solicitations, and prospective donor cultivation.

All donations are to be acknowledged with a thank you letter that is signed by the principal and includes the appropriate tax language.

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.

PROCEDURE

Approval for a capital campaign first requires that a proposed campaign plan be submitted to the pastor and Sacred Arts Committee. - The plan must include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Capital project description, goals, and objectives;
- Feasibility study;
- Project financials, including cost estimate and gift and pledge schedules; and
- Solicitation action plan and timeline.

Capital Campaigns over \$50,000

Once approved by the superintendent and pastor, plans must be submitted for review and approval to the Building and Sacred Arts Committee. Please note that Building and Sacred Arts Committee requires the plan prior to breaking ground or starting the project. At least 50% of project cash must be in hand and the balance pledged before a project can begin.

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.

PROCEDURE

The school administrator, in collaboration with the school board and those responsible for advancement for the school, is responsible for establishing 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.

PROCEDURE

Schools that wish to change their websites or create new sites should communicate their desires to the Office of the Superintendent prior to doing so.

School website revisions should maintain an updated vision and mission of the school. The school's Board should review revisions.

The principal is ultimately responsible for the content and the approval of content for the website.

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.

PROCEDURE

The principal or Chief Administrator shall maintain a list of each official school social media page or website, along with the administrator usernames and passwords. The principal or Chief Administrator must have access to these pages at all times.

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.

PROCEDURE

The school administrator shall collaborate with the faculty, school board, and Office of the Superintendent in creation of a long-range strategic plan. He/she shall use the format and procedures outlined by the Office of the Superintendent.

The long-range strategic plan shall encompass historical, present, and future perspectives on the school's philosophy, mission statement, Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Operational Vitality, Advancement, Governance and Leadership.

The school's strategic plans must be on file at the Office of the Superintendent.

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.”

PROCEDURE

Every school must include either the long form or short form of its non- discriminatory policy as to students in all its brochures, catalogues, advertisements and websites. The disclaimer should read as follows:

“NAME of SCHOOL admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.”