



**Diocese of Little Rock
Office of Catholic Schools**

Policy and Procedure Manual

6.00 CURRICULUM - INSTRUCTION

	Page
6.08 Arkansas History	4
6.20 Co-Curricular Activities - High School	11
6.19.1 Elective Requirements - High School	10
6.10 Enrichment Activities	4
6.19 Graduation Requirements - High School	8
6.11 Guidance and Counseling	4
6.02 Instructional Program	2
6.04 Library-Media Center	2
6.19.2 Mandatory Requirements - High School	10
6.05 Materials Secured Through Federal Programs	3
6.09 Physical Education	4
6.14 Pre-Kindergarten Standards	5
6.06 Religion, Teaching, and Practice	3
6.07 Safe Environment Program	3
6.01 School Calendar and Hours of Instruction	2
6.13 Student-Teacher Ratio	5
6.15 Suggested Time Allotments/Grades 1-2-3	6
6.16 Suggested Time Allotments/Grades 4-5-6	7
6.17 Suggested Time Allotments/Grades 7-8	8
6.18 Suggested Time Allotments/High School	8
6.12 Testing Program	5
6.03 Textbooks in Schools	2

6.01 SCHOOL CALENDAR AND HOURS OF INSTRUCTION

The Office of Catholic Schools develops a school calendar. Before schools modify this calendar, prior approval must be received from the superintendent.

1. Holiday and Early Dismissal - No holiday or early dismissals other than those designated in the official calendar may be given without prior approval of the superintendent of schools.
2. Required Clock Hours - The instructional time in each school day will not be less than six (6) hours. Any time less than (6) six hours will not be counted for a full day of instruction; nothing less than three (3) hours will be counted as one-half (1/2) day of instruction.
3. Days of Instruction - All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock will use the state - required 178 days of instruction as a minimum standard.

6.02 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

All Catholic schools will follow the Diocesan requirements regarding basic materials, specific courses, and time allotments.

1. Each school will have a period of instruction in the Catholic religion and follow curriculum established by the Diocesan guidelines.
2. Each school will offer a balanced curriculum as outlined in the suggested time allotment charts. The *In Spirit and Truth* curriculum guide will be the curriculum utilized in each of the elementary schools.

6.03 TEXTBOOKS IN SCHOOLS

All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock will use approved texts in the instructional program.

1. Religion Texts - The pastor, principal, and teacher will concur on the choice of texts from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) conformity list.
2. Secular Subject Texts – All textbooks and materials should be chosen from a list of approved and recommended textbooks provided by the Office of Catholic Schools and the Curriculum Committee. Prior to using a textbook that is not on the approved list, permission must be obtained by the Office of Catholic Schools.

6.04 LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER

The Library-Media Center should ensure that students and staff have access to materials and information that will be a fundamental part of the educational programs.

Each school should have an instructional materials policy that describes the process and the criteria for the selection or deletion of instructional materials to be included in the Library-Media Center. The following areas should be defined:

- Materials for selection

- Responsibility for selection
- Criteria for selection/withdrawal
- Procedures for selection
- Challenged materials procedures
- An inventory of all library-media center materials will be kept at the school

6.05 MATERIALS SECURED THROUGH FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Materials placed in the schools through federal programs are the property of the local school district. These materials are to be kept at the school. The local school district Title I office should be contacted for removal when the materials are no longer in use.

- An inventory of the materials will be maintained in the school.
- The materials will not be used in the religion program of the school.

6.06 RELIGION, TEACHING, AND PRACTICE

- Catholic liturgy, sacraments, traditions, and prayer shall be taught as an integral part of the school's curriculum. The liturgy should be celebrated regularly for the school and Catholic traditions celebrated according to liturgical season. Prayers are an active part of the school day.
- All Catholic schools shall actively promote family participation in the Sunday Eucharist. Liturgical formation shall be directed toward fostering active participation of the students in the Eucharist each Sunday.
- School liturgies shall observe the norms of the liturgical books and the local directives of the Bishop. Adaptions of the liturgy to the particular circumstances of schools shall be made so as to harmonize and foster parish liturgical life.
- Sacramental preparations for the Sacraments of Initiation: Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation shall be conducted according to the parish plan. Ordinarily, the sacraments should be celebrated with local parish communities: exceptions must be approved by the Bishop or his delegate. Participation in school-based sacramental preparation does not substitute for full participation in the parish-based sacramental preparation program.
- The curriculum for religion will be consistent with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, conform to the guidelines of the Diocese for curricula of religion, and be developmentally appropriate and relevant to the students' lives. All supplementary material used in the curriculum must conform to Catholic moral teachings and doctrine.
- Catholic schools shall provide opportunities for students to participate in community service projects or service learning that will benefit the community and all people.

6.07 Safe Environment Program

Each year the schools are required to teach two lessons from the Safe Environment Program. After teaching the lessons, a report must be sent to the Diocesan Safe Environment Office.

6.08 ARKANSAS HISTORY

A unit of Arkansas History shall be taught as a social studies subject at each elementary grade level with greater emphasis at the fourth and fifth grade level.

At least one full semester of Arkansas History shall be taught to all students at the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade level.

6.09 PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Every student in the Catholic schools of this diocese, except such as may be excused by reason of bodily defect or physical deficiency, shall be required to take physical education as outlined by Diocesan curriculum standards.

6.10 ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

The principal will approve all co-curricular activities. Any school-sponsored activity must allow equal opportunities for the students.

- Speakers - All speakers must have prior approval from the principal. Speakers without Safe Environment training must be escorted by an adult.
- Field Trips - No off-campus field trip will be taken without the approval of the principal. 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. Before groups of students are taken off the school grounds, written approval will be obtained from the parent/guardian of each child.
- Overnight Trips - Overnight trips are highly discouraged for elementary schools. Requests for exceptions must have approval from the pastor and be submitted to the Diocesan superintendent. Overnight trips must meet guidelines from Catholic Mutual Youth Trips involving overnight stay. Exceptions will be considered on the following basis:
 - Relevance to and integration with the academic curriculum
 - Contribution to the understanding of Christian values
 - Adequacy of adult supervision
 - Relationship to the specific goals of Catholic schools

6.11 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

When possible, the elementary school will provide services of a counselor. Each secondary school will provide a guidance program for students in spiritual, emotional, personal, social, and vocational development.

- Vocational guidance concerning various occupations will be given to students including vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life.
- High schools must employ a guidance counselor with knowledge of graduation credits and the ability to assist students with knowledge of scholarship availability.
- In some instances, the parish priest may be available for assistance in counseling a student.

6.12 TESTING PROGRAM

The testing program is designed for diagnostic purposes and for providing principals, teachers, and parent(s)/guardian(s) with information.

1. Religion Tests - The religion tests are administered to students in grades 5 and 8 annually.
2. Standardized Achievement Tests - Standardized achievement tests are administered to all students in grades 1 through 8 annually, according to the schedule approved by the Office of Catholic Schools. These tests are optional for kindergarten and ninth grade students.
3. High schools should offer exams to further the student's education and/or career opportunities.
4. At the request of parents/teachers, a child may be referred for diagnostic evaluation in specialized areas.

6.13 STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO

The following guidelines are recommended for student-teacher ratios.

GRADE LEVEL	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS	STAFF RECOMMENDATION
K	20	1 professional teacher
1-2-3	25	1 professional teacher
4-5-6	28	1 professional teacher
7 thru 12	30	1 professional teacher

In addition to the required professional teachers, teacher-aides and para-professionals will be employed at the discretion of the principal.

6.14 PRE-KINDERGARTEN STANDARDS

All pre-kindergarten programs are to follow the Arkansas Department of Human Services minimum licensing requirements for child care centers.

The pre-kindergarten curriculum is to be developmentally appropriate and include readiness programs, basic skills, and religion.

6.15 SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENTS / GRADES 1-2-3**MINIMUM OF 6 INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS PER DAY**

<u>BLOCKS</u>	<u>TIME</u>	
Subject	Daily	Weekly
Religion	30 minutes	150 minutes
English - Language Arts Reading Spelling Handwriting Oral Communication Written Communication Literature	180 minutes	900 minutes
Mathematics	45 minutes	225 minutes
Social Living Citizenship Geography-History- Economics Science Health Safety	60 minutes	300 minutes
Creative-Recreational Art Music Physical Education	45 minutes	225 minutes
TOTAL	360 minutes	1,800 minutes

6.16 SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENTS / GRADES 4-5-6**MINIMUM OF 6 HOURS INSTRUCTIONAL TIME PER DAY**

<u>BLOCKS</u>	<u>TIME</u>	
Subject	Daily	Weekly
Religion	30 minutes	150 minutes
English - Language Arts Reading Spelling Handwriting Oral Communication Written Communication Literature	150 minutes	750 minutes
Mathematics	60 minutes	300 minutes
Social Studies Geography-History- Economics	45 minutes	225 minutes
Science: General Science Health Safety	45 minutes	225 minutes
Creative- Recreational Art Music (band) Physical Education	30 minutes	150 minutes
TOTAL	360 minutes	1,800 minutes

6.17 SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENTS / GRADES 7-8
MINIMUM OF 6 HOURS INSTRUCTIONAL TIME PER DAY

<u>BLOCKS</u>	<u>TIME</u>	
Subject	Daily	Weekly
Religion	30 minutes	150 minutes
English - Language Arts: Reading Spelling Handwriting Oral Communication Written Communication Literature	120 minutes	600 minutes
Mathematics	55 minutes	275 minutes
Social Studies: Geography-History- Economics	55 minutes	275 minutes
Science: General Science Health Safety	55 minutes	275 minutes
Creative - Recreational Art Music (band) Physical Education	45 minutes	225 minutes
TOTAL	360 minutes	1,800 minutes

6.18 SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENTS - HIGH SCHOOL

A course which meets for the equivalent of a regular school period each day for a full school year will consist of a minimum of 275 minutes per week for laboratory/vocational courses and 225 minutes per week for all other courses in high school.

Schools that offer seven (7) periods of instruction in the secondary school may schedule laboratory/vocational courses in fifty (50) minute periods for a total of 250 minutes.

6.19 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS - HIGH SCHOOL

The secondary school must have a master curriculum schedule that offers 28 units, 24 of which are offered at least every other year. The minimum requirements for graduation are 22 units of which 16 units are mandatory. The schools' 28 course offerings are listed in the table below. A unit of credit shall be defined which meets for a minimum as the credit given for a course of 120 hours per year or covers the intended content (i.e. online courses).

SUBJECT	UNITS	COURSE
Religion	4 units	
Language Arts	6 units	4 units of English 1 unit of Oral Communications or ½ unit of Oral Communication and (½ unit of Drama or ½ unit of Journalism)
Mathematics	5 units	1 unit of Algebra I or Algebra A & B (grade 7-8 or 8-9) 1 unit of Algebra II 1 unit of Geometry 1 unit of Pre-Calculus Math to include Trigonometry Comparable concurrent college credit courses may be substituted where applicable.
Science	4 units	Active student participation in laboratory experience is required for a minimum of 20% of the instructional time. 1 unit of Biology 1 unit of Chemistry 1 unit of Physics Other options approved by the school
Social Studies	4 units	1 unit of American History 1 unit of World History ½ unit of Economics ½ unit of American Government- Civics ½ unit of Arkansas History if not taught in 7 th or 8 th grade Other options approved by the school
Foreign Language	2 units	2 units of the same language
Computer Science	1 unit	1 unit of Computer Science
Fine Arts	3 units	
Physical Education and Health	1 unit	½ unit Physical Education ½ unit of Health Education
Career/Technical Education	2 units	Drafting, Drivers Ed, Leadership, Accounting, Graphic Design, Computer Application, Web Design, Engineering, Business Courses, etc.

6.19.1 ELECTIVE REQUIREMENTS – HIGH SCHOOL

It is recommended that elective courses be offered at least every two years at the high school level:

Science (Anatomy, Physiology, Geology)

Mathematics (Calculus, Trigonometry, Consumer Math)

Art (including crafts)

Music (such as Music Appreciation)

Foreign Language (third and fourth year)

Social Studies (Anthropology, Sociology, AR History, Global Studies)

Drama

Home Economics (Consumer Education, Parenting Education)

Approved programs including Advanced Placement and college courses

Exploratory, Vocational, or Industrial Arts

6.19.2 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS – HIGH SCHOOL

The mandatory graduation (16 units) requirements are shown below:

English	(4) Units
Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 unit of Algebra or its equivalent • 1 unit of Geometry or its equivalent A two-year algebra equivalent or a two-year geometry equivalent may each be counted as two (2) units of the four unit requirement.	(4) Units May substitute 1 required unit of mathematics for one unit of approved STEM or Computer Science
Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 unit of Biology or its equivalent • 1 unit of Physical Science or its equivalent 	(3) Units May substitute 1 required unit of science for one unit of approved STEM or Computer Science
Social Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 unit of World History • 1 unit of American History • ½ unit of Civics • ½ unit of Economics and Personal Finance 	(3) Units
Oral Communication	(1/2) Unit
Physical Education	(1/2) Unit
Health and Safety CPR Training must be included	(1/2) Unit
Fine Arts	(1/2) Unit
Religion courses may not be substituted for any of the 16 units required for graduation. Each student must have one digital learning course.	

6.20 CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES - HIGH SCHOOL

Co-curricular activities will be correlated with the courses of studies and directed to the same general objectives.

- Clubs in High Schools - The foundation of the school program will be scholarship; therefore, clubs closely aligned with school subjects deserve a place in the regular activity schedule. Membership in any club will be voluntary, not compulsory.
- School Publications - Whenever possible, students in the junior high/high school will be encouraged and trained to publish a paper and a yearbook. These will not be published for a profit, and the soliciting of extensive advertising will be avoided. Subscriptions to student publications will be at a minimum rate.
- Scholarships and Contests - High school students will be encouraged to participate in scholarship examinations and contests. Special emphasis will be placed on scholarships to Catholic colleges and universities. Faculty members will prepare and encourage students to apply for scholarships.