



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

Policies and Procedures Manual

1.00 INTRODUCTION

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The Diocese of Little Rock Office of Catholic Schools reserves the right to amend at any time this policy manual, which is not a contract. School principals will be given prompt notification of any amendments.

1.01 UNIVERSAL RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION

"All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education that is in keeping with their ultimate goal, their ability, and the culture and tradition of their country, in harmony with their fraternal association with other peoples in the fostering of true unity and peace on earth. For a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and the good of the societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share." Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, Vatican Council II.

1.02 STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock seek to offer high quality academic programs which are integrated with religious truth and values. Students are prepared for life in today's Church and society and for leadership in society and the Church of tomorrow through a strong, basic, and contemporary curriculum which includes instruction and formation in the beliefs, values, and traditions of Catholic Christianity.

The development of the whole person (spiritually, intellectually, personally, socially, and physically) is the focus of Catholic education. The teachers, as partners with the parents, play a significant role in this educational ministry as they daily witness to the meaning of mature faith and Christian living. They are selected with care and are challenged to on-going professional and spiritual growth.

1.03 GOALS

The broad goals of all Catholic schools are to worship God; to teach the Gospel message; to build a faith community; and to be of Christian service. Specific goals include:

- To work closely with the family in educating children toward the fullness of Christian life.
- To create a Christian educational community where knowledge, enlightened by faith, is shared by teachers, students, and parents in a spirit of freedom and love.
- To provide opportunities for personal commitment to religious values.
- To teach Catholic principles and Christian values.
- To offer personal experiences in Christian living through liturgy, sacramental life, prayer, guidance, service, and example.
- To instruct students in knowledge and skills which enable them to actively participate in the parish community and society.
- To assist each student to develop a positive attitude toward lifelong education, including the power to think constructively, to solve problems, and to reason independently.
- To facilitate and improve each student's opportunity to learn.
- To play a significant role in raising national levels of knowledge, competence, and experience.

STANDARDS

1.04 STANDARD I - FAITH

Every Catholic school in the Diocese of Little Rock will provide a religious atmosphere and programs which foster and deepen the knowledge of the Catholic faith and the practice of a Christian life.

- The school will give top priority to religion in the curriculum and will use texts approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- The school will provide opportunities for sacred liturgies. Prayer will be incorporated throughout the school day.
- Schools will educate students to integrate faith and life through the teachings of the Catholic Church. This will be demonstrated through engagement in areas such as vocations, missions, world hunger, justice, peace, and respect for life.

1.05 STANDARD II - ACADEMICS

Catholic schools in the Diocese will strive for the highest quality education and will maintain the standards required by the Diocese.

- The school will adhere to the policies and regulations outlined in the *Diocesan Manual of Policies and Procedures*.
- The school will follow the *In Spirit and Truth* curriculum guide for grades kindergarten-eighth.
- Classroom instruction will be designed to engage and motivate all students, addressing the diverse needs and capabilities of each student, and accommodating students with special needs, as fully as possible.
- Curriculum instruction will provide students with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to become creative, reflective, literate, critical and moral evaluators, problem solvers, decision makers, and socially responsible global citizens.

1.06 STANDARD III - EVANGELIZATION/SUPPORT

By reason of their evangelizing mission, Catholic schools are an apostolate of the local church. Therefore, Catholic schools should be available to all people who desire a Catholic school education for their children. (*Gravissimum Educationis*: Code of Canon Law, Canons 793 – 795; *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, Introduction)

- Parishioners will be encouraged by the pastor to support the parish school in a meaningful way, such as scholarships, periodic collections, fundraising activities, and volunteering time and talents.
- Parish scholarships will be established for families with financial needs.
- An educational trust fund or endowment will be maintained to ensure adequate support for the school.
- Catholic schools will establish an admissions policy with Catholic students taking precedence over other students.

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1.07 STANDARD IV – POLICY MANUALS/HANDBOOKS

The school will develop an employee handbook and a student handbook which include its philosophy and goals in compliance with the goals in the *Diocesan Manual of Policies and Procedures*. The handbooks will also contain the policies and procedures which pertain to that particular school. Current copies of the employee and student handbooks are to be available to the Office of Catholic Schools, school board, and faculty. The student handbook is to be available to the parents. Each school will evaluate its policies and procedures annually.

1.08 STANDARD V - SCHOOL BOARD

Catholic schools shall have a school board which recognizes and respects the roles of the appropriate authorities and adheres to the *Diocesan Manual of Policies and Procedures*.

- The school board functions according to its approved constitution and bylaws.
- The school board maintains a relationship with the canonical administrator, (pastor or designee of the Bishop) marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, and continuing dialogue.
- The school board ensures financial plans and budgets are implemented, using current and effective business practices as a means of providing good stewardship of resources.