

## Handbook Alerts

Before submitting the handbooks, it might be helpful to review the following comments and make any changes related to these ahead of time.

1. Do not use words like "should," "expect," "please," "ought to," if the statement is meant to be a rule, regulation or policy that all are to follow. These words do not carry the same force of law as more definitive statements.

Examples:

Request: Students should be in their classrooms no later than 8:00 AM.

Requirement: Students are to be in their classrooms no later than 8:00 AM.

Request: Please do not park on the school roof!

Requirement: Do not park on the school roof!

2. Pastoral authority, as the legal authority, always needs to remain clear. School boards in the Diocese of Jefferson City are advisory and consultative. Language that implies authority to the board is to be avoided.

Therefore, words like "set," "make," "determine," "established," "approved," "developed," etc. are to be avoided when describing actions of the school board. Rather, words like "formulate," "recommend," etc. are to be used. Board actions always need pastoral approval for them to be legally effective. For example, you might say something like:

"The school board has developed, and the pastor has approved, the following lunchroom guidelines."

Rather than:

"The school board has set the following lunchroom guidelines."

Or, you can avoid this question all together by just eliminating the word "board." This policy would then read:

"The school has set the following for lunchroom guidelines."

3. The words "pastor," "principal," and "school" are normally not capitalized unless part of the full title.

Examples:

Incorrect: The Pastor visits the school to teach religion.

Correct: The pastor visits the school to teach religion.

Incorrect: Students who misbehave are sent to the Principal.

Correct: Students who misbehave are sent to the principal.

4. The same is true for the names of curriculum subjects. Unless they are the names of languages, such as English, Spanish, French, normally subject names like science, social studies, religion, etc. are not capitalized.

5. The complete policy on sexual abuse of minors (DSP 5825) does not have to be printed in the handbooks. If you look at DSR 2350, where items to be included in your handbooks are specified, it states that you only need:
  1. Paragraph 1 of the Introduction
  2. Paragraph II A - Reporting Procedures
  3. A statement as to where the whole policy can be found.

While it is allowable, we would recommend that you not print the whole policy in your handbook, as it becomes almost overpowering to everything else in the handbook.

6. A similar situation occurs with the copyright law - DSR 3910.
7. A check-off sheet is enclosed for you to indicate on what page of your handbook specific diocesan policies and regulations appear. This will be a double-check for you and make it easy for us to find the policies and regulations. The check-off sheets are to be sent to us with your handbooks for review.
8. If there is a diocesan policy on a certain issue, there is not to be a repetitive local policy. For example, there is a diocesan non-discrimination policy. This is the policy for all of the schools. Each school is not to have its own non-discrimination policy.
9. Normally, handbooks are best written in third person.
10. Make sure that you include the compliance form given to you by the Catholic School Office as the only compliance form to use.

We hope the above information is helpful to you.