

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: The Role of Catholic Schools in the Church's Educational Mission

Catholic schools exist primarily to participate in the educational mission of the Catholic Church. *Of the educational programs available to the Catholic community Catholic schools offer the fullest and best opportunity to realize the threefold purpose of Christian education among children and young people. (To Teach as Jesus Did, ¶101.)*

“Since a true education must strive for the integral formation of the human person, a formation which looks toward the person’s final end and, at the same time, toward the common good of societies. Children and young people are to be so reared that they can develop harmoniously their physical, moral, intellectual talents, and spiritual gifts that they acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and correct use of freedom, and that they be educated for active participation in social life.” *(Code of Canon Law, Can. 795.)*

Furthermore, in regard to this education, parents have a duty to send their children to Catholic schools when able. *Parents are to send their children to those schools which will provide for their Catholic education. (Code of Canon Law, Can. 798.) We recall the duty of Catholic parents to entrust their children to Catholic schools, when and where this is possible, to support such schools to the extent of their ability, and to work along with them for the welfare of their children. (To Teach as Jesus Did, ¶101.)*

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Objectives of Catholic Schools in the Church's Educational Mission

Because schools foster faithful adherence to the teachings and “values and virtues” of the Catholic Church they shall:

1. Incorporate Catholic principles in all areas of the curriculum;
2. Offer personal experiences in Catholic living and opportunities for personal commitment including liturgy, sacramental life, prayer, guidance, and example;
3. Recognize the dignity and God-given gifts of each person—pastor, employee, parent, student;
4. Provide education in the Catholic teaching on human sexuality according to the Gospel of Life;
5. Reflect a Catholic understanding of responsibility for one another, reflected in mutual respect of the clergy, employees, parents, students and parishioners.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: The Role of Catholic Schools in the Diocese's Educational Mission

The school communities of the Diocese of Jefferson City are avenues of the saving mission of Christ. They accept the continuing mission of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to the world and making disciples of all nations.

The diocesan schools provide quality Catholic education in a Christ-like environment by educating and nurturing the children in their care. An educational curriculum is provided where students learn intellectual, spiritual, social, physical, and aesthetic life skills and attitudes. Continual development of the student's ultimate earthly and spiritual potential is the primary design.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Objectives of Catholic Schools in the Diocese's Educational Mission

Specifically, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Jefferson City have as their objectives the following:

1. To foster faithful adherence to the teachings and virtues of the Catholic Church;
2. To serve as positive driving forces in their respective communities;
3. To balance positive leadership with respect for the diversity of each local school;
4. To recruit and cultivate professional Catholic educators;
5. To provide support for each school and the individuals within;
6. To impart knowledge and create opportunities for learning that last a lifetime;
7. To strive to meet the needs of each student, especially by developing the following:
  - a. Positive attitudes to life-long learning;
  - b. Key skills such as listening, reading, thinking, problem solving, and making good judgments;
  - c. Basic knowledge and the ability to locate new and changing information;
  - d. Effective use of technology to assist learning in preparing students for the demands of a technological society.
8. To work to foster a positive, stimulating environment, open to creative and dynamic educational methods;
9. To emphasize growth toward self-discipline and personal responsibility.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Educational Authority in the Diocese of Jefferson City

The Bishop of Jefferson City, as the canonically appointed head and teacher of the Church in the diocese, is responsible for the entire educational program in the diocese. The superintendent of Catholic schools helps to formulate policies. All policies in the Diocese of Jefferson City need the approval of the bishop. The bishop delegates the responsibility of implementing the policies related to Catholic schools in the diocese and the responsibility of issuing appropriate regulations for carrying out these policies to the superintendent of Catholic schools.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: The Relationships of the Catholic Schools to the Parish

Because schools serve as part of the parish and are a part of the total parish ministries, the schools are to do the following:

1. Be guided by the pastoral authority within the parish;
2. Work in union with clergy, other parish leaders and other parish programs;
3. Share educational opportunities and resources, as feasible, with the broader community;
4. Extend service, to the extent possible, to meet the needs of the parish and broader community;
5. Work closely with parents in educating children toward the fullness of Catholic Christian life;
6. Involve representatives of the parish community in policy development, in the educational process, and in appropriate school activities;
7. Assure regular communication with parents regarding all important areas of school life;
8. Collaborate with the parish council and school board in carrying out the school's mission and philosophy.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Educational Authority in the Parish

The pastor of each parish, canonically appointed to be the head of the Catholic community, has pastoral authority and concern in all facets of parish life. In educational matters, he works with the parish Catholic school board. The parish Catholic school board is an advisory board established to assist the pastor, school administrator/principal, parish council, and finance council in fostering the education mission, goals and objectives of the Catholic school. It helps formulate and recommend policy and is consultative to both the pastor and the school administrator/principal.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Local Policies and Regulations

The Catholic school advisory board may recommend to the pastor local policies and/or regulations which may be amended from time to time, as necessary. All local policies and/or regulations are first subject to approval of the pastor. Once approved by the pastor, these policies and/or regulations shall be submitted to the Catholic School Office for review to ensure compliance with diocesan policies and the law. After this review, the policies and/or regulations are then reviewed by the Bishop or the superintendent of Catholic schools, as his delegate. No local policy or regulation is valid until it has the approval of the Bishop, or his delegate. Once the local policies and regulations have been approved by the Bishop, or his delegate, then the school administrator / principal shall implement these local policies, along with diocesan policies, and issue appropriate regulations for the everyday activities of the school.

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COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: School Advisory Boards

All school advisory boards are to follow the guidelines established by the Diocese of Jefferson City. (See Series 9000 for Guidelines for School Boards.)

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Home and School Associations

There must be the closest cooperation between parents and the school faculty and staff. In fulfilling their task, schools are to collaborate closely with the parents/guardians. Associations and meetings of parents/guardians are to be established and held in high esteem. Each Catholic elementary school shall establish and maintain a home and school association to help parents/guardian in fulfilling their role as Christian educators and to provide educational assistance in Christian family living. *(School) Associations and meetings of parents are to be set up and held in high esteem. (Code of Canon Law, Canon 796.)* The home and school fulfills its purpose by supporting the school and collaborating with faculty and staff.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Home and School Associations

All home and school associations are to follow the guidelines established by the Diocese of Jefferson City. (See Series 9000 for Guidelines for Home and School Associations.)

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Press Releases

Normally, press releases from a school should be reviewed, cleared and released through the school administrator/principal or pastor.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Press Releases

Any press releases and/or media contact or statements regarding such things as permanent school closings, closing of grades, disasters, legal challenges or other serious/controversial issues are to be cleared with the superintendent of Catholic schools who will consult with the chancellor of the diocese and the communications director to decide who will release information or make comments concerning the matters to the media. Normally, the procedure in these cases is to initially make no comment. The local pastor and/or administrator/principal is to inform employees that they, in turn, are to make no comment on the matter until authorization is received from the superintendent of Catholic schools. After notifying and consulting with the superintendent of Catholic schools, the local pastor and/or administrator/principal will be further directed as to how to proceed.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: National Catholic Educational Association

Every school of the diocese is expected to have an institutional membership in the National Catholic Educational Association. Catholic school administrators/principals are to attend the NCEA annual convention, if at all possible.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools Week is to be observed in every Catholic school in the Diocese of Jefferson City during the week recommended in the national promotion with special activities and observances to be scheduled during this week, unless special written approval is given by the superintendent of Catholic schools.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Use of Student Photos

Much care must be taken in the use of photos of students (either of individual students or groups of students) for public relations purposes. Student photos may be used in brochures, newspapers, or other publications only if the parent/guardian of the student signs a release allowing such use. A sample of such a release can be found in Appendix #DSR 1530

At no time is the school, parish, or any employee to place or send photos of students (either of individual students or groups of students) on the Internet, even with parent/guardian permission. This includes any diocesan school, parish, or employee website(s) including home page(s).

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COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Grievance

Any serious grievance that cannot be solved through an informal process using the local chain of command (teacher, principal, pastor) shall be resolved through the Administrative Recourse Procedure. Since the parish school board is an advisory board, it is not part of the process of reconciling differences, unless a pastor decides to consult some or all of the board for advice on a serious issue. The Administrative Recourse Procedure shall constitute the exclusive method for resolving such disputes after informal attempts at reconciliation have failed. The parties are bound by its determination as final and binding. The Administrative Recourse Procedure is specifically limited to "Grievances" as defined within the Administrative Recourse Procedure policy and regulation.

COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Administrative Recourse

A. Definition

A "Grievance" is a formal complaint about any serious issue regarding a school or its personnel that needs a formal process of reconciliation in order for it to be resolved.

B. Purpose

The primary purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible administrative level, equitable solutions to problems which may from time to time arise affecting the welfare or working conditions of persons associated with the school.

C. Basic Principles

1. Informal attempts using the local chain of authority (teacher, school administrator/principal, pastor) have failed to resolve the grievance.
2. Since it is important that grievances be processed as rapidly as possible, the number of days indicated at each level should be considered a maximum and every effort should be made to expedite the process. The failure of a grievant to act within the time limits will act as a bar to any further appeal and an administrator's failure to give a decision within the time limits shall permit the grievant to proceed to the next step. (*By mutual written agreement, however, the time limits may be extended.*)
3. The grievant agrees that discussions during the procedural stages of a grievance shall be kept confidential.
4. There is to be no retaliation against any party or participant in the grievance procedure.
5. Meetings held pursuant to this procedure shall be conducted by mutual agreement at a time and place that will afford a fair and reasonable opportunity for all persons, including witnesses to attend.
6. Records of formal proceedings at every Level shall be kept and made available to all parties involved.
7. Levels One and/or Two of the Grievance Procedure may be waived upon the written request of both parties and the grievance brought directly to the next level.

D. Procedure

1. Informal Attempts at Resolution

Before differences become formal grievances, every effort shall be made to resolve local-level disputes by way of a free and open discussion between the parties involved in the grievance. Accordingly, a party may not pursue a grievance through the formal procedures outlined in this policy unless the party has first engaged in informal attempts with the local chain of authority to reconcile the difference beginning with the person whom the grievance is against. The normal chain of authority is: (1) teacher; (2) principal; (3) pastor. The school administrator/principal or pastor may ask a third party to attend and assist the discussion.

2. Formal Grievance Procedures

In the event that informal attempts at resolving the dispute have been unsuccessful, the formal grievance procedure outlined below shall be observed. For complaints to be resolved through the Formal Grievance Procedures, the following shall apply: (i) if the complaint relates to a principal, LEVEL ONE will not apply, and the grievant will begin with LEVEL TWO; and (ii) if the complaint relates to a pastor, LEVELS ONE AND TWO will not apply, and the grievant will begin with LEVEL THREE.

**LEVEL ONE: SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR/PRINCIPAL**

The grievant shall reduce the complaint to writing and submit it to the school administrator/principal within fifteen (15) days following the occurrence of the event. The school administrator/principal will hold a meeting within seven (7) days following receipt of the written statement of grievance. The school administrator/principal, a grievance representative designated by the pastor and the grievant shall be present for the meeting. Within seven (7) days following the meeting, the school administrator/principal shall provide the grievant with a written decision.

**LEVEL TWO: PASTOR**

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the school administrator's/principal's written decision, the grievant may appeal the decision in writing within five (5) days to the pastor. If the Formal Grievance Procedure begins with LEVEL TWO, the grievant shall reduce his/her complaint to writing and submit it to the pastor within fifteen (15) days following the occurrence of the event. The pastor will hold a meeting within seven (7) days following receipt of the written statement of grievance or the appeal, as applicable. The pastor, a grievance representative designated by the pastor and the grievant shall be present for the meeting. Within seven (7) days following the meeting, the pastor shall provide the grievant and the school administrator/principal with a written decision.

**LEVEL THREE: SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the pastor's written decision, the grievant may appeal the decision in writing within five (5) days to the superintendent of Catholic schools. If the Formal Grievance Procedure begins with LEVEL THREE, the grievant shall reduce his/her complaint to writing and submit it to the superintendent of Catholic schools within fifteen (15) days following the occurrence of the event. The superintendent of Catholic schools or a designated representative of the superintendent of Catholic schools will hold a meeting on the matter within ten (10) days following receipt of the appeal. The superintendent of Catholic schools will render a decision in writing stating findings of fact and conclusions within ten (10) days of the hearing and a copy of the decision shall be delivered to the grievant, the pastor and the school administrator/principal.

**LEVEL FOUR: DIOCESAN SCHOOL RECOURSE COMMITTEE**

If the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance at LEVEL THREE, a written appeal may be made within five (5) days to the Diocesan School Recourse Committee (DSRC), a committee composed of three members appointed by the bishop. The committee will review the entire record relating to the grievance and thereafter hold a meeting which shall not be later than fifteen (15) days after receipt of the written appeal. The grievant is entitled to attend the meeting. Evidence relevant to the grievance may be offered by interested parties, and questions may be asked pertaining to the cause by committee members as well as the interested parties. The DSRC will render and communicate its recommendation to the bishop who will notify the superintendent of Catholic schools and the grievant of his ruling. The decision of the bishop will be final and binding.

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COMMUNITY AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Penalty Status During Administrative Recourse

The penalty for a violation of a school or diocesan policy or regulation is to be enforced during the recourse procedure. However, a request can be made to the superintendent of Catholic schools to speed up the procedure. Either the person(s) registering the complaint or the person(s) to whom the complaint is registered can make this request. The request can be granted or denied.