

Policy 1000

Canonical Overview

Effective: July 2023

Revised:

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

The policies contained within this document are subject to and shall be administered and interpreted consistently with ecclesiastical principles, Catholic doctrine, and the Code of Canon Law, especially Canons 796 through 806 and 827.2, all of which are incorporated into this document by reference.

Specifically, the Bishop has the right to watch over and inspect all Catholic schools within the territory of the Diocese. He has also the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of all Catholic schools. Further, those who are in charge of Catholic schools are to ensure, under the supervision of the Bishop, that the formation and academic standards are at least as outstanding as that in other schools in the area (Canon 806).

Accordingly, the norms containing in the Office of Catholic Schools Administrators' Manual are subject to the general administration, interpretation, and authority of the parish pastor and principal for parochial schools and of the superintendent and principal for Diocesan school. In regard to matters of religion, morals, and general regulation, to the canonical authority of the Bishop and his designee, the superintendent. On behalf of the Bishop, the superintendent will conduct periodic reviews of schools within the Diocese bearing the title "Catholic."

Policy 1020

Accreditation and Licensing

Effective: July 2021 as Policy 1100.0

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Accreditation is a method of quality assurance that evaluates and verifies an institution's quality and encourages continuous improvement. It is a protocol for school systems committed to meaningful and sustainable improvement designed to act as a means of ongoing improvement.

All recognized Catholic schools in the State of Ohio, including those within the Diocese of Columbus, are accredited through the Ohio Catholic School Accreditation Association (OCSAA) and engage in a 6-year long accreditation cycle that ensures the professional educational standards of each school. In order to be accredited, schools must be certified as adhering to the operating standards of the OCSAA, found on the OCSAA website.

All recognized Catholic schools recognized by the Diocese of Columbus maintain a status of chartered non-public schools with the Ohio Department of Education.

Policy 1030

☐ Elementary

Membership in the Diocesan Catholic Schools

Effective: May 1983 as Policy 2010.0

Revised: July 2023

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

The diocesan and parochial schools of the Diocese of Columbus are those that meet all of the Canon Law specifications for Catholic schools (see Canons 796-806) and all of the following conditions:

1. Are recognized by the Bishop of Columbus and approved by him to “bear the title *Catholic school*” (Canon 803) and are owned and operated either by the Diocese itself or by a parish entity, and
2. Are responsible to the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools for such matters as have been determined by the Bishop of Columbus, and are subject to the Superintendent’s regulations and supervision,
3. Are governed by all of the policies established by the Diocese of Columbus and the Office of Catholic Schools,
4. Have policies in place that state acceptance of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, that actively enact the teaching ministry of the Church, and that outline the frequent and regular participation in the Sacraments, and
5. Have written belief and mission statements which identify the school as Catholic and actively serve as places of missionary discipleship in the Church’s ministry of education, and
6. Have a program of religious education which conforms to the standards determined by the Bishop of Columbus and implemented through the Office of Catholic Schools (Canon 804), and
7. Accept the regular visitation of the Bishop and/or his designees to exercise their right of vigilance of the school, including the acceptance of all of his “prescriptions dealing with the general regulation of Catholic schools” (Canon 806),
8. Are chartered by the State of Ohio and classified as a chartered, non-public school.
9. Maintain accreditation through the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association (OCSAA).

Policy 1040

Organization of Diocese of Columbus Schools

Effective: July 2023

Revised:

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

The roles and responsibilities of those who administer Catholic education in the Diocese of Columbus are interrelated and collaborative, and are to reflect the intent of the local Ordinary in the duties of education and sanctification.

Bishop

The responsibility for the educational apostolate in the Diocese belongs to the Bishop. All policies in this manual have been approved by the bishop.

Pastor

The pastor, on behalf of the Ordinary, assumes responsibility for both the administrative and spiritual leadership of parochial schools. The pastor is also responsible in the following areas:

- Employs the principal in parochial schools and maintains a close working relationship with him or her.
- Works with the principal as employer and co-supervisor of the teachers and school staff.
- Ensures that the religious teachings directed by the bishop are implemented in the parochial school.
- Cooperates with the Office of Catholic Schools in the supervision of the school's academic and religious programs.
- Consults with the Office of Catholic Schools before taking any actions regarding legal matters and contractual disputes.
- Approves the budget and long-range plans.
- Provides for worship opportunities at the school.
- Is visible at school and present to students.

Superintendent

The superintendent has been appointed by the bishop as his designee in all matters pertaining to Catholic schools. He or she is responsible in the following areas:

- Works to ensure the Catholicity of all preschools, elementary schools, and high schools.
- Assists each school in evaluation of program effectiveness.
- Provides guidance, support, direction, oversight, and vision to the schools of the Diocese through the work of the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Oversees the implementation of all school policies according to the policy manual of the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Assistant superintendents may be delegated specialized responsibilities that they will fulfill on behalf of and in communication with the superintendent.

Office of Catholic Schools

The Office of Catholic schools, under the direction of the superintendent, is authorized to carry out the mandate of the Bishop pursuant to Canon Law. The Office of Catholic Schools:

- Serves the educational needs of the people of the Diocese through Catholic schools by providing necessary programs at the Diocesan level, including leadership, support, and consultative services to pastors, principals, and those who collaborate with them in the ministry of Catholic education.
- Helps to ensure the quality of Catholic education and places particular emphasis on faith formation in each Catholic school in the Diocese by cultivating a love for Jesus Christ, fidelity to His Church, commitment to the dignity of the human person, service to others, and evangelization.
- Coordinates services, communication, and cooperation among the various educational components.

The relationship between the Office of Catholic Schools and the schools of the Diocese adheres to the Church's guiding principle of subsidiarity: "a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to co-ordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1883).

Administrator-Minister

The administrator-minister of a school are those individuals with the position titles of Principal, Assistant Principal, or Vice-Principal. These individuals are responsible for the ordinary operation of the school as specified in their contract of employment and in the policies of the Office of Catholic School. For clarity, the title of "administrator-minister" has been shortened to "administrator" throughout this Manual. However, the administrator-minister retains the mission of serving the Catholic Church through leadership of an educational apostolate.

Teacher-Minister

Teacher-ministers serve actively in the education and faith development of their students. Catholic school teacher-ministers are expected to abide by the standards of faith, morals, and teachings of the Catholic Church. Catholic school teachers shall fulfill the duties outlined in the teacher-minister job description, the employment contract, and all policies contained in this Manual. For clarity, the title "teacher-minister" has been shortened to "teacher" throughout this Manual.

Parochial School

A parochial school is a Catholic school, usually serving grades Kindergarten through 8 or preschool through 8, that is supported and sponsored by a parish entity. The parochial school is one department of many in an active parish. The parish and parochial school are under the supervision of the pastor, as "the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2179).

Diocesan School

A diocesan school is a Catholic school, usually serving grades 9 through 12, that is owned and operated by the Diocese of Columbus. In his role as shepherd of the Diocese, the bishop oversees the diocesan school as a pastor would a parochial school. The bishop may delegate the supervision of these schools to the superintendent.

Revision History: 07/23

Policy 1050

Request for New School Openings

Effective: August 2019 as Policy 2020.0

Revised: March 2025

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

All schools designated as “Catholic” must follow the policies and guidelines authorized by the Bishop regarding religious education, catechists, and liturgy. Catholic schools operated by entities within the Diocese of Columbus must also meet standards relating to academic excellence and financial viability. Any group (including those representing a parish) wishing to open a Catholic school in the Diocese of Columbus must first comply with the following procedures:

1. Discuss the proposal with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and obtain approval before initiating any formal steps in the process of opening such a school. In cases where the group is not a parish entity, written permission to enter the Diocese must be obtained from the Bishop prior to discussing the proposal with the Superintendent.
2. Submit to the Superintendent a written proposal, which includes a professional feasibility study as described below. This report must also certify that the effect of opening a new school will have minimal negative impact on existing approved Catholic schools. The Diocesan Finance Director will review any financial proposal. The feasibility study must include:
 - a. Proposed name, mission, vision, and philosophy statements
 - b. Proposed alignment with the Diocese of Columbus Theology Course of Study
 - c. Proposed alignment with the Diocese of Columbus Academic Course of Study
 - d. Proposed location with necessary safety inspections of the physical plant. This should include consultation with the Diocesan Facilities Office.
 - e. Minutes from board meetings over a 12-month period, or as applicable.
 - f. A five-year projection of enrollment
 - g. A five-year financial plan that demonstrates financial viability and sustainability
 - i. Evidence of financial viability, including bank statements, benefactor lists, or other supporting documentation may be requested.
 - h. Any drafts of handbooks, such as those for families and staff
3. If, after reviewing the proposal and supporting data, the Superintendent determines that the proposal has sufficient merit, the Superintendent will recommend to the Bishop that he approve the request to establish such a school. Only with the approval of the Bishop may a school call itself “Catholic” or use the term “Catholic” in its title and/or communication with the public (see Policy 1051).
4. The new school must adhere to all requirements in Policy 1030, including adherence to the policies of the Diocese of Columbus and the Office of Catholic Schools. If seeking independent (i.e., not a parochial or diocesan school), Policy 1051 must be implemented.

Revision History: 03/25, 07/23, 08/19

Policy 1051

Independent School Recognition

Effective: August 2019 as Policy 2030.0

Revised: March 2025

- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☒ Both

Only the Bishop can designate a school to be “Catholic” (Canon 803, Code of Canon Law). Schools entering the Diocese of Columbus seeking independent status are those operated by a religious community or a lay corporation.

To obtain designation from the Bishop as a Catholic school as required by Canon 803, an independent school administered by a religious community or lay corporation must demonstrate an ability and willingness to follow the policies and guidelines authorized by the Diocesan Bishop regarding religious education, catechists, liturgy, and certain other aspects of school operation. However, such schools are independent entities and are responsible for their own administration, operations, property, and debts or liabilities.

To seek such designation, the owner(s) and administrators of an independent school must first:

1. Provide written notification to the Diocesan Bishop and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the desire to operate a religious community sponsored or lay corporation sponsored Catholic school. Incorporated in this notification must be a sworn statement that the owner(s) and administrators of the school agree to safeguard the canonical prerogatives of the Diocesan Bishop, including but not limited to those specifically relating to religious education such as textbooks, materials, teachers, and spiritual direction, and to liturgical norms;
2. Provide letters of recommendation from the pastor (s) of the parish(es) of the areas impacted by the school for the owner(s) and chief administrators of the school. If the school is relocating from another diocese, a letter of endorsement from the Episcopal Vicar for Religious Education and Superintendent of Schools of said diocese is also required;
3. Include in the governing charter of the organization an affirmation to safeguard the canonical prerogatives of the Diocesan Bishop as stated in the letter referred to in item a). A copy of the organization’s charter and other governing documents (e.g., articles of incorporation, bylaws, etc.) must also be submitted;
4. Additionally, the school must:
 - a. Agree to accept an Office of Catholic Schools representative as an ex-officio participant of the local school governance board and include this representative in board discussions and communication;
 - b. Enter into an indemnification and hold harmless agreement in a form to be provided by the diocese; and maintain insurance coverage acceptable to the diocese and adequate to satisfy the provisions set forth therein, naming the diocese and Bishop as additional insured.

- c. The celebrations of First Eucharist, First Penance, and Confirmation are to be conferred in parishes ONLY. As an integral element of its religion curriculum, the school must agree to provide adequate catechesis for sacramental preparation and regarding the sacraments.

Upon receiving the designation of Catholic from the Bishop, an independent private school is eligible to request by written application to the Office of Catholic Schools participation in all educational programs developed for schools or sponsored by the Diocese.

Designation as a Catholic school does not create any partnership, joint venture, or other civil law relationship between the school and the Diocese of Columbus or its Bishop. The diocese and Bishop are not liable for any claim or demand of any nature arising in relation to the school.

Maintaining Catholic Status

Following the designation as a recognized Catholic school, the independent school will work with OCSAA to receive a charter from the State of Ohio that will classify the school as a chartered, non-public school. The school is required to participate in OCSAA accreditation and to maintain the state charter to retain its recognition from the Bishop.

Each year, the school shall provide to the Office of Catholic Schools evidence of its continued willingness to remain a designated Catholic school in the Diocese. Such evidence must include the following:

1. A school philosophy/mission statement consistent with the principles of Catholic education enunciated in the Church documents and the Catechism.
2. Evidence the school is following religious education guidelines set forth by the Diocese in employing religion teachers who meet Diocesan standards for catechist certification and providing regular communication to parents describing the religion education program.
3. Evidence of a governance structure to ensure continued school viability and Catholic identity.
4. Evidence of school accreditation through OCSAA.
5. Evidence of adherence to all Safe Environment policies, procedures, and processes, including the participation in the annual audit.
6. The school shall further provide to the Office of Catholic Schools:
 - a. a current list of all administrators and faculty members who supervise and/or teach religious education, which includes their professional assignment;
 - b. a current list of religion textbooks and materials being used;
 - c. copies of all school handbooks and policy manuals;
 - d. statistical data required for the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Report;
 - e. a current list and brief biographical information regarding its governing board membership, of which at least 50% must be practicing Catholics in good standing;
 - f. documentation of the structure and goals of the school governing board;
 - g. confirmation that the school principal is a practicing Catholic in good standing;
 - h. an indemnification and hold harmless agreement in a form to be provided by the diocese;

- i. a Certificate of Insurance evidencing insurance coverage acceptable to the diocese and adequate to satisfy the provisions set forth in the indemnification and hold harmless agreement, naming the diocese and Bishop as additional insured.
 - a. an opportunity for the Office of Catholic Schools to verify all documentation and, in the discretion of the Bishop and/or the Superintendent of Schools, to visit the school and observe its operations;
7. In addition, the school must continue to include an Office of Catholic Schools representative as an ex-officio, non-voting participant on the local school governance board.

The Bishop reserves the right to rescind the designation as a Catholic school in the event of an aberration from this Policy or any other policies or conditions subsequently established by the diocese, or for other reasons in his sole discretion.

Policy 1052

Request for School Closing

Effective: August 2019 as Policy 2030.0

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Any consideration of permanently closing or substantially changing the enrollment of a Catholic school must be initiated in writing by the pastor or appropriate administrator of the school to the superintendent prior to December 31. The Office of Catholic Schools, at the direction of the superintendent, will direct a thorough study of the situation and alternatives. The superintendent will then present recommendations to the bishop and to the Pastor of the elementary school. The actual decision to close a secondary school is made by the bishop. The actual decision to close an elementary school is made by the pastor.

Sufficient time should be provided in announcing the closure to allow faculty to seek employment and for student enrollment opportunities at other Catholic schools.

Policy 1053

Changing the Organizational Structure and/or Status of a School

Effective: November 1972 as Policy 2040.0 and 2040.05

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

If a school experiences a significant decline in enrollment and/or financial viability, the Superintendent of Schools must be notified before any steps are taken to change the organizational structure and status of the school. No change in the organizational structure and status of any school can be made without the approval of the Bishop.

Possible resolutions of these conditions include: closing of the school, consolidation with another school, or continuing with a diminished number of grades. The decision to implement any of these resolutions must be a cooperative effort. The Office of Catholic Schools, in conjunction with the principal (and pastor for elementary schools) and all other stakeholders will be involved in the evaluation and decision-making process. The Office of Catholic Schools shall utilize the systematic steps and timetable as authorized by the Bishop to implement the change.

Similarly, major changes in the school's configuration not related to finance and/or enrollment require prior approval by the Office of Catholic Schools and the Bishop. Such changes include: the addition or closing of a kindergarten or other grades; moving grade levels to other buildings; or variations to the curriculum or academic model. The school, when granted approval for such configuration will then follow the process established by the Ohio Catholic Schools Accrediting Association to implement the change.

Policy 1060

Use of Name

Effective: August 2019 as Policy 1600.0

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Attaching any school's name, logo, or other insignia to an event, activity, or publication implies a close connection with the school, usually sponsorship or endorsement. However, involvement by individual faculty, staff, students, or parents is not, by itself, sufficient basis to title an activity, program, or event as "school" sponsored. Rather the activity, program, or event must be one for which the school takes institutional responsibility.

Faculty members, staff, students, parents, and parish members may use or authorize the use of the school name, logo, or insignia (alone or in conjunction with the name of a specified organization or activity) only with the written approval of the pastor and principal in parish schools or the principal and superintendent in Diocesan schools. No individual, company, or organization may seek to use the school name, logo, or insignia for any commercial benefit without the written approval of the pastor and principal in parish schools or the principal and superintendent in Diocesan schools.

In appropriate cases determined by the pastor/principal or principal/superintendent, permission for ongoing events, activities, or publications requiring approval under this policy may be given.

Policy 1070

Racial Nondiscrimination

Effective: July 2021

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

The Ohio Department of Education requires the following:

The governing board of the non-public school shall adopt and implement policies of non-discrimination on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin. After the policies are adopted, copies of adopted policies must be sent to Nonpublic Educational Options for approval on school letterhead. The adopted racial nondiscriminatory statement must appear in the school's advertisements, website, policies, handbooks, manuals, etc. ODE will verify that the statements are included in handbooks and manuals when they are uploaded into the application and during site visits.

The policies must be sent to ODE at the same time as the Affidavit of Intent Not to Discriminate.

Required Language for Governing Boards and Advertisements:

"The governing board of __ (Name) _____ School located at __ (Street address) _____ in __ (City) _____, Ohio __ (Zip Code) _____ has adopted the following racial nondiscrimination policies.

"The __ (Name) _____ School recruits and admits students of any race, color, or ethnic origin to all its rights, privileges, programs, and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

The __ (Name) _____ School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel."

To Demonstrate Compliance

IRS Form 5578 must be completed annually before November 15. A copy of this form must be submitted to the IRS and a second copy must be submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools before this date.

Additionally, the adopted racial nondiscriminatory statement must appear in the school's advertisements, website, policies, handbooks and manuals, etc. ODE will verify that the statements are included in handbooks, manuals, and posted at the school during site visits.

Policy 1100

Policies

Effective: September 2002 (as Policy 2430.05, Policy 1500.5 in 2019)

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Policies are public documents; therefore, they are available to all stakeholders (including but not limited to administrators, faculty, parents, students, volunteers, and board members). Local policy must always be aligned with the Diocesan policies.

Printed or digital handbooks for parents, students, and faculty will be reviewed annually and revised as needed based on stakeholder input. Handbooks must be published and distributed, either on paper or electronically, to all stakeholders annually.

Policies are subject to amendment with or without notice. The superintendent will keep the school principals informed of all changes as soon as practical. Some changes might have to be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.

All other Diocesan-issued policies and manuals apply to Catholic schools and are included in this Administrator Manual by reference. This is inclusive of Safe Environment Policies, Finance Policies, Chancery Policies, and any other policy approved by the Bishop.

Policy 1110

☐ Elementary

Policy Interpretation

☐ Secondary

Effective: September 1993 as Policy 2450.1, Policy 1700.0 in 2019

Revised: July 2023

☒ Both

All schools in the Diocese of Columbus operate on the principle of subsidiarity in relationships and structure. Therefore, disagreements or complaints should be dealt with and solutions sought at the lowest possible level. Every attempt should be made to resolve a conflict at the lowest possible level.

This means by those persons involved in the disagreement and/or with that person to which the complaint has been made in a conference or meeting setting. Since the goal in these situations is to achieve a reconciliation of differences, and so that an adversarial situation does not occur, no legal counsel for either party will be permitted to attend said conference. This applies to all conferences through and including those held at the Diocesan level.

In cases involving principal and pastor discretion, the Office of Catholic Schools recognizes the local administration's authority to exercise discretionary rights within the parameters of local and Diocesan policy.

Any dispute regarding the interpretation of Diocesan policies is to be referred to the superintendent in writing with the following information:

1. State the policy in question.
2. Describe the interpretation of the policy by the school (party A).
3. Describe the interpretation of the policy by the student/family (party B) and how it is adversely affecting the family.
4. Describe the efforts that have been made by both parties to address the interpretation differences, which must include meetings with the school principal and pastor (for parochial schools).

The superintendent will review the information provided and render a written decision that shall be final.

Request for Intervention

The Office of Catholic Schools is not the equivalent of a public school district and does not normally intervene in conflicts at the school level that do not relate to the interpretation of or violation of Diocesan-level policy. However, occasionally the Office may need to involve itself in matters to facilitate conflict resolution. In such cases, the following process shall be followed when a request is received for intervention in a local dispute.

Level One - The complainant will be first directed to the local level and instructed to speak with the school administrator (including the pastor at a parochial school) before the complaint will be acted upon by the Office of Catholic Schools. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Office of Catholic Schools will notify the school administrator of the issue and encourage him/her to attempt to resolve the conflict in a spirit of fairness and justice.

Level Two - If the conflict cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved, recourse may be made to the Office of Catholic Schools, which will then attempt to initiate a peaceful resolution between the parties.

1. When a parent or a student (18 years of age) believes that a school official has acted contrary to Diocesan or local policy, the person may submit a written statement to the superintendent in the Office of Catholic Schools with the following information provided:
 - a. The subject of the appeal
 - b. What rights and/or policies have been violated
 - c. Any factual data, other than hearsay, the person considers appropriate
 - d. The efforts that were made to resolve or correct the issue leading to expulsion

Only requests for appeal submitted in writing will be accepted. Those seeking to request intervention by phone will be directed to submit a statement in writing.

2. Should the superintendent or his/her designee determine that a person's rights and/or a policy have been violated, he/she will investigate the complaint. He/she will review the materials submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools and may ask for further details or may seek to arrange a conference between the parties. He/she may also make recommendations to the school administration to resolve the issue at the local level. At his/her sole discretion, he/she may determine that a hearing would be appropriate, in which case he/she may hear the appeal alone or form a hearing committee. This process may take time, and repeated calls or emails that become harassing or disrespectful will terminate the process. The decision of the superintendent and/or his/her designee in the Office of Catholic Schools is final and binding and concludes the intervention process.
3. This intervention process is designed to support the Catholic Church's belief in subsidiarity and, therefore, at no time during it may the parent, employee, or student (18 years of age) be represented by an attorney.

Communication

All communication to and from the Office of Catholic Schools or to any Catholic school in the Diocese of Columbus is to be respectful and courteous. Communication, whether verbal or written, that is inappropriate, offensive, or harassing will be ignored. Similarly, anonymous communications to the Office of Catholic Schools will not be reviewed and no action will be taken.

The Office of Catholic Schools and the schools of the Diocese of Columbus may only communicate information about individual students with that child's parent or legal guardian. No communication regarding a student in the Diocese of Columbus will be communicated to any other person, including extended family members without legal standing.

Policy 1120

Parent and Student Handbook

Effective: August 2002 as Policy 1500.0

Revised: July 2025

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Every school shall develop and distribute (either on paper or electronically) a parent and student handbook to assist both the parents and the students in becoming knowledgeable about school rules and policies. This handbook must state the philosophy, mission, rules, and regulations of the school. All elements of the handbook must be in compliance with the policies of the Diocese of Columbus.

The handbook must be distributed annually and it must be reviewed and revised on annually. School handbooks constitute policies, standards and procedures. The Parent and Student Handbook policies that are intended only as guidelines. This handbook is not a contract. As such, the school reserves the right to change its policies, procedures and benefits at any time at its discretion, as well as interpret or vary them however it deems appropriate. For this reason, all families must sign a handbook acknowledgement statement (see below), which may be either a printed document or a digital document. If the acknowledgement is signed digitally, a printed record of the acknowledgement must be on file. Acknowledgement forms must be on file in the school office no later than September 1 of the current school year. The parent and student handbook must address, but is not limited to the following items:

- Asbestos plan to inform
- Acknowledgement signature page (see below)
- AI (Policy 6520)
- Amendment statement (see below)
- Attendance (Policy 5200)
- Bullying and cyberbullying (Policy 5411)
- Cell phone and electronic device usage
- Child custody issues (Policy 5210)
- Crisis plan (Policy 1310)
- Directory Information Notice (Policy 2800)
- Discipline Policy
- Dispensing medication (Policy 7100)
- Dress code
- Drug and substance abuse (Policy 4312, 5414)
- Feeder school areas (high schools, Policy 5103)
- Fidelity to Church teachings (Policy 4010)
- Fingerprinting (all paid school staff and volunteers)
- Grading (Policy 6201)
- Unlawful Harassment (Policy 4317, 5412)
- Mission and belief statements

- Non-discrimination statement and reasonable accommodation procedure (Policy 1070)
- OHSA athletic transfer policy (high schools)
- Ohio assessment requirements (elementary schools, Policy 5340)
 - Including Third Grade Reading Guarantee (Policy 5350)
- Parent communication system
- Parish sports (elementary schools)
- Personally identifiable information release notice
- Pregnancy policy (high school, Policy 5600)
- Protecting God's Children
- Publishing student information
- Reporting sexual abuse (Policy 5413)
- School violence (Policy 5410)
- Social media policy
- Student code of conduct (Policy 5401)
- Suspension and expulsion policies (Policy 5408, 5409)
- Technology and acceptable use policy (Policy 2600, 6500)
 - Including permission for using Google classroom
- Tuition payment and refund policy
- Use of name / Branding policy (Policy 1060)
- Weather closures (Policy 1360)
- Visitor procedures (Policy 5220)

A Parent/Student Handbook and a Faculty Handbook are required for all schools. The handbook must be submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools electronically for review and retention on or before September 15 each year. It is strongly recommended that schools develop a Volunteer Handbook, an Extended Care/Latchkey Handbook, a Substitute Teacher Handbook, and an Athletics Handbook. Please contact the Office of Catholic Schools for a list of recommended topics for each handbook.

Amendment Statement

All school handbooks must include the following statement:

Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The school principal will attempt to keep the school families informed of all changes as soon as practical. Some changes might have to be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.

Acknowledgement Statement

All school handbooks must include the following statement that must be signed by the parents and students in all grades prior to the start of the school year. The signature may be on either paper or electronic.

I have read and agree to abide by the policies contained in the <School Name> Parent/Student Handbook. I acknowledge that the information contained herein is subject to modification, change, interpretation, and elimination at any time by the School in its sole discretion, without notice.

The specific diocesan policies identified in this Handbook are summaries only. For complete copies of the

policies referenced, refer to the Office of Catholic Schools Administrator’s Manual. In the event of any conflict between the summary and the complete policy, it is the Administrator’s Manual that governs.

This agreement form must be signed by the parents/guardians and students in all grades and returned to the School Office no later than September 1.

Acknowledgement of Risks and Pledge to Follow Health and Safety Guidelines – Family Handbook

All school handbooks must include the following statement:

Updated: July 3, 2024

We, the parent(s) and student who are signing this student handbook for _____ (“School”), acknowledge and agree that, as a student at the School and as parent(s) of that student, entering into the School or being on the School premises or entering into the parish or being on the parish premises (as applicable), having personal contact with teachers, classmates, and other School/parish staff, involves a certain degree of risk, including contracting and passing on communicable diseases (such as influenza, colds, COVID-19, etc.), and then potentially passing it on to others, including family members. Due to the inherent risk and the close proximity of persons at the School, there is an elevated risk of student and parent(s) contracting a disease simply by being in the School/parish building, on the School/parish premises, or at any School/parish function.

By signing this School Handbook, we acknowledge and agree that after carefully considering the risks involved, we voluntarily and willingly accept those risks of being in an in-person environment, including the risk of contracting communicable diseases. If I have underlying health concerns which may place me at greater risk of contracting communicable diseases, , and all reasonable accommodations have been met, I acknowledge and agree to assume these risks.

Acknowledgement of Risks and Pledge to Follow Health and Safety Guidelines – Faculty Handbook

Updated: July 3, 2024

I, the employee who is signing this faculty handbook as an employee of _____ (“Employer”), acknowledge and agree that, as an employee, entering into the work premises or entering into other affiliated premises (as applicable), having personal contact with other persons, involves a certain degree of risk, including contracting and passing on communicable diseases (such as influenza, colds, COVID-19, etc.), and then potentially passing it on to others, including family members. Due to the inherent risk and the close proximity of persons in connection with my job duties, I understand there is a risk that I may contract a disease simply by being in the building, on the premises, or at any work-related function.

By signing this handbook, I hereby acknowledge and agree that I have carefully considered the overall risks involved with entering the work premises and other affiliated premises as being an in-person environment, including the risk of contracting communicable diseases. If I have underlying health concerns which may place me at greater risk of contracting communicable diseases, and all reasonable accommodations have been met, I acknowledge and agree to assume these risks.

Policy 1130

Communications Between School and Community

Effective: April 1982 as Policy 1000.0 in 2019

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Every school shall have a plan to inform the community of the school's belief statements, mission, policies, programs, strengths, and needs. This plan should provide for a local school advisory board and/or home and school association or other groups which reflect the partner relationship between parents and the school and through which parents can actively involve themselves in their children's education.

Policy 1200

Public Speaking Engagements

Effective: July 2021 as Policy 1800.0

Revised: July 2025

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

The following procedure applies to any engagement in a Catholic School within the Diocese of Columbus that includes a public speaker. “Public speaker” is defined as anyone invited to speak or present at a public event that is sponsored by or associated with a recognized Catholic school in the Diocese of Columbus, or anyone who would be asked to present at any event for any audience that addresses topics of faith or morals. Speakers invited for informal panel discussions, even with an audience, are at the discretion of the administrator. All those invited to speak in any forum should be reminded by the administrator that they are in a Catholic institution and should comport themselves accordingly.

1. Any speaker, if Catholic, hosted by an institution, must be an active, practicing Catholic in good standing.
 - a. If priests, deacons, diocesan or parish employees, of the Diocese of Columbus in good standing are invited to speak, they are exempt from the vetting process.
 - b. The hosting institution is responsible for collecting a letter of good standing from the speaker’s diocese, parish, or religious community, including clergy, religious, and laity.
 - c. A non-Catholic is also subject to this same review process. However, a letter of good standing is not required. It is, however, still recommended to be sought from the speaker’s place of worship as part of the vetting process. If the proposed speaker does not have a place of worship or this cannot be obtained, a letter from their place of employment attesting to their character may reasonably be requested as part of the vetting process.
2. Under no circumstances is a candidate actively running for political office permitted to speak at any event sponsored by a Catholic institution in the Diocese for campaign purposes. A politician or public official not engaged in an active campaign may be invited, pending the successful completion of this review process, provided his or her public positions are not at odds and do not undermine Church teaching. (Exceptions may be granted for such instances as for example a sitting governor, running for re-election who comes to a school during the campaign season to present an award.)
3. The speaker vetting process must be completed before any invitation to speak is extended and the event is scheduled and/or publicized.
4. The content and subject matter of talks hosted by a Catholic institution within the Diocese of Columbus must never contradict the official Magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church on faith and morals.
5. The Catholic institution that sponsors a speaking engagement is responsible for obtaining a commitment from the proposed speaker that they adhere to the original topic and subject matter agreed upon for the talk.

6. A formal speaking agreement or contract must be used with paid speakers. This contract can be reviewed through normal contract review processes, including a legal review.
7. The hosting institution must provide the following to the Vicar General through the Superintendent of Catholic Schools:
 - a. A letter of good standing from a bishop or religious superior of the proposed Priest or Religious speaker. The letter is to be requested and obtained by the sponsoring institution. If the proposed speaker is a layperson, a letter of good standing from their bishop or pastor is to be provided.
 - b. The speaker's current curriculum vitae.
 - c. The written source(s) (books or articles on the topic authored by the speaker that form the basis for the talk (if available); and a short-written summary of the purpose and content of the talk. The written summary may be written by the person responsible for hosting the talk.
 - d. Please allow two weeks for the vetting process to occur. However, no invitation should be made, no scheduling should happen, and no public promotion of the speaker should be communicated until after the vetting process is completed and approval is granted.
 - e. The process will include an Internet and social media search of the individual.
8. All speaker approvals are valid for one year from the date of approval.

All elementary school speaking engagements are to follow the same process described above. requirements of A 1-7. After an initial review from the Superintendent of Schools, the Pastor (if applicable) provides the final review and approval for events involving his parish. If the elementary school is diocesan, final review and approval is provided by the Chancery.

All high school speaking engagements are to follow the requirements above. Administrators are first required to contact the Superintendent to discuss inviting a speaker to the Diocese before proceeding with the vetting and approval process. Final review and approval is provided by the Chancery for all speakers.

Policy 1210

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Public Relations Procedures

Effective: August 1992 as Policy 1010.0 and 1010.5

Revised: July 2023

Public Announcements

As a general rule, principals are responsible for routine public relations for their school. Exceptions to this rule include matters relating to diocesan actions or decisions.

Examples of matters handled by the Diocese through the Communications Office are:

1. Decision or actions by the Bishop, Superintendent, or Office of Catholic Schools staff.
2. Decisions or actions by diocesan committees.
3. For Diocesan schools: announcements of resignations, terminations, or hiring of any new principals, openings, closings, or mergers.

Crisis Communications

The superintendent will be informed by the principal as soon as facts indicate a potential or actual public relations issue. If the superintendent is not available, the Principal will contact the assistant superintendent. The Diocesan Communications Office will then be brought into the discussion.

In consultation with the principal, the superintendent (or Communications Office) will determine if media relations will be handled by the principal or by the Diocese. If the principal will handle media relations, the Communications Office will assist in developing a press release or statement and respond to questions. This procedure should be communicated to the local school advisory board and parent volunteers as part of their annual training/orientation.

Policy 1220

Service Activities for Students

Effective: August 1982 as Policy 1410.0

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

In keeping with the commitment of Catholic schools to educate students for Christian service, every Catholic school shall provide opportunities for students to participate in service learning activities and service programs of the Diocese, their parishes, and local community organizations. It is preferable that all schools partner with organizations sponsored by, affiliated with, or supported by the Catholic Church. If the school partners in any way with an organization that is not part of the Catholic Church, the principal must establish by written documentation with the agency that the practices and the policies of the agency are not inconsistent with the principles of the Catholic Church. This documentation may remain at the school, but should be available for review if necessary.

Policy 1300

Relations with Local Community Emergency Agencies

Effective: August 2008 as Policy 1412.0

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Each school in the Diocese of Columbus, in compliance with ORC 3737 and the State of Ohio Fire Codes, will follow the drill schedule as illustrated in the matrix below and found at the Ohio School Safety Center website (<https://ohioschoolsafetycenter.ohio.gov>) and on the School Safety App in the administrator's OH-ID account.

Drill	Purpose	Drill Signals	End Signals	Practice
Evacuation	Fire drill Bomb threat	Fire Alarm Runner for bomb threat	"All Clear" No bells	Monthly August through June
Reverse Evacuation	Stranger outside	3 short bells repeatedly	"All Clear"	September and January
Lock Down	Intruder inside	Announce over PA	Unlocked by police or administrator	September, January, and April
Duck Cover and Hold	Tornado drill	Announce over PA	"All Clear"	March, April, May, and June
Shelter in Place	Hazmat accident Chemical spill	Announce over PA	"All Clear"	Faculty review in September
Hit the Deck	Gunfire	Local decision	"All Clear"	Explain, no drill required

By following this matrix, schools will be in compliance when the appropriate state agency reporting requirements have been met.

Each school must annually upload the following to NaviGate Prepared:

- Teacher IS-100 NIMS training certificate
- Annual NIMS assessment and improvement goals
- Updated Crisis Response Plan
- Current floor plans with any changes or updates

Policy 1310

Schoolwide Safety and Crisis Management

Effective: March 2008 as Policy 3510.4 and Policy 5140.1

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

All schools will comply with the procedures found at the Ohio School Safety Center website (<https://ohioschoolsafetycenter.ohio.gov>) and on the School Safety App in the administrator's OH-ID account. Schools must:

- Annually complete and submit the required safety and security documentation.
- Annually contact and communicate with local first responders.
- File current building designs.
- Maintain state and Diocesan drill schedule.
- Annually train teachers, staff, and students.

Each school will develop and implement a plan to address school safety according to these directives and requirements. The document will be updated, reviewed and approved by state officials on a three-year cycle. Additional uploaded documents include:

1. Site plan
2. Stakeholder signatures
3. Floor plans
4. Emergency Contact information

The Annual Certification of the plan must be completed by July 1st each year. The school's Emergency Management Test must be completed and logged through the ODE app according to the 3-year rotation of:

1. table top drill
2. functional drill
3. full scall drill

The plan will be reflective of the involvement of appropriate stakeholders and in coordination with local community services.

Additionally, schools must:

1. Regularly schedule fire drills, rapid dismissals, tornado drills, school evacuations, and lockdown drills
2. Maintain written records of all drills.
3. Post emergency procedures in all rooms within the school and make procedures available to all parents, students, and school personnel.
4. Post emergency telephone numbers next to all telephones within the building (offices and classrooms).
5. Ensure that emergency crisis plan is accessible to all stakeholders.

Revision History: 07/23, 08/14, 03/09, 03/08

Policy 1311

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Protocol for Law Enforcement Visits

Effective: February 2025 as Chancery Policy 01/25

Revised:

The Office of Diocesan Legal Counsel for the Diocese of Columbus is issuing this protocol to assist the parishes, schools, and other organizations which operate under the administrative authority of the Diocese of Columbus (collectively, “Diocesan Organizations”). The Diocese and all Diocesan Organizations remain committed to offering educational, religious, and social services in a safe and supportive environment within the confines of the law. The Diocese has been receiving inquiries regarding the possibility of immigration officials (ICE agents) coming to Diocesan Organizations on official business with a warrant. Be advised, this is a very unlikely scenario, however, if any law enforcement official seeks to make an arrest, the Diocesan Organization Representative (i.e. pastor or principal) should ask for a valid judicial warrant. A valid judicial warrant will show the name of the person that they are seeking to arrest (spelled out correctly) and must be signed by a judge as is required by Article III of the United States Constitution.

If your Diocesan Organization is presented **WITH** a warrant by law enforcement officers (i.e., ICE agents) and request to enter the premises, here are the steps you should take:

1. Stay calm and request identification.

- Politely ask the presenting law enforcement officers (“Officer(s)”) for their official credentials, noting names and badge numbers.
- Request a copy of the judicial warrant and any other official documentation the Officer(s) have that specifies the scope of the search.
- Inform the Officer(s) that your Diocesan Organization has legal representation, and you will follow established protocols.
- Contact the Diocesan General Counsel, the Superintendent, and your pastor (if applicable) immediately.
- Whether you have contact with General Counsel or the Superintendent, you must cooperate with the Officer.

2. Escort Officer(s) to the area the warrant specifies only.

- Designate a senior leader and backup, this should be the principal and vice principal, to handle the escort and communication with Officer while on site.
- Do not answer any questions until Diocesan General Counsel or alternative is contacted.

3. Review the warrant scope.

- Do not consent to any search that goes beyond the warrant’s details.
- Limit Officer(s) access to the areas or materials explicitly mentioned in the document.

4. Document everything.

- Keep a log of times, dates and Officer(s) interactions.
- Note any items or documents seized by Officer(s).

5. Handle all follow-up with Officer(s) through General Counsel.

- Ensure all additional requests and responses are managed by General Counsel.

If law enforcement officers request to enter the Parish/ School **WITHOUT** a warrant, here are the steps you should take:

1. Stay calm and request identification and ask if there are *exigent circumstances*.

- a national security threat
- imminent risk of death, violence, or physical harm
- in hot pursuit of an individual who poses a public safety threat
- in hot pursuit of a personally observed border crosser

If any of the above circumstances are provided, please follow the steps as outlined above as if you were presented with a judicial warrant.

If the official does not state the visit involves any of the above, politely refuse them entry to the premises and immediately contact your Pastor (or supervisor) and Diocesan General Counsel immediately. If the Diocesan General Counsel is not available and a school is involved, please contact the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Policy 1320

Incident Reports

Effective: March 2006 as Policy 3520.0

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

All serious incidents involving injury that could result in possible liability are to be reported immediately to the superintendent. All written notes, including the incident report for serious injuries, are to be sent to the superintendent as soon as possible following the incident.

All serious incidents involving injury are to be documented using the incident reporting form on the following page. Less serious incidents are to be documented on the Incident Reporting form found on the OCS website.

As a general guide, an incident is not minor, and a report should generally be prepared when:

- there is an observed or reported incident which involves death, injury or hospitalization; or
- a person sustains injury to the head or loses consciousness; or
- a person sustains an injury to the eyes or where teeth are broken or dislodged; or
- a person sustains broken bones or lacerations requiring sutures; or
- it is necessary to transport an injured person to hospital; (Please see ASCIP's Guide: "Student Emergency Transport Guidelines"); or
- medical attention is provided on site by an ambulance officer or health care professional; or
- a student has to leave school early as a consequence of an incident; or
- a parent, caregiver or relative is summoned to the school as a consequence of an incident; or
- parents or caregivers are advised to take a student to a doctor for precautionary reasons; or
- any person observes or reports inappropriate contact or conduct by or between staff, students or persons, such as, but not limited to, inappropriate touching, harassment, fighting, bullying or similar incidents;
- when emergency services (i.e. 911), the police, the fire department, child protective services, or any other such professionals are called to respond to or investigate an incident; or
- the principal or his or her delegate has determined, at his or her own discretion, that there is any potential for legal proceedings (whether civil or criminal) to result from the incident/injury

No written communication is to be released to anyone other than the superintendent unless directed by the Diocesan Insurance Office or the Office of Legal Services.

Student Injury Report Form Guidelines

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) provides the following Student Injury Report Form and guidelines as an example for districts to use in tracking the occurrence of school-related injuries. ODH suggests completing the form when an injury leads to any of the following:

1. The student misses $\frac{1}{2}$ day or more of school.
2. The student seeks medical attention (health care provider office, urgent care center, emergency department).
3. EMS 9-1-1 is called.

Schools are encouraged to review and use the information collected on the injury report form to influence local policies and procedures as needed to remedy hazards.

Instructions

- Student, parent and school information: self-explanatory.
- Check the box to indicate the location and time the incident occurred.
- Check the box to indicate if equipment was involved; describe involved equipment. Indicate what type of surface was present where the injury occurred.
- Using the grid, check the body area(s) where the student was injured and indicate what type of injury occurred. Include all body areas and injuries that apply.
- Check the appropriate box(es) for factors that may have contributed to the student's injury.
- Provide a detailed description of the incident. Indicate any witnesses to the event and any staff members who were present. Attach another sheet if more room is needed.
- Incident response: include all areas that apply.
- Provide any further comments about this incident, including any suggestions for what might prevent this type of incident in the future.
- Sign the completed form.
- Route the form to the school nurse and the principal for review/signature.
- Original form and copies should be filed according to district policy.

Ohio Department of Health Student Injury Report

Student Information

Name		Date of incident	
Date of birth	Grade	☐ Male ☐ Female	Time of incident

Parent/guardian Information

Name(s)		Work phone ()	
Address		Home phone ()	
City	State	ZIP	Cell phone ()

School Information

School	Phone ()
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Location of Incident check appropriate box

- ☐ Athletic field ☐ Cafeteria ☐ Gymnasium ☐ Parking lot ☐ Restroom ☐ Vocation shop/lab
☐ Bus ☐ Classroom ☐ Hallway ☐ Playground ☐ Stairway

☐ Other explain

Time of Incident check appropriate box

- ☐ Recess ☐ Lunch ☐ P.E. class ☐ In class (not P.E.) ☐ Class change ☐ Field trip
☐ Before school ☐ After school ☐ Unknown

☐ Other explain

Athletic practice/session:

- ☐ Athletic team competition ☐ Intramural competition

Equipment

- ☐ No equipment involved ☐ Equipment involved describe

Surface check all that apply

- ☐ Asphalt ☐ Concrete ☐ Gravel ☐ Ice/snow ☐ Mat(s) ☐ Synthetic surface ☐ Wood chips/mulch
☐ Carpet ☐ Dirt ☐ Gymnasium floor ☐ Lawn/grass ☐ Sand ☐ Tile

☐ Other specify

Type of Injury check all that apply

	Head	Eye	Ear	Nose	Mouth/lips	Tooth/teeth	Jaw	Chin	Neck/throat	Collarbone	Shoulder	Upper arm	Elbow	Forearm	Wrist	Hand	Finger	Fingernail	Chest/ribs	Back	Abdomen	Groin	Genitals	Pelvis/hip	Leg	Knee	Ankle	Foot	Toe
Abrasion/scrape																													
Bite																													
Bump/swelling																													
Bruise																													
Burn/scald																													
Cut/laceration																													
Dislocation																													
Fracture																													
Pain/tenderness																													
Puncture																													
Sprain																													
Other																													

Contributing factors *check all that apply*

☐ Animal bite	☐ Compression/pinch	☐ Fall	☐ Overextension/twisted	☐ Struck by object (bat, swing, etc.)
☐ Collision with object	☐ Contact with hot or toxic substance	☐ Foreign body/object	☐ Physical Altercation	☐ Tripped/slipped
☐ Collision with person	☐ Drug, alcohol or other substance involved	☐ Hit with thrown object	☐ Struck by auto, bike, etc.	
☐ Weapon specify		☐ Other explain		

Description of the Incident

Witnesses to the Incident

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Staff Involved *check all that apply*

☐ Assistant staff	☐ Cafeteria staff	☐ Nurse	☐ Secretary	☐ Other specify
☐ Bus driver	☐ Custodian	☐ Principal	☐ Teacher	

Incident response *check all that apply*

☐ First Aid	Time	By whom	
☐ Called 911	Time	By whom	
☐ Parent/guardian notified	Time	By whom	
☐ Unable to contact parent/guardian	Time	By whom	
☐ Parents deemed no medical action necessary	☐ Returned to class	☐ Sent/taken home	Days of school missed
☐ Taken to health care provider/ clinic/hospital/urgent care	Diagnosis		Days of school missed
☐ Hospitalized	Diagnosis		Days of school missed
☐ Restricted school activity	Explain	Length of time restricted	Days of school missed
☐ Other explain			

Describe care provided to the student

Additional comments

Signature of staff member completing form	Date/time
Nurse's signature	Date/time
Principal's signature	Date/time

Policy 1330

Weapons and Concealed Carry

Effective: July 2023

Revised:

- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☒ Both

The safety of parish and school employees, clients, and visitors is of paramount importance. Accordingly, the parish and school prohibits its employees, contractors, and agents, including any individuals licensed to carry concealed weapons, from carrying firearms, handguns, or any potentially lethal or dangerous device (including but not limited to knives, clubs, explosives, and so forth) while:

1. On or in any property owned, leased, or controlled by the parish or school (including but not limited to buildings, vehicles, parking lots, and so forth);
2. While performing any duties for the Parish/School;
3. While at parish-sponsored or school-sponsored events.

The only exceptions to this policy are law enforcement officers on official business, school resource/safety officers who have obtained Diocesan approval, and ordained personnel who live on church property and who own firearms that are maintained in an open, non-concealed manner, and are owned solely for the purpose of hunting or as a hobby. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including ending of employment.

An employee who becomes aware of another person violating this policy must immediately ask that the person carrying the weapon remove it from church property. The employee must also immediately notify a director or moderator of such an incident. If the person carrying the weapon does not comply with said request, law enforcement must be called to remove the weapon and the person. Any attempt by an employee of the parish or school, with the exception of school resource/safety officers, to remove a weapon or person carrying a weapon is strictly forbidden.

Policy 1340

Chemical Hygiene Plan

Effective: March 2008 as Policy 3510.6

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Each school shall have a plan which sets forth procedures and practices that protect employees and students from health hazards presented by hazardous chemicals used in schools. The protocol for Hazardous Materials Release both inside and outside of school buildings is in the *Diocese of Columbus Emergency Operations Manual*.

Policy 1350

Pest Management Plan

Effective: March 2008 as Policy 3510.7

Revised: July 2023

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Efforts to protect human health must be put in place by a locally developed integrated pest management plan at each school. The plan shall include regular monitoring, identification, and treatments. Ohio schools must notify parents and staff of an upcoming pesticide treatment and maintain notification records for a year. Only licensed applicators or trained service personnel may apply pesticides.

Policy 1360

Closure Due to Weather or Facility Conditions

Effective: July 2023

Revised: May 2025

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Principals always have the ability to close a school if, in their determination, local conditions (including weather, facilities issues, or other unusual circumstance) indicate that this is in the best interests of student and staff safety. At parochial schools, the principal should consult with the pastor regarding closure due to weather or facility conditions. At diocesan schools, the principal should consult with the superintendent.

Announcements about school closure shall be made to the school community as quickly as possible. Ordinarily, a school will close due to winter weather if the local public school district is closed or if local conditions or faculty absences warrant closure.

Each school shall develop and disseminate local policies that address closure and special schedules for weather or facility conditions. These policies should include procedures for faculty and family notification through school communication systems, such as email or texting services.

When closures exceed a reasonable number of required days or hours, the Office of Catholic Schools may require that days be added to the calendar in order to maintain the level of instruction. Schools also have the option of instituting a plan for online days (see below).

Ordinarily, students should not be released early during a school day, unless it is a pre-scheduled early dismissal for a purpose such as staff development or a holiday. Emergency conditions that may warrant early release require the permission of the pastor at parochial schools and the superintendent at Diocesan schools prior to the dismissal of students.

Schools Located in the City of Columbus – Winter Weather Emergencies

Because of the number of schools in the City of Columbus primarily served by busing from Columbus City Schools and the number of families with children in multiple schools, the determination to close schools located in City of Columbus due to winter weather conditions will be made by the Diocese of Columbus and relayed to school principals as quickly as possible via text message. Generally, the Diocese will follow the decision of Columbus City Schools. School principals will notify their school communities through the school's described communication channels.

The Diocese of Columbus will report "Columbus Catholic Schools" closures to the local media (NBC4, Fox 28/ABC6, and CBS10). The listing of "Columbus Catholic Schools" refers only to the schools in the City of Columbus. Suburban schools in Franklin County will be listed separately.

In the event that schools close due to winter weather, principals may make the determination on whether to cancel or permit after school activities (such as practices) if weather and road conditions improve throughout the

day and if it is safe to do so. This decision may vary due to differing conditions throughout the region. This local decision will be communicated through the school's described communication channels.

Online Day Plans

Ohio Revised Code 3313.482 allows schools to implement online instruction days as an alternative to making up hours due to school closure under several circumstances. Schools or districts may use an online day plan to make up the equivalent of up to three school days via online delivery under allowable scenarios. An online day plan may be used to make up hours in a school year for circumstances necessary to close schools. The circumstances specified in law are:

- Disease epidemic;
- Hazardous weather conditions;
- Law enforcement emergencies;
- Inoperability of school buses or other equipment necessary to the school's operation;
- Damage to a school building; or
- Other temporary circumstances due to utility failure rendering the school building unfit for use.

The statute does not include in the list of eligible circumstances: staffing shortages, parent-teacher conferences or professional development days.

Each online day plan should be designed to ensure continuity of learning for students during a school closure. Each school is required to adopt an online day plan by August 1 of each school year. The plan must include all of the following:

- a. A statement that the school, to the extent possible, will provide for teacher-directed synchronous learning in which the teacher and students are interacting in real time on a virtual learning platform during the closure;
- b. The school's attendance requirements, including how the school will document participation in learning opportunities and how the school will reach out to students to ensure engagement during the closure;
- c. A description of how equitable access to quality instruction will be ensured, including how the school will address the needs of students with disabilities, English learners, and other vulnerable student populations;
- d. The process the school will use to notify staff, students and parents that it will be using online delivery of instruction;
- e. Information on contacting teachers by telephone, email, or a virtual learning platform during the closure;
- f. A description of how the school will meet the needs of staff and students regarding internet connectivity and technology for online delivery of instruction.

These plans must be on file at the local school and notice of these plans and procedures must be communicated to school faculty and to parents in the handbook and at the start of the school year.

Policy 1361

Closure Due to Illness

Effective: March 2025

Revised:

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

☒ Both

Additional information about closure due to illness can also be found in Policy 7230.

The health and safety of students, faculty, and staff are of utmost importance. School closure is not recommended for outbreaks of infectious disease. The decision to close a school is an administrative decision that will be made with careful consideration and in consultation with local health authorities and Diocesan leadership.

Criteria for School Closure

School closure due to illness will be considered only under the following circumstances:

1. **Inability to Provide Adequate Staffing** – If a significant number of faculty and staff members are ill, and the school is unable to maintain safe and effective supervision and instruction, temporary closure may be necessary. Every effort will be made to provide substitute coverage before making this decision.
2. **Health Conditions Necessitating Closure** – Certain health emergencies, such as epidemics, outbreaks of contagious diseases, or public health directives from authorities, may require school closure to prevent the spread of illness. In such cases, guidance from the local health department and diocesan officials will be followed. The local health department has the authority to close childcare centers.
3. **Last Resort Approach** – School closure will be considered a last resort. Alternative solutions, such as increased sanitation efforts or modified schedules, may be implemented before deciding to close the school.

If a closure is deemed necessary, families will be notified as soon as possible through the school's official communication channels, including email and text alerts.

This policy is subject to review and modification based on public health guidance and emerging situations.