Diocese of Erie
Catholic Schools Office

Rooted in Faith. Committed to Excellence.

POLICIES
FOR
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
IN THE
DIOCESE OF ERIE

PROMULGATED AUGUST 2019
Revisions and Additions:
11/2019, 8/2020, 8/2021, 8/2022,
2/2023, 8/2023, 8/2024, 8/2025
August 2026

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie,
in collaboration with family, parish and community,
educate our youth to be well-informed citizens with critical thinking skills
that will prepare them to live virtuous lives.

In faithfulness to the teachings of Christ and His Church,
students will be invited to know, love and serve God
in order to evangelize in a global society.

Through a safe, nurturing environment,
students are challenged academically,
provided opportunities to explore the arts and athletics,
and inspired to develop a heart that is open to service.

Approved by Bishop Lawrence Persico on August 10, 2018

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GOVERNANCE POLICIES

GOVERNANCE – DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS OF TERMS AND STRUCTURES

Purpose: To clarify terms found in the Governance section and to describe the different governance structures in schools within the Diocese of Erie.

Additional Authority:
Code of Canon Law; Canon 116, 413, 419-421, 803, 804 and 806
School System By-Laws
15 Pa. C.S.A. § 531 O(a)

Governance Terms

Articles of Incorporation establish each school system as an incorporated entity that is a religious, charitable, and educational non-profit entity according to laws of the Commonwealth and is established as a public juridic person according to the laws of the Roman Catholic Church.

Board means the Board of Directors of the school system corporation. In the case of School Boards within the Diocese of Erie, they are of limited jurisdiction.

Bylaws, for this policy, means the Bylaws of the Corporation, as they may be amended or restated from time to time. The Bylaws determine membership, duties, and functionality of the Board.

Catholic Schools Office (CSO) is the diocesan office which includes the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, as appointed by the Bishop, the Director of Teaching and Leading, the Director of Government Programs and Compliance, the Director of Strategic Planning and Analytics, the Director of School Finance and Operations, the Coordinator of Mission and Catholic Identity, and the Executive Assistant.

Chairman of the Members serves as the chair of the Corporate Members and is the current bishop of the Diocese of Erie.

Committee of Pastors is chaired by the Episcopal Vicar of the Regional Vicariate (or his designee) who serves as a member of the Board of Directors, and the committee members are the pastors of sponsoring or partner parishes.

Limited Jurisdiction restricts the authority of the Board of Directors.

Member, in relation to this policy, refers to the Corporate Members of Catholic school systems in the Diocese of Erie.

Parish-Based School is a school that has an appointed pastor as the leader of the total educational program for members of his parish(es) and therefore the pastor is the administrative head of the parish-based school.

Respondeat Superior is a common-law term that makes an employer liable for the actions of an employee when the actions take place within the scope of employment. Administrators can delegate their responsibilities, but they cannot abdicate their responsibilities.

School Board Director(s) means individually and collectively, as the context may require, those individuals who have been appointed by the Corporate Members to be a member of the Board or who are deemed *ex officio* Directors pursuant to the Bylaws of each system.

Service Agreements define what services the Catholic Schools Office and other diocesan offices will provide/offer schools/systems to assist them in performing the ministry of Catholic education.
School System, in the Diocese of Erie, refers to an incorporated group of schools that fall under one set of Articles of Incorporation, a set of Bylaws and a Board of Directors and a Corporate Board of Members. A school system may also be legally recognized as an Association. **The Pennsylvania Department of Education does not recognize schools as school systems, but rather individual schools.**

Governance Structures

School System

Each school system has a two-tiered governance structure. The final oversight belongs to the Catholic School System Corporate Members, of which the bishop is the chairman. Each school system has a board of directors which provides the ordinary governance to the system.

The president of a system is hired by the Board of Directors in consultation with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and with the approval of the Board of Members. The president reports to and is evaluated by the Board based on the model provided by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The principal reports to and is evaluated by the president in consultation with the Superintendent or designee consistent with diocesan recommendations.

Administrative job descriptions for the President/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Principal/Chief Operating Officer (COO) are found at the diocesan website (www.eriercd.org) in the section MyDioErie.

Parish-Based School

The pastor is the administrative head/CEO of the parish-based school and consults and cooperates with the Superintendent, the Catholic Schools Office and the school principal to help ensure an effective program of religious and academic education is maintained at the school. A job description for the principal is found at the diocesan website (www.eriercd.org) in the section MyDioErie.

The principal is hired by the pastor in consultation with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and with the approval of the bishop.

The pastor of a parish-based school may consider forming a School Advisory Council. This council is limited to being advisory in nature only and must not make operational decisions regarding the school.

Religious Order School

The religious order school is sponsored by a religious order fully or can be co-sponsored by the order. Each religious order establishes its own means of governance that often involves a two-tier governance structure.

Religious Order schools must have the consent of the bishop to be established but do have greater autonomy in their operation. The bishop works cooperatively with religious order schools to ensure general regulations are followed.

Catholic Schools Office

Superintendent of Catholic Schools

The Superintendent is appointed by and reports to the Bishop of Erie. The Superintendent serves as the chief educational leader of the Diocese of Erie Catholic Schools, responsible for mission integrity, governance oversight, strategic leadership, and system-wide accountability aligned Diocesan, State, Federal, and Canon governance and NSBECS advancing the mission of Catholic education throughout the diocese.

Director of Strategic Planning and Analytics

The Director of Strategic Planning and Analytics provides leadership in data systems, assessment, accreditation, and continuous improvement to support evidence-based decision-making across all diocesan schools.

Director of Teaching and Learning

The Director of Teacher and Learning leads curriculum development, instructional quality, teacher and leader formation, and professional development across all diocesan schools.

Director of Government Programs and Compliance

The Director of Government Programs and Compliance ensures compliance with federal, state, and local regulations while managing all government-funded programs supporting Catholic schools. This position serves as the liaison person with the public-school sector.

Director of School Finance and Operations

The Director of School Finance and Operations manages financial stewardship and coordination, scholarship programs, grants, and operational support for the Catholic Schools Office.

Coordinator of Catholic Identity and Mission

The Coordinator of Catholic Identity and Mission supports the integration of Catholic identity and mission across the Diocese of Erie Catholic schools by coordinating faith formation, mission-focused initiatives, religious education resources, and partnerships that strengthen the spiritual life of school communities.

Executive Assistant

The Executive Assistant provides executive-level administrative and operational support to the Superintendent and Catholic Schools Office by coordinating communications, managing office operations, supporting leadership meetings, and ensuring the efficient functioning of the central office.

1A – Appendix – Administrator's Receipt of Policies

Administrator's Receipt of Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie

School: _____

School Year: _____

****

- I have been given access to and have been instructed to review the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie*. I understand that the most current copy of the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie* is available at all times on the MyDioErie: School Policies link.

- My responsibility for implementing procedures that comply with the policies has been explained to me.

- I understand that the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie* represent the current policies of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie and that I am expected to comply with them.

- I have been given the opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns I have about any item in the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie.*

- I understand that policies may be added to, deleted, or changed as necessary. I will receive notification of any changes to the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie.*

_____
PRINT NAME

_____ _____
SIGNATURE DATE

This form requires an original signature.

Return completed form annually to Catholicschools@eriercd.org by the last Monday of September.

1B – Appendix – Employee Receipt of Policies

Receipt of
Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie

School: _____

School Year: _____

****

- I have been given access to and have been instructed to review the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie*. I understand that the most current copy of the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie* is available at all times on the MyDioErie: School Policies link. The school administrator has provided the password for access.

- I understand that the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie* represent the current policies of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie and that I am expected to comply with them.

- I have been given the opportunity to discuss with my supervisor any questions or concerns I have about any item in the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie.*

- I understand that policies may be added to, deleted, or changed as necessary. I will receive notification of any changes to the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie.*

_____
PRINT NAME

_____ _____
SIGNATURE DATE

This form requires an original signature.

To be completed annually and kept in employee personnel file.

101.1 – JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR LEAD ADMINISTRATORS

Purpose: To ensure all schools/systems maintain current job descriptions for administrators.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Directive 2021

A. Definition

Job Description, for the purpose of this policy, is a comprehensive document with standard categories, formats and includes job functions for the individual position. Job descriptions are used in hiring, professional development, and holding administrators accountable through the performance appraisal process.

Lead administrators, for the sake of this policy, refer to school system presidents, principals or other positions that fill a similar role.

B. Requirements

All system schools must annually review job descriptions for all principals and presidents. If updates are needed to the job descriptions, they are to be made in collaboration with the Catholic Schools Office. All parish-based schools must annually review the job description for the principal. If updates are needed to the job descriptions, they are to be made in collaboration with the Catholic Schools Office.

Each job description must be aligned with the four domains from the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS):

- Mission and Catholic Identity
- Academic Excellence
- Operational Vitality
- Governance and Leadership

The categories of responsibilities will address the areas of Catholic school administration and must include faith community affairs, academic affairs, student affairs, personnel issues, development affairs, business affairs, liaison responsibilities, board relations, if applicable, and strategic planning. Administrative job descriptions will be developed in collaboration with the Catholic Schools Office.

All job descriptions for lead administrators must be signed, upon hire, by the new administrator and maintained in his/her personnel file. This signature represents confirmation of reading and understanding the job description information. If, in the annual review, the job description is modified, the new job description must be signed by the administrator and maintained in his/her personnel file.

102.1 – PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS FOR LEAD ADMINISTRATORS

Purpose: To ensure administrative performance appraisals are objective, consistent, adaptable and ongoing throughout the year.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Decree 2021
Bylaws of the Corporation
In alignment with 22 Pa. Code § 19.2

A. Definition

Annually, for the purpose of this policy, means the process is completed once a school year.
Administrative Performance Appraisal Process, for the purpose of this policy, means the annual and systematic evaluation or assessment process regarding the job performance of a person a lead administrator role.
Lead administrators, for the sake of this policy, refer to school system presidents, principals or other positions that fill a similar role.

B. Requirements

The performance appraisal process shall be used to assess and improve performance, encourage professional growth and facilitate attainment of school/system goals. Appraisals must be understandable, clearly stated and based on measurable and observable metrics. The process must be collaborative and ongoing throughout the entire school year, not just a once-a-year task. The evaluation process must include a current job description containing job functions and must assess leadership skills in the areas of four domains from the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS):

- Mission and Catholic Identity
- Academic Excellence
- Operational Vitality and
- Governance and Leadership

In addition, assessment methods must consider performance goals identified at the beginning of the process and encompass self-appraisal.

The Performance Appraisal Process, as defined by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO), is the method, with accompanying forms, which may be utilized in the appraisal process. Other appropriate evaluation processes, which include self-appraisal, assessment of performance goals and applicable instruments that have been reviewed and approved by the CSO prior to the start of the evaluation process, may also be used.

Presidents

The evaluation of a president (CEO) of the corporation for system schools is to be completed by the Board of Directors of the corporation, in collaboration with the Superintendent of Catholic

Schools or designee.

System Principals
The evaluation of a principal of a system school is to be completed by the president of the system, in collaboration with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools or designee.

Parish-Based School Principals
The evaluation of a parish-based school principal is completed by the pastor, in collaboration with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools or designee.

103.1 – SPOKESPERSON FOR THE SCHOOL/SYSTEM

Purpose: To clarify who is authorized to act or speak on behalf of the school or school system.

Additional Authority:
Can. 519, 532
Bylaws of the Corporation

A. Definition

Board means the Board of Directors of the school system corporation. In the case of School Boards within the Diocese of Erie, they are of limited jurisdiction.
Bylaws, for this policy, means the Bylaws of the Corporation, as they may be amended or restated from time to time. The bylaws determine membership, duties, and functionality of the Board.
Member, in relation to this policy, refers to the Catholic School Systems in the Diocese of Erie Corporate Members.
Pastor, for the purpose of this policy, *is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share, so that for that same community he carries out the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing. . . (Can. 519)*

B. Requirements

The bylaws of a school system define who has the authority to represent the school system in matters of contracts, purchases, legal issues, fundraising, etc. With respect to public communication and operational decisions, the board chairperson or Corporate Members represent the school system. Some areas of authority may be delegated to the president/principal or other authorized designee. Examples that relate to this policy would be announcements to the media, emergency decisions concerning school closings, and school crisis situations. In canonical matters, the Corporate Members represent the system.

The pastor is the spokesperson for the parish-based school, in accord with canon law. In certain matters, he can delegate aspects of this responsibility to the principal or an authorized designee. The bishop has oversight in certain matters.

C. Legal Ramifications

If an employee, such as a principal or president, speaks on behalf of the school/system without being duly delegated to do so, the school system or parish may be liable for the action taken.

104.1 – SCHOOL/SYSTEM POLICIES

Purpose: To define the scope of school/system policies in reference to *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie.*

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Decree August 2019

A. Definition

School/system policies are written and approved at the local school/system level by the administration, pastor and/or Board of Directors. These policies are in effect within the particular school/system and are beyond the scope of the *Policies of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie*.

B. Requirements

All school/system policies are to be documented in writing and available to the school community group that is expected to follow each policy. That documentation may be in handbooks, system policy manuals, etc. There must be a method to assure that the most recent set of school/system policies are the only accessible version of the policies.

Students, parents and employees must sign (electronically or inked) an acknowledgment that states the following:

- They have access to the school/system policies.
- They have been told to review the policies.
- They are expected to comply with them.
- They have the opportunity to discuss them with a school representative.
- They will be notified if there is an update/revision.

No school/system policy may contradict or override a policy found in the latest version of the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie*. School/system policies may be more stringent in some cases than a policy found in the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie*.

C. Legal Ramifications

Policies that are not documented in writing and available to the school community group could potentially be challenged.

105.1 – PRE-EMINENT VERSION OF POLICIES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

Purpose: To define that the only official version of the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie* is the electronic version found online.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Decree August 2019

A. Definition

Pre-eminent Policy Book refers to the version of the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie* that is the official version in full effect for Catholic Schools within the Diocese.

B. Requirements

All Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Erie are to comply fully with the complete set of policies found as of September 1 each year in *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie*, and in force for the following academic year.

The pre-eminent version of the policies is only found in an electronic version online at the diocesan website (www.eriercd.org) in the section MyDioErie.

Each year, all school/system employees must sign (electronically or inked) an acknowledgment that states the following:

- They have access to the Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie.
- They have been told to review those policies.
- They are expected to comply with those policies.
- They have the opportunity to discuss the policies with a school administrator.
- They will be notified if there is an update/revision.

The annually signed acknowledgement for administrators, such as principals and presidents, is maintained by the Superintendent.

All school/system employees must realize that there are policies in effect that are beyond the scope of the *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie*, for example ***Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth*** and school/system policies.

C. Legal Ramifications

It is the responsibility of the school administration to implement procedures that comply with the policies. This responsibility can be delegated but not abdicated.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

201.1 – CATHOLIC MISSION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Purpose: To ensure that parents and students understand and are willing to abide by the Catholic mission and identity of the school.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Directive 2019

A. Definitions

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a type of agreement between two or more parties that includes each party's responsibilities and requirements.

B. Requirements

The Catholic Mission MOU must be signed and dated by all parents/guardians as part of the enrollment process and then on an annual basis at the start of each school year. This form (Appendix 201.1A) is to be included in the student's permanent folder.

If parents/guardians refuse to sign the Catholic Mission MOU, their child(ren) are not to be admitted to the school.

201.1A – Appendix – Catholic Mission MOU

DIOCESE OF ERIE
CATHOLIC MISSION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

As a parent/guardian of a student in a Catholic School, I understand, affirm and support the following:

1. The primary purpose of a Catholic school education is to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

2. Catholic schools are distinctive religious educational institutions operated as programs of the Catholic Church; they are not private schools but are administered and supported by the sponsoring parish(es), the diocese or religious community.

3. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege not a right.

4. While academic excellence and involvement in extracurricular activities (i.e., sports, clubs, etc.) are important, fidelity to the Catholic identity of the school is the fundamental priority.

5. The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity.

6. In all questions involving faith, morals, faith teaching and Church law, the final determination rests with the diocesan Bishop.

As a parent/guardian desiring to enroll my child in a Catholic school, I accept this memorandum of understanding. I pledge support for the Catholic identity and mission of this school and, by enrolling my child, I commit myself to uphold all the principles and policies that govern a Catholic school.

Father:	Mother:	Guardian:
_____	_____	_____
Printed	Printed	Printed
_____	_____	_____
Signature	Signature	Signature

Student's Name (please print): _____ School: _____

Date: _____

THIS FORM IS TO BE INCLUDED WITH EACH CHILD'S PERMANENT RECORD FOLDER AND UPDATED ANNUALLY AT THE START OF EACH SCHOOL YEAR.

201.2 – PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL SPHERE

Purpose: To establish the relationship between Catholic schools and political or partisan activities.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Directive 2019

A. Definition

Due respect means that the Catholic individual observes the proper level of respect for the teachings of the Church. Catholics and non-Catholic individuals must show respect for teachings based on natural law which are moral codes that can be understood by all people through human reasoning.

B. Requirements

Catholic institutions and those representing them may freely participate in the public actions of government. For example, school buildings may be used as polling places on election day.

No facility or organization under the umbrella of the Catholic Church may be used for partisan or political activity, or to support or oppose any candidate for public office. For example, it is not permissible to rent out a Catholic school auditorium for an event for a political party.

Schools may educate students and employees on issues or proposed legislation to bring the message of the Gospel to bear on social and moral issues.

Catholic institutions and those representing them, including faculty and staff, are not permitted to publicly endorse any partisan activities or person. This includes accepting political advertisements and displaying political signs on school property. No voters' guides or voter education information may be distributed or made available to students, parents, or employees except those approved for distribution by the Diocese of Erie.

Before inviting guests to address specific issues, Catholic institutions should have some reasonable assurance that the presence of these guests will not cause scandal. Those guests in the building who are speaking must be provided Speaker Guidelines (Appendix 201.2A)

No candidate or other public official whose conduct, voting record or public expression fails to give due respect to the teachings of the Church may receive any award, honor or endorsement of any kind.

Questions arising over "due respect" should be directed to the Catholic Schools Office or the Chancery Office.

201.2A – Appendix – Guidelines for Guests

GUIDELINES FOR GUESTS IN THE DIOCESE OF ERIE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

It is very important that guests who address our students, parents, and faculty do so in a manner that is respectful and consistent with Church teaching. These guidelines for guests are being provided to assist a presenter, speaker, a student teacher, or a volunteer in determining the appropriateness of an action or comment while on the school premises. Your willingness to follow the guidelines in a spirit of cooperation while in the school or parish is critical to maintaining a Catholic environment throughout our school building and your continued presence in the building.

A GUEST / SPEAKER IS EXPECTED TO:

1. Recognize the true nature of all individuals as children of God and deserving of the respect granted to them by our Creator.

2. Act in a manner both verbally and physically that models professional decorum.

3. Respect and refrain from contradicting the Catholic identity and mission of Catholic schools in the diocese.

4. Respect and refrain from contradicting Catholic teachings and the Catholic faith including, but not limited to, the following:

    - Respecting that the Catholic faith recognizes that marriage is between a man and a woman, and is the only legitimate place for sexual relations
    - Respecting that the Catholic faith recognizes abstinence from sexual relations until marriage is both a standard of moral behavior as well as the proper strategy for preventing sexually transmitted disease
    - Respecting the teaching of the Catholic Church that regards homosexual activity as morally unacceptable, while promoting the respect due to all persons regardless of sexual orientation
    - Respecting Catholic teaching on abortion, namely, that human life is to be respected and protected from the moment of conception
    - Respecting the teaching of the Catholic Church that regards artificial methods of birth control as morally unacceptable.

5. Any organization or its representative that self-discloses a pro-abortion stance or support is not to be invited into the school to speak.

Regarding formation in chastity, only information appropriate to each phase of a young person's individual development should be presented to children and young people

202.1 – BUILDING SAFETY

Purpose: To define necessary precautions to maintain building safety.

Additional Authority:
24 P.S. § 1517 and 1518
35 Pa. C.S.A. § 7701

A. Definition

School Security Drill refers to a planned exercise, other than a fire drill or natural disaster drill, designed to practice procedures to respond to an emergency situation that may include, but is not limited to, an act of terrorism, armed intruder situation or other violent threat.

B. Requirements

The school administrator, or his/her designee, shall conduct a daily check of the school premises. This should be completed before school opens or soon after school begins. It is the school administrator's responsibility to see that all personnel know exactly what to do and where to go in an emergency and that these procedures are practiced. Emergency procedures must be briefly and clearly written and posted throughout the building, including phone numbers for the police department, the fire department, and emergency management in your area.

Fire Drills

All schools are to conduct fire drills a minimum of once a month. In such fire drills, students and teachers shall be instructed in and made thoroughly familiar with the use of the fire escapes and exits. The drill shall include the complete removal of students and teachers in an expedient and orderly manner by means of fire escapes and exits from the building to a place of safety. Teachers must take a list of students in class with them for the drill. Schools must have a procedure in place for reporting that all students, staff, and visitors are accounted for and for reporting any missing students, staff, and visitors. Fire exits must be posted throughout the school and staff and students must be made familiar with the fire drill procedures. The date and time of all fire drills are to be recorded and kept on file at the school.

Schools should be careful not to create fire hazards by unnecessary use and storage of flammable material.

The local fire department must have a map of the school and school grounds with all rooms labeled. Any changes to the school or grounds during the school year would require an updated map be sent to the department as soon as possible.

School Security Drill

Within 90 days of the commencement of each school year, each school shall conduct one school security drill per school year in place of a fire drill. Each school may conduct two school security drills per school year in place of two fire drills.

Disaster Response and Emergency Preparedness
Annually, schools shall conduct at least one disaster response or emergency preparedness plan drill.

Summary of Required Drills
The chart below outlines the required safety drills for a school year.

Type of Drill	Frequency	Notes
Fire Drills	Once a month from July through June	
School Security Drills (ex. responding to an act of terrorism, armed intruder, or other violent act)	By mid-November, conduct at least one drill	This drill may replace one fire drill; up to two fire drills may be replaced by School Security drills.
Disaster Response Drill (ex. tornado drill)	At least one during the school year	

Tornados
Each school must have a weather radio in the office which is kept on during the school day. If a tornado warning is in effect in the locality of a school, students should be taken to a safe place. A basement area will provide the best protection. If the building is of reinforced construction, keep the students inside, but away from windows, and preferably in an interior hallway on the lowest floor. Areas such as auditoriums and gymnasiums with large, poorly supported roofs are extremely dangerous.

Children should not be sent home during a tornado warning.

Traffic Safety for Students
Contact with local police officials shall occur before the beginning of the school year. Arrangements should be made for crossing guards. Local police officials shall be given a copy of the school calendar and should be informed in advance of any changes in schedule.

Student Safety Patrols should be used to supplement the services of police and crossing guards. Written parent permission is required for any student to fulfill this role. Students are NOT permitted to direct traffic but can only direct students. The school is not to be held liable for any harm caused to a student acting as a safety patrol. The local police department should be contacted for materials and information.

Inspection by the Department of Health
School premises, according to state law, are subject to inspection by health inspectors whose recommendations should be seriously studied for implementation and compliance. Copies of Department of Health inspections must be kept on file at the school.

Inspection of State Department of Labor and Industry
The precepts of the State Building Code apply to nonpublic schools, and periodic inspections by

representatives of the Department of Labor and Industry are scheduled with recommendations that our schools must honor. Copies of Department of Labor and Industry inspections must be kept on file at the school.

The diocesan asbestos program is coordinated through the Facilities and Risk Management Office. Every six months a report needs to be filed stating what aspects of the school building contain asbestos material. These reports are to be filed in January and July with that office.

A loss control survey is also performed at schools by the director of the Facilities and Risk Management Services. This may include athletic equipment and playground equipment.

Chemical Safety
Information on how to handle chemicals safely and dispose of them properly is to be posted in science labs on cabinets where chemicals are stored. All material safety data sheets are to be current, on file, and readily available for review.

202.1 – Best Practices – BUILDING SAFETY

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1. A Fire Drill Log (Appendix 202.1 BP-A) is provided as a sample.

2. Tornado drills should occur at least once at the start of the school year.

3. Resources, tools and programs highlighted by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/all-resources-tools

4. Additional resources can be found at the following website. https://www.centerforsafeschools.org/resources/#EmergencyManagement

5. A Chemical Safety Manual for Pennsylvania Schools can be accessed at http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Waste/Bureau%20of%20Waste%20Management/WasteMgtPortalFiles/SolidWaste/HazardousWaste/School_Chemical_Safety_Manual.pdf. It contains information on how to handle chemicals and how to dispose of them properly.

6. Any environmental or safety issue should be brought to the attention of the Superintendent.

202.1 BP-A – Appendix – Fire Drill Log

School and City: _____ Year _____

	Date	Hour	Number Evacuated	Evacuation Time	Special Conditions	Problems Encountered	Weather	Person Conducting Drill	Notification Used
Aug									
Sept									
Oct									
Nov									
Dec									
Jan									
Feb									
Mar									
Apr									
May									
June									
July									

202.2 – ACCEPTABLE USE OF INTERNET, COMPUTERS AND NETWORK RESOURCES

Purpose: To emphasize the importance that schools encourage good digital citizenship amongst students and staff in their use of computers, the Internet and other network resources. These are supported in the instructional and operational programs that facilitate learning, teaching, and daily school operations through interpersonal communications and access to pertinent information, up-to-date research and collaboration.

Additional Authority:

18 U.S.C. § 2256
20 U.S.C. § 7131
18 Pa. C.S.A. § 5903, 2709
24 P.S. § 1303.1-A
24 P.S. § 4601 et seq
42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq
28 C.F.R. § 35.160
18 Pa. C.S.A. § 6312
47 U.S.C. § 254
24 P.S. § 4604
47 C.F.R. § 54.520
17 U.S.C. §101 et seq
24 P.S. § 1302-E
29 U.S.C. § 794

A. Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the ability of a digital or computer or computer-controlled machine to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings. The term is frequently applied to the project of developing systems endowed with the intellectual processes characteristic of humans, such as the ability to reason, discover meaning, generalize, or learn from past experience.

The term child pornography is defined under both federal and state law.

Child pornography under federal law, is any visual depiction, including any photograph, film, video, picture, or computer or computer-generated image or picture, whether made or produced by electronic, mechanical, or other means, of sexually explicit conduct, where:

1. The production of such visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;
2. Such visual depiction is a digital image, computer image, or computer-generated image that is, or is indistinguishable from, that of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct; or
3. Such visual depiction has been created, adapted, or modified to appear that an identifiable minor is engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

Child pornography under state law, is any book, magazine, pamphlet, slide, photograph, film, videotape, computer depiction or other material depicting a child under the age of eighteen (18) years engaging in a prohibited sexual act or in the simulation of such act.

Computer – for the purposes of this policy, district computers include any electronic device owned or leased by the district that has the capability to create, play or edit text, audio and video data; transmit or receive messages, text, data or images; operate software or online applications; or provide a wired or wireless connection to the Internet.

The term harmful to minors is defined under both federal and state law.
Harmful to minors under federal law, is any picture, image, graphic image file or other visual depiction that:

1. Taken as a whole, with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex or excretion
2. Depicts, describes or represents in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or lewd exhibition of the genitals and
3. Taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value as to minors.

Harmful to minors - under state law, is any depiction or representation in whatever form, of nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sadomasochistic abuse, when it:

1. Predominantly appeals to the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors;
2. Is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable for minors; and
3. Taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political, educational or scientific value for minors.

Obscene - any material or performance, if:

1. The average person applying contemporary community standards would find that the subject matter taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest;
2. The subject matter depicts or describes in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct described in the law to be obscene; and
3. The subject matter, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, educational or scientific value.

Technology protection measure is a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography or harmful to minors.
Vandalism is any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, Internet or other networks; this includes but is not limited to uploading or creating computer viruses. Vandalism also includes, but is not limited to, damage to hardware, software, protective ware, and all associated equipment.

B. Requirements

The availability of access to electronic information does not imply endorsement by the school of the content, nor does the school guarantee the accuracy of information received. The school shall not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged or unavailable when using the network or for any information that is retrieved via the Internet.

The school shall not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the Internet and technology resources.

Computer and network use are privileges, not rights. The school or school system's computer and technology resources are the property of the school or school system. Users shall have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, delete, access, receive or display on or over the school's Internet, computers or technology resources, including personal files or any use of the school's Internet, computers or technology resources. The school or system reserves

the right to monitor, track, and log network access and use on school computers and network resources; monitor fileserver space and file storage utilization by users; or deny access to prevent unauthorized, inappropriate or illegal activity and may revoke access privileges and/or administer appropriate disciplinary action. The school or school system shall cooperate to the extent legally required with the Internet Service Provider (ISP), local, state and federal officials in any investigation concerning or related to the misuse of the school's Internet, computers and technology resources.

All users are required to fully comply with this policy and immediately report any violations or suspicious activities to the school principal or his/her designee.

In addition to those materials stated in law and defined in this policy, the Diocese prohibits deliberate or violative access to Internet sites or materials that promote, depict, contain, or advocate defamation, lewdness, vulgarity or profanity, inappropriate behavioral actions, harassment, discrimination, intolerance or hate, gambling, illegal weapons, bullying, terrorism or drug use. The school or school system reserves the right to restrict access to any Internet sites or network functions it deems inappropriate through established policy, or the use of software and/or online server blocking/filtering. Specifically, the school or school system operates and enforces a technology protection measure(s) that blocks or filters access to inappropriate matter by minors on its computers and network resources used and accessible to adults and students. The technology protection measure shall be enforced during use of computers and network resources with Internet access.

Upon request by staff, the principal or designee shall expedite a review and may authorize the adjustment of technology protection measures to enable access to material that is blocked or filtered through technology protection measures but is not prohibited by this policy.

Upon written request by the staff, the principal or designee may authorize the temporary adjustment of technology protection measures to enable access for bona fide research or for other lawful purposes. Written permission from the parent/guardian is required prior to adjusting Internet blocking/filtering software for a student's use.

The school or school system shall make every effort to ensure that this resource is used responsibly by students and staff.

The Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy (Appendix 202.2A) is to be given to all who use the school or school system networks or technology. Faculty, staff and volunteers who use school or school system networks or school-owned equipment shall, prior to being given access or being issued equipment, sign user agreements (Appendix 202.2B) acknowledging awareness of the provisions of this policy, and awareness that the school or school system uses monitoring systems to monitor and detect inappropriate use and tracking systems to track and recover lost or stolen equipment.

Students and their parent/guardian must each sign agreements. (Appendix 202.2C and Appendix 202.2D) prior to being given access or being issued equipment.

The principal or designee shall be responsible for recommending technology and developing procedures used to determine whether the school's computers and network resources are being used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing materials harmful to minors. The procedures shall include but not be limited to:

- Utilizing a technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access for minors and adults to certain visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, harmful to minors with respect to use by minors, or determined inappropriate for use by minors
- Maintaining and securing a usage log
- Monitoring online activities of minors on school computers and network resources.

The principal or designee shall develop and implement regulations that ensure students are educated on network etiquette and other appropriate online behavior including, but not limited to, interaction with others on social media websites and cyberbullying awareness.

Network and email accounts shall be used only by the authorized owner of the account for its approved purpose. All users shall respect the privacy of others using the system.

It is important to protect users of the network from harassment and unwanted or unsolicited electronic communications. Any user who receives threatening or unwelcome electronic communications or inadvertently visits or accesses an inappropriate site shall report such immediately to a teacher or administrator. Users shall not reveal personal information to other users on the network or Internet, including chat rooms, emails, social networking websites, etc.

Internet safety measures shall effectively address the following:

- Control of access by minors to materials harmful to minors on the Internet and World Wide Web
- Safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, social networking websites and other forms of direct electronic communications
- Prevention of unauthorized online access by minors, including "hacking" and other unlawful activities
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors
- Restriction of minors' access to materials harmful to them or which have been designated as inappropriate matter in Board policy.

Users are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner in accordance with this policy, accepted rules of network etiquette, and federal and state law and regulations. Specifically, the following are prohibited uses of district computers and/or network resources:

1. Facilitating illegal activity
2. Personal, commercial or for-profit purposes

3. Nonwork or non-school related work
4. Product advertisement or political lobbying
5. Bullying/Cyberbullying or harassment
6. Hate mail, harassment, discriminatory remarks, and offensive or inflammatory communication
7. Unauthorized or illegal installation, distribution, reproduction, or use of copyrighted materials
8. Accessing, sending, receiving, transferring, viewing, sharing or downloading obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal materials, images or photographs
9. Access by students and minors to material that is harmful to minors or is determined inappropriate for minors in accordance with existing policies within the Diocese
10. Language or profanity that is harmful to minors
11. Transmission of material that a reasonable person would know to be offensive or objectionable to recipients
12. Intentional obtaining or modifying of files, passwords, and data belonging to other users
13. Impersonation of another user, anonymity, and pseudonyms
14. Fraudulent copying, communications, or modification of materials in violation of copyright laws
15. Loading or using of unauthorized games, programs, files, or other electronic media
16. Disruption of the work of other users
17. Destruction, modification, abuse or unauthorized access to network hardware, software, systems and files
18. Accessing the Internet, school computers or other network resources without authorization
19. Disabling, adjusting, or bypassing the technology protection measure(s) without authorization
20. Accessing, sending, receiving, transferring, viewing, sharing or downloading confidential information without authorization
21. Quoting personal communications in a public forum without the consent of the original author
22. Disseminating unauthorized student information, including but not limited to first or last name, address, telephone number, email address, or picture as defined in student records policy
23. Creating or participating in chain letters or similar forms of broadcast mail
24. The misuse or abuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Internet communications are not guaranteed to be private, and individuals who operate the system do have access to electronic data. Communications relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities. Staff assisting students in creating student email addresses must use non-descriptive identifiers (such as numbers instead of names).

System security is protected through the use of passwords and/or encryption and school security procedures. Failure to adequately protect or update passwords could result in

unauthorized access to personal or school files. To protect the integrity of the system, these guidelines shall be followed:

- Employees and students shall not reveal their passwords to another individual.
- Users are not to use a computer that has been logged in under another user's name.
- Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the network.

The illegal use of copyrighted materials is prohibited. Any data uploaded to or downloaded from the school or school system network shall be subject to fair use guidelines and applicable laws and regulations.

The school and/or school systems shall establish and maintain a website and shall develop and modify its web pages to present information about the school under the direction of the president/principal or designee. All users publishing content on the school websites shall comply with this and other applicable policies.

Users shall not copy or download information from school websites and disseminate such information on unauthorized web pages without written authorization from the building administrator or program supervisor.

Accessibility

School staff who maintain the school's websites and web pages shall post content which is accessible to individuals with disabilities, to the same extent that it is available to other users, based on the needs of the individuals and limitations of the platform. This shall include, but is not limited to:

1. Including alternate text descriptions or captions for images.
2. Including captions for video content.
3. Avoiding text that is posted as an image or conveyed using only color cues.
4. Creating links and attachments in formats that are accessible to screen readers and other assistive technology, and may be accessed through keyboard or speech navigation.
5. Formatting text so that it is accessible to screen readers and other assistive technology, and may be accessed through keyboard or speech navigation.

All school websites shall contain clear contact information that may be used by member of the public to request accommodations or assistance.

The user shall be responsible for damages to the equipment, systems, platforms, and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts.

Illegal use of the school computers and network resources, intentional deletion or damage to files or data belonging to others, copyright violations, and theft of services shall be reported to the appropriate legal authorities for possible prosecution.

General rules and school policy for behavior and communications apply when using the Internet, in addition to the stipulations of this policy.

Vandalism shall result in loss of access privileges, disciplinary action, and/or referral to legal authorities. Failure to comply with this policy or inappropriate use of the Internet, in violation of this policy, result in usage restrictions, loss of access privileges, disciplinary action, and/or referral to legal authorities.

C. Legal Ramifications

The school or school system shall inform staff, students, parents/guardians and other users about this policy through employee and student handbooks, posting on the school's website, and by other appropriate methods. All employees, volunteers, students and their parents are required to receive a copy of the Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy (Appendix 202.2A) Faculty/Staff/Volunteer agreements (Appendix 202.2B) must be signed, as well as, Student agreements (Appendix 202.2C). Parental Consent Agreements (Appendix 202.2D) must be signed for all students under the age of 18.

202.2A – Appendix – Internet Safety Policy, Employees et al.

REPRODUCE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

_____School

ACCEPTABLE USE and INTERNET SAFETY POLICY
for
Employees, Students and Volunteers

Please read the following carefully before signing this document. This is a legally binding document.

Introduction

It is the policy of _____ School to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network for, or transmission of, inappropriate material via the Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub.L.No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)]. We will adhere to all Diocese of Erie policies and provisions for the protection of children as well as guidelines for Use of Photographic Images of Children and Youth.

Overview

Computers, handheld devices, network, Internet, electronic communications and information systems (collectively "CIS systems") provide vast, diverse and unique resources. Access to the school's electronic communications systems and network is granted to responsible users for educational purposes, and terms of use are outlined in this document. This access includes Internet access, whether wired or wireless, or by any other means.

SECTION ONE: GENERAL COMPUTING POLICY

1) Acceptable Use

In order to ensure smooth system operations, the school administrator has the authority to monitor all accounts. A user must abide by the terms of all software licensing agreements and copyright laws. A user can be monitored at any time. Once a user receives a user ID to be used to access a computer or network and computer systems on that network, he or she is solely responsible for all actions taken while using the user ID. Therefore, the following are prohibited:

a) Applying for a user ID under false pretenses
b) Sharing your user ID with any other person. (If you do share your user ID with another person, you will be solely responsible for the actions of that other person.)
c) Deletion, examination, copying, or modification of files and/or data belonging to the school or other users without their prior consent
d) Attempts to evade or change resource quotes, posting personal communications without the original author's consent; invading the privacy of others; attempting or gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities; accessing or vandalizing the data of another user; using the network for any unauthorized or illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts; downloading or uploading software
e) Use of facilities and/or services for commercial purposes
f) Any unauthorized, deliberate action which damages or disrupts a computing system, alters its normal performance, or causes it to malfunction is a violation regardless of system location or time duration
g) Copying programs purchased by you onto the school's computers and/or the network systems, without the express, written consent of the school

h) Copying programs, licensed to the school, for personal use
i) Abusing and disrupting electronic equipment and/or systems.

2) Security

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the school staff to supervise and monitor usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the school's online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Specifically, as required by CIPA prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including 'hacking and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors. Appropriate training will be provided for staff and students in the use of technological resources, the Internet and electronic communications.

Subject to administrative approval, technology protection measures may be disabled or minimized, for adult Internet usage only, for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

As a user of a computer or network, you may be allowed to access other networks and/or computer systems attached to those networks. Therefore, the following are prohibited:

a) Use of systems and/or networks in attempts to gain unauthorized access to remote systems
b) Decryption of system or user passwords
c) Copying, deleting, or moving system files
d) Deleting, examining, copying, or modifying files and/or data belonging to other users
e) Copying of copyrighted materials, such as third party software, without the express written permission of the owner or the proper license
f) The willful introduction of computer "viruses" or other disruptive or destructive programs into the computer and/or network or into external computers and/or networks
g) Vandalism is prohibited, including, but not limited to, any attempt to harm or destroy the data of another user, the network/Internet, or any networks or sites connected to the network/Internet. Attempts to breach security codes and/or passwords will also be considered a form of vandalism.
h) Willful destruction of computer hardware or software or attempts to exceed or modify the parameters of the system are prohibited. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the school operator from intercepting and stopping E-mail messages which have the capacity to overload the computer resources. Discipline may be imposed for intentional overloading of school computer resources.

SECTION TWO: INTERNET ACCESS

Internet access is available to employees and students of _____ School. We believe the Internet offers vast, diverse and unique resources to administrators, teachers, employees, and students. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication.

The Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers. Administrators, teachers, employees, and students have access to:

- electronic mail communication with people all over the world
- many University Library Catalogs, the Library of Congress and the Education Resources Information Center, (ERIC)
- a plethora of topics ranging from Japanese culture to music, to politics, to the environment
- the public domain and shareware of all types.

With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the school setting. Our school has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. To the extent practical, technological protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter access to inappropriate information on the Internet, or via other forms of electronic communications. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene, to child pornography, and to any material deemed harmful to minors. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and a user may discover controversial information. We firmly believe that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with education goals.

Internet access is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies, and regional and state networks. In addition, the smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the end users who must adhere to strict guidelines. These guidelines are provided here so that you are aware of the responsibilities you are about to acquire. In general, this requires efficient, ethical and legal utilization of the network resources. If a user from our school violates any of these provisions, his or her Internet access will be terminated, and future access could possibly be denied. Disciplinary and/or legal action including, but not limited to, criminal prosecution under appropriate state and federal laws may also be taken. The signature(s) at the end of this document is (are) legally binding and indicates the party (parties) who signed has (have) read the terms and conditions carefully and understand(s) their significance.

INTERNET ACCESS – TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1) Acceptable Use

The purpose of accessing the Internet is to support research and education in and among academic institutions in the United States by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. Your use must be in support of education and research, and consistent with the educational goals and objectives of our school. Each user is personally responsible to follow these provisions at all times when using the network.

a) Use of other organization's network or computing resources, including "cloud computing" must comply with the rules appropriate for that network.
b) Transmission of any material in violation of local, state and/or federal statutes or regulations is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, material protected by trade secret, threatening material, obscene material, pornographic material and criminal activity.
c) Use for commercial activities or product advertisement (including campaigns for student government/council) is prohibited.
d) Use of the network in any way that would disrupt network use by others is prohibited.
e) **NEVER** reveal personal information such as your address, phone number, password or social security number. This also applies to others' personal information or that of organizations.
f) Use of the network or computer resources to publicly oppose, degrade, and/or intentionally misrepresent any teachings, beliefs, or practices of the Catholic Church are strictly prohibited.

2) Privileges

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The school administrator will deem what is inappropriate use and his or her decision is final.

3) Network Etiquette

You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette (netiquette). These include, but are not limited to, the following:

a) Be polite. Do not send, or encourage others to send, abusive messages.
b) Use appropriate language. Remember that you are a representative of your school and diocese on a non-private network. You may be alone on a computer, but what you say can be viewed around the world. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language**. Illegal activities are forbidden**.
c) All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property.

4) Online Safety and Behavior

_____ School, in accordance with amendments to the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) contained in the "Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act" (October 2008), will include in our technology education program for minors instruction concerning:

a) Appropriate online behavior
b) Interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and chat rooms
c) Cyber bullying awareness and response. "Cyber bullying" is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.

5) Electronic Mail (E-Mail)

Whenever you send electronic mail, your name and user ID are included in each message. You are responsible for all electronic mail originating from your user ID, therefore:

a) Unauthorized attempts to access another person's E-mail or similar electronic communications or to use another's name, E-mail or computer address or workstation to send E-mail or similar electronic communications is prohibited and may subject the individual to disciplinary action.
b) All users must understand that the school cannot guarantee the privacy or confidentiality of electronic documents and any messages that are confidential as a matter of law should not be communicated over E-mail.
c) The school reserves the right to access E-mail to retrieve school information and records, to engage in routine computer maintenance and housekeeping, to carry out internal investigations, and/or to disclose messages, data or files to law enforcement authorities.
d) Any information contained on a school computer's hard drive or computer disks which were purchased by the school are considered the property of the school.
e) Forgery (or attempted forgery) of electronic mail is prohibited.
f) Attempts to send or sending harassing, obscene and/or other threatening e-mail to another user are prohibited.
g) Attempts to send or sending unsolicited junk mail, "for profit" messages or chain letters are prohibited.

6) Security

Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. Never use another person's information to log onto the system. If you feel you can identify a security problem, you must notify a teacher or administrator. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Do not reveal your

account password to anyone. Users are responsible for any misuse of their account that is due to their own negligence. Users are responsible for reporting unauthorized use of their account to a teacher or administrator.

7) Updating Your User Information

If any information on your account changes, (e.g., telephone number, location, home address) it is your responsibility to notify a teacher or administrator.

8) Services

_____ School makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the computer and Internet service it is providing and will not be responsible for any damages you may suffer. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries, or service interruptions caused by the system or your errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the system is at your own risk. _____ School specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through use of the Internet.

SECTION THREE: ADOPTION

Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy
Approved by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie, April 2025

Revised April 2025

202.2B – Appendix – Internet Safety Policy Agreement, Faculty et al.

REPRODUCE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

_____ School

Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy

Faculty/Staff/Volunteer Agreement

I have read the Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy ("the policy"). I understand its significance, and I voluntarily agree to abide with all terms and conditions of the policy. I understand that any violation of the policy, or any applicable law, or of this agreement would be unethical and might even constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any such violation, I understand that my privileges may be revoked and disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action, may be taken. I also hereby indemnify and hold harmless _____School from any claim or loss resulting from any infraction by me of the policy or any applicable law.

_____

User's Signature Date

_____

Name of User (Please Print)

_____

Job Title or Position

_____

Home Street Address

_____

City/State/Zip

_____

Home Phone Office Phone

202.2C – Appendix – Internet Safety Policy Agreement, Student

REPRODUCE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

_____ School

Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy

Student Agreement

I have read the Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy. I understand its importance, and I agree to willingly follow all terms and conditions of it. I further understand that violation of this agreement would be wrong and might even be a criminal offense. Should I choose to violate this agreement, my privileges will be taken away and disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

Student's Signature	Date
Name of Student (Please Print)	Grade
Name of Parent/Guardian (Please Print)	
Home Street Address	
City/State/Zip	
Home Phone	Parent's/Guardian's Office Phone

202.2D – Appendix – Internet Safety Policy Agreement, Parents
REPRODUCE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

_____ School

Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy

Parental Consent Agreement

_____ School has chosen to permit students access to computer and telecommunication resources to further its educational goals and objectives. Reasonable care has been taken to assure the appropriateness and educational quality of the material available through the use of educational software and telecommunications. However, parents and guardians are warned that neither the School nor the Diocese of Erie has total control of the information on the Internet. Parents and guardians are the primary authority responsible for imparting the standards of ethical and legal conduct their child or ward should follow. Therefore, we support and respect each family's right to decide whether or not their child may have access to this resource.

1. I am the parent/guardian of the below named student. I have read the Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy ("the policy") and I have either explained it to my child/ward (student) or I have assured myself that the student understands it. I also understand my own and the student's responsibilities regarding computer hardware, software, and Internet access at _____ School.

2. Check one:

   [ ] I hereby consent to the student having access to, and use of, the telecommunications resources at _____ School, I also hereby indemnify and hold harmless the Diocese of Erie and _____ School from any claim or loss resulting from any infraction by the student of the policy or any applicable law.

   [ ] I do not consent to the student having access to, or use of, the telecommunications resources at _____ School.

_____
Parent's/Guardian's Signature Date

_____
Name of Parent/Guardian (Please Print)

_____
Name of Student (Please Print) Grade

_____
Home Street Address

_____
City/State/Zip

_____
Home Phone Office Phone

202.3 – ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS PREVENTION AND DISEASE CONTROL

Purpose: To provide a safe and healthy workplace.

Additional Authority:
Chapter 7E of the Pennsylvania Workers Compensation Act
29 C.F.R. Part 1910
The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)

A. Definitions

Bloodborne Pathogens are microorganisms such as viruses or bacteria that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans.
Body Fluids includes blood, drainage from scrapes and cuts, feces, urine, vomitus, respiratory secretions such as nasal discharge and saliva, etc.
Decontamination refers to the use of physical or chemical means to remove, inactivate, or destroy bloodborne pathogens on a surface or item to the point where they are no longer capable of transmitting infectious particles and the surface or item is rendered safe for handling, use or disposal.
Facilities and Risk Management Office is a department of the Diocese of Erie housed at St. Mark Catholic Center, Erie. The office contact number is 814-824-1180.
HBV refers to the Hepatitis B Virus.
HIV refers to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus.
Industrial Health Services refers to the means by which potential hazards are identified and corrective actions are determined to control or prevent exposures.
Industrial Hygiene refers to the study of the effect the workplace environment has on the worker.
Universal Precautions refers to a concept of bloodborne disease control which requires that all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens.

B. Requirements

Emergency Management

Each location, insured through the Diocese of Erie, is required to have assembled a comprehensive plan detailing how its employees are to respond to the development of potentially hazardous conditions and have the plan posted in a conspicuous place. The posting is to include instruction and telephone numbers for contacting non-emergency personnel including police, fire and medical.

All employees are to call 911 in the event of an emergency. Each employee should be aware of the location and availability of a first aid kit and/or provider.

Safe Work Practices

In case of accident, obtain first aid or medical care as necessary. An Accident / Injury Report (Appendix 202.3A) is to be completed when an adult is injured in the building or on school grounds.

Defective equipment and unsafe conditions should be reported; replacement or repair must be made promptly.

All work areas are to be well lit; burned out bulbs are to be replaced as soon as practical upon notice. Work areas must be kept free of unnecessary obstructions/hazards.

Hazard Identification
Employees are encouraged to recognize potentially hazardous conditions that occur between inspections and to request that corrective measures be taken.

Asbestos Management
The Asbestos Management Plan is maintained by the Facilities and Risk Management Office. A yearly notification to parents and employees, provided by the Facilities and Risk Management Office, on the presence of Asbestos Containing Materials and a plan to safely manage those materials must be distributed accordingly. The Asbestos Management Plan is based on the principle of 'in-place' management.

Industrial Hygiene
If an employee suspects he/she is being exposed to or is experiencing symptoms from suspected exposure to potentially harmful chemicals, physical or environmental conditions he/she is expected to report the cause for concern and/or symptoms to his/her supervisor. The supervisor is to document and preliminarily evaluate the employee's concerns. If the situation cannot be easily rectified or appears to be impractical or severe, the Facilities and Risk Management Office is to be notified.

Under no circumstance is an employee to be precluded from initiating contact with the Facilities and Risk Management Office.

Industrial Health Services
Industrial Health Services are available through the Facilities and Risk Management Office. Every reasonable effort will be made to identify and assist remediation of the problematic conditions.

To obtain Industrial Health Services, contact the Facilities and Risk Management Office.
Disease Control

- Hand Washing - Comprehensive hand washing is the single most important way to limit the spread of disease. If unanticipated skin contact with body fluids occurs in a situation where gloves are not immediately available, hands and other affected skin areas of all exposed persons must be washed with an antibacterial soap and hot water after direct contact has ceased.
- Control of Exposure to Body Fluids and Bloodborne Pathogens - All body fluids from both staff and students should be considered potentially infectious. Contact with body fluids presents a risk of infection. Universal precautions are the Occupational Safety and

Health Administration's (OSHA) required methods of control to protect employees from exposure to human blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM).

Any time there is blood to blood contact there is a potential for transmission of bloodborne pathogens. Universal precautions and using personal protective equipment is recommended whenever contact with blood or OPIM is anticipated and/or possible. Disposable gloves must be available in every classroom and in every first-aid kit. The use of disposable gloves is required when direct hand contact with body fluids is anticipated. The contaminated gloves, tissues, paper towels, and diapers must be disposed of in a plastic lined container, sealed and discarded daily.

In the event of exposure and after removal of personal protective equipment, areas of potentially contaminated skin should be immediately washed using antibacterial soap and hot running water. Equipment and surfaces which may have become contaminated should be decontaminated with an appropriate disinfectant (at least 10% chlorine bleach solution or equivalent) as soon as possible. The disinfectant used must be approved to use as a disinfectant and kill vegetative bacteria, fungi, tubercle bacillus and viruses.

Contaminated clothing should be treated as soon as possible with an antibacterial/viral solution (at least 10% chlorine bleach solution or equivalent) for at least ten minutes prior to laundering.

Should an employee incur an exposure incident, it should be reported to the appropriate supervisor who has the responsibility to maintain applicable records and will contact the director of the Facilities and Risk Management Office. The director of the Facilities and Risk Management Office will coordinate post exposure evaluation and treatment in accordance with the OSHA.

202.3A – Appendix – Accident / Injury Report - Employees

Accident / Injury Report (Employees – Workers Compensation)

School: _____

Individual Injured

Name _____ Address _____
Last First MI

Student _____, if so grade _____ Staff _____ Volunteer _____ Guest _____

Injury Details

Description of Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Cause of Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Part(s) of Body Injured _____

Accident Details

Time of Accident / Injury _____
Date Day of Week Exact Time

Location of Accident (be specific) _____

Activity of Injured Person at Time of Accident / Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Treatment Provided (be specific) _____

_____

If student, Supervision at Time of Accident / Injury ____ yes ____ no (If yes, give name and title) _____

_____

Parent / Insurance Notification

Were the parents notified? ____ yes _____ no (If yes, by whom and date) _____

Was report made to Church Mutual Insurance Company (800.554.2642)? ____ yes ____ no

If yes, by whom and date? _____

Signature

Report prepared by (name and title) _____ Date of Report _____

Principal's Signature _____ Date _____

Keep original in school's accident file. Send a copy to Church Mutual Insurance Company claimsintake@churchmutual.com

202.4 – COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND INFECTIOUS CONDITIONS

Purpose: To ensure the protection of the entire school community from the spread of communicable disease.

Additional Authority:
28 Pa Code § 27.71, 27.72, 27.1, 27.2, 27.23

A. Definitions

Body Fluids include blood, drainage from scrapes and cuts, feces, urine, vomitus, respiratory secretions such as nasal discharge, saliva, etc.

Communicable Disease refers to an illness which is capable of being spread to a susceptible host through the direct or indirect transmission of an infectious agent or its toxic product by an infected person, animal or arthropod, or through the inanimate environment.

Infectious Agent refers to any organism, such as a virus, bacterium, fungus or parasite, that is capable of being communicated by invasion and multiplication in body tissues and capable of causing disease.

Universal Precautions refers to the practice of avoiding contact with bodily fluids, by means of the wearing of nonporous articles such as medical gloves, goggles, face shields, etc.

B. Requirements

All students shall be immunized against specific diseases in accordance with state law and regulations, unless specifically exempt for religious, medical reasons or conscientious reasons.

A student or staff person, including volunteer, who has been diagnosed by a physician or are suspected of having a disease (see list below) by the school nurse or administrator shall be excluded from school for the period indicated by regulations of the Department of Health. Such diseases should include any of the following unless that person is determined by the school nurse, or physician, to be noncommunicable:

- Mouth sores associated with the inability to control saliva
- Rash with fever or behavioral change
- Purulent discharge from the eyes
- Productive cough with fever
- Oral or axillary temperature equal to or greater than 102 degrees Fahrenheit
- Unusual lethargy, irritability, difficulty breathing, or other signs of severe illness
- Persistent vomiting
- Persistent diarrhea

The school shall maintain a record of the exclusion and the reasons prompting the exclusion.

Readmission shall be contingent upon the school nurse or, a physician, verifying that the criteria for readmission have been satisfied.

The criteria for readmission are:

- Diphtheria – two weeks from the onset or until appropriate negative culture tests
- Measles – four days from the onset of rash
- Mumps – nine days from the onset or until subsidence of swelling
- Pertussis – three weeks from the onset or five days from the use of appropriate antimicrobial therapy
- Rubella – four days from the onset of rash
- Chickenpox – five days from the appearance of the first crop of vesicles or when all the lesions have dried
- Respiratory streptococcal infections including scarlet fever – at least ten days from the onset or 24 hours from use of appropriate antimicrobial therapy
- Infectious conjunctivitis (pink eye) – until judged by a medical professional not infective and without a discharge
- Ringworm – immediately after the first treatment if body lesions are covered. Neither scalp nor body lesions that are dried need to be covered.
- Impetigo contagiosa – 24 hours after the use of appropriate treatment
- Pediculosis capitis (head lice) - immediately after first treatment. The person is to be reexamined for infestation by the school nurse 7 days posttreatment.
- Pediculosis corpora (body lice) - after completion of appropriate treatment
- Scabies – after completion of appropriate treatment
- Trachoma – 24 hours after institution of appropriate treatment
- Tuberculosis – following a minimum of two weeks of treatment and three consecutive negative morning sputum smears. A note from the attending physician must be submitted prior to readmission.
- Neisseria Meningitidis – until judged by a medical professional noninfective after a course of treatment

Universal precautions are the required methods of control to protect employees and students from exposure to human blood and other potentially infectious materials. Administrators must review universal precautions annually with all staff. The locations of all first aid kits, disposable gloves and disinfectants must be reviewed annually as well. Disposable gloves must be used when direct hand contact with body fluids or an infectious agent is anticipated. Disposable gloves must be available in every classroom and in every first aid kit. A disinfectant must be used to clean surfaces contaminated with body fluids or an infectious agent.

The school administrator, his or her designee, or the school nurse shall report the presence of suspected communicable diseases to the appropriate local health authority, as required by the Department of Health. The school administrator shall direct that health guidelines and universal precautions designed to minimize the transmission of communicable diseases be implemented in their school.

202.4 – Best Practices – COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND INFECTIOUS CONDITIONS

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The process for readmission after a diagnosis of Pediculosis capitis (head lice) may differ by local public school districts. Some districts require that a person is reexamined for infestation by the school nurse prior to first arrival back after treatment and every seven days thereafter for four weeks. As long as the process meets the minimum stated in the policy, schools should follow the local public school district's standard practice.

202.5 – SCHOOL CLOSURE AND/OR GRADE LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS

Purpose: To define the process for school closure or for changing the grading configuration.

Additional Authority:
Can. 806 in support of Catholic Identity and Mission, Educational Integrity

A. Definitions

Grade expansion refers to when one or more grade(s) is added to a Catholic school.
Grade reduction refers to the elimination of one or more grade levels in a Catholic school.
School closure refers to when an entire school ceases to operate permanently.

B. Requirements

If a school or particular grade level(s) or classroom(s) of a school is in jeopardy of closure, the pastor, system president, and/or school principal must explore all options and opportunities. School officials are required to meet with the Catholic Schools Office to assist in this process. If a decision is made, the pastor, system president, and/or school principal, in collaboration with the Catholic Schools Office, must request the Bishop's permission to act on the decision. The Bishop's permission must be obtained before any school closes or any grade level(s) is eliminated at any school in the Diocese of Erie.

If a school is planning on expansion of the grade levels served at the school, school administrators are required to meet with the Catholic Schools Office to assist in this process.

202.6 – TITLE IX – SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Purpose: To define Title IX requirements and delineate how complaints about Title IX are managed.

Additional Authority:
Title IX
C.F.R. Part 106, Title IX
18 Pa C.S.A. 2709

A. Definition

Complainant means, for the purpose of this policy, an individual who is alleged to be the victim.
Clear and convincing evidence is the standard of proof that will be used to determine the legitimacy of a situation(s) falling under Title IX. This standard of evidence requires that the evidence indicates that the situation(s) be highly and substantially more likely to be true than untrue. The investigator needs to have a firm conviction or belief in its factuality.
Discrimination is limited within the Title IX law to be the action of treating individuals differently on the basis of sex or to harass or victimize on the basis of sex.
Formal Complaint means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging Title IX sexual discrimination or harassment and requesting that there be an investigation of the allegation under the grievance process for formal complaints.
Respondent means, for the purpose of this policy, an individual alleged to be the perpetrator of the discrimination.
Supportive Measures means the non-disciplinary, nonpunitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Supportive measures shall be designed to restore or preserve equal access to the program or activity, work environment or employment opportunity, without unreasonably burdening the other party and may include, but are not limited to counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, etc.
Title IX Sexual Harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A school/system employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or school/system service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct, commonly referred to as *quid pro quo* sexual harassment.
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to a school/system education program or activity and work environment and employment opportunities.
3. Any instance of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking.

"Under any education program or activity" refers to any location, event, or circumstance over which the school/system exercised substantial control over the respondent and the context in which the situation(s) occurred. There is no distinction between "off campus" and "on campus" or "in person" and "online."

B. Requirements

All Catholic schools within the Diocese of Erie must comply with Title IX by prohibiting sex discrimination, which includes sexual harassment and retaliation. Catholic schools reserve the right to make religious exceptions as provided by law.

The following statement is to be included in each student/parent handbook, staff handbook and this policy and related appendices must be posted to the school's website.

> *While reserving the right to make religious exceptions as provided by law and in accord with Catholic religious belief, the Catholic schools within the Diocese of Erie do not discriminate on the basis of sex. This includes being excluded from participation in, being denied the benefits of, or being subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity on the basis of sex.*

Title IX notices and information shall include the title, office address, telephone number and email address of the individual(s) designated as the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator for parish-based schools shall be the Director of Government Programs and Compliance. For school systems, the Title IX Coordinator will be from the administrative team assigned by the president.

The Title IX Coordinator shall ensure adequate nondiscrimination procedures are in place, recommend procedures or modifications to procedures, and monitor the implementation of nondiscrimination procedures in the following areas:

1. Curriculum and Materials
2. Training
3. Resources
4. Student Access
5. Student Evaluation
6. Reports/Formal Complaints

The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), decision-maker(s), or any individual designated to facilitate an informal resolution process shall receive the following training, as required or appropriate to their specific role:

1. Definition of sexual harassment
2. Scope of the program or activity, as it pertains to what is subject to Title IX regulations

3. How to conduct an investigation and grievance process for formal complaints
4. How to serve impartially
5. Use of relevant technology
6. Issues of relevance including when questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant

7. Issues of relevance, weight of evidence and application of standard of proof and drafting investigative reports that fairly summarize relevant evidence
8. How to address complaints when the alleged conduct does not qualify as Title IX sexual harassment but could be addressed under another complaint process or Board policy

All training materials shall promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of Title IX sexual harassment without relying on sex stereotypes. All training materials shall be posted on the school/system's website.

Making a claim of Title IX Sexual Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation

Students and third parties who believe they or others have been subject to Title IX sexual discrimination, harassment or retaliation are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the principal or the Title IX Coordinator. A person who is not an intended victim or target of discrimination but is adversely affected by the offensive conduct may file a report of discrimination.

The student's parents/guardians or any other person with knowledge of conduct that may violate this policy is encouraged to immediately report the matter to the principal or the Title IX Coordinator. A school/system employee who suspects or is notified that a student has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy shall immediately report the incident to the principal or Title IX Coordinator, as well as properly making any mandatory police or child protective services reports required by law. Upon receiving notification of violations to this policy, the principal shall immediately report all incidents to the Title IX Coordinator.

Employees and third parties who believe they or others have been subject to Title IX sexual discrimination, harassment or retaliation are to promptly report such incidents to the principal or the Title IX Coordinator.

If the principal is the subject of a complaint, the student, parent/guardian, employee or third party shall report the incident directly to the Title IX Coordinator.

The complainant or the individual making the report may use the Title IX Incident Report Form for the purposes of reporting an incident(s) in writing; however, a verbal report of an incident(s) shall be accepted.

Step One: (Immediately)

The principal or employee of the school/system who received the report shall notify the Title IX Coordinator of all reports of Title IX sexual discrimination, harassment or retaliation.

Step Two: (Within one business day)

The Title IX Coordinator shall contact the complainant, and if deemed to be necessary the reporter if not the complainant, to gather additional information for the report and to discuss

the availability of supportive measures for the complainant. The Title IX Coordinator shall consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures.

Step Three: (As soon as reasonably possible)
The principal and the Title IX Coordinator shall conduct an assessment of the information supplied by the reporter and/or complainant to determine whether the reported circumstances, if presumed to be true, could constitute Title IX sexual discrimination, harassment or retaliation. If the reported circumstances do not qualify as Title IX, they are to be addressed through other discrimination/harassment policies. If the reported circumstances, presumed to be true, meet the definition of Title IX sexual discrimination, harassment or retaliation, they shall be addressed through the Title IX complaint procedures. If the reported circumstances do not constitute either Title IX sexual discrimination, harassment or retaliation or conduct otherwise prohibited in this policy or other harassment policies, the Title IX Coordinator shall refer the report for follow-up under any other applicable policies or codes of conduct.

Step Four: (Within three business days of Step Three completion)
If determined by the Title IX Coordinator that the complaint does constitute Title IX Sexual discrimination, harassment or retaliation, then an informal resolution option may be presented to the complainant and the respondent by the Title IX Coordinator.

Step Five: (Within ten business days of Step Four completion)
If the informal resolution option is not accepted or does not prove to be productive, then the Title IX Coordinator investigates the claim, creates a report summarizing the findings, and distributes the report to all parties. The Initial Decision-Maker will use the standard of clear and convincing evidence when determining outcomes. The Initial Decision-Maker for all schools will be the school administrator.

Step Six:
If any of the parties, within two weeks of report receipt, decide to appeal the report findings, they must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The appeal process is conducted by the Title IX Coordinator. Once the process is completed, a final decision is made by the Appeal Decision Maker. For parish-based schools the Appeal Decision Maker will be the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The Appeal Decision Maker for the school systems will be the President of the school system.

Confidentiality of all parties, witnesses, the allegations, the filing of a report and the investigation related to any form of discrimination, harassment or retaliation shall be handled in accordance with applicable law, regulations, this policy, and the school's legal and investigative obligations.

Retaliation is prohibited against any person for:

1. Reporting or making a formal complaint of any form of discrimination or retaliation, including Title IX sexual harassment.

2. Testifying, assisting, participating or refusing to participate in a related investigation, process or other proceeding or hearing.
3. Acting in opposition to practices the person reasonably believes to be discriminatory.

The school/system and its employees are prohibited from intimidating, threatening, coercing, or discriminating against anyone for actions described above. Individuals are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator immediately if retaliation is believed to have occurred.

The Title IX Coordinator, with assistance from school/system principals, will ensure the publication and dissemination of this policy and complaint procedure at least annually to students, parents/guardians, and school/system employees to notify them of where and how to initiate complaints under this policy.

Title IX Sexual Harassment Training Requirements
The Title IX Coordinator, decision-maker, investigator, or any individual designated to facilitate an informal resolution process related to Title IX shall receive training, as required.

All training materials shall promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints without relying on sex stereotypes. All training materials shall be posted on the school's website.

Title IX Forms
All Title IX forms can be found at MyDioErie.

Disciplinary Consequences
A student who is determined to be responsible for violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with a school/system's Code of Student Conduct.

An employee who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with applicable policies, individual contracts, up to and including dismissal and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

When a report alleges Title IX sexual discrimination, harassment or retaliation, disciplinary sanctions may not be imposed until the completion of the appeal process for formal complaints. The school/system shall presume that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determinization has been made at the completion of the appeal process for formal complaints.

Reporting to Outside Agencies
Any complainant has the right to file complaints of discrimination, harassment or retaliation with federal, state or local regulatory agencies, in addition to the reporting procedures provided in this policy. Contact information for outside agencies shall be available in the school/system's office.

C. Legal Ramifications

If a Catholic school within the Diocese of Erie is found to be out of compliance with Title IX requirements, the school may lose government funding, receive penalties and could be held liable.

202.7 – SAFE2SAY SOMETHING PROGRAM

Purpose: To clarify for schools/systems their required involvement in the state's Safe2Say Something youth violence prevention program.

Additional Authority:
Act 44 of 2018
24 P.S. §13-1301-D et seq.

A. Definition
Safe2Say Something Program is a youth violence prevention program that teaches youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals of individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and to report the concern anonymously through the Safe2Say Something system.

B. Requirements
Each school/system must develop procedures for assessing and responding to reports received from the Safe2Say Something program.

If a report filed with the Safe2Say Something program is determined to be a false report, information about the subject of the false report shall not be made part of the student's record.

All students in middle and high school (~grades 5 or 6-12) are to receive a one-hour training on how to utilize a 24/7 tip line, app, and website to submit anonymous tips regarding student and school safety.

Safe2Say Something Website Resources:
1. Homepage: https://www.safe2saypa.org
2. Frequently Asked Questions: https://www.safe2saypa.org/faq/
3. School Resources: https://s2ss.knack.com/s2ss#schools/
4. Student Training PowerPoint: https://s2ss.knack.com/s2ss#schools/kn-asset/22-42-72-5c38e8b59b87140859261abd/s2ss.studentpres.pptx

C. Legal Ramifications
Lack of follow-through and/or documentation on a Safe2Say Something report could put the school in jeopardy of legal action.

203.1 – ADMISSIONS

Purpose: To use a fair and transparent process to determine which students can be accepted.

Additional Authority:

Bishop's Directive 2019
28 Pa. Code Ch 23
22 Pa. Code Ch 11
24 Pa. Code Ch 13
PA Statute Act 14 Section 1402
Americans with Disability Act
Rehabilitation Act Section 504

A. Definitions

Not applicable

B. Requirements

Catholic Mission Memorandum of Understanding

Both parents/guardian and students must be willing to abide by the values inherent in our Catholic faith and in accord with the mission of the school. For this purpose, a Catholic Mission Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix 203.1A) must be signed and dated by all parents/guardians as part of the enrollment process and then on an annual basis. This form is to be included with each student's permanent record folder.

Immunizations

The school administrator has the duty to ascertain that a child has been immunized in accordance with the requirements put forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Immunization requirements must be met for the first day of school for first-time entrance into:

- the pre-school/kindergarten level
- at 12 years of age (7th grade) and
- at 18 years of age (entry into 12th grade).

Immunizations required at entrance, 7th grade and 12th grade are also required in succeeding years. Foreign exchange students or foreign students visiting Pennsylvania schools need at least one dose of each antigen and are then granted a provisional enrollment, same as any student enrolling in a Pennsylvania school. Contact your local school nurse with questions or concerns regarding current immunization requirements.

The parent/guardian must provide proof of immunization which means a written record showing the dates (month, day, year) their child was immunized. The school is to make copies to include with the application. Regulations require that a completed Certificate of Immunization (an official certificate furnished by the Department of Health) be on file at the school where each student attends. The Certificate of Immunization shall become the school immunization record or the record of exemption. This provision shall not apply to a child that

has not been immunized or is unable to provide immunization records due to being homeless. Each school must report immunization data to the Commonwealth by December 31st of each year.

A child cannot be admitted to or permitted to attend school unless the immunization, exemption, temporary waiver or provisional admission requirements of the Department of Health have been met.

Single dose vaccines: If a child has not received a vaccine for which only a single-dose is required on the first day of attendance for that school year, the child may not be admitted to school.

Multiple dose vaccines: If a multi-dose vaccine is medically appropriate at the time of school entry, the child must have had at least one dose of each multiple dose vaccine series to be provisionally admitted. The child has five days to receive the final doses of the vaccines or risk exclusion. If it is not medically appropriate to receive all of the remaining doses within the five days, the parent must provide the school a medical certificate indicating that the scheduling the additional required doses has occurred. Remaining immunization requirements shall be completed in accordance with the requirements of the medical certificate. If, upon review, the requirements of the medial certificate are not met, the school administrator must exclude the child from school. Special exemption requirements exist for homeless children and children in foster care.

If a child has recently moved or is transferring into a school and is unable to provide immunization records, the child's parents/guardian shall have 30 days to provide immunization records to the school. The child may be excluded at the end of the 30-day period until the necessary records are provided.

Types of Exemptions:

1. Medical Exemptions - Students are exempt from immunization if a physician provides a written statement that immunization may be detrimental to the health of the student.
2. Religious Exemptions - Students are exempt from immunization if the parent, guardian or emancipated student objects in writing to the immunization based on contradiction to their religious beliefs.
3. Philosophical/Strong Moral Ethical Conviction Exemptions (added 2013) - Students are exempt from immunization if the parent, guardian or emancipated student objects in writing to the immunization based on personal beliefs.

School officials must use their discretion in accepting the statements of exemption. The reason(s) for exemption must be reasonable, as judged by the school official. The decision to accept a child whose parents or guardian have filed an exemption belongs to the school administrator and pastor/president. Each case must be handled separately due to the makeup of the school student body and staff.

Medical Examinations
A physical examination is required for all students prior to entrance to school. Students in grades one, six and eleven are required to have a physical examination and children in grades one, three and seven are required to have a dental examination. A hearing test is required in grades one, two, three, seven and eleven. A scoliosis test is required in grades six and seven. Only those students who have had a physical by their own physician within the preceding four months can be excused. Students may be excused from the physical only if a bona fide, recognized religious objection is provided. Parent/Guardian consent must be secured for all health services. The health record of the student will be made available to the school physician at the regularly scheduled health appraisals.

Parents or guardians of children of school age shall be advised in advance of the date of examination. Medical examinations shall be made in the presence of the parent or guardian of the child when so requested by the parent or guardian.

Tuition Contract
Prior to admittance, a parent/guardian must sign a tuition contract which outlines the fiscal responsibility of the parent/guardian. This contract must clearly state all obligations the family has toward the school (service hours, fundraising, etc.). The rights of the school (for payment, claims on refunds, etc.) and the rights of the parent/guardian are governed by contract law once the tuition (enrollment) contract is signed by both parties. FACTS Management paperwork does not meet the requirements of a tuition contract.

Discrimination
A school cannot discriminate in its acceptance practices on the sole basis of race, sex, disability, or national origin. A Catholic school is not required to accept any student but cannot refuse a student admittance on the sole reason of their race, sex, disability, or national origin. For schools within the Diocese of Erie with single-gender missions, restricting enrollment on the basis of sex is permitted. Age requirements regarding admissions are determined by each individual school or school system.

Students with Disabilities
A school cannot refuse to admit a student on the sole reason of his/her disability if the student qualifies in all areas and with reasonable accommodations can meet the school's requirements. Reasonable accommodations involve minor adjustments. Accommodations are not reasonable if they fundamentally alter the nature of the program, cause an undue financial burden, or create a substantial risk of injury to the student or others. Students with allergies may be classified as disabled, if an accommodation is medically necessary. Fairness and feasibility to make appropriate accommodations are what determines whether the school meets the requirements of the law.

It is the duty of the school administrator to ascertain whether a school is able to meet the needs of prospective students. The school must be confident that it will be able to meet the needs of the students that are accepted.

203.1A – Appendix – Catholic Mission MOU

DIOCESE OF ERIE
CATHOLIC MISSION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

As a parent/guardian of a student in a Catholic School, I understand, affirm and support the following:

1. The primary purpose of a Catholic school education is to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

2. Catholic schools are distinctive religious educational institutions operated as programs of the Catholic Church; they are not private schools but are administered and supported by the sponsoring parish(es), the diocese or religious community.

3. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege not a right.

4. While academic excellence and involvement in extracurricular activities (i.e., sports, clubs, etc.) are important, fidelity to the Catholic identity of the school is the fundamental priority.

5. The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity.

6. In all questions involving faith, morals, faith teaching and Church law, the final determination rests with the diocesan Bishop.

As a parent/guardian desiring to enroll my child in a Catholic school, I accept this memorandum of understanding. I pledge support for the Catholic identity and mission of this school and, by enrolling my child, I commit myself to uphold all the principles and policies that govern a Catholic school.

Father:	Mother:	Guardian:
_____	_____	_____
Printed	Printed	Printed
_____	_____	_____
Signature	Signature	Signature

Student's Name (please print): _____

School: _____

Date: _____

THIS FORM IS TO BE INCLUDED WITH EACH CHILD'S PERMANENT RECORD FOLDER AND UPDATED ANNUALLY AT THE START OF EACH SCHOOL YEAR.

203.1 – Best Practices – ADMISSIONS

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1. Sample application forms for elementary/middle school and pre-school are found at MyDioErie in Administrator Resources.

2. In the event of a teachers' strike in the local public school district, school administration must deal with each student applicant who is seeking enrollment on a case-by-case basis to determine if the desire to enroll is based solely on other concerns, such as sports and timing for graduation.

3. Setting the entry age for students is a school/system-level decision. Many schools will align their entry age to coincide with the public school district(s).

4. If a school opts to test for early admission, the practice must be offered consistently to other applicants in a similar situation.

5. During disease outbreaks, non-immunized children may be excluded from school until the outbreak is over. A child can be excluded from school through two incubation periods of the disease. When deciding to accept a student who has not been immunized, consider the health status of other students attending the school.

6. Students entering school for any grade other than entry level should provide proof of promotion to the grade for which they seek entry.

7. When a student transfers from another Catholic school, the administrator should verify that no tuition is in arrears at the other Catholic school.

8. Any student may be accepted on a provisional basis. Administrators are encouraged to review all documentation listed in #9 for transfer students.

9. When a student is transferring, the following information is to be given to the receiving school:
   - Health record (Original given to receiving school. If going out-of-state, a copy is mailed.)
   - Copy of academic records
   - Copy of Accommodations checklist, if applicable
   - Copy of standardized test scores
   - Copy of disciplinary records
   - Copy of psychological records
   - Copy of psychiatric records. These records require a separate parental consent form. (Appendix 203.1 BP-A)

10. To assist in determining if the school can accommodate a student with learning disabilities, please see Accepting Students with Special Considerations. (Appendix 203.1 BP-B)

203.1 BP-A – Appendix – Protected Health Information

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE AND DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

You May Refuse to Sign This Authorization

I, _____ (name of individual) authorize _____ (name of school) to use and disclose in any form or format a copy of records concerning individual but only as follows, to:

_____ (name of recipient) for the purpose(s) of (be specific):

_____ (description of purposes). I specifically authorize you to use and disclose the following types of super-confidential information (initial where appropriate):

____ HIV records (including HIV test results) and sexually transmissible diseases
____ Alcohol and substance abuse diagnosis and treatment records
____ Psychotherapy records
____ Tuberculosis
____ All hospital records
____ All of the above

I specifically authorize you to use and disclose the following Protected Health Information. Please initial one or more of the following, if applicable:

Written Medical Records:

____ X-rays/MRI/CT
____ Billing Records
____ Prescription records
____ Other (specify in detail): _____(description of other protected information)
____ All of the above

I understand that my records may be subject to re-disclosure by recipient(s) and unprotected by federal or state law; that this Authorization remains effective until the following date: _____ (expiration date); the following event: _____(description of event); or until you actually receive a signed revocation or until the records retention period required under federal and Pennsylvania law has expired, whichever first occurs; that I have been given an opportunity to ask questions; that I have received a copy of the signed Authorization; that I may inspect a copy of my protected health information to be used or disclosed under this Authorization; that you have not conditioned provision of services to or treatment of me upon receipt of this signed Authorization; and that I may refuse to sign this Authorization. My refusal to sign will not affect my eligibility for benefits or enrollment, payment for or coverage of services, or ability to obtain treatment, except as provided on this form. If the purpose of this Authorization is for the use and/or disclosure of health information for a research study, and I refuse to sign this Authorization, you reserve the right to deny treatment associated with such research. If the purpose of this Authorization is to disclose health information to another party based on health care that is provided solely to obtain such information, and I refuse to sign this Authorization, you reserve the right to deny that health care. I understand that I may inspect or copy the information that is used or disclosed. I understand that I may revoke this Authorization at any time by notifying you in writing, except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance on this Authorization; or if this Authorization is obtained as a condition of obtaining insurance coverage, other law provides the insurer with the right to contest a claim under the policy or the policy itself.

A copy of this signed form will be provided the individual.

_____ (name of individual) Dated: _____ (date of execution)

In the presence of:

_____ (name of witness)

203.1 BP-B – Appendix – Special Considerations

ACCEPTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Name _____ Date _____ Grade _____

Student Concerns/Diagnosis: (please check)

____ Autism
____ Deaf-blindness
____ Deafness
____ Hearing Impairment
____ Intellectual Disability
____ Multiple Disabilities
____ Orthopedic Impairment
____ Other Health Impairment
____ Serious Emotional Disturbance
____ Specific Learning Disability
____ Speech or Language Impairment
____ Traumatic Brian Injury
____ Visual Impairment
____ Other (Please specify)

_____

_____

Previously Accessed Support Programs: (please check)

____ Counseling
____ Early Intervention
____ ELL/ESL
____ Emotional Support
____ Gifted
____ Learning Support
____ Life Skills
____ Mental Health
____ Remedial
____ Wraparound
____ Other (Please specify)

_____

_____

To Do List:

Done (✓)	Task	Date
_____	Speak to principal at previous school	_____
_____	Get releases signed for access to information from doctors / psychiatrists / psychologists / counseling services	_____
_____	Ask "Why are you transferring?"	_____
_____	Request Discipline records	_____
_____	Review test scores: Academic and Cognitive	_____
_____	Write a **provisional** acceptance letter and send letter to parents	_____

Staff Available for Support:

_____

_____

Educational Plan to Meet Needs of Child:

Exceptionalities briefly defined: (each affects a child's education performance)

Autism: a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction

Deaf-blindness: concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness

Deafness: a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing

Hearing impairment: an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section

Intellectual Disability: a significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Multiple disabilities: concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

Orthopedic impairment: a severe orthopedic impairment (e.g., clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.)

Other health impairment: having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that a) is due to chronic or acute health problems (e.g., ADHD, epilepsy, etc.)

Severe emotional disturbance: a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree

a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances
d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (e.g., schizophrenia)

Specific learning disability: a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, (e.g., perceptual disabilities, dyslexia, etc.) The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Speech or language impairment: a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment

Traumatic brain injury: an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment

Visual impairment: including blindness - an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's education performance.

203.2 – ATTENDANCE

Purpose: To define the expectations of the Pennsylvania Compulsory Attendance Law and to explain steps taken concerning truant behavior.

Additional Authority:
22 Pa. Code Ch 11
24 P.S. § 1326, 1327, 1329, 1332, 1333 – 1333.2

A. Definitions

Attendance refers to students' physical exposure to or contact with learning activities
Compulsory attendance (for Catholic Schools): Attendance at a school operated by a bona fide church or other religious body which provides a minimum of 180 days of instruction or 900 hours of instruction per year at the elementary level (K-6) or 990 hours of instruction per year at the secondary level (7-12).
Compulsory school age: The period of a child's life from the time he/she enters school as a beginner, which may be no later than six years of age, until the age of seventeen or graduation from high school, whichever comes first.
Cumulative lawful absences: A maximum of ten days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification is permitted during a school year. Absences beyond ten cumulative days require an excuse from a physician.
Excuse: A written communication from the parent or guardian concerning a student's absence which notes the student's name, date and the reason for the child's absence.
Habitually Truant: A student is considered habitually truant if s/he has at least six unlawful absences during a school year.
Lawful absence: Absences for which the school has received a written excuse from the parent/guardian. This excuse is to be received within three days of the absence. Absences may be excused when a student is prevented from attendance for mental, physical, or other urgent reasons, which include but are not limited to illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, authorized school activities, and educational travel of five (5) or fewer days with prior approval. In addition, lawful absences include student attendance at court hearings related to the student's involvement with the agencies that deal with the welfare of children.
Learning activities are instructional activities provided as an integral part of the school program under the direction of certified school employees. Includes the following (in-person or remote):

- Student services, such as guidance and counseling services, psychological services, speech pathology and audiology services, and student health services
- Homeroom period/morning meeting
- Supervised study halls/tutoring
- Assemblies
- Clubs, student councils, and similar activities conducted during school hours
- Educational trips, to which admission is not charged to families and a certified school employee accompanies the students

Truant: A student is considered truant when absent for at least three unlawful absences during a school year.
Unlawful absences: Absences for which the school has not received a written excuse within the appropriate timeframe (standard protocol is three days after student absence) from the parent/guardian.

B. Requirements
A parent/guardian must call the school office to report a child absent on each day of the absence. When a call is not received from a parent/guardian, the school must contact the parent/guardian to verify the absence.

Compulsory attendance is supported by implementation of a clear, consistent attendance policy that must be shared with parents/guardians. Students and/or their parents who do not comply with compulsory attendance regulations will be subject to the consequences outlined in the attendance policy and will be assisted in improving attendance through the development of an individualized School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). A fillable SAIP is available on the PDE website.

Teachers are the first line of defense for compulsory attendance, as they are the first to recognize students with possible attendance issues. Therefore, teachers working with the building administrators should implement a plan of action including, but not limited to:

- Sharing and reviewing school policy on attendance and student responsibilities with students and families
- Contacting the student's parent/guardian upon his/her absence
- Following up with the administrator
- Meeting individually with students to discuss reason(s) for absence
- Making referrals to school counselor or appropriate outside agencies
- Collaborating with the appropriate team within the school, e.g., BLeST / SAP.

There are limited exceptions to compulsory attendance regulations for students. Unusual circumstances which may merit exception to compulsory attendance regulations must be brought to the attention of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for discussion.

The parent/guardian or person in a parental relationship, such as a foster parent, is responsible for ensuring that a child attends school regularly and for providing a written excuse in the event of absence within three calendar days of the absence. The parent/guardian must be informed that if they do not provide the written excuse within three days of the absence, the absence will be permanently counted as unlawful.

If a school/system will include time spent in a remote learning environment, toward instructional time requirements, it must implement a system that accurately tracks out-of-school instructional time. Attendance must be based on whether the student was engaged in

the assigned learning activity. To determine engagement, the school/system must account for both the student's daily access to and completion of assigned learning activities.

Procedures for Lawful Absences
A student who is absent due to mental, physical, or other urgent reasons is considered lawfully absent if the absence is less than three days consecutively and if the parent/guardian provides a written excuse within three days of the absence.

A student who is absent for three or more consecutive days is considered lawfully absent if a written excuse is provided by a physician. A student who has been absent for more than 10 days during the school year is considered lawfully absent if a written excuse is provided by a physician or proof of a legitimate absence is provided.

Procedures for Unlawful Absences
If the parent/guardian is neglectful in providing written excuses or does not meet such requirements in a timely fashion, reasonable allowances should be made to help them comply with the law. Schools must document and maintain a record of all communications, including telephone calls, written correspondence, and any other documents.

1. First unlawful absence: Parent/guardian receives notice of unlawful absence from the school. The name and telephone number of a school contact person are included with the notice. Legal penalties established by law for violation of compulsory attendance requirements are attached to the notice. (Appendix 203.2A)

2. Second unlawful absence: Parent/guardian receives second notice of unlawful absence from the school. Name and telephone number of a school contact person are included. An offer of assistance is made to the parent. Legal penalties established by law for violation of compulsory attendance requirements are attached to the notice. (Appendix 203.2B)

3. Third unlawful absence: Within ten (10) days of the third unlawful absence the parent/ guardian receives a third notice of unlawful absence by certified mail, noted as "official notice of child's third illegal absence." Legal penalties established by law for violation of compulsory attendance requirements are attached to the notice. Additionally, the parent/guardian must receive a phone call from the school indicating the student's third unlawful absence and an invitation to attend a school attendance improvement conference. Three days after such notice, the student and/or parent/guardian who violates these requirements shall be liable without further notice.

4. At this time, the school is required to convene an attendance improvement conference for the purpose of developing a School Attendance Improvement Plan. For further guidance, please see Legal Ramifications. A written invitation will be sent to the parent/guardian and the student to participate in the conference. All parties should sign the SAIP. Specific directions for developing and writing a School Attendance

Improvement Plan are attached as Appendix 203.2B. The school must hold the attendance improvement conference even if the parent/child refuse to attend. The school must document the outcome of the conference in a written School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). Representatives from the student's school district of residence should be invited to attend the conference and, once completed, should be given a copy of the SAIP.

5. Subsequent unlawful absence: After agreeing to an SAIP, or if there is no agreement, and three (3) days have passed, if the child is unlawfully absent at any point within the school year, a notice of unlawful absence is sent home via certified mail. Additionally, the student's school district of residence will be notified of the unlawful absences and that the student is at risk of becoming classified as "habitually truant."

6. Continued truancy: Once a student has six unlawful absences during a school year, they are classified as "habitually truant." The school must report to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools cases when a child is habitually truant. The student's case will be referred to his/her school district of residence where decisions will be made on the following:
   a. Refer student to school based or community-based attendance improvement program
   b. Refer student to county child and youth agency for possible disposition as a dependent child
   c. File truancy citation with the appropriate judge

7. When referring a habitually truant student to the district of residence, the school will collaborate to provide documentation for the district to comply with the PA School Code truancy requirements. Upon request, the school shall provide the student's school district of residence with the following documentation:
   a. The student's attendance record
   b. Notices provided to the parent/guardian
   c. Actions taken by the school to address truant behavior
   d. Copy of the School Attendance Improvement Plan
   e. *Optional* - copy of the student's academic performance

8. Upon request, the school shall participate in court proceedings related to juvenile dependency referrals or citations for truant behavior. Participation in such proceedings may be in person, by phone conferencing, by video conferencing or by any other electronic means.

9. If at any time throughout this process the student withdraws or is expelled from the school, the school is responsible for notifying the student's district of residence.

C. Legal Ramifications

At any hearing before a magisterial district judge, the burden would be on the school to prove

beyond a reasonable doubt that the child was habitually and without justification truant from school.

There are serious legal ramifications of truancy. Possible sentences for parents found to be in violation of compulsory attendance law:

- Paying a fine up to $750 for each offense and court costs, or in lieu of or in addition to any other sentence the district justice may order the parent, guardian or person in parental relation to perform community service in the school district in which the offending child resides for a period not to exceed six months
- Completing a parenting education program, and
- Completing in lieu of, or in addition to, the previous penalties, community service within the school district for a period of no more than six months
- If there is a failure or refusal to comply with the original penalties imposed, incarceration may be an option
- If the parents are not convicted and the child continues to be truant, the child may be fined up to $300 or be assigned to an adjudication alternative program.

Truant juveniles may have their Pennsylvania motor vehicle operating privileges removed for 90 days for a first offense and six (6) months for a second offense. Juveniles who are unlicensed are prohibited from applying for a learner's permit for 90 days for a first offense and six (6) months for a second offense.

A district justice is permitted to suspend a sentence given to a parent or child if the child is no longer habitually truant.

School Attendance Improvement Conference and School Attendance Improvement Plan
The SAIP is developed cooperatively with involved stakeholders through a School Attendance Improvement Conference, which is required after the school's notice to the student's parent/guardian upon the third unlawful absence. The School Attendance Improvement Conference engages all participants involved in the student's life to explore possible solutions to increase the student's school attendance. Maintaining open communication between the student and adults will facilitate positive outcomes.

The purpose of the School Attendance Improvement Conference is to discuss the cause(s) of the truancy and to develop a mutually agreed upon plan to assure regular school attendance. The School Attendance Improvement Conference provides both parties with the opportunity to identify, understand and explore all issues contributing to the student's truant behavior. Participation by the student and family is an integral component for this conference. A School Attendance Improvement Plan shall be developed cooperatively with the student and other meeting participants.

Issues to be addressed at the School Attendance Improvement Conference should include, but not be limited to:

- Appropriateness of the student's educational environment
- Possible elements of the school environment that inhibit student success
- Student's current academic level and needs
- Social, emotional, physical, mental and behavioral health issues
- Issues concerning family and home environment
- Any other issues affecting the student's attendance.

The participants in the School Attendance Improvement Conference are to work collaboratively to conduct a holistic assessment to determine the reason(s) the student is exhibiting truant behavior. Every member is to have a vested interest in, and responsibility for, determining an appropriate plan to assist the student to succeed both socially and academically. This School Attendance Improvement Conference also provides an opportunity to ensure that both the student and the family clearly understand the legal ramifications of not adhering to the state's compulsory attendance requirements.

The primary goal of the School Attendance Improvement Conference is the development of a comprehensive SAIP that is understood by, agreed upon and supported by the student, the parent/guardian, the school representatives and all other conference participants. The SAIP must include, but not be limited to, the following components as appropriate:

- Identification and provision of appropriate academic supports by the school and/or community organization(s)
- Identification and provision of appropriate social, emotional, physical, mental and behavioral health support from the school and/or community organization(s)
- Identification of the school environment issues that affect the student's success and solutions to address these issues
    - Explanation of the student's strengths and responsibilities related to the SAIP
    - Explanation of the family's strengths and responsibilities related to the SAIP
    - Clarification of method(s) used for monitoring the effectiveness of the SAIP
- Explanation of the consequences for each stakeholder if the SAIP is not fully implemented
    - Discussion of the benefits for successfully implementing the SAIP
    - Follow up and report the outcome of the SAIP.

The SAIP substantiates efforts made by the school, the family and other vested third parties to assist the student in addressing and resolving school attendance issues. This comprehensive system of supports and services provides documentation of the "good faith" effort between the school and the student's family should future action be required.

Directions to complete the School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)
The SAIP is to be completed at the School Attendance Improvement Conference. The school administrator must complete the SAIP in collaboration with other conference participants. A fillable SAIP is located at Administrator's Resources on the Catholic Schools Office website.

Note to School Administrators Regarding Medical Information: In this form, there are several places that request medical information from the parent(s) and/or student. While this information is helpful in fully understanding any potential medical causes for attendance issues, schools do not have the authority to require such information. Both the parent(s) and the student must be informed, prior to the meeting, that possible medical reasons for the attendance issues will be discussed and that they are not required to provide such information. The parent(s) and student must also be informed, however, that this information may be essential to developing attendance improvement solutions. If a parent and/or student does not wish to share this information, simply note on the form that the parent and/or student did not wish to share the information now. This documents that the school requested the information but that the parent and/or student was not inclined to provide it.

203.2A – Appendix – Truancy

LEGAL RAMIFICATIONS OF TRUANCY

There are serious legal ramifications of truancy.

Parents:
Pennsylvania law may impose the following on parents of truant students:

- Fine up to $300
- Pay court costs
- Sentenced to complete a parenting education program
- Community service for up to six months

If the parents show that they took reasonable steps to ensure the attendance of the child, they will not be convicted of a summary offense.

Students:
If the parents are not convicted and the child continues to be truant, the child may be fined.

- Up to $300
- Assigned to an adjudication alternative program.
- Have their Pennsylvania motor vehicle operating privileges removed for 90 days for a first offense and 6 months for a second offense.
- If unlicensed are prohibited from applying for a learner's permit for 90 days for a first offense and 6 months for a second offense, commencing on their 16th birthday.

A district justice is permitted to suspend a sentence given to a parent or child if the child is no longer habitually truant.

203.2B – Appendix – Attendance Improvement Plan

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Directions: The School Attendance Improvement Plan needs to contain the following information.

1. **Date:** Enter the date when SAIP is being completed
2. **Goal: [**STUDENT NAME**]** will attend school on a regular basis by **[**DATE**].**
3. **Basic Student Information (document the following):**
    a. Name of the Student (First M. Last)
    b. Birth Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
    c. Gender (male/female)
    d. Grade Level (K-12)
    e. Home Address
    f. Home Phone Number
    g. Cell Phone Number
    h. Special Needs
    i. Medical/Health Concerns
4. **School Information (document the following):**
    a. School District: Diocese of Erie
    b. School Address
    c. Website
    d. Student's School Building Name
    e. Student's Building Principal – name, phone number, email address (optional)
    f. Person Responsible for Addressing Student Attendance Issues at the School – name, phone number, email address (optional)
    g. Referring Teacher's Name
    h. Attach a copy of the policy regarding attendance as well as any school regulations and/or rules pertaining to absence procedures and/or requirements.
5. **Parent/Guardian Information (document the following for <u>all</u> parents/guardians, regardless of whether present):**
    a. Name
    b. Home Address
    c. Home Phone Number
    d. Work Address
    e. Work Phone Number
    f. Cell Phone Number
    g. Email Address(es) can be provided to ensure ongoing better communication
6. **List of Individuals in Attendance and Relationship to Student**
7. **Strengths (discussion and documentation):**
    a. ***Identify and document the strengths of the student, family and the school*** to support the goal of increasing attendance for the student. Engage the student and family first to identify what they perceive to be the strengths of the student.
        i. What are the student's interests?
        ii. What is the student passionate about?
        iii. What is the student's favorite subject in school?
        iv. What are the student's strongest areas of ability/talent?

8. **General Information Regarding Family and Habits (discussion and documentation):**
    a. Does the student have siblings, step or half-siblings, or are other children or young adults living in the household?
    b. With whom does the student live during the week?
    c. What time does the student wake up on school days?
    d. What type of transportation does the student use to get to school?
9. **School Records of Absence (discussion and documentation):**
    a. ***For each absence in the current school year, discuss and document the following:***
        i. Action taken by the school on each incident of absence
    b. ***Summary of all actions taken by the school regarding absences***; including the name of the person taking the action, the date action was taken and any other relevant information
    c. ***Summary of attendance issues for previous years***
10. **Assessment/Areas of Need (discussion and documentation):**
    a. ***Identify and document possible root cause/s of the attendance issues.*** It is crucial (yet sometimes overlooked) to build rapport with the student. Engage the student and family first to identify what they perceive to be areas of need for the student. This dialogue benefits all involved parties:
        i. Student: academic, medical, social, physical, mental, behavioral health issues, problems with peers, problems with teachers or other adults within the school
        ii. Parent/Guardian: medical, home environment, work schedules, unsupervised time for student, transportation, socioeconomic factors, special circumstances, etc.
        iii. School: school environment, student's interaction with other adults and with other students, classes, etc.
11. **Solutions (discussion and documentation):**
    a. ***Review the strengths*** listed at the beginning of the meeting, ***discuss and document potential solutions*** considering these strengths. Engage the student and family first to identify what they perceive to be solutions to resolving the student's attendance issues.
        i. Some examples of possible solutions are:
            1. Where the student is left unattended due to a parent's work schedule or other reason, an appropriate action step could be to have a neighbor, extended family member or other adult either stay with the student or be in contact with the student during the parent's absence.
            2. Increasing student involvement in programs and services available in the school or community.
            3. Pairing the student with a mentor (family member, teacher, school staff, community businesses, etc.).
            4. Pairing the student with a business member in the field that interests the student. This may help the student to understand the relevance of what he/she is learning in school and future endeavors.
            5. Increasing participation in activities intended to build self-esteem or confidence (e.g., tutoring elementary students, acting as a junior assistant coach on a school or community sports team, joining a club

or activity in the student's interest area). For example, if the student reads well, a possible solution could be the student tutoring of elementary students. This engages the older student in a meaningful activity, increases confidence and supports his/her sense of responsibility by tutoring a younger student, thereby regular school attendance and academic success of both the older and younger student. Likewise, if a student is interested in athletics, encourage participation in an athletic activity.

6. Coordinating with county and/or other services to student and/or family to address health, social or financial issues.

b. ***Discuss and document potential motivators***. Engage the student and family first to identify and document what they perceive to be motivators for the student that might be used to assist in resolving the student's attendance issues.
    i. For example: If there is a teacher or other faculty member, a possible solution may be periodic "check-ins" with that faculty member to support and encourage the student.

c. ***Discuss and Document Responsible party(ies):***
    i. Name of the person/agency that will be responsible for monitoring and encouraging progress in <u>each</u> stated solution.
    ii. Contact information for each person/agency listed (to assist in monitoring/follow up).

12. Specific Potential Benefits to Student for Compliance with the SAIP (discussion and documentation):

a. First engage the student and family in a ***discussion to identify*** what they perceive to be ***benefits of resolving the student's attendance issues***.
b. Some examples of potential benefits are:
    i. Better grades for the student
    ii. Graduating
    iii. Increased potential for the student to find employment
    iv. Increased post-secondary education opportunities for the student.
c. ***Document any potential benefits*** identified on the SAIP.

13. Specific Potential Consequences to Student and/ Family for Non-Compliance with the SAIP (discussion and documentation):

a. First engage the student and family in a ***discussion to identify*** what they perceive the ***consequences to be of not resolving the student's attendance issues***.
b. Clearly outline the consequences for the student and parent/guardian if they do not follow-through with the recommendations of the SAIP. Some examples of potential consequences are:
    i. If the student values school and the absences occurred three days in a row, then perhaps this was an isolated incident. However, it should be made clear that consequences for the fourth absence will result in a citation to the magisterial district judge and referral to the county children and youth agency once six unlawful absences have occurred.
    ii. The impact of additional absences on post-high school plans for employment for further schooling including decreased opportunities
    iii. Potential for delayed graduation of the student or having to repeat a grade.

c. Document any consequences identified on the SAIP.

14. **Signatures:** The student and parent/guardian(s) will sign and date the SAIP as verification they understand and agree to all components of the SAIP.
15. **Parent/Student Concerns:** Where the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or the student do not feel that the school, community agency, or other individual tasked with providing services/opportunities in the SAIP are not implementing the SAIP appropriately, the parents/guardians and/or student should make a request to the school to reconvene the SAIP team to discuss the implementation of the Plan. Upon such request, the school will arrange and facilitate a reconvene to discuss implementation issues.
16. **Follow-up Meeting:** With school-family participants present, a follow-up meeting will be scheduled. At the follow-up meeting, each responsible party listed in the Solutions section will report on the progress of their area of responsibility.
17. **Next Steps:** The group members will list the outcome(s) of the SAIP and outline next steps, if any. The next steps should include future meeting dates.
18. **Permission to Release SAIP and Signatures:** The student, parent/guardian and school official will sign permission for the SAIP to be released to relevant parties.
    a. ***A copy of the SAIP will be retained in the student's file.***
    b. ***A copy of the SAIP must be provided to the:***
        i. Student
        ii. Parent/guardian
        iii. Appropriate school personnel
        iv. Other: signatures of responsible party or educational decision maker.

203.2 – Best Practices – ATTENDANCE

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1. Sample parent letters are available in Appendix 203.2 BP-A through Appendix 203.2 BP-E.

2. The Flowchart of Procedures for Student Absences (Appendix 203.2 BP-F) can be used as a quick reference guide.

3. At the time of the School Attendance Improvement conference, it is recommended that parents provide written authorization for release of student records so that the School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) can be shared with those outside of the school staff.

203.2 BP-A – Appendix – Unexcused/Illegal Absence 1

On School Letterhead

NON-COMPLIANCE OF COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAWS (PA SCHOOL CODE 1354)

UNEXCUSED/ILLEGAL ABSENCE – FIRST NOTICE

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

This letter is a first notice that your son or daughter has received an unexcused absence. A student receives an unexcused absence when a valid excuse is not received within three (3) days of a student's return to school.

If a student receives three unexcused absences throughout the course of the year, a Student Attendance Improvement Conference will be scheduled.

It is our duty to work with parents and students to achieve regular school attendance. Administrators and staff members are always available to answer questions about our attendance policy. We encourage you to contact us by phoning the school. It is our goal to strengthen your student 's educational experience and prevent further unexcused absences from school.

Legal penalties can be incurred by both parents and students if these absences continue. A list of legal ramifications has been included with this letter.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and attention to this important attendance matter.

Sincerely,

Principal

203.2 BP-B – Appendix – Absences Requiring Doctor Excuse

On School Letterhead

NON-COMPLIANCE OF COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAWS (PA SCHOOL CODE 1354)

ABSENCES REQUIRING A DOCTOR'S EXCUSE

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

This letter is to notify you that your child has been absent from school 10 or more days this school year. This negatively impacts academic performance, and it is very difficult for the student to overcome this loss of instructional time.

We are committed to the belief that regular attendance is conducive to proper and thorough educational programs.

Therefore, further absences require a doctor's excuse within three days of absence or they are considered unexcused/illegal.

Respectfully.

Principal

203.2 BP-C – Appendix – Unexcused/Illegal Absence 2

On School Letterhead

NON-COMPLIANCE OF COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAWS (PA SCHOOL CODE 1354)

UNEXCUSED/ILLEGAL ABSENCE- SECOND WARNING

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

This letter is a warning notification of a second unexcused attendance violation. A second violation is filed when a student is illegally absent for a second time during the school year. A student receives an unexcused/illegal absence when a valid excuse is not received within three (3) days of a student's return to school.

We are concerned with your child's attendance at school. Students' grades suffer from missed days, and the full benefit is not received when students are absent from class.

If a student receives three unexcused absences throughout the course of the year, a Student Attendance Improvement Conference will be scheduled.

Legal penalties can be incurred by both parents and students if these absences continue. A list of legal ramifications has been included with this letter.

Please call the school office concerning this matter if you have any questions. We will be glad to help in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Principal

203.2 BP-D – Appendix – Unexcused/Illegal Absence 3

On School Letterhead

NON-COMPLIANCE OF COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAWS (PA SCHOOL CODE 1354)

UNEXCUSED/ILLEGAL ABSENCE – THIRD NOTICE

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

This notice is required to be sent by your school if your child has three unexcused/illegal absences.

A student receives an unexcused/illegal absence when a valid excuse is not received within three (3) days of a student's return to school.

Our records indicate that the following dates were unexcused/illegal absences.

_____ _____ _____

Due to an accumulation of three unexcused/illegal absences, the school is required by law to meet with you and your child to develop a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). You are asked to attend the School Attendance Improvement Conference at the following date and time:

_____ _____ _____

Date: ` Time: Location:

Legal penalties can be incurred by both parents and students if these absences continue. A list of legal ramifications has been included with this letter.

Your school district of residence will also be notified of this situation and will be informed of any further unexcused/illegal absences.

Our goal is to work with you and your child to help eliminate any barriers with school attendance. Your attendance at the Student Attendance Improvement Conference is essential to develop solutions to help prevent your child from receiving another unexcused/illegal absence.

Respectfully.

Principal

203.2 BP-E – Appendix – Unexcused/Illegal Absence 4+

On School Letterhead

NON-COMPLIANCE OF COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAWS (PA SCHOOL CODE 1354)

UNEXCUSED/ILLEGAL ABSENCE – FOURTH (FIFTH) NOTICE

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

Your child has missed _____ days of school so far this year, of which _____ are unexcused/ illegal.

This is an excessive number of absences in breach of the Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) and/or in violation of the compulsory attendance requirements. Each day a student is absent from school, he/she misses six (6) hours of quality instruction time. This negatively impacts academic performance and it is very difficult for the student to overcome this loss of instructional time. We are committed to the belief that regular attendance is conducive to proper and thorough educational programs.

Your child's absences this year have not permitted him/her to receive the proper exposure to our educational program. Repeated communications and the attempted SAIP have not brought an improvement in your child's attendance. Since there has been no improvement, the school has notified the public school district of residence.

Legal penalties can be incurred by both parents and students if these absences continue. A list of legal ramifications has been included with this letter.

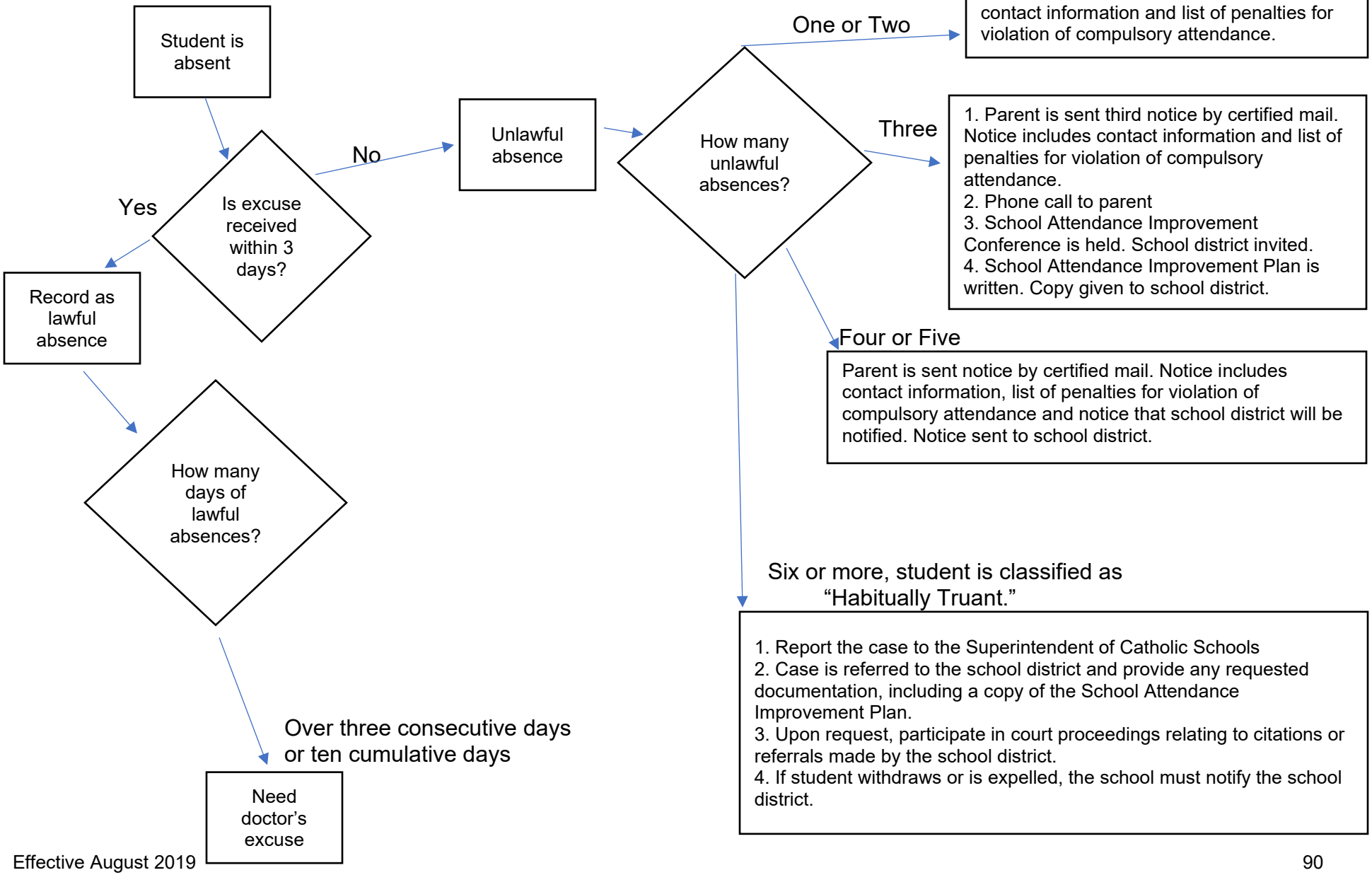
If a sixth unexcused/illegal absence occurs, your child’s attendance issue will be turned over to the public school district of residence to take further action.

Sincerely,

Principal

203.2 BP-F – Appendix – Absences Flowchart

Flowchart of procedures for student absences



203.4 – INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Purpose: To provide the framework for participation of international students within the school program.

Additional Authority:
Public Law 87-256 as amended, 22 U.S.C. § 2451, et. Seq. (1988), also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act
Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001, Public Law 107-56
Public Law 107-173, Section 501 Foreign Student Monitoring Program (SEVIS)
Code of Federal Regulations, 8 CFR § 214.3, Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)

A. Definitions:
International students are categorized as F or J students:
F-1 Student: Nonimmigrant student legally in the United States for the purpose of academic or English language education, typically attending a full-time program, length of program can be from one to four years.
J Student: Nonimmigrant student legally in the United States as a secondary school student exchange program, typically participating in a one-year program.
SEVP certification is the process through which schools go to receive authorization from Department of Homeland Security to enroll students with F-1 visas.

B. Requirements
The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its delegates, i.e., U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), have oversight for F students.

The Department of State has oversight over J students, who are sponsored through a U.S. university, private organization, or government program sponsors (not the Diocese of Erie) and are welcome to attend our schools.

High schools within the Diocese of Erie whose officials enroll international students with F-1 visas will comply with applicable federal laws, regulations, and policies required to maintain SEVP certification. In addition, in accordance with the bishop's directive, enrollment of international students shall be limited to no more than 5% of the school's total enrollment in grades 9-12.

Elementary/middle schools in the diocese are not approved to accept students with F-1 visas.

No child will be admitted to a school within the Diocese of Erie unless the child and his/her family have met all applicable legal requirements, as well as the school's requirements for admission. International students must be able to read, write, and understand English well enough to participate in all school activities. Students must also provide financial evidence

showing that they or a sponsor have sufficient funds to cover tuition and living expenses during the period of intended study.

International students participating in athletics or other co-curricular activities are required to abide by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) rules and other legal authorities regarding participation for international students.

C. Legal Ramifications

When any Catholic school within the diocesan does not abide by the requirements of the DHS regarding international students, serious consequences can result which could affect the international student program for the whole diocese.

Working with international students is a very complicated area of law, and questions about individual students should be reviewed with legal counsel.

204.1 – NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH, BREAKFAST AND MILK PROGRAMS

Purpose: To provide guidance to schools that voluntarily participate in the National School Lunch, Breakfast, or Special Milk Program for Children.

Additional Authority:
7 CFR § 210
7 CFR § 215
7 CFR § 220
All other applicable laws and regulations

A. Definition
The National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program and the Special Milk Program for Children are part of federal legislation to provide low-cost or free meals and/or milk to qualified students through subsidies to schools.

B. Requirements
All schools who voluntarily participate in the National School Lunch, Breakfast, and/or the Special Milk Program for Children are required to operate in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, e.g., Civil Rights Training. In addition, all schools participating in National School Lunch, Breakfast, and/or the Special Milk Program for Children are required to comply with the Diocesan Wellness Policy.

In the operation of the food service program, discrimination is prohibited against individuals based on the following protected classes: race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.

Public Notification
The school administrator will ensure the "And Justice for All" poster is prominently displayed in each school where meals and snacks are served.

The school administrator will ensure the following nondiscrimination statement is on all publications, webpages, posters and informational materials that mention or indicate involvement with the USDA and child nutrition programs.

- In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.
- Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal

Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

Civil Rights Complaint Log

The school must keep a Civil Rights Complaint Log which will document the complaint and actions taken. The Complaint Log must include the following information:

1. Date complaint received
2. Complainant's name
3. Complainant's address
4. Complainant's telephone number
5. Complainant's email address
6. Allegation of discrimination/issue
7. Date of alleged discriminatory action.

The Civil Rights Complaint Log will be maintained separately from any other complaint log.

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program must comply with all regulations in the Diocesan Wellness policy. (See Policy #204.2)

C. Legal Ramifications

Within five (5) days of receipt of a Civil Rights complaint, the school must forward information related to the complaint to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

204.2 – WELLNESS

Purpose: (For schools participating in the National School Lunch Program) To provide students with a healthy school environment that maximizes individual growth and development.

Additional Authority:
WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004
Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010

A. Definition

Competitive foods are defined as foods and beverages offered or sold to students on school campus during the school day, which are not part of the reimbursable school breakfast or lunch.
School campus means any area of property under the jurisdiction of the school that students may access during the school day.
School day means the period from midnight before school begins until thirty (30) minutes after the end of the official school day.

B. Requirements

The Wellness Policy has well-defined measurable goals:

- Engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other community members in developing, implementing, and monitoring diocesan-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- Maximize nutritional and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity that promote overall health and well-being.

The Wellness Policy also includes:

- Periodic assessment tools to gauge how effectively student needs are being addressed
- Periodic updates to keep the policy current
- Feedback opportunities for all policy stakeholders.

The Diocesan Wellness Policy is available for the public to view via the Catholic Schools Office website at the link for Parent Resources.

The Diocesan Wellness Committee (DWC) will serve as a resource to schools for implementing the Wellness Policy. This committee will consist of parents, students, school food authorities, school administrators, physical education teachers, and school health professionals.

Each school administrator will appoint a committee to oversee the implementation of the Student Wellness Policy in the school. This committee will be referred to as the Local Wellness Committee (LWC). The job of the LWC is to use the School Wellness Index to identify areas for development in the school.

School Wellness Index
The School Wellness Index is an assessment tool. (Appendix 204.2A) Periodic use of the School Wellness Index helps schools determine if they are meeting the goals of the Student Wellness Policy.

The School Wellness Index is divided into four (4) categories with goal statements relating to each of the four categories. The four areas included in the School Wellness Index are Nutrition Education, Physical Activity, School Meals and Competitive Foods. The use of an implementation key indicates the level of compliance with the stated goal.

The Implementation Key is as follows:
1. Consistently meets and exceeds goal
2. Consistently meets goal
3. Needs work to meet goal.

Areas that contain "3" indicate a need for extra attention by the Local Wellness Committee to comply with the Student Wellness Policy and maximum health benefits for all students.

Based on the results of the School Wellness Index, the LWC will identify two or three goals that the school will address during the academic year. The LWC will provide periodic feedback to the administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents using newsletters (hard copy or electronic), parent broadcast announcements, and/or periodic meetings.

Nutrition Education Overview and Goals
Nutrition Education includes any learning experience designed to facilitate the voluntary adoption of food and drink choices and other nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being.

The primary goal of the Nutrition Education component is to influence students' food and drink selections. Additionally, Nutrition Education will reinforce lifelong balance by emphasizing the link between caloric intake and exercise in ways that are appropriate.

Nutrition Education at all levels will:
- Be offered as part of an integrated curriculum
- Be sequential, comprehensive and standards based
- Be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to improve and maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Include developmentally appropriate events that promote good nutritional habits
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low fat and fat free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods.

Nutrition Promotion Overview and Goals
Promotion of healthy eating is also carried out through an environment that encourages healthy nutrition choices.

Nutrition Promotion at all levels will:

- Provide parents resources about health and nutrition to encourage healthy meals for their children
- Provide opportunities for appropriate student projects that relate to nutrition
- Consistently display nutrition messages throughout the classrooms, cafeteria and school assembly areas.

Physical Activity Overview and Goals

It is recommended that children engage in 60 minutes of moderate physical activity each day.

The primary goal of the Physical Activity component is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills specific for physical activity. Additionally, the Physical Activity component will help maintain physical fitness and ensure that all students regularly participate in physical activity. A comprehensive Physical Activity program includes physical education, recess, and before and after school programs.

Physical Activity Education at all levels will:

- Be offered as part of an integrated curriculum
- Be sequential, comprehensive and standards based
- Be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to improve and maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Include developmentally appropriate activities that promote academic achievement and contribute to the recommended 60 minutes a day of physical activity for all children.

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS/BEVERAGES AT SCHOOL

School Meal Program Overview and Goals

All foods served at schools will contribute to the overall health and well-being of the students. The meals and snacks offered to students will provide a healthy, balanced nutritional program.

Meals and snacks at all schools will:

- Contain no more than 30 percent of total calories from fat
- Consist of fresh fruits and vegetables daily in each meal
- Include only one percent and nonfat milk options
- Offer whole grains and introduce new whole grain products as they become available
- Occasionally include food items selected by students and parents through taste testing, community meetings and surveys
- Be served in clean, safe and pleasant environments
- Provide an appropriate amount of time for lunch and breakfast.

Competitive Food Overview and Goals

All food and beverages sold or served to students in schools must comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines (including vending and ala carte items). These include any foods that

are served in classrooms and any foods offered at school-sponsored events during the school day.

Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day shall offer healthy alternatives in addition to the more traditional fare.

All competitive foods sold outside of the school meal must comply with the federal Smart Snacks in School nutrition guidelines.

The following items will not be offered as part of the school breakfast or lunch program.

- Foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) as defined by the USDA regulations, including:
  - All food and beverage items listing sugar in any form as the first ingredient
  - All food containing trans fat
- All sodas and sugar-based drinks

Sold Competitive Foods

Fundraising activities held during the school day involving the sale of competitive foods shall be limited to foods that meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, unless an exemption is approved by the Catholic Schools Office. Up to five exempt fundraisers in elementary and middle school buildings, and up to ten exempt fundraisers in high school buildings are permitted. Exempt fundraisers are fundraisers in which competitive foods are available for sale to students that do not meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. To request an exemption, the school must complete a Fundraiser Exemption Approval form and submit it two weeks prior to the event to the Catholic Schools Office. (Appendix 204.2B) An e-mail approving the exemption will then follow. Even though an exemption has been granted, the food and beverage items may not be sold during the breakfast or lunch mealtime.

Non-sold Competitive Foods

Food and beverages shall not be used as a reward or incentive in schools. A list of suggested non-food rewards to offer as an alternative to food rewards is available at the Catholic Schools Office website under Teacher Resources. Non-sold competitive foods available to students, which may include, but are not limited to, foods and beverages offered as rewards and incentives at classroom parties and celebrations, or as shared classroom snacks, shall meet the following guidelines:

- Rewards and Incentives: Foods and beverages shall not be used as a reward for classroom or school activities unless the reward is an activity that promotes a positive nutrition message.
- Classroom Parties and Celebrations: Classroom parties shall offer a minimal amount of foods (maximum of three items) containing added sugar as the primary ingredient (e.g., cupcakes, cookies) and will provide the following:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables; and
  - Water, 100 % juice, 100 % juice diluted with water, low-fat milk or nonfat milk.

Marketing
Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day shall meet or exceed the established federal nutrition standards (USDA Smart Snacks in School). Marketing applies to logos/verbiage on vending machines, posters, trash cans, cups used for beverage dispensing and similar types of items. Existing contracts should be reviewed and modified to the extent possible. Marketing does not apply to personal clothing or other items brought from home or educational tools.

Measurement, Assessment and Evaluation Overview
Measurement, assessment and evaluation will be an integral part of ensuring the adoption and implementation of the Student Wellness Policy guidelines. A Catholic Schools Office designee will ensure compliance at the school level.

The LWC will monitor the implementation of the Student Wellness Policy, execute a plan for evaluating its effectiveness, and report to the school administrator, parents, and/or the community the status of implementing the plan. The committee will utilize the School Wellness Index and other sources of data to identify priority areas and to monitor improvements in those areas. The committee will ensure that the school provides families with information about school and community nutrition education and physical activity opportunities. The committee will report to the Diocesan Wellness Committee on an annual basis with results of the School Wellness Index.

Every three years, the Wellness policy will be assessed as to its effectiveness in meeting the established goals. This triennial assessment shall include:

- The extent to which each school follows laws and policies related to wellness
- The extent to which this policy compares to model wellness policies
- A description of the progress made by the diocesan schools in attaining the goals of this policy.

The Diocesan Wellness Committee will make this assessment available to the public. The Wellness Policy will be reviewed and updated after the assessment is complete.

Record Keeping
It is the responsibility of the Catholic Schools Office to maintain the following records on an annual basis:

- Current Diocesan Wellness Policy
- Meeting agenda and minutes of the Diocesan Wellness Committee’s meetings
- Evidence of annual public notification of content of the Wellness policy
- Evidence of compliance with the community involvement requirements
- Evidence of the triennial assessment

Other School Based Activities
In addition to the school-based activities on the Wellness Index, regular professional development will be provided to all applicable groups including School Food Service Staff.

Furthermore, because faculty and staff need to model positive health behaviors, ongoing wellness opportunities will be offered to the staff. Some suggestions for offerings include:

- Workshops and presentations on health promotion
- Educational resources that encourage healthy lifestyles, prevent injury, and reduce chronic stress
- Fitness opportunities such as walking clubs, fitness challenges, and before and after school programs such as aerobics and healthy eating groups
- In-service programs outlining the Student Wellness Policy

C. Legal Ramifications

All schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program should be diligent in following this policy because it is part of program's audit.

204.2A – Appendix – School Wellness Index

SCHOOL WELLNESS INDEX

SCHOOL NAME_____**CITY**_____

Due Date: _____ **Send to:** Catholicschools@eriercd.org

Implementation Key:
1 - consistently meets & exceeds goal 2 - consistently meets goal 3 - needs work to meet goal

1. Nutrition Education

Goal	Level of Implementation	Comments
a. School provided comprehensive nutrition education program.		
b. Nutrition Education program promoted fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low fat and fat free dairy products.		
c. Nutrition Education emphasized the caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure.		
d. Assessment tests indicated that students have increased their knowledge of nutrition.		
e. The school shared nutrition information through parent and student newsletters.		
f. Nutrition Education was provided through speakers and displays around the school.		
g. Nutrition Education is incorporated into the curriculum.		

2. Nutrition Promotion

Goal	Level of Implementation	Comments
a. Provided parents resources about health and nutrition to encourage healthy eating at home.		
b. Provided opportunities for student projects that relate to nutrition.		
c. Nutrition messages were displayed in classrooms, cafeteria and assembly areas.		

3. Physical Activity

Goal	Level of Implementation	Comments
a. The school provided a comprehensive physical education program that meets Diocesan Standards.		
b. The school educated students about the value of physical activity and provided opportunities for every student to develop his/her knowledge and skills.		
c. Students received daily recess for no less than 20 minutes each day in a safe environment, preferably outside.		
d. Playgrounds provided safe physical activity.		
e. Afterschool programs encouraged physical activity.		
f. Teachers incorporated stretching breaks into lesson plans.		
g. Physical Activity resources are shared with parents and students though regular newsletters.		
h. Physical Activity Education was provided by speakers and displays throughout the school.		
i. Physical activity was not used as a form of punishment.		
j. Loss of recess was not used as a form of punishment.		
k. Students do not have periods of 2 hours or more of inactivity.		

4. School Meal Plan

The goals with an asterisk (*) only apply to schools participating in the National School Lunch Program.

Goal	Level of Implementation	Comments
a. *The school lunch program met all minimum requirements set by local, state, and federal statutes.		
b. Meals were appealing and attractive to children.		
c. Meals were served in clean, pleasant settings.		
d. *Meals offered a variety of fruits and vegetables.		
e. *Meals included only low fat and fat free milk products.		
f. *Half of all grains served with meals were whole grain.		
g. *Trans fats were never used in food preparation.		
h. Students have a minimum of 20 minutes to eat lunch and a minimum of 10 minutes to eat breakfast.		
i. Students have access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before all meals and snacks.		
j. All snacks provided make a positive contribution to children's diet with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as primary snacks and water as primary beverage.		
k. *School shared School Meal Program information with parents and students through a newsletter.		

5. Competitive Foods

Goal	Level of Implementation	Comments
a. Healthy food and beverage choices were available at vending machines, student stores, and at parties and fundraisers.		
b. Competitive foods included healthy food and beverage choices.		
c. Teachers provided a list of healthy snack item suggestions to parents.		
d. Beverage consumption in the classroom was limited to water, 100% juice, and low fat or non-fat milk.		
e. School-based marketing of brands promoted healthy food and beverage choices.		
f. Environmentally friendly practices that maximize the reduction of waste by recycling, reusing, composting, and purchasing recycled products occurred.		
g. Fundraising efforts include healthy foods and non-food items.		

PRINCIPAL'S SIGNATURE_____**DATE**_____

WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

_____

_____

_____

_____

204.2B – Appendix – Fundraiser Exemption Approval

Diocese of Erie
Catholic Schools Office
Fundraiser Exemption Approval Form

Complete this form to receive an exemption from the USDA nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold to students during the school day on the school campus. Even with the exemption, schools are not permitted to sell these items in the food service area during breakfast or lunch. A maximum of five fundraiser exemptions can be granted during the school year for elementary/middle school and a maximum of ten fundraiser exemptions for high schools.

The form must be submitted to the Catholic Schools Office at least two weeks prior to the event. An e-mail will be sent notifying the requester of the approval.

School Name:_____ Date: _____

Title of Fundraiser: _____

Brief Description of Fundraiser: _____

_____

Fundraiser Organizers / Group Receiving Sponsorship Through Fundraiser:

_____

Complete the chart by giving dates, times, location of fundraiser. A fundraiser given an exemption cannot exceed 5 consecutive school days.

Date	Begin Time	End Time	Location

Food/beverage(s) being sold: _____

_____

Adult Coordinator:_____

Signature of Principal _____ Date _____

E-mail Address for Approval Response _____

For Office Use: Approval _____ Date _____ E-Mail _____

Comments: _____

204.3 – TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Purpose: To assist in the clarification of transportation issues and bus safety.

Additional Authority:
24 P.S. § 510, 13 – 1361 and 1517
67 Pa. Code, Chapter 447

A. Definition

Hazardous refers to an unsafe condition between vehicles and school students, while the students are walking between their home and their school or school bus stop.

B. Requirements

Transportation

When a public school district provides transportation for its public students, it must provide transportation services to nonpublic students of the same grade level that it is providing for its own students. The nonpublic school must be nonprofit and located within ten miles of the public district's boundary, measured by the nearest public road. If the school building in which the student is enrolled is not located within the ten mile distance, the nonpublic pupil is not eligible for transportation, nor are his parents eligible for payment towards transportation costs.

The local public school district is required to transport eligible nonpublic school students to school on days when the nonpublic school(s) is in session and the public school is closed with the exception of a closure due to weather conditions. The law allows a child, regardless of age, to walk up to a mile and a half to a bus stop. The mile and a half is measured by public roads and does not include any private lane or walkway of the child's residence. If a parent/guardian believes their child must walk on a road that is hazardous, the law provides for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to review potentially hazardous walking routes. The request for this review must be made by the public school district to the local PennDOT engineering district office. PennDOT regulations do not address hazards other than road or traffic conditions. The local public district may assess conditions such as bad neighborhoods, secluded wooded areas, snow removal, etc., when developing transportation routes. A public school district may suspend busing services for a child due to behavior issues. Transportation is a privilege, not a right. The local public school district develops the bus routes based on geography, population distribution, etc. and there are no time limits set for how long a student may have to ride on the bus.

Bus Safety

All schools owning and operating school buses for the transportation of school children on a daily basis shall conduct, on school grounds, two emergency evacuation drills on buses during each school year, the first to be conducted during the first week of the first school term and the second during the month of March and at such other times as the administrator may require. Each such drill shall include the practice and instruction concerning the location, use and

operation of emergency exit doors and fire extinguishers and the proper evacuation of buses in the event of fires or accidents. Bus operators shall be provided with the proper training and instructions to enable them to carry out the provisions of this policy.

C. Legal Ramifications

Case law (Garnet Valley School District vs. Hanlon) has been tested and it is appropriate for public school buses to transport nonpublic school students over a state boundary as long as it falls within the 10 miles of the public school district boundary.

204.4 – DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Purpose: To define what student information is classified as directory information and can be shared without parent permission.

Additional Authority:
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99)
Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. § 7908)
10 U.S.C. § 503(c)

A. Definitions

Directory information is information about a student that is generally not considered to be an invasion of privacy or harmful if released by the school, and includes:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- School issued electronic mail address (email)
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student's SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

B. Requirements

FERPA requires that schools, with certain exceptions, obtain written consent from parents/guardians or eligible students prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. Directory Information is one of the exceptions to this requirement.

Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless parents/guardians or eligible students have advised the school to the contrary.

A "Release of Directory Information" (Appendix 204.4A) notification must be disseminated to all school families at the start of each school year.

Parents/guardians or eligible students, who do not want the school to disclose directory information from the student's education records without their prior written consent, must notify the school in writing by September 15th. Written requests must be maintained in the student's permanent record folder. These requests must be honored while a student is in attendance unless the parent/guardian rescinds the opt out request.

204.4A – Appendix – Release of Directory Information

REPRODUCE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, requires that schools, with certain exceptions, obtain written consent from parents/guardians prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from their child's education records. However, schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless parents/guardians have advised the school to the contrary. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the school to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production
- The annual yearbook
- Honor roll or other recognition lists
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require schools receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories - names, addresses and telephone listings - unless parents have advised the school that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If a parent does not want the school to disclose directory information from his/her child's education records without his/her prior written consent, he/she must notify the school in writing by September 15th. The following information has been designated as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student’s SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

These laws are: Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503 (c).

204.5 – PARENTAL CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

Purpose: To define how to address custody situations where there is a separation or divorce between parents.

Additional Authority:
20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
Court order(s) and/or legally binding written agreements

A. Definition
Not applicable.

B. Requirements
Divorced or separated parents are responsible for informing the school of the status of their rights regarding parental custody arrangements, access to student educational records, and educational decision-making. They are required to provide school officials with copies of any court order and/or legally binding written agreements specifying parental custody, access to the children and responsibility for the children's education. The administrator or designee will examine and utilize the court order and written agreements to resolve any conflicts concerning parental custody, access to student records and educational decisions.

In the absence of any court order or written agreement establishing custody:

- The school must assume both parents have custodial rights.
- Unless directed by a court order, custodial rights do not extend to step-parents or grandparents.
- Both parents have a legal right of access to all school information relating to the children's educational program and progress unless such rights have been terminated.
- The non-custodial parent is permitted contact with school staff to discuss school related concerns, programs and decisions and has a legal right to question and challenge such decisions unless such rights have been terminated.
- School information, progress reports (including test results) and report cards routinely provided by the school to the custodial parent must be sent to a non-custodial parent upon request.
- Separate conference times are not required to be offered to divorced or separated parents unless there is a restraining order against one of the parents.

204.5 – Best Practices – PARENTAL CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

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1. Upon enrollment, obtain the court order for any custody arrangements.

2. Schools are not required to offer separate conferences for each parent unless the school has documentation of a restraining order.

204.6 – STUDENT SURVEYS

Purpose: To address student surveys that inquire about a student's personal or family life and may require parent permission.

Additional Authority:
20 U.S.C. § 1232h - Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)
22 Pa. Code § 4.4

A. Definition
Survey is an activity that can be written or verbal, in which students are asked a question or a series of questions in order to gather information. Surveys include questionnaires.

B. Requirements
The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) requires that the school notify parents/guardian to obtain consent or allow them to opt their child out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the areas considered "protected."

Areas protected by law that require parent permission prior to gathering:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
- Sexual behaviors or attitudes
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
- Legally recognized privileged or analogous (similar) relationships, such as with lawyers, physicians, and ministers
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or students' parent
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Every time students are asked to participate in one of these "protected information" activities, whether written or verbal, a parent(s)/guardian must complete a Student Survey Consent Form. (Appendix 204.6A) The Student Survey Consent Form must list each of the protected areas that are found in the particular survey for which consent is being requested. Only students whose parents agree to their participation in the activity may participate.

A student's parent has the right to inspect a student survey prior to administration if it regards protected areas. Parents must provide timely notice, as defined on the Student Survey Consent Form, to the administrator. The parent or guardian may not be entitled to a copy if it is copywritten material.

C. Legal Ramifications
All surveys and instruments used to collect information from students must relate to the school's educational objectives.

If the program that is sponsoring the survey is not government funded, the permission may be passive. A passive permission does not require a parent/guardian signature, but notification still must occur.

204.6A – Appendix – Opt Out Consent Form

REPRODUCE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

CONSENT FORM

_____
Title of Survey

The *Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20U.S.C. § 1232h*, requires that we notify you and obtain consent or allow you to opt your child out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight (8) areas ("protected information surveys"):

Check all that apply.
_____ 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
_____ 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
_____ 3. Sex behaviors or attitudes
_____ 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
_____ 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
_____ 6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
_____ 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents
_____ 8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of student information for marketing purposes ("marketing surveys"), and certain physical exams and screenings.

_____ YES, I give permission for my child to participate in the _____
Title of Survey

_____ NO, I do not give permission for my child to participate in the _____
Title of Survey

PRINT Child's Name: _____ *Grade Level:*_____

PRINT Parent/Legal Guardian's Name: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return this form no later than _____ *to*
Date

_____
Name of person to whom form is to be returned

Reminder: Should you wish to review the survey before it is administered, please contact the principal to arrange a time and place for this review. Please note: The survey is copyrighted material; therefore, it may be viewed but <u>cannot</u> be copied or disseminated.

204.7 – STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

Purpose: To provide guidance for developing the required, current and resourceful student/parent handbook.

Additional Authority:
Can. 796 §2
Contract Law
Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, 43 P.S. § 954(b), as amended by the Pennsylvania CROWN Act, Act 54 of 2025

A. Definition

Student/Parent Handbook is a reference document that contains school policies, regulations, and guidelines defining and clarifying school processes, procedures and instructions that will assist the student(s) and parent(s)/guardian and serve as a resource.

B. Requirements

A student/parent handbook must contain, at the minimum, the following:

- School's Contact Information
- Attendance Information
  - Truancy Information
  - Reporting Absences
  - Student Appointments
  - Withdrawal
- Academic Information
  - Access to Student Records
  - Parent Communication
  - Reporting on Student's Progress
  - Graduation Requirements (for secondary schools only)
  - Service Hour Requirements
- School Rules and Regulations – To include the rules and regulations that if not followed would have an adverse effect on a student, parent, family, etc.
  - Acceptance or nonacceptance of electronic signature
- Code of Conduct
  - Suspension and Expulsion
  - Appeal Process
  - Dress Code
    - Dress and grooming policies must comply with the Pennsylvania CROWN Act and may not discriminate based on traits historically associated with race, including hair texture and protective hairstyles, or restrict head coverings or hairstyles associated with religious creed, except as otherwise permitted by law.
- School's Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy – To include the procedure for reporting a complaint, the investigative process to be followed and the ramifications for false reporting.

- School's Harassment Policy – To include the procedure for reporting a complaint, the investigative process to be followed and the ramifications for false reporting.
- Information regarding the Acceptable Use of the Internet, Computers and Network Resources Policy
- School's Search and Seizure Policy – To include techniques for searching students, causes for searches, what happens to seized possessions, school lockers and school property are always subject to searches. If a student brings personal technology devices onto school grounds, school buses or vehicles, or to school-sponsored events, this subjects them to search and seizure of that personal technology device when school administration has reasonable suspicion that the student has violated school rules, policy, or state and/or federal law through the use of his/her technology device.
- School's Anti-Hazing Policy (for schools serving grades 7 through 12)
- School's Suicide Awareness and Prevention Policy (for schools serving grades 6 through 12)
- Tuition and Financial Obligations
- Child Protection Information and Visitor Policy
- Food Allergy Management Information
- Title IX Notices and Information (Refer to Policy #202.6)
- Medication Information and Procedures

204.8 – RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION

Purpose: To provide clarification regarding non-student record management and retention practices utilized in Catholic schools.

Additional Authority:
Can. 1284 and 1286
United States Conference of Catholic Bishop, DFM, 2002
1.24 P.S. 518
2.20 U.S.C. 1232g
24 P.S. 433
Federal Rules of Civil Procedure
Policy for the Protection of Children, The Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie, 3/15/21

A. Definition

Litigation Hold - a communication ordering that all records and data relating to the subject of a dispute being addressed by current or impending litigation be preserved for possible production in the litigation.

Real Property is land, and anything growing on, affixed to, or built upon land. This also includes man-made buildings as well as crops.

Records, as it is used in this policy, refers to all recorded information, documents, letters, maps, books, photographs, films, sound recordings, tapes (magnetic and otherwise), electronic data processing records, emails sent and received, recorded voicemails, electronic data banks and other documentary material created, received, maintained or preserved by any department or employee of a Catholic school/system in the course of transaction of business or ministry or in pursuit of its legal obligations.

Personnel, as defined in the diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children, includes employees, regular volunteers, occasional volunteers, and independent contractors/contracted employees.

B. Requirements

The school/system shall designate a records coordinator responsible for implementing the requirements of the records retention schedule; preserving and categorizing school/system records; and disposal of records.

All records as defined above and created or preserved by a school/system or employee of the school/system in the course of employment or in the transaction of school/system business are solely the property of the school/system. No records shall be removed, destroyed, transferred, stored, transferred onto other media or otherwise disposed of except in compliance with school and diocesan policies. Records are to be maintained on school/system property and preserved in a safe place which is reasonably protected from fire, theft and other hazards.

Annually, each Catholic school/system will dispose of records whose retention time has expired. Records may be shredded or, if electronic, deleted or destroyed by another approved method (Appendix 204.8A). No exceptions may be made to the minimum retention time.

Arrangements may be made for commercial shredding. If using commercial shredding, a copy of the Certificate of Destruction will be executed and signed by the building administrator and kept on file at the school or system offices.

Paper records may be scanned or otherwise transferred to an electronic medium. When the conversion is complete the paper records are to be destroyed in accordance with this policy. Email messages are similar to other forms of communicated messages such as correspondence.

Administration of the Records Management and Retention Program will be the responsibility of the building administrator.

Litigation Proceedings
Procedures shall be developed for addressing a litigation hold in the event of a current or potential claim or dispute. The procedures for record retention and disposition shall be immediately suspended for all records relevant to the current or potential claim. The litigation hold may be communicated to the records coordinator initially by phone but shall be followed by a written notification (fax, e-mail or letter). Litigation hold procedures shall include:

1. Who can initiate a litigation hold
2. How and to whom a litigation hold is communicated
3. Who will determine which records are subject to the litigation hold
4. Who will be responsible for collecting such records
5. In what format the records will be collected.

The records coordinator shall communicate with legal counsel to determine which records are subject to the litigation hold. Regardless of retention requirements, email and all other electronic correspondence pertaining to threatened or actual legal proceedings must be retained until the litigation is finally concluded. It is the responsibility of the school/system involved to notify the technology department in writing of the need for the hold on the destruction of electronic communications.

Email Accounts When Employee Leaves Employment
When an employee is no longer employed, it is the responsibility of the building administrator to immediately notify the technology department. That user's mailbox will be maintained for sixty calendar days. Individual user mailboxes will be purged after sixty calendar days. It is the administrator's responsibility to ensure that official record emails that have not met their retention have been saved by the end of the sixty-day period by one of the following methods:

1. Print the email and store the hard copy in the appropriate file
2. Move the email out of the email system and store it on a shared network drive.

If accounting work is performed by an outside company (e.g., payroll service), copies of all reports are to be maintained at the school/system offices.

C. Legal Ramifications
Retention periods in this policy are mandatory (Appendix 204.8A), except when legally halted by official notice.

204.8A – Appendix – Records Retention Schedule

RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE

Retention periods listed are given in **years**, unless otherwise noted. Upon expiration of the retention period, identified records are to be disposed of in accordance with the method (Code) indicated.

Disposal Codes:

1. Routine Handling: No special precautions are necessary upon disposal. These records should be recycled or disposed of in accordance with standard school/system procedures.
2. Special Handling: The destruction of records containing confidential or sensitive information that requires special handling by shredding, burning, recycling, or any other method that reduces the information to an illegible condition.
3. Archival Retention: Records requiring permanent retention or records that have sufficient archival or historical value must be preserved in perpetuity.

Records Retention Schedule

Record Description	**Retention Period (yrs.)**	**Disposal Code**
Accounting Records		
Adopted Annual Budget	7 years	1
Auditors' reports	Permanently	3
Bank Statements/Reconciliation and Deposit Slips	7 years	1
Cash Books	Permanently	3
Charts of Accounts	Permanently	3
Checks – Canceled - Payroll & General	7 years	2
Depreciation Schedules	Permanently	3
Financial Statements - End of Year	Permanently	3
Financial Aid Award Documentation	3 years	2
Fixed Assets Detail	Permanently	3
Equipment inventories	7 years	1
Equipment purchased with E-Rate Funds	10 years	1
General Ledgers and Journals	Permanently	3
Journal Entry Support	7 years	2
Investment Records (after cancellation)	7 years	2
Payroll - Time Cards - Individual Time Reports -Earning Records, I-9s	3 years (I-9) or 6 years	2
Payroll - Tax forms: W-4, W-2, 941	7 years	2
Subsidiary Ledgers (including Receivables and Payables)	7 years	2
Trial Balances - Year End	Permanently	3
Vouchers - for payment to vendor, employees, etc.	7 years	2
Pledge Support (from full receipt of pledged funds)	7 Years	2

Contribution Support (Temp. Restricted) – from end of Restriction	7 Years	2
Contribution Support (Perm. Restricted)	Permanently	2
Contribution Support (Unrestricted)	7 Years	2
Corporate Records		
Bylaws, Charter, Board & Committee Meeting Minutes	Permanently	3
Capital - Stock and Bond Records	Permanently	3
Checks - Taxes, Property, Settlement of important contracts	Permanently	3
Contracts and Agreements still in effect	Permanently	3
Conflict of Interest Statements	7 years	2
Copyrights and Trademark Registrations	Permanently	3
Deeds and Easements	Permanently	3
Labor Contracts	Permanently	3
Mortgages, Notes, and Lease Expired	Permanently	3
Policies and Procedures (Past and Current)	Permanently	3
Tax Returns and Working Papers	Permanently	3
Wage and Tax statements (W-2 forms)	7 years	2
Withholding Allowance certificates after	7 years	2
Correspondence Records		
General	3 years; Legal - permanently	2
Legal and Tax	Permanently	3
License, Traffic, and Purchase	7 years	2
Complaints	6 years after resolution	2
Press releases	Permanently	3
Insurance Records		
Accident / Incident Reports	6 years	1
Claims - After Settlement	7 years after settlement	2
Fire Inspection Reports	7 years	1
Group Disability Reports	7 years	1
Policies - All Types - Expired	7 years	1
Safety Reports	7 years	1
Safe School Act Report	Permanently	3
Emergency Preparedness Plans (after being revised)	2 years	1
Fraud Documentation	Permanently	3
Facility use files	6 years	1

Pesticide application records	3 years	1
Workers' Compensation Records after claim closed	10 years from last activity	2
Personnel Records – employees, regular & occasional volunteers, and independent contractors & contracted employees		
Contracts - Expired	7 years	2
Clearances - sexual abuse/criminal/all necessary for employment	Permanently	3
Disability and Sick Benefit Records (FMLA, other)	Permanent	3
Employment Applications Not hired	3 years	2
Applications hired	Permanent	3
Personnel Files - from date of termination Evaluations, reference checks, medical records, resignation/retirement records	7 years after employment ends	2
Attendance Records - from date of termination	3 years	2
Complaints (By or About an Employee)	7 years after employment ends	2
Professional Development/Continuing Education	7 years after employment ends	2
Credentials (Certificates, licenses, etc.)	Permanent	3
Discipline Records	Permanent	3
Purchasing and Sales Records		
Purchase Orders	7 years	1
Purchase or Sale of Real Property	Permanent	3
Leases Equipment and Vehicles	6 years after expiration	1
Requisitions	3 years	1
Sales Contracts	3 years	1
Sales Invoices	7 years	1
Tuition invoices	7 years	2
Student Records (post-graduation)		
Student Permanent Records: test scores	100 years	2
Excuses	1 year	1
Medical Records	2 years after student no longer enrolled	2
Entrance/Placement Exam Scores	3 years	2
National School Lunch Program	7 years	2

205.1 – INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AND COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Purpose: To define the amount of instructional time schools are required to provide students to meet the minimum state guidelines.

Additional Authority:
24. P.S. § 15-1501-1510
22 Pa. Code § 11.27
Chapter 11 § 11.2
Affidavit of Nonpublic, Non-Licensed Day School Operated by a Bona Fide Church or Other Religious Body in Pennsylvania

A. Definitions

Instruction time for students shall be time in the school day devoted to instruction and instructional activities provided as an integral part of the school program.

B. Requirements

A minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days of instruction or a minimum of nine hundred (900) hours of instruction at the elementary school level (1 – 6) and nine hundred and ninety (990) hours of instruction at the secondary school level (7-12). For Kindergarten, there is a minimum of 450 hours for half-time and 900 hours for full-time kindergarten. Schools with different grade level configurations, than above, (for example K-8), are required to meet the minimum annual hourly requirements for each specified grade level. Annually, schools will submit verification of the 180 days or the 900/990 hours to the Catholic Schools Office using forms provided by the Catholic Schools Office.

For pupils in graduating classes, up to three days for graduation preparation are permitted within 60 days of the commencement ceremony under the supervision of school employees.

School year calendars must be submitted for review to the Catholic Schools Office by April 30th for the following school year.

Emergency School Closings

An emergency school closing can occur either before school begins or during the school day. Emergency school closings can occur for multiple reasons, such as building emergencies, health-related emergencies, police emergencies, utility emergencies, and weather emergencies. The principal's responsibility is to see that all personnel, parents, and students know exactly how they will be informed and what to do in the event of an emergency school closing. The principal must report all emergency school closings to the Catholic Schools Office. The principal or his/her designee must report to the school during an emergency school closing or delay in the event that children still arrive at the school. The principal or his/her designee must remain on site until all students have been safely dismissed.

Occasions when time is lost due to a delayed start or early dismissal may not be counted as pupil instruction time unless it is for inclement weather. No full days on which the schools are closed shall be counted as days taught even if it is due to inclement weather.

No school is required to change its graduation schedule or require graduating students to return to school after graduation to make up class days lost due to severe weather conditions.

Exception to the 180 School Days

Exception to the 180 school days are granted to allow the professional staff to be engaged in a meritorious education program during regular school hours without students being present yet count as the part of the minimum 180 student days. A school must still meet the minimum required hours of instruction for students. There is no limit on the number of exceptions that may be requested as long as the required minimum instruction hours for the school year are met. The request must be submitted prior to the date of exception. The approval cannot be used for time lost due to inclement weather, mechanical or power failures or other unforeseen situations. Activities that may be approved for exceptions include:

1. Parent-teacher meetings
2. Curriculum planning and development
3. Strategic planning
4. In-service programs dealing with new subjects or activities having an impact on the educational program
5. Evaluation of graduation projects.

Exceptions to the 180 school days are approved by the Superintendent in the Catholic Schools Office using Appendix 205.1A.

Courses Taught

At the elementary school level (K-6), the following courses are taught: Religion, English (spelling, reading and writing), arithmetic, science, geography, history of the United States and Pennsylvania, civics, and safety education (including instruction in the dangers and prevention of fires, Internet safety, drug and alcohol education and bullying prevention), health and physiology, physical education, music, and art.

At the secondary school level (7-12), the following courses are taught: Theology, English (language, literature, speech and composition), science (biology and chemistry), geography, social studies (civics, economics, world history, history of the United States and Pennsylvania), foreign language, mathematics (general mathematics, statistics, algebra and geometry), art, music, physical education, health and physiology, and safety education (including instruction in the dangers and prevention of fires, Internet safety, drug and alcohol education and bullying prevention).

Agreements with Other Catholic Institutions to Provide Education

A school may enter into an agreement with one or more institutions of higher education in order to allow students to attend such institutions of higher education while the students are enrolled in the secondary school. The agreement may be structured so that high school

students may receive credits toward completion of education credits at the high school and the institution of higher learning.

A Catholic high school may enter into an agreement with a Catholic elementary school (K - 8) to offer students in 8th grade the opportunity to receive instruction in advanced courses at the high school during normal school hours.

205.1A – Appendix – 180 School Day Exception

REQUEST FOR EXCEPTION TO 180 SCHOOL DAYS

_____
School Year

School _____ **City** _____

The following are activities which may be approved for a 180 Day Exception.
Complete **one form per request**. Check the Professional Development Offering or Parent-Teacher Conference.

Educational Leadership Professional Development Offering

- ☐ Required PD Day Planned by CSO – Topic_____
- ☐ Academically Focused PD Based on Needs of Students as Identified by Assessment Data (FSGA) Topic_____
- ☐ Student Mental/Behavioral Health – Topic_____

Executive Leadership Professional Development Offering

- ☐ Training Required by Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie – Topic_____
- ☐ Building Safety – Topic_____
- ☐ Instructional Technology – Topic_____
- ☐ Other – _____ – Topic_____

☐ **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Please provide the following information for the professional development event.

Specific Dates(s) _____ Specific Time(s)_____
Faculty Involved (e.g., primary teachers, K-8 teachers) _____
(If you checked Parent-Teacher Conferences, no further information is required.)

Description:

_____

_____

_____

Intended Outcome(s):

_____

_____

Principal's Signature_____ Date _____

Complete and submit with the Compulsory School Attendance Days Calendar to Catholicschools@eriercd.org by **April 30th**.

For CSO Use Only: Approved ____ Not Approved ____
Signature _____ Date_____

205.1 – Best Practices - INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AND COURSE EXPECTATIONS

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1. The chart below provides guidelines for instructional hours per content areas per grade level groupings. The recommended percent per school day hours is given.

Gr.	Religion	English/ Lang Arts	Math	Science/ Health	Soc St	Art / Music	PE	Tech
K	15%	35%	15%	5%	5%	10%	10%	5%
1	15%	35%	15%	10%	10%	5%	5%	5%
2	15%	35%	15%	10%	10%	5%	5%	5%
3	15%	30%	20%	10%	10%	5%	5%	5%
4	15%	30%	20%	10%	10%	5%	5%	5%
5	15%	30%	20%	10%	10%	5%	5%	5%
6	15%	20%	20%	15%	15%	5%	5%	5%
7	15%	20%	20%	15%	15%	5%	5%	5%
8	15%	20%	20%	15%	15%	5%	5%	5%

2. For the purposes of determining if an activity, other than instruction of curriculum, conducted during school hours can be counted as instructional hours in lieu of ordinary instruction, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has defined the following activities which may be counted as pupil instruction time:
   - Pupil personnel services, such as guidance and counseling services, psychological services, speech pathology and audiology services, and pupil health services conducted during school hours
   - Opening exercises, homeroom periods, and supervised study halls
   - Assemblies, clubs, student councils, and similar activities conducted during school hours
   - School, group or class educational trips, to which admission is not charged to students or parents, if accompanied by a certificated school employee
   - Civil defense, fire and other similar drills
   - Kindergarten orientation activities, snack-time and play-time if they are an integral part of the kindergarten curriculum (Note: "Recess" time conducted with the same parameters as primary grade recess is not counted as instructional time)
   - For pupils in graduating classes, up to three days for graduation preparation within 60 days of the commencement ceremony under the supervision of certified school employees. Graduation preparation may be held on Saturdays.
   - Early dismissal and delayed opening due to inclement weather.

   The Pennsylvania Department of Education has defined the following activities which may not be counted as pupil instruction time:
   - Recess and time for passing from class to class

- Early dismissal or delayed opening for reasons other than inclement weather
- Teacher meetings dealing with routine matters, such as record keeping responsibilities, and other similar activities
- Celebrating, picnicking, hunting, fishing, or harvesting crops
- Any activity for which admission is charged to students or parents
- Viewing or reviewing material that has as its purpose the marketing of commercial products.

For purposes of granting approvals for Act 80 exceptions for a shortened school year or a shortened school day, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has defined the following activities which may be approved for an exemption to the 180 school days:

- Parent-teacher meetings
- Curriculum planning and development
- Long-range planning
- Professional development programs dealing with new subjects or activities having an impact on the educational program
- Dismissal at the start of the school year of a partial group of kindergarten students while an orientation program is being conducted for another part of the group of current year kindergarten students
- Administration of the Professional Development Assistance Program assessment
- Evaluation of graduation projects.

The requirement for minimum instructional hours for the school year must still be met.

205.2 – RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Purpose: To define how religious instruction is delivered to students during the school day.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Directive 2019
Can. 804.2

A. Definitions
USCCB refers to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

B. Requirements
Teachers of religion/theology are to be practicing Catholics, as verified by their pastors. It is inappropriate for any teacher or staff member to discuss with students any of their own personal difficulties or opposing views they may have with the Catholic faith and/or the Catholic Church.

Non-Catholic students are not to be excused from taking religion class or meeting the theology requirements for graduation. All students are to attend school Masses regardless of their religious affiliation. Non-Catholic students should only be excused from attending Mass for reasons of conscience, not simply because they are not Catholic. A written explanation from a parent/guardian expressing a strong concern that attending Mass would compromise their religious beliefs would be required for review and approval by school administration.

Daily prayer is to be an integral part of the Catholic school culture.

All faculty are to participate in an annual faith formation opportunity of at least one full day.

Elementary/Middle Schools (K – 8)
- Religion textbooks are to be aligned with the diocesan guidelines and selected from the Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series published by the USCCB (205.2 BP).
- Religion is to be taught five days per week.
- Mass and penance services may take the place of a religion class for that week.
- Religion class is to have the same status of other major subjects with respect to instructional time, grading, etc.
- Students should attend Mass during school at least every other week, on holy days and Ash Wednesday.
- Students should participate in Penance Services at least two times per year.

High Schools (9-12)
- High school theology curriculum and textbooks are to be in conformity with the USCCB "Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework." All instruction is to be in full fidelity with the Roman Catholic Church.
- Students should go to Mass during school at least once per month, on holy days and Ash Wednesday.
- Students should participate in Penance Services at least two times per year.
- All students are to participate in an annual spiritual retreat of at least one full day.

205.2 – Best Practices – RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

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September 1, 2023

Dear Principals:

In past years, I approved a list of catechetical textbooks for use in grades K to 8. The criteria established for approving publishers and text series were that the texts:

- Enjoy an *Imprimatur* and *Nihil Obstat* from the competent ecclesiastical authority
- Are on the USCCB Subcommittee of the Catechism's "Conformity List"
- Follow a "spiral curriculum" so that important matters of faith would be covered over a number of years, with increasing depth and detail in successive years
- Be complemented by extensive on-line resources for the student, family and teacher
- Be "consumable," i.e., designed to prompt the student's personal use.

Updated and new textbook series continue to emerge that assist in educating students to know, love, and serve God in order to evangelize in a global society. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has tasked the Subcommittee on the Catechism to foster authentic implementation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This work is accomplished primarily through reviewing catechetical materials for conformity with the Catechism.

With this letter, I am announcing that schools may refer to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website and use religion textbooks that appear on the frequently updated Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series. I ask that you work closely with your religion teacher and other faith formation leaders in the school and parish to determine which series best meets the needs of your students.

We all need to remember that the faith is taught first by persons who believe; the textbook is only a resource, albeit an important one. Therefore, please collaborate with your pastor in every way to continue forming our catechists and teachers in the faith. I pray that this process of textbook selection renews our recognition of the importance of handing on the faith throughout the parishes and schools of the Diocese.

With every best wish, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Lawrence T. Persico

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, J.C.L.
Bishop of Erie

LTP/kr

Diocese of Erie ◈ P.O. Box 10397 ◈ Erie, Pennsylvania 16514-0397
814.824.1120 ◈ Fax 814.824-1124

205.3 – EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Purpose: To assist schools in their site-based decisions on the selection of educational resources.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Directive 2019
24 P.S. § 9 – 923 – A, Acts 195/90/35

A. Definition

Curriculum refers to the framework of content or ingredients that relate to that given area of study. It clarifies what to teach and what students should know and be able to demonstrate.

Definitions as they would pertain to Acts 195/90/35:

Instructional equipment refers to equipment, other than fixtures annexed to and forming part of the real estate, which is suitable for and to be used by children. The term includes, but is not limited to, projection equipment, recording equipment, laboratory equipment, and any other educational secular, neutral and non-ideological equipment as may be of benefit to the instruction of children.

Instructional materials refer to prepared learning materials, which are secular, neutral and nonideological in character and are of benefit to the instruction of school children on an individual basis.

Textbooks refers to books, workbooks, including reusable and non-reusable workbooks and manuals, whether bound, in loose-leaf form or a copy of which is expected to be available for the individual use of each pupil in a class or group.

B. Requirements

Schools with grades K through 8 must choose from the Bishop's approved list of textbook series for religious instruction. This list is located at MyDioErie in Administrator Resources.

The basis for selecting instructional materials is the alignment with the current curriculum standards. Principals and teachers are expected to use current curriculum standards to design grade level instruction. Textbooks are not considered the curriculum but are utilized as a resource for instruction.

Each year, the Pennsylvania legislature appropriates funds for the purchase and loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment to eligible Pennsylvania K – 12 resident students enrolled in, and attending full time, nonpublic schools recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. These schools can participate in the Pennsylvania Acts 195/90/35 Programs, which loan textbooks, instructional materials and equipment to the students. Each school is required to report student enrollment to the Department of Education by October 1 of each year. Based upon the number of students, a per diem is calculated per eligible student totaling an allotment for the following school year. The Department of Education issues allotments in the spring/summer of each year, once the Commonwealth has passed a budget.

This information is disseminated to all schools by the Catholic Schools Office. The allotments are used to acquire the textbooks, instructional materials and equipment for the following school year. Information about the Acts 195/90/35 Programs can be found on the NPIS (Nonpublic Information System) website: Act 195-90-35 Non Public Information System Webinar Screen Shots.pdf (pa.gov). Deadlines for placing orders will be provided by the Catholic Schools Office and may not match exactly with the date listed on the NPIS website.

Guidelines for utilizing the funds to acquire textbooks, instructional materials and equipment must be strictly adhered to and can also be found on the NPIS website. It is required that schools identify the funding source and year that the funds were allocated for all educational resources that were purchased with government funding. Questions should be directed to the Catholic Schools Office.

All textbooks and educational resources used by students must not conflict with church teachings.

C. Legal Ramifications

Funding for materials not eligible under Acts 195/90/35 is the responsibility of each school (e.g., religion textbooks, teacher manuals).

205.4 – FIELD TRIPS

Purpose: To recognize field trips as an important component of the instructional program, when used for teaching and learning integral to the curriculum.

Additional Authority:
Policy for the Protection of Children
Can. 806 in support of Educational Integrity

A. Definition

Field Trip shall be defined as any trip by students away from school premises that is an integral part of approved planned instruction and is conducted as a first-hand educational experience not available in the classroom and is supervised by a teacher.

B. Requirements

Field trips must be clearly linked to goals and objectives of the curriculum.
The following regulations shall apply to field trips planned, organized and conducted during the school year:

- The safety and well-being of all participants will be protected at all times.
- Parent/guardian written permission must be obtained and kept on file before any student may participate. Use the Parent Consent and Release of Liability template. (Appendix 205.4A)
- All chaperones must be pre-approved by the school administrator.
- All chaperones must have all necessary clearances on file.
- The administrator will approve the purpose, itinerary, duration and budget of each trip.
- The nurse, or his/her designee, must be notified of the trip when a student who is on an emergency medical plan or on medication is attending the field trip.
- If possible, trips should be scheduled to assure little or no disruption of normal student transportation.
- Emergency contact information and emergency medical plans for students must be taken on the field trip.
- Teachers are not to transport students in their vehicles at any time.

Overnight field trips require a heightened level of security.

It is mandated that the Policy for the Protection of Children be strictly followed.

C. Legal Ramifications

Participation in field trips is not a right and may be denied to any student who demonstrates disregard for the policies and rules of the school.

205.4A – Appendix – Field Trip Parent Permission

(NAME OF SCHOOL)

PARENT PERMISSION FORM FOR FIELD TRIP PARTICIPATION

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian:

Your son/daughter is eligible to participate in a school-sponsored activity requiring transporation to a location away from the school building. This activity will take place under the guidance and supervision of teacher/s from _____ School. A brief description of the activity follows:

Name of Event: _____

Educational Purpose: _____

_____

Destination: _____

Designated Supervisor of Activity: _____

Date and Time of Departure: _____

Date and Time of Return: _____

Method of Transportation: _____

Student Cost: _____

If you would like your child to participate in this event, please complete, sign and return the following statement of consent and release of liability. As parent or legal guardian, you remain fully responsible for any legal responsibilities which may result from any personal actions taken by the named student.

I hereby request that my child,_____, participate in the event described above. I understand that this event will take place away from the school grounds and that my child will be under the supervision of the designated teacher/s on the stated dates. I further consent to the conditions stated above on participation in this event, including the method of transportation.

_____ _____

(Parent/Legal Guardian Signature) (Date)

_____ No, I do not want my child to participate in the event described above. I understand that instead of participating in the field trip, my child will attend school.

_____ _____

(Parent/Legal Guardian Signature) (Date)

205.4 – Best Practices – FIELD TRIPS

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1. When determining the value of a field trip, ask and answer these questions:

Educational Purpose vs. Recreational/Social Value

- How significant is the educational value of the proposed trip? How is the trip clearly linked to the established curriculum at your school for the grade level participating? I.e., What courses and how? Will student learning be measured in any way?
- Do the educational outcomes of the trip justify the length of time away from school?

Costs/Expense

- Does the funding of the trip place an undue burden on parents and/or students who already make the sacrifice of tuition payments?
- Does the funding of the trip divert school funds (including fundraising monies) from more urgent, pressing or higher priority needs?

Safety and Supervision of Students

- Is there an adequate ratio of supervisory adults to students? Is there an appropriate number of both men and women supervisors relative to the gender balance of students?
- Are these adults adequately prepared for their responsibilities? Are they known to be persons of high moral character and good judgment? Have they received training in child protection and/or received any necessary clearances?
- Are they prepared to set aside their own social/recreational interests (including drinking alcoholic beverages) for the good of the students?
- Will they be vigilant regarding potential dangers to and violations by students?
- Is there a plan in place to supervise students at all times, including the evening and night hours, including any possible emergencies or medical situations? If appropriate, will professional security/police be hired?

Exposure to Liability

- Have all appropriate and reasonable measures been taken to address liability concerns if something unfortunate were to happen?
- Has the school adequately weighed the risks and benefits of this trip?

Religious Obligations

- If the trip includes a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation, will the schedule include provision for students and supervisory adults to attend Mass?
- Will adequate preparations be made to respectfully observe Catholic practices, e.g., reception of ashes on Ash Wednesday, Lenten obligations of fasting and abstaining from meat, etc.?

Consistency with Other Catholic Schools in the Area

- Would the proposed trip respect the general policies and practices of other Catholic schools in the area? While secondary schools can have different parameters than elementary schools, it is important that all our schools approach trips as consistently as possible.

School Tradition

- Tradition is not reason enough to continue a trip if the above considerations cannot be adequately addressed.

2. The adult to student ratio must be determined taking into account the age of the children, previous behavioral issues with the group, individual student issues and the destination of the field trip. A suggested ratio of adult chaperones to students for one day trips is:
   - Pre-school to grade 3: 1 to 7
   - Grade 4 – 8: 1 to 10
   - Grade 9 – 12: 1 to 15

   Reference the Policy for the Protection of Children concerning overnight trips.

   Each trip should have at least two chaperones. If a chaperone becomes sick or unavailable during an emergency, another chaperone should be available. At least one chaperone should be a school employee, such as a teacher, coach, or administrator. This person is responsible for following the school's policies and procedures and notifying school contacts in an emergency.

3. A bus is the preferred option for transporting students to and from field trips. When bus transportation is not feasible or available, parent/guardians may transport students. Reference the "Policy for the Protection of Children" to find all regulations concerning student transportation by parent/guardian.

205.5 – USE OF ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

Purpose: To provide students an opt-out option for dissection of animals.

Additional Authority:
24 P.S. § 1523

A. Definitions

Alternative education project shall include, but is not limited to, the use of video tapes, models, films, books and computers which would provide an alternate avenue for obtaining the knowledge, information or experience required by the course of study in question. The term also includes "alternative test". A pupil has the right to refuse any alternative education project or test which may involve or necessitate any harmful use of an animal or animal parts.

Animal shall mean any living organism of the kingdom animalia in the phylum chordata, organisms which have a notochord. The term also includes an animal's cadaver or severed parts of any animal's cadaver.

B. Requirements

Dissection of Animals

Students from Kindergarten through grade twelve may refuse to dissect, vivisect, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals, or any parts thereof, as part of their course of instruction.

Schools shall notify incoming pupils and their parents or guardian of the right to decline to participate in an education project involving harmful or destructive use of animals and authorize parents or guardians to assert the rights of their children to refuse to participate in those projects. Notice shall be given not less than three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled course exercise which involves the use of animals.

A student who chooses to refrain from participation or observation of a portion of a course of instruction in accordance with this section shall be offered an alternative education project for the purpose of providing the pupil an avenue for obtaining the factual knowledge, information or experience required by the course of study. If tests require harmful or destructive use of animals, students shall be offered alternative tests. A student shall not be discriminated against based upon his or her decision to exercise the right afforded that student by this section. Lowering a grade because a student has chosen an alternative education project or test is strictly prohibited.

205.5 – Best Practices – USE OF ANIMALS

****

1. Classroom Pets
   Should Not Be Permitted as Classroom Pets:
   - Inherently dangerous animals (e.g., lions, tigers, cougars, and bears)
   - Nonhuman primates (e.g., monkeys and apes)
   - Mammals at higher risk for transmitting rabies (e.g., bats, rats, raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes)
   - Aggressive or unpredictable animals, wild or domestic
   - Stray animals with unknown health and vaccination history
   - Venomous or toxin-producing spiders, insects, reptiles, amphibians, etc.

2. Animal Visitation to a Classroom
   Written teacher permission should be obtained before any animal is allowed to visit a classroom.

   Students are to be under direct close supervision whenever there is human-animal contact.
   If displayed, animals should be in enclosed cages or under appropriate restraint.
   Animals should not be permitted in areas where food and drink are prepared or consumed.
   Specific areas are to be designated for animal contact.

   Parents are to be informed prior to student exposure to any animal in the school setting.
   Parents are to be informed so they may determine special considerations needed for children who are immunocompromised, who have allergies, who have asthma or are fearful of animals.

3. Clean and disinfect all area where animals have been present.

4. Animals should not be allowed to roam or fly free.

205.6 – FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

Purpose: To offer an alternative to the 180 day requirement when the school building is prevented from being opened.

Additional Authority:
Senate Bill 440

A. Definitions

Asynchronous, for this policy, references lessons that are not aligned with current lesson plans. These lessons are packaged as separate from the current classroom instruction but do cover grade appropriate standards.

B. Requirements

A flexible instructional day is an option for schools only when at least one of the following occurs:

- A disease epidemic
- A hazardous weather condition
- A law enforcement emergency
- The inoperability of school buses or other equipment necessary to the school entity's operation
- Damage to a school building
- Another temporary circumstance rendering any portion of a school building unfit or unsafe for use.

To determine if a school has the option to use flexible instructional days, a Verification of Instructional Hours form must be completed and submitted to the Director of Government Programs and Compliance prior to claiming a flexible instructional day. This form is located on the diocesan website in MyDioErie - Administrator Resources. A school may use a flexible instructional day only if the number of instructional hours, excluding those of the flexible instructional day(s), meet the 900 for elementary schools and 990 for middle and high schools.

A maximum of five flexible instructional days may be used during a school year. After the use of each flexible instructional day, the school must complete a Verification of Instructional Hours form (Appendix 205.6A) and submit it to the Superintendent to determine if and how many additional flexible instructional days may be taken.

For each flexible instructional day, students must receive instruction in each of these content areas:

- High School: Language arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Theology
- Elementary (K-8): Language arts, Mathematics and Religion

Instruction in these content areas may be asynchronous.

Procedures must be written and explained to parents, students and staff prior to the use of a flexible instructional day. Flexible instructional days are contractual days for teachers.

Procedures must answer the following questions concerning flexible instructional days:

1. How will student and teacher attendance be determined?
2. If technology is used, how will students without Internet access retrieve the educational resources/materials?
3. How will technical support be provided to teachers and students during the flexible instructional day?
4. What duties is a teacher expected to perform while on a flexible instructional day?
5. When is the student work due to the teacher to receive full credit?

Students who do not meet the requirements defined in the procedures for a flexible instructional day are to be reported as having either an excused or unexcused absence.

205.6 – Best Practices – FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

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1. Sample content for procedures for flexible instructional days (FIDS) that involve technology:

   To initiate a FIDS:
   If a flexible instructional day will be used, at approximately 5:30 a.m., a mass phone communication message will go to all phone numbers currently listed in the student information system. The message will indicate that this will be a flexible instructional day.

   To verify attendance:
   By 10:00 a.m. of a flexible instructional day, children must sign-in to the school's portal to confirm attendance. If children are unable to access the Internet from home, families may call the school office to confirm attendance for the day. If a student does not sign-in or call the school office, he/she will be marked as absent.

   To explain the alternative to technology if a student or teacher's home does not have Internet access or sufficient technology for the number of students in the home:
   If students cannot access the Internet during any point in the day, they will be given the assignments when they return to school and will have three days to complete the work.

   Duties of teachers:
   Teachers are required to check their school email during required school time (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) and respond to any student/parent e-mails within 30 minutes.

   Teachers are required to post via the school portal an instructional, student-engaged assignment no later than 8:30 a.m.

2. If technology is not going to be used as part of the instructional student program for that day, students may receive a packet of a day's lesson prior to any flexible instructional days. Completing that work within a certain time period can count as attendance for a flexible instructional day.

205.7 – REMOTE INSTRUCTION AND RECORDING OF LESSONS

Purpose: To provide clarification and guidance regarding remote instruction and the recording of lessons by teachers.

Additional Authority:
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

A. Definition

Personally Identifiable Information (PII), for this policy, is defined as information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual.
PII is a FERPA term referring to identifiable information that is maintained in education records and includes direct identifiers, such as a student's name or identification number, indirect identifiers, such as a student's date of birth, or other information which can be used to distinguished or trace an individual's identity either directly or indirectly through linkages with other information.
Recording of Lessons, for this policy, is defined as when a teacher records a lesson for the purpose of some or all students viewing it at a later point in time or watching for review purposes.
Remote Instruction is defined, for this policy, as where the student and the educator, or information source, may not be physically present in a traditional classroom environment**.** Information is relayed through technology, such as discussion boards, video conferencing, and/or online assessments.

B. Requirements

Remote Instruction

Codes of conduct and related policies remain in force and are to be enforced during all sessions of remote instruction as they would be in a brick and mortar classroom. PII is not to be disclosed during the lesson other than usage of a student's first name. If appropriate written consent from all parents/guardians or eligible students in the class is secured prior to the start of remote instruction, then some limited and appropriate PII may be shared. By its sheer nature, remote instruction is accessible to all who are in the vicinity of the student utilizing remote instruction.

Remote instruction technologies must have controlled access and must only be accessible to those students and staff who are authorized by the principal to do so. Securing access may include requiring strong passwords and multiple levels of user authentication. Appropriate firewalls and must be in place and confidentiality issues must be addressed. Recording of live remote instruction shall be under the control of the teacher. The teacher shall have the ability to discontinue any recording of remote instruction when required, in his/her discretion, due to a technological problem or unforeseen circumstance arising during the instruction.

Principals must have access to all remote instruction sessions held by all teachers and staff and must regularly join remote instruction sessions to help ensure appropriate student and teacher supervision.

Recording Lessons

If the recorded lesson is posted on the Internet, access must be restricted to students who are currently rostered in that class and any authorized personnel as identified by the principal. PII is not to be disclosed during the lesson. If appropriate written consent from all parents/guardians or eligible students in the class is secured prior to the lesson, then some limited and appropriate PII may be shared.

Recording of remote instruction shall be under the control of only authorized personnel which consists of the school/system administrator(s) and the teacher. Recording or attempting to record remote instruction by others, including students, is prohibited. Students and other unauthorized persons are prohibited from modifying, altering, or revising recorded lessons or attempting to do so. Students and other unauthorized persons shall not be permitted to copy, modify, alter, or revise remote instruction and/or attempt to upload the original or altered recording to social media. Students shall not permit, aide, or assist unauthorized persons to view, access or record recorded lessons.

The recording will qualify as an educational record if it directly relates to a student and is maintained by the school/system. The qualifiers for making a recorded lesson an educational record are:

1. The content of the recorded lesson contains PII or
2. The recording contains a depiction of an activity:
    a. That results in the use of the recording for disciplinary action
    b. Shows a student getting injured, attacked, victimized, ill or a health emergency
    c. Shows a student in violation of a law or
3. Used for disciplinary action for student(s) in the class or
4. The person or school/system making the video intends to make a specific student the focus.

Recordings qualifying as educational records and all other educational record requirements must be in accordance with Student Records Policy #301.1.

C. Legal Ramifications

Even in instances where FERPA does not require parental consent to share PII, schools/systems may consider whether consent is prudent and appropriate.

205.7 – Best Practices – REMOTE INSTRUCTION AND RECORDING OF LESSONS

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1. Focus the camera on the teacher for livestreaming events.

2. Student and teacher backgrounds should be nondescript and maintain individual privacy.

3. The recording should limit capturing or documenting students.

4. Students are to be instructed not to share Personal Identifiable Information (PII).

5. Non-students, for example, family members who might overhear lessons, are to be encouraged not to share PII.

6. Schools should annually distribute a FERPA notice for Remote Instruction. See example below.

   The (school/system name) has made reasonable efforts to ensure that remote instruction is confidential, and access is limited to students in the assigned grades. However, some of these lessons will be provided in a group format and when this occurs, students will be able to see other students in the group. In addition, the (school/system name) is unable to control who else may be in the room in which a student is receiving these services remotely, including but not limited to other family members, who may observe the session, who the other students are in the group and what they are doing. Therefore, the (school/system name) expects that all families will review and implement the following guidelines and expectations to ensure the confidentiality rights of all students are protected during instructional methodologies which will include group communications, and/or video conferencing.

   1. The parent, or any other person within the home at the time the student is receiving instruction remotely shall not make or maintain recordings of the course content or classroom activity or other group communication that is conveyed via the virtual attendance services.

   2. Parents shall make every effort to ensure that no one other than the student scheduled to participate in a virtual attendance service can see or hear the virtual attendance service.

3. If parental or other third-party involvement in a virtual attendance service is necessary to enable a student to participate, the individual assisting the student shall not disclose any personally identifiable information about any student involved in the virtual attendance activity.

4. The parties agree that this Agreement does not apply to the video-or audio-taping of any course material by teachers that have been or may be made available to students from time to time.

205.8 – ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

Purpose: To explain the conditions that must be met to accept an electronic signature as in intent to sign a document.

Additional Authority:
73 P.S. §2260.101 et seq.

A. Definition
Electronic Signatures (e-signatures) are an electronic sound, symbol or process attached to or logically associated with a record and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record.

B. Requirements
Schools/systems must not require, but rather offer the option, to use electronic signatures on their documents.

If electronic signatures are going to be an option, the following conditions must be met:

- Electronic signatures are limited transactions between parties each of which has agreed or consented to conduct transactions by electronic means. Therefore, on the forms where an electronic signature will be accepted a consent agreement must be present. Legal recognition is given to the electronic signature and any contract is given legal effect.

  Sample consent clause:
  The parties agree that this agreement may be electronically signed.
  The parties agree that the electronic signatures appearing on this agreement are the same as hand-written signatures for the purposes of validity, enforceability, and admissibility.

- The signer must show clear intent to electronically sign an agreement. For example, move his/her mouse, click a button labeled, "I accept."

- If parties have agreed to conduct a transaction by electronic means, the school/system must be capable of retaining the document with the electronic signatures at the time of receipt. The electronic signature must be attributable as the act of the person.

- The school/system must have a way of determining that the person authorized to sign the document was, in fact, the person who did sign. This can be done by using a person's known email address, security codes, or passwords.

- If multiple signatures are required on a document, all signers must receive a fully executed copy of the agreement.

Some documents originating from the government or other entities may not accept e-signature and therefore an original inked signature may be required.

205.9 – CONSTITUTION DAY

Purpose: To ensure each school offers students an instructional program based on the U.S. Constitution.

Additional Authority:
Title I, Section III, 108-447, Division J, Title I, §111
24 P.S. §15-1545

B. Requirements
Each school/system must develop and offer an age-appropriate instructional program regarding the U.S. Constitution. This must occur each year between September 17th and the Bill of Rights Day, December 15.

C. Legal Ramifications
If a school/system does not provide the instructional program regarding the U.S. Constitution federal funding could be placed in jeopardy.

STUDENT POLICIES

301.1 – STUDENT RECORDS

Purpose: To maintain a complete and accurate permanent record of each student's attendance, academic achievement, health record and disciplinary history while ensuring the individual's right to privacy.

Additional Authority:

24 P.S. § 1305 – A
24 P.S. § 1306 – A
24 P.S. § 1307 – A
24 P.S. § 1402
24 P.S. § 1409
22 PA Code § 12.31
22 PA Code § 15.9
20 U.S.C. § 1232g
20 U.S.C. § 7165

A. Definitions

Disciplinary History, for this policy, is limited to all incidents of violence, incidents involving possession of a weapon and convictions or adjudications of delinquency for acts committed on school property.

Education records are those records that are: (1) directly related to a student; and (2) maintained by the school/system. The term does not include: (1) records that are kept in the sole possession of the maker, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record; (2) records of the law enforcement unit of a school/system; (3) records relating to an individual who is employed by an educational agency or institution, that are made and maintained in the normal course of business, relate exclusively to the individual in that individual's capacity as an employee, and are not available for use for any other purpose; (4) records on a student who is 18 years of age or older, or is attending an institution of postsecondary education, that are treatment records and accessible only to individuals providing the treatment; (5) records created or received by an educational agency or institution after an individual is no longer a student in attendance and that are not directly related to the individual's attendance as a student; and (6) grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by a teacher.

Information That Has Short-Term Value and May be Unverified consists of legal and clinical findings, personality test results, anecdotal records, and unevaluated reports from teachers or counselors. Confidential, personal files maintained by professionals working in a school, and not shared with anyone except a substitute teacher, are the sole possession of the maker and are not part of the student permanent record but may be subpoenaed. This type of information does not transfer and is not retained after the student leaves the school.

Parent for the purpose of record access, includes natural parents, adoptive parents, a guardian, or an individual legally acting as a parent of the student in the absence of a parent or guardian. The school presumes that either parent of the student has authority to inspect and review the permanent records of the student unless the school has been provided with evidence that

there is a legally binding instrument or a state law or court order governing the divorce, separation, involuntary termination of parental rights, or custody providing to the contrary.

Permanent Record is the physical folder that contains the student's attendance, academic achievement and disciplinary history. This folder is maintained for 100 years past the student's 21st birthday.

Personal Data Necessary for Operation of the School System or directory information includes information such as student's name, address, phone number, email, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weights and heights of members of athletic teams, degrees and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, photo or video image, and other similar information. This is information that is contained in a permanent record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Directory information does not include a student's social security number or student identification number if the identification number can be used to access a student's record. Schools may disclose appropriately designated directory information without written consent unless parents/guardians have advised the school to the contrary.

Personally Identifiable Information includes but is not limited to the name of a student, name of their parents or other family members, a personal identifier such as a social security number or biometric record, indirect identifiers such as date and place of birth and mother's maiden name, other information that is linked, or can be linked with other information, to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community to identify the student with reasonable certainty. Disclosure is permitting access to or the release, transfer or other communication of personally identifiable information contained in permanent records by any means, including oral, written, or electronic means, to any party, except the party that provided or created the record.

Verified Information (not opinions or suspicions) of Clear Importance includes standardized test scores, intelligence and aptitude scores, interest inventories, health data, additional family information, teacher or counselor observations, and reports of serious acts of misbehavior and behavior patterns. Health records not transferred should be maintained according to state regulations. The information in the permanent record must be reviewed at periodic intervals. Documents that have short-term value and may be unverified are to be destroyed when the student leaves the school. Schools may not disclose this information without written parent/guardian consent.

B. Requirements

Schools are required to keep a complete and accurate permanent record for each student enrolled. This record includes, but is not limited to, the student's directory data, attendance record, and records of academic progress. All personally identifiable information is part of a student's permanent record. Student records must be kept according to FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) guidelines. Student records shall not include audio/video

recordings of livestream or recorded instruction, provided that such recording may become an educational record for a student only if they involved matters individualized to a particular student. Such recordings shall be destroyed when their usefulness as a record has ended. The right of access to such recordings shall be limited to the student and parents/guardians for whom the recording has become an educational record. The school administrator is responsible for the collection, maintenance, security, dissemination, retention, and classification of all student records. Schools are required to maintain student permanent records for 100 years past the 21st birthday of the student. If a school closes, the Catholic Schools Office will be responsible for maintaining the permanent records.

Parents must be notified of scheduled dates for standardized achievement and cognitive ability tests. Individual written consent of the parent or guardian is required prior to psychological and psychiatric evaluation and before the collection of personal and family data which are not directly relevant to educational purposes. These requirements, when practical, extend to interviews and data obtained by school counselors, nurses, psychologists and similar personnel. Data for non-school medical and social science research studies shall not be collected without prior consent of the Superintendent and the voluntary consent of the parent or student.

Medical and health records shall be established and maintained pursuant to this act shall be confidential. When a child of school age enrolls in any school, public or nonpublic, previously attended school in Pennsylvania, the district or school wherein the child is newly enrolled shall request and the district or school where the child previously attended shall surrender the health record of the child. Medical and health records shall be collected and maintained for two years past the student's high school graduation.

When a student transfers from another school or to another school, the receiving school shall obtain a copy of the student's disciplinary record from the school from which the student is transferring. The sending school has ten (10) days from receipt of the request to provide the disciplinary record. This record shall be maintained as part of the student's permanent record and shall be available for inspection as required by law.

The administrator's plan for compilation, retention, disclosure and security of student permanent records must provide the following:

- Protecting and safeguarding student records when collecting, retaining and disclosing personally identifiable information
- Informing parents/guardians and eligible students eighteen years and older of their rights and the procedures to implement those rights, annually and upon enrollment (Appendix 301.1A)
- Permitting appropriate access by authorized persons and officials and describing procedures for access
- Enumerating and defining the types, locations and persons responsible for permanent records maintained by the school
- Establishing guidelines for disclosure of information and data in student records

- Maintaining a record or log of access and release of information for each student's permanent records
- Transferring permanent records and appropriate disciplinary records to other schools
- Providing new and incumbent staff with review and updates of policy and procedures regarding student records and the student records plan for the school
- Creating maintaining, and implementing a record retention schedule delineating the record, record description, and a retention timeframe and implementing appropriate review, retention, disposal and protection of student records.

Although all school data is part of a student's permanent record, specific data is collected and maintained in the permanent record for each student. Permanent records must be locked and accessed only by those with a "legitimate educational need." Permanent records must not leave the school building and must be secured at all times. Information included in the permanent record shall include, but is not limited to, school application, student permanent record sign-in sheet, directory information, copy of immunization record, permanent report card with yearly attendance record, religious records, standardized test results, yearly pictures, custody records, transfer records, auxiliary services records (Act 89 or Title I), parole records, truancy records, IEP records from a public school district, equitable participation service plan, diocesan accommodations guidelines checklist, outside agency or professional reports, student accident forms, conduct reports, behavior contracts, evidence of threats or violence and threat assessment reports.

There are occasions when the permanent record of a student, its contents, application form and health record may be released or examined, without consent of or notification to the parent/guardian or a student who is legally 18 years of age. These occasions include:

- Teachers and other professional school personnel within the diocese who have a legitimate educational interest.
- Schools who request such data because of a student transfer. Administrators releasing student records must notify parent/guardian that the child's records will be sent automatically upon request. This notification to the parent/guardian takes the place of a signed release for records being sent to another school system. The parents/guardian should be informed that the record has been requested and date in which it will be mailed. Parents/guardian wishing to review or challenge the record must notify the school prior to the date of mailing.
- Judicial order, order of administrative agencies having subpoena power or for investigative purposes. In such case, the school must make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian or eligible student and alert them in advance of its compliance to records release by a certain date so the parent/guardian or eligible student may seek protective action. Parents/guardians wishing to review or challenge the record must do so prior to this date. Notice to the parent/guardian or eligible student is not required and shall not be made if: (1) the court has ordered the existence or the content of the subpoena or court order, or the information furnished in response to the subpoena or court order, not be disclosed; or (2) a parent is a party to a court proceeding involving

child abuse and negligent or dependency matter and the court order or subpoena is issued in the context of that proceeding.

The student permanent record shall be accessible to the legal-aged student, his or her parents/guardian if the student is under 18, or their legal representatives. When a student attains the age of 18 and is no longer in school or is married whether or not he/she is 18, parent(s)/guardian do not have the right to access, review, or request copies of their child's records.

Under no condition, except in the event of a court order or subpoena, should the personal files and notes belonging to school professionals be released to any individuals. Parents should be notified of such an order and the school's compliance. A parent/guardian may, by written permission, request this information be released to a clinic or other agency serving the needs of the child. Such a request should be directed to the person or agency that originally made the evaluation. The test or assessment itself should not be shown to the parent or student, although representative questions not included in the scoring or evaluation may be shown. Government agencies may mandate, without subpoena or court order, the release of the student record. The parent/guardian should be notified of all such orders and the school's compliance. The one exception to this would be cases involving child abuse or neglect statutes.

When a student attains the age of 18 and is no longer in school or is married whether or not he or she is 18, his or her consent alone must be obtained. This includes the right to deny parental access to the student's records. Consent of the parent/guardian will be solicited if a student, in the judgement of school officials, is not responsible to give consent, or if the student is dependent as defined for income tax purposes.

The right to access student permanent records includes the right to challenge, through due process procedures, the validity of information contained in the record. A parent/guardian may challenge the accuracy of a recorded grade but may not contest whether the teacher should have given a higher grade.

The school must receive written authorization from either the parent/guardian or student who is 18 years of age or older, before releasing data to non-educational third parties, such as prospective employers or others.

Information regarding the Student Record Policy and using the Notification of Rights Under FERPA, parents/guardians and eligible students shall be notified annually of their rights regarding the following:

- The right to inspect and review the student's permanent record within forty-five days of the school's receipt of the request for access
- The right to request amendment of the student's permanent records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading

- The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's permanent records, except to the extent the law authorizes disclosure without consent
- The criteria for determining what constitutes a legitimate educational interest if the school discloses certain materials without prior consent
- The right to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the categories of directory information
- The right to request that information not be provided to military recruiters
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Whenever special cases or questions arise, consultation should be made with the Catholic Schools Office.

301.1A – Appendix – FERPA Notification of Rights

(Name of School)

STUDENT RECORD POLICY

Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

In order to operate our educational program, we must keep records of the objective information that parents and eighteen year old and older students give us permission to acquire. The following statement constitutes our *"annual notification of rights"* disclosure to these parents.

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access.

   Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading.

   Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

   If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

   One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including intermediate unit staff, health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a

special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist), or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. It is the policy of the school to not release directory information except as specified in the above statements or without providing parents an opportunity to deny such releases.

A school/system may disclose Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible students to appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to CFR § 99.31(a)(10), § 99.36.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:
   Family Policy Compliance Office, US Department of Education,
   600 Independence Ave., SW Washington DC 20202-4605.

301.2 – EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Purpose: To provide guidance for determining when and how to provide accommodations.

Additional Authority:
34 CFR parts 104 and 300 § 504
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
405.083 Testing/Grading Accommodations
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
Letter to Runkel, Office for Civil Rights / Montana, September 30, 1996
Related Index Numbers: 95.005 and 220.020

A. Definitions

Accommodations: **"**Minor" adjustments to daily classroom instruction that may change how instruction is delivered without changing expectations and curriculum requirements.
Child with a Disability: A child evaluated as having one or more of these 13 disabilities (Appendix 301.2A):

1. Autism
2. Deaf-Blindness
3. Deafness
4. Hearing Impairment Including Deafness
5. Intellectual Disability
6. Multiple Disabilities
7. Orthopedic Impairment
8. Other Health Impairment
9. Serious Emotional Disturbance
10. Specific Learning Disability
11. Speech or Language Impairment
12. Traumatic Brian Injury
13. Visual Impairment Including Blindness

and who, as a result of the disability, needs special education and related services.
Note: Gifted education is not a disability.
Equitable Participation (EP): The services that are provided to a parentally-placed child with a disability enrolled in a nonpublic school. In Pennsylvania, the agency responsible for providing EP services is the local Intermediate Unit. E.P. is not an individual entitlement to Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
FAPE: Free and appropriate public education is an educational right of all children in the United States that is guaranteed by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Students must be enrolled in a public school district to receive FAPE. Nonpublic schools are not required to offer FAPE.
Individualized Education Program (IEP): The plan written by the public school district's IEP team, which includes parents, that specifically describes the programs and services necessary for a

"free appropriate public education" for a child with a disability. IEP's are not legally binding for nonpublic schools.
Modifications: Modifications are "major" adjustments to daily classroom instruction that change the expectations and possibly curriculum requirements for the students.

B. Requirements
Catholic Schools are never required to offer educational accommodations or modifications to any student.

There are three levels of accommodations which schools/systems may offer to students: Intensive, Strategic and Moderate.

Intensive
Educational Accommodations may be offered to students in grades K-12 when the following criteria are met:

1. Per the Student's public school district of residence or local Intermediate Unit, the two-prong test is met: (1) The student is identified with a special education disability and (2) the student is found to need specially designed instruction.
2. Parents decline FAPE and the IEP their child is offered by the public school district of residence. Intermediate Units cannot offer FAPE or an IEP since they are not a public school district.
3. The Catholic school agrees to:
   - Provisionally maintain a student who was enrolled before being identified with one of the special education disabilities, or
   - Provisionally accept a new student who was identified with one of the special education disabilities.
4. Parents agree to the educational accommodations offered by the Catholic school. (Appendix 301.2B)
5. Record of all educational accommodations are maintained in the student's permanent record per the Intensive Accommodations Checklist. (Appendix 301.2C)
   Accommodations may not be recorded in any manner on report cards or transcripts.

These students are eligible for Equitable Participation (EP) Services which are provided through the local Intermediate Unit.

Strategic
Educational Accommodations may be offered to students in grades K-12 when the following criteria are met:

1. Student has not been identified with a special education disability by his public school district of residence or local Intermediate Unit but has been identified with a learning issue by a medical doctor, psychologist, or psychiatrist and is found to need specially designed instruction.
2. The Catholic school agrees to:

- Provisionally maintain a student who was enrolled before being identified with one of the special education disabilities, or
- Provisionally accept a new student who was identified with one of the special education disabilities.

3. Parents agree to the educational accommodations offered by the Catholic school. (Appendix 301.2B)
4. Record of all educational accommodations are maintained in the student's permanent record per the Strategic Accommodations Checklist. (Appendix 301.2D) Accommodations may not be recorded in any manner on report cards or transcripts.

These students are not eligible for Equitable Participation (EP) Services.

Moderate

Educational Accommodations may be offered to students in grades K-12 when the following criteria are met:

1. Student has not been identified with a special education disability by his public school district of residence or local Intermediate Unit, nor has a medical doctor, psychologist, or psychiatrist identified the student as having a learning issue.
2. The principal assembles a school-based education team to include the principal, classroom teacher(s), guidance counselor if applicable, and any other teachers who have an educational right to access this information about the student to review the student's permanent record and all available academic and achievement data.
3. The school-based education team concludes that based on the data, educational accommodations are justified. This decision must be documented in a written report and placed in the student's record.
4. Parents agree to the educational accommodations offered by the Catholic school. (Appendix 301.2B)
5. Record of all educational accommodations are maintained in the student's permanent record per the Moderate Accommodations Checklist. (Appendix 301.2E) Accommodations may not be recorded in any manner on reports cards or transcripts.

Before deciding to offer Moderate Accommodations refer to Best Practices to make sure the teaching techniques noted have been implemented.

These students are not eligible for Equitable Participation (EP) Services.

C. Legal Ramifications

If schools knowingly accept a student with an identified special education disability or learning issue when they do not have programs in place to address that issue, then courts may find them financially responsible for educating that student.

301.2A – Appendix – Exceptionalities Defined

Exceptionalities briefly defined: (each affects a child's education performance)

Autism: a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction

Deaf-blindness: concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness

Deafness: a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing

Hearing impairment: an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section

Intellectual Disability: a significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Multiple disabilities: concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

Orthopedic impairment: a severe orthopedic impairment (e.g., clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.)

Other health impairment: having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that a) is due to chronic or acute health problems (e.g., ADHD, epilepsy, etc.)

Severe emotional disturbance: a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree

a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances
d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (e.g., schizophrenia)

Specific learning disability: a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, (e.g., perceptual disabilities, dyslexia, etc.) The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Speech or language impairment: a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment

Traumatic brain injury: an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment

Visual impairment: including blindness - an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's education performance.

301.2B – Appendix – Agreement of Accommodations

REPRODUCE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Agreement of Accommodations

We, the undersigned, agree that the accommodations as noted on the

(Check only one.) ____ Moderate ____ Strategic ____ Intensive

Accommodations Checklist will be made for _____,

grade _____, during the _____ - _____ academic school year. We further understand

that we will participate in on-going meetings throughout the school year to review

_____'s progress and to discuss any changes or recommendations in the

accommodations checklist.

This agreement has been signed on _____

Signatures

Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____

_____

Principal: _____

Teacher(s): _____

_____

Please Note: The original signed agreement is placed in the student's permanent record and a copy is given to the parents. If the parents do not agree to accommodations for the student, document their wishes and place in the student's permanent record.

301.2C – Appendix – Intensive Accommodations Checklist

(Name of School)

INTENSIVE ACCOMMODATIONS CHECKLIST

School Year: 20 ___ - 20 ___

Student: _____ Grade: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____ Date of Meeting with Parents/Guardians:_____

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS (List is not all inclusive.)

1. ___ Preferential seating
2. ___ Seat the student away from windows or doorways
3. ___ Provide an unobstructed view of the chalkboard, teacher, movie screen, etc.
4. ___ Reduce visual distractions in the classroom (e.g., mobiles, etc.)
5. ___ Allow for headphones
6. ___ Keep a neutral odor to the classroom
7. ___ Keep workspace clear of unrelated materials
8. ___ Provide individual space or use a study carrel
9. ___ Arrange for student to leave the classroom voluntarily to go to a designated safe area when under high stress
10. ___ Arrange a check-in time to organize the day
11. ___ Use an alarm to help with time management
12. ___ Alert student several minutes before a transition from one activity to another is planned
13. ___ Record assignments and due dates in a notebook or via email that is shared between home and school and initialed by parents and teachers
14. ___ Provide a print copy of any assignments or directions written on the blackboard/whiteboard
15. ___ Provide two sets of textbooks, one for home and one for school
16. ___ Provide clearly defined classroom rules and post in classroom or on student's desk
17. ___ Use nonverbal cues
18. ___ Use visual reminders (e.g., daily schedule, expectations, rubrics)
19. ___ Develop a system or a code word to let the student know when behavior is not appropriate
20. ___ Use both oral and printed directions with repetition/restatement
21. ___ Stand near the student when giving directions or presenting a lesson
22. ___ Give directions in small steps and in as few words as possible
23. ___ Have student repeat the directions
24. ___ Sequence work, with the easiest part first
25. ___ Hand out work pages one at a time
26. ___ Check progress and provide feedback often in the first few minutes of each assignment
27. ___ Place a ruler under sentences being read for better tracking
28. ___ Use an index card with cut-out slot for better tracking when reading
29. ___ Provide text in a larger print size
30. ___ Omit assignments that require copying
31. ___ Provide a computer for written work
32. ___ Provide visual aids
33. ___ Use graphic organizers
34. ___ Use Post-It notes to mark assignments in textbooks
35. ___ Provide word banks
36. ___ Number and sequence the steps in a task
37. ___ Use work pages that require minimal writing
38. ___ Provide photocopy of teacher notes

39. ___ Provide summaries of chapters
40. ___ Provide fill-in-the-blank study guide with word bank
41. ___ Provide the student with a list of discussion questions before reading the material
42. ___ Give page numbers to help the student find answers
43. ___ Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of key concepts
44. ___ Provide study guides and study questions that directly relate to tests
45. ___ Specify and list exactly what the student will need to learn to pass and review this frequently and share with parents
46. ___ Substitute alternatives for written assignments (clay models, posters, panoramas, collections, etc.)
47. ___ Use fill-in questions with space for a brief response rather than a short essay
48. ___ Give alternatives to long written reports and include all modalities (e.g., write several short reports, preview new audiovisual materials and write a short review, give an oral report on an assigned topic)
49. ___ Introduce an overview of long-term assignments so the student knows what is expected and when it is due – include a graphic organizer that includes a timeline or flowchart
50. ___ Break long-term assignments into small, sequential steps, with daily monitoring and frequent grading
51. ___ Show a model of the end product (e.g., a completed math problem or finished quiz)
52. ___ Provide additional wait time for student to respond verbally
53. ___ Student not expected to read aloud unless s/he volunteers
54. ___ Provide additional time to complete a task
55. ___ Nonverbal sign for self-assessment (e.g., red, yellow, or green cards)
56. ___ Allow extra time to turn in assignments without penalty
57. ___ Develop an individualized behavior intervention plan (BIP) – incorporating what works at home and school
58. ___ Other – Specify:_____

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIFIC TO READING/LANGUAGE ARTS /HANDWRITING
(In addition to Classroom Accommodations listed above.)

1. ___ Listen to audio recordings instead of reading text
2. ___ Use peer readers
3. ___ Allow the student to use a dictionary and thesaurus without penalty
4. ___ Provide list of important vocabulary with definitions
5. ___ Additional time to learn key vocabulary and other facts
6. ___ Use writing scribe
7. ___ Use of word-processing/typing
8. ___ Use of a recording device
9. ___ Use of voice-to-text program
10. ___ Use of pencil grips and other aids
11. ___ Provide an outline or graphic organizer of key points
12. ___ Limit length of written assignments
13. ___ Read printed material orally to student
14. ___ Shorten spelling tests to focus on mastering the most functional words
15. ___ Other – Specify: _____

Please Note: When reading skills are being assessed, the assessment cannot be read to the student.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIFIC TO MATHEMATICS
(In addition to Classroom Accommodations listed above.)

1. ___ Allow the student to use a calculator without penalty
2. ___ Provide list of important vocabulary with definitions
3. ___ Provide key vocabulary for word problems and allow use during assessment
4. ___ Group similar problems together (e.g., all addition in one section)
5. ___ Provide fewer problems on a work page (e.g., 4 to 6 problems on a page, rather than 20 or 30)
6. ___ Require fewer problems to show mastery of concept
7. ___ Use enlarged graph paper to write problems to help the student keep numbers in columns
8. ___ Provide a table of math facts for reference without penalty
9. ___ Provide a formula sheet for reference without penalty
10. ___ Tape a number line to the student's desk
11. ___ Read and explain story/word problems or break problems into smaller steps
12. ___ Use pictures or graphics
13. ___ Use manipulatives
14. ___ Other – Specify: _____

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIFIC TO TESTING
(In addition to Classroom Accommodations listed above.)

1. ___ Avoid timed assessments (e.g., math facts)
2. ___ Assess individually
3. ___ Assess orally/read test to student
4. ___ Allow extra time for completion
5. ___ Allow misspellings when not test concept
6. ___ Limit response items or choices on test
7. ___ Provide a word bank
8. ___ Allow oral responses
9. ___ Dictate answers to a scribe who writes or types
10. ___ Allow retesting
11. ___ Take test at a specific time of day – Specify: _____
12. ___ Break test into sections taken over a period of more than one day
13. ___ Other – Specify: _____

301.2D – Appendix – Strategic Accommodations Checklist

(Name of School)

STRATEGIC ACCOMMODATIONS CHECKLIST

School Year: 20 ___ - 20 ___

Student: _____ Grade: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____ Date of Meeting with Parents/Guardians:_____

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS (List is not all inclusive.)

1. ___ Preferential seating
2. ___ Seat the student away from windows or doorways
3. ___ Provide an unobstructed view of the chalkboard, teacher, movie screen, etc.
4. ___ Reduce visual distractions in the classroom (e.g., mobiles, etc.)
5. ___ Allow for headphones
6. ___ Keep a neutral odor to the classroom
7. ___ Keep workspace clear of unrelated materials
8. ___ Provide individual space or use a study carrel
9. ___ Arrange for student to leave the classroom voluntarily to go to a designated safe area when under high stress
10. ___ Arrange a check-in time to organize the day
11. ___ Use an alarm to help with time management
12. ___ Alert student several minutes before a transition from one activity to another is planned
13. ___ Record assignments and due dates in a notebook or via email that is shared between home and school and initialed by parents and teachers
14. ___ Provide a print copy of any assignments or directions written on the blackboard/whiteboard
15. ___ Provide two sets of textbooks, one for home and one for school
16. ___ Provide clearly defined classroom rules and post in classroom or on student's desk
17. ___ Use nonverbal cues
18. ___ Use visual reminders (e.g., daily schedule, expectations, rubrics)
19. ___ Develop a system or a code word to let the student know when behavior is not appropriate
20. ___ Use both oral and printed directions with repetition/restatement
21. ___ Stand near the student when giving directions or presenting a lesson
22. ___ Give directions in small steps and in as few words as possible
23. ___ Have student repeat the directions
24. ___ Sequence work, with the easiest part first
25. ___ Hand out work pages one at a time
26. ___ Check progress and provide feedback often in the first few minutes of each assignment
27. ___ Place a ruler under sentences being read for better tracking
28. ___ Use an index card with cut-out slot for better tracking when reading
29. ___ Provide text in a larger print size
30. ___ Omit assignments that require copying
31. ___ Provide a computer for written work
32. ___ Provide visual aids
33. ___ Use graphic organizers
34. ___ Use Post-It notes to mark assignments in textbooks
35. ___ Provide word banks
36. ___ Number and sequence the steps in a task
37. ___ Use work pages that require minimal writing
38. ___ Provide photocopy of teacher notes

39. ___ Provide summaries of chapters
40. ___ Provide fill-in-the-blank study guide with word bank
41. ___ Provide the student with a list of discussion questions before reading the material
42. ___ Give page numbers to help the student find answers
43. ___ Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of key concepts
44. ___ Provide study guides and study questions that directly relate to tests
45. ___ Specify and list exactly what the student will need to learn to pass and review this frequently and share with parents
46. ___ Substitute alternatives for written assignments (clay models, posters, panoramas, collections, etc.)
47. ___ Use fill-in questions with space for a brief response rather than a short essay
48. ___ Give alternatives to long written reports and include all modalities (e.g., write several short reports, preview new audiovisual materials and write a short review, give an oral report on an assigned topic)
49. ___ Introduce an overview of long-term assignments so the student knows what is expected and when it is due – include a graphic organizer that includes a timeline or flowchart
50. ___ Break long-term assignments into small, sequential steps, with daily monitoring and frequent grading
51. ___ Show a model of the end product (e.g., a completed math problem or finished quiz)
52. ___ Provide additional wait time for student to respond verbally
53. ___ Student not expected to read aloud unless s/he volunteers
54. ___ Provide additional time to complete a task
55. ___ Nonverbal sign for self-assessment (e.g., red, yellow, or green cards)
56. ___ Allow extra time to turn in assignments without penalty
57. ___ Develop an individualized behavior intervention plan (BIP) – incorporating what works at home and school
58. ___ Other – Specify: _____

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIFIC TO READING/LANGUAGE ARTS /HANDWRITING
(In addition to Classroom Accommodations listed above.)

1. ___ Listen to audio recordings instead of reading text
2. ___ Use peer readers
3. ___ Allow the student to use a dictionary and thesaurus without penalty
4. ___ Provide list of important vocabulary with definitions
5. ___ Additional time to learn key vocabulary and other facts
6. ___ Use writing scribe
7. ___ Use of word-processing/typing
8. ___ Use of a recording device
9. ___ Use of voice-to-text program
10. ___ Use of pencil grips and other aids
11. ___ Provide an outline or graphic organizer of key points
12. ___ Limit length of written assignments
13. ___ Read printed material orally to student
14. ___ Shorten spelling tests to focus on mastering the most functional words
15. ___ Other – Specify: _____

Please Note: When reading skills are being assessed, the assessment cannot be read to the student.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIFIC TO MATHEMATICS
(In addition to Classroom Accommodations listed above.)

1. ___ Allow the student to use a calculator without penalty
2. ___ Provide list of important vocabulary with definitions
3. ___ Provide key vocabulary for word problems and allow use during assessment
4. ___ Group similar problems together (e.g., all addition in one section)
5. ___ Provide fewer problems on a work page (e.g., 4 to 6 problems on a page, rather than 20 or 30)
6. ___ Require fewer problems to show mastery of concept
7. ___ Use enlarged graph paper to write problems to help the student keep numbers in columns
8. ___ Provide a table of math facts for reference without penalty
9. ___ Provide a formula sheet for reference without penalty
10. ___ Tape a number line to the student's desk
11. ___ Read and explain story/word problems or break problems into smaller steps
12. ___ Use pictures or graphics
13. ___ Use manipulatives
14. ___ Other – Specify: _____

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIFIC TO TESTING
(In addition to Classroom Accommodations listed above.)

1. ___ Avoid timed assessments (e.g., math facts)
2. ___ Assess individually
3. ___ Assess orally/read test to student
4. ___ Allow extra time for completion
5. ___ Allow misspellings when not test concept
6. ___ Limit response items or choices on test
7. ___ Provide a word bank
8. ___ Allow oral responses
9. ___ Dictate answers to a scribe who writes or types
10. ___ Allow retesting
11. ___ Take test at a specific time of day – Specify: _____
12. ___ Break test into sections taken over a period of more than one day
13. ___ Other – Specify: _____

301.2E – Appendix – Moderate Accommodations Checklist

(Name of School)
MODERATE ACCOMMODATIONS CHECKLIST
School Year: 20 ___ - 20 ___

Student: _____ Grade: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____ Date of Meeting with Parents/Guardians:_____

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS (List is not all inclusive.)

1. ___ Preferential Seating
2. ___ Seat the student away from windows or doorways
3. ___ Provide an unobstructed view of the chalkboard, teacher, movie screen, etc.
4. ___ Reduce visual distractions in the classroom (e.g., mobiles, etc.)
5. ___ Keep workspaces clear of unrelated materials
6. ___ Provide individual space or use a study carrel
7. ___ Use an alarm to help with time management
8. ___ Record assignments and due dates in a notebook that is shared between home and school and initialed by parents and teachers
9. ___ Provide two sets of textbooks, one for home and one for school
10. ___ Provide clearly defined classroom rules
11. ___ Use nonverbal cues
12. ___ Develop a system or a code word to let the student know when behavior is not appropriate
13. ___ Use both oral and printed directions
14. ___ Hand out work pages one at a time
15. ___ Place a ruler under sentences being read for better tracking
16. ___ Limit assignments that require copying
17. ___ Provide visual aids
18. ___ Use graphic organizers
19. ___ Provide word banks
20. ___ Student not expected to read aloud unless s/he volunteers
21. ___ Provide additional wait time for student to respond verbally
22. ___ Nonverbal sign for self-assessment (e.g., red, yellow, or green cards)
23. ___ Other – Specify: _____

Please note: Items listed on Strategic and Intensive Accommodations Checklists cannot be included.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIFIC TO READING/LANGUAGE ARTS/HANDWRITING
(In addition to Classroom Accommodations listed above.)

1. ___ Allow the student to use a dictionary and thesaurus without penalty
2. ___ Use of pencil grips and other aids (e.g., writing guide)
3. ___ Limit length of written assignments
4. ___ Other – Specify: _____

Please note: Items listed on Strategic and Intensive Accommodations Checklists cannot be included.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIFIC TO MATHEMATICS
(In addition to Classroom Accommodations listed above.)

1. ___ Use enlarged graph paper to write problems to help the student keep numbers in columns
2. ___ Tape a number line to the student's desk
3. ___ Use pictures or graphics
4. ___ Use manipulatives
5. ___ Other – Specify: _____

Please note: Items listed on Strategic and Intensive Accommodations Checklists cannot be included.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIFIC TO TESTING
(In addition to Classroom Accommodations listed above.)

1. ___ Avoid timed assessments (e.g., math facts)
2. ___ Allow misspellings when not test concept
3. ___ Provide a word bank
4. ___ Other – Specify: _____

Please note: Items listed on Strategic and Intensive Accommodations Checklists cannot be included.

301.3 – TEAM PROCESS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Purpose: To ensure each school has a systematic team process to help remove barriers to student success.

Additional Authority:
Can. 806 in support of Educational Integrity, Safety
24 P.S. 15-1547

A. Definitions
Not applicable

B. Requirements
Each Catholic school is required to have a systematic building level support team process used to mobilize school and community resources to remove barriers to learning. The primary goal of this team support is to help students overcome these barriers so that they may achieve and advance in school.

If the BLeST process is being used at the elementary/middle level, it does not generate educational records. Therefore, BLeST forms are never to be included in a student's permanent record folder since they do not refer to the student by name. Implementation of the recommendations offered by a BLeST Nucleus team may create an educational record for the student. If using a process that does create educational records, written parent/guardian permission is necessary.

At the secondary level, if using the Student Assistance Program (SAP), it does generate a student record, so the team must have written permission from the parent/guardian. If using a process that does not create an educational record, then written permission is not required.

When the issue lies beyond the scope of the school, the team will assist the parent/guardian and student so they may access services within the community.

C. Legal Ramifications
Team members do not diagnose, treat or refer for treatment. The team may refer a student and their parent(s)/guardian to a community based service for further assessment and support.

301.3 – Best Practices – TEAM PROCESS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

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Building Level Support Team Program

All forms for this program are located at MyDioErie in Teacher Resources.

Building Level Support Team Program Description:

1. The Building Level Support Team (BLeST) is a support team process. The goal of the BLeST process is to help students meet with success.

2. The entire faculty comprises the BLeST Team. Specific team members representing the varying grade levels and content areas are assigned to the BLeST Nucleus each year. Each member of the Nucleus has a different, yet significant role. The most significant is that of the principal. Meetings of the Nucleus are not to take place without the principal present, and it is the principal who facilitates each BLeST Meeting Team members assigned to the BLeST Nucleus other than the principal are to be rotated from year to year.

3. The BLeST Nucleus meets regularly to review cases and make recommendations. Cases for either individual students or groups of students related to academic, behavioral, social, or other specific areas of concern can be presented to BLeST. Any teacher, whether or not on the Nucleus, can refer a student or class to BLeST. The referring teacher completes either an Initial Case Referral Form or a Group/School Referral Form. The form is submitted to the Team Coordinator who assigns each case a reference number. It is the responsibility of the Team Coordinator to keep a record of all case numbers. The Team Coordinator makes copies of the BLeST referral forms and accompanying documentation for all members of the Nucleus. The Weekly Case Presentation Form can be utilized to create the agenda and schedule for each meeting. The Team Coordinator disseminates all documentation to the members of the Nucleus at least twenty-four hours prior to each meeting taking place.

4. The Team Coordinator maintains the school's BLeST Log. The Weekly Meeting Attendance Form is used as the sign-in sheet for each meeting of the BLeST Nucleus and is maintained in the school's BLeST Log. The Team Coordinator also records the running records for each case presented at meetings of the Nucleus on the Individual Action Form and maintains those in the BLeST Log. Each member of the BLeST Nucleus must have a binder for maintaining the BLeST forms and their own running records for each case. An Individual Case Implementation Form is available for use should the BLeST Team decide to utilize it. This particular form is intended to assist a case manager gather and share information about a case with all the teachers involved with that case. After the case manager collects these forms and uses them to report on the progress of the case, they are shredded. The school's BLeST Log and all other binders must be collected at the end of each school year and stored in the school office.

5. As cases are reviewed by the members of the Nucleus, the students referenced are never referred to by name, only by reference number assigned to the case. Recommendations to resolve the area(s) of concern are offered by the members of the Nucleus. Since the BLeST process, including the BLeST forms, does not refer to any student by name, BLeST does not generate educational records and, therefore, BLeST forms are never to be included in a student's permanent record folder. Implementation of the recommendations offered by the Nucleus may create an educational record for the student.

6. At the end of each school year, all cases are to be reviewed by the Nucleus to determine which cases will remain open and which will be closed. However, a case can be closed at any time during the school year and a case can also remain open for multiple school years. Whenever a case is closed the BLeST forms referring to that case are collected from all members of the Nucleus and must be shredded.

7. Schools are advised to share information about the BLeST process with their parents. Sample letters are included for reference. Prayers that can be used to begin and end meetings of the BLeST Nucleus are also included.

301.4 – REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Purpose: To provide students a measurement of their progress and to assist parents/guardians in fulfilling their educational duty to their children.

Additional Authority:
Can. 796 §1
Can. 806 in support of Educational Integrity

A. Definitions

Progress report is a report, either in paper or electronic form, that indicates the student's acquired mastery level of content standards and may include attendance data, social growth indicators and teacher comments.
Regular interval means periodically throughout the school year - at minimum, twice a year.

B. Requirements

Various methods of reporting, appropriate to grade level and curriculum content, shall be utilized in each school for the following purposes:

- To inform parents/guardians of the progress of their child(ren) on a regular interval
- To determine the academic needs of students so that an effective academic program may be offered
- To determine effectiveness of school-level academic programs.

Parent Conferences are to be scheduled a minimum of once per school year. Parents/guardians are to be given the opportunity to meet with teachers concerning their child's progress throughout the school year so that teachers and parents/guardians may collaborate closely.

301.4 – Best Practices – REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

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1. No report card should be withheld due to non-payment of tuition.

2. Sample standards-based report cards can be found at MyDioErie – School Staff Resources.

3. Reference Policy #301.2 Educational Accommodations for Students.

4. All schools should participate in the Diocesan-level student assessments, such as NWEA. Strict control should be observed in the storage, distribution and collection of test materials. Parents should be notified of the testing dates at least three weeks prior to the test.

301.5 – EDUCATIONAL AUXILIARY STUDENT SERVICES

Purpose: To support and enhance student learning and achievement.

Additional Authority:
Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA) – Federal Funding
22 Pa Code § 112.1 and sequence, Act 89 – State Funding

A. Definition

Auxiliary Student Services refers to state or federally funded student support programs offered in the nonpublic schools. Auxiliary Student Services are intended to supplement a child's core instructional program and not supplant. Two examples are Act 89 and Title I, Part A.
Supplant refers to superseding and replacing core instructional programming.
Supplement refers to additional instruction added to the core instructional programming.

B. Requirements

Educational auxiliary student services must follow the federal or state laws established for each program and the program guidelines developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Strict adherence to the laws and guidelines for each program is required in order to utilize them for the students and to ensure continuation of the programs. Program guidelines are subject to change every time the legislation authorizing a program is renewed. As the programs rely on federal or state funding, the level of funding authorized for each program annually impacts program offerings.

Parental permission is required for students to participate in an auxiliary student services program. Signed permission forms for participation must be kept on file in the student's permanent record folder. Should a parent refuse permission for participation in an auxiliary program, notice of refusal must also be kept in the student's permanent record folder.

C. Legal Ramifications

Educational auxiliary services are intended to supplement classroom instruction. They may never supplant local educational offerings. A consistent process must be followed to determine which students are to be referred for auxiliary services. Justification for services may be needed upon parent inquiry.

302.1 – HARASSMENT

Purpose: To maintain a safe, positive environment for students that is free from harassment.

Additional Authority:
18 Pa. C.S.A. § 2709
Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972

A. Definitions

Harassment

A person commits the crime of harassment when, with intent to harass, annoy or alarm another, the person:

1. Strikes, shoves, kicks or otherwise subjects the other person to physical contact, or attempts or threatens to do the same
2. Follows the other person in or about a public place or places
3. Engages in a course of conduct or repeatedly commits acts which serve no legitimate purpose
4. Communicates to or about such other person any lewd, lascivious, threatening or obscene words, language, drawing or caricatures
5. Communicates repeatedly in an anonymous manner
6. Communicates repeatedly at extremely inconvenient hours or
7. Communicates repeatedly in a manner other than specified above.

Hostile Environment

A hostile environment exists when harassment is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the student's ability to participate in or benefit from school services, activities, or privileges.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other inappropriate verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission of such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's academic success
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for academic or work decisions affecting the individual
3. Such conduct deprives a student of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment
4. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's school performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

B. Requirements

Once any member of the school staff knows or reasonably should know of possible student-on-student harassment, it must take immediate and appropriate action to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. If harassment has occurred, a school must take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate any hostile environment, and prevent its recurrence. These duties are a school's responsibility even if the misconduct also is

covered by an anti-bullying policy and regardless of whether the student makes a complaint, asks the school to take action, or identifies the harassment as a form of discrimination.

A person who knowingly gives false information in an attempt to abuse, bully, demean, embarrass or threaten that individual will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary and civil action. No reprisals nor retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith charges of harassment, bullying, or discrimination

Schools are responsible to develop a Harassment policy and procedures for the investigation of allegations of harassment.

Harassment of a sexual nature may fall under Title IX policy, #202.6.

302.1 – Best Practices – HARASSMENT

****

1. A sample harassment policy:

   The school is committed to providing a place free of sexual harassment as well as harassment based on such factors as race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, medical condition, disability, or veteran status. The school strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate harassment of employees, students, or visitors by any supervisor or employee. The school will also protect employees and students from non-employees.

   Harassment includes verbal, physical, and visual conduct as well as written material that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile working or academic environment or that interferes with work performance of employees or students. Harassment includes but is not limited to physical or mental abuse, insults, slurs, jokes, posters of a disturbing nature, subtle pressure for sexual activity, unwelcome sexual advances or touching or requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, national origin, age, or handicap/disability. Any material appearing on a website, blog, online message, e-mail, or any other form of online computer communication or cell phones that is of a nature as outlined above is also considered to be harassment, whether it originates inside or outside of the school.

   - Ethnic harassment includes the use of any derogatory word, phrase, or action characterizing a given racial or ethnic group that creates an offensive working environment.
   - Sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
     - Submission to such conduct of a sexual nature is a term of condition of an individual's continued employment of academic progress.
     - Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for academic or work decisions affecting the individual.
     - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment. Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to sexual flirtations, advances, touching, or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual, jokes, pin-ups, calendars, objects, graffiti, vulgar statements, abusive language, innuendoes, references to sexual activities, overt sexual conduct, or any conduct that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's ability to work or learn or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning or working environment.

Harassment refers to behavior that is personally offensive, that disables morale, or interferes with the work or academic performance of its victims. Any students or employees who believe themselves to be the objects of actions prohibited by this policy are strongly urged to report these violations. Any incident of harassment, including work-related harassment by any school employee or harassment by or against students should promptly be reported to that employee's supervisor and to the administrator, who is responsible for investigating the matter. Supervisors who receive such complaints should immediately report the incident to the administrator. An employee may also report such incidents of harassment directly to the pastor/president, especially when a supervisor is involved in the harassment. Every complaint of harassment that is reported to the administrator will be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and in as confidential a manner as possible. In addition, the school will not tolerate retaliation against any employee or student for making a complaint. The school considers any report of harassment to be serious. Thus, anyone found to have brought a false charge of harassment as a form or reckless defamation of another's character will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment or dismissal as a student.

Complaint Procedure

Employees and students who believe that they are being harassed are encouraged to firmly and promptly notify the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome. The school also recognizes that differences in position of the alleged harasser and an alleged victim may make such confrontation impossible or impractical. In the event that this type of direct communication between individuals is ineffective, any student or employee who feels that he or she has been made a victim of harassment should take the following steps to report any complaints.

1. An employee or student shall report a complaint of harassment, orally or in writing, to his/her immediate supervisor or the administrator, who shall inform the employee or student of his/her rights and of the complaint process. In the event that an initial report is made orally, the administrator shall request that the complaint be put in writing before an investigation is initiated and resolution achieved. If the alleged victim refuses to put the complaint in writing, the administrator shall prepare a written statement which summarizes the oral complaint.

2. The administrator immediately shall notify the pastor/president, and the administrator shall initiate an impartial, thorough and confidential investigation of the alleged harassment within five (5) working days of notification. In the event that the administrator is the subject of the complaint, the complaint shall be directed to the pastor/president to conduct the investigation. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes harassment, the totality of the circumstances, nature of the conduct, and context in which the alleged conduct occurred shall be investigated.

3. The administrator (or pastor/president) shall prepare a written report within twenty (20) working days of his/her notification of the suspected harassment summarizing the

investigation and recommending disposition of the complaint unless extenuating circumstances prevent him/her from doing so. The report shall include a finding that harassment occurred, harassment did not occur, or there is inconclusive evidence as to whether harassment occurred. Copies of the report shall be provided to the complainant, the accused, the president and others directly involved, as appropriate.

4. If the investigation results in a substantiated charge of harassment, the school shall take prompt corrective action to ensure the harassment ceases and will not recur.

5. Every effort shall be made to keep all matters related to the investigation and the various reports confidential. The school will maintain written records for one (1) year from the date of the resolution of the complaint unless new circumstances dictate that the file should be kept for a longer period of time.

6. No limited time frame will be instituted for reporting harassment complaints. Delayed reporting of complaints will not, in and of itself, preclude the school from taking remedial action.

7. The school will not, in any way, retaliate against an individual who makes a report of sexual or other harassment or permit any management of supervisory employee to do so. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual for reporting harassment will be subject to the same disciplinary action provided for the actual harassment offenders.

Discipline

A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such employee to disciplinary action, including discharge. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject such student to disciplinary action, consistent with the student discipline code, and may include exclusion from educational activities and/or counseling services related to unlawful harassment and/or dismissal from the school. If it is concluded that an employee has made false accusations, such employee shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. In the case of harassment by school employees, if harassment is established, the School will take disciplinary action, up to and including immediate discharge, depending on the circumstances. With regard to acts of harassment by non-employees, corrective action will be taken after consultation with appropriate legal authorities.

Appeal Procedure

1. If the complainant or accused is not satisfied with the administrator's decision, he/she may file a written appeal to the pastor/president within ten (10) working days of the resolution of the charge by the administrator.

2. The pastor/president shall review the initial investigation and report and may also conduct a reasonable investigation. The pastor/president shall prepare a written

response to the appeal within thirty (30) working days. Copies of the response shall be provided to the complainant, the accused, the administrator and others directly involved, as appropriate. In the event that the administrator was the subject of the complaint, the decision of the pastor/president shall be final.

3. In the event the complainant of harassment accuses the pastor/president, the appeal from the administrator's determination shall be to the Catholic Schools Office / Board of Directors of the School, which shall review the initial investigation and report and may also conduct a reasonable investigation.

4. The decision of the pastor/president (or the Board) on appeal shall be final.

302.2 – BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

Purpose: To maintain a safe, positive environment for students that is free from bullying/ cyberbullying.

Additional Authority:
24 P.S. § 13-1303.1-A
18 Pa. C.S. § 2709 (a)

A. Definitions

Bullying shall mean an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts:

- Directed at another student or students and
- Which occurs in a school setting and
- That is severe, persistent or pervasive and
- That has the effect of doing any of the following:
  - Substantially interfering with a student's education
  - Creating a threatening environment or
  - Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through short message service (SMS), text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.

Off-campus Acts of Bullying is bullying in such a way as to encompass acts that occur outside a school setting if those acts are:

- Directed at another student or students and are severe, persistent and pervasive or
- Have the effect of:
  - Substantially interfering with a student's education
  - Creating a threatening environment or
  - Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

School setting shall mean in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

B. Requirements

Each school must develop a bullying/cyberbullying policy that addresses disciplinary consequences and identify the appropriate school staff person to receive reports of incidents of alleged bullying. The policy must be available on school websites and in every classroom.

Once a school knows or reasonably should know of possible student-on-student bullying, it must take immediate and appropriate action to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. If bullying has occurred, a school must take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the bullying, eliminate any hostile environment, and prevent its recurrence.

These duties are a school's responsibility regardless of whether the student makes a complaint, asks the school to take action, or identifies the bullying as a form of discrimination.

Schools/systems are responsible for developing procedures for:

- A process for reporting of complaint
- The investigative process to be followed and
- Ramifications for false reporting.

C. Legal Implications

Some bullying issues may have a civil or criminal aspect.

Retaliation may be considered a form of bullying or harassment and is to be noted specifically in the Student/Parent handbook.

302.2 – Best Practices – BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

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1. A sample bullying policy:

Purpose

The school is committed to providing a safe, civil, positive learning environment for students. The school recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, presents an obstacle to social/emotional development of students, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the School prohibits bullying by students.

Definitions

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of any of the following:

- Substantial interference with a student's education
- Creation of a threatening environment
- Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying. Bullying consists of a pattern of repeated harmful behavior by a person with more physical or social power toward a less powerful person. This may include a wide variety of behaviors, with deliberate intent to hurt, embarrass, or humiliate the other person. All forms of cyberbullying are unacceptable and, to the extent that such actions are disruptive of the educational process of the district, offenders shall be the subject of appropriate discipline, which may include legal and/or police proceedings.

Bullying includes unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a student by another student that has the intent of or effect of:

- Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student.
- Damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property.
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm.
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property.
- Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities.

The term bullying shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school and on the way to and from school.

The school prohibits all forms of bullying by students. The school encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building administrator or designee.

The school directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. If the behavior is found to meet the definition of bullying, written documentation shall be submitted to the building administrator. The building administrator or designee will inform parents/guardians of the victim and person accused. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

Guidelines
The Student/Parent Handbook, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students. This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in prominent locations and on the school's web site.

Consequences for Violations
A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include:

- Counseling
- Parental conference
- Loss of school privileges/exclusion from school-sponsored activities
- Detention
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Referral to law enforcement officials

2. A bullying/cyberbullying policy may include that the forwarding of a message that violates this policy is also considered to be an act of participating in the bullying/cyberbullying.

3. A guide to know when to call law officials is when:
   - A crime has been committed
   - A threat of crime
   - Safety concern for person / people
   - In doubt

302.3 – HAZING

Purpose: To maintain a safe, positive environment for students that is free from hazing.

Additional Authority:
24 P.S. § 5352-5354
P.L. § 1595, 175
P.L. § 229, 31

A. Definition

Hazing is any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or which willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, any organization. The term shall include, but not be limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, or any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property. For purposes of this definition, any activity as described in this definition upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be "forced" activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding.

B. Requirements

Each school that serves 7th through 12th grades, which includes K – 8 elementary schools, must develop a written anti-hazing policy and rules that prohibit students or other persons associated with the school (recognized as an organization by the school) from engaging in any activity which can be described as hazing. Such penalties may include fines, withholding of diplomas or transcripts pending compliance with the rules or pending payment of fines and the suspension or dismissal of the student. Rules adopted shall apply to acts conducted on or off campus or other school property whenever such acts are deemed to constitute hazing. This includes admission into or maintenance of membership in any organization affiliated with the school.

A copy of the written anti-hazing policy, its associated rules, penalties and programs of enforcement must be provided to all athletic coaches, moderators, directors, or leaders of every organization affiliated with the school. Schools must obtain written evidence, from all coaches, moderators, directors, and leaders confirming receipt and understanding of the policy. Refusal to provide written evidence would disallow involvement. These policies, rules and punishments must also be available on the school's website.

C. Legal Ramifications

Some hazing issues may have a civil or criminal aspect. Any hazing incidents that are of a sexual nature may fall under the Title IX Policy #202.6.

302.3 – Best Practices – HAZING

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A sample hazing policy is provided below.

Hazing violates the purpose and mission of (school name), wherein students are called to grow in their commitment to God, one another, the Church, and the wider community.

Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing or reckless act meant to induce pain, embarrassment, humiliation, deprivation of rights or that creates physical or mental discomfort, and is directed against a student for the purpose of being initiated into, affiliated with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization, club, or athletic team, whether such hazing practices were mandatory or voluntarily entered into by any student or organization in question.

Examples of hazing include, but are not limited to the following:

- Recklessly or intentionally endangering the physical health, mental health, safety, or dignity of a person
- Willful destruction or removal of public or private property for initiation or admission into affiliation with, or as a condition of continued membership in any organization
- Forcing or requiring the drinking of alcohol or any other substance
- Forcing or requiring the eating of food or anything an individual refuses to eat
- Paddling or striking in any manner
- Marking, branding, or shaving the head or body hair
- Preventing/restricting normal personal hygiene
- Sexual harassment causing indecent exposure or nudity at any time
- Physical harassment such as pushing, cursing, shouting, etc.
- Requiring uncomfortable, ridiculous, or embarrassing dress
- Requiring the carrying of items
- Requiring personal service or acts of servitude
- Treating a person in a degrading or demeaning manner
- Requiring new members to practice periods of silence
- Conducting interrogations or any other types of questioning.

Student and supervising adults must not remain silent if they observe hazing. Silence condones these activities and may make the observer as guilty as the hazers themselves. Any hazing incident witnessed by a student or supervising adult should be immediately reported to the administrator. Individuals or groups found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action that could include suspension or expulsion from the school.

302.4 – WEAPONS

Purpose: To ensure a safe school environment, possession of weapons in the school, on school grounds, or at a school sponsored event is prohibited.

Additional Authority:

24 P.S. § 1317.2	24 P.S. § 1302.1-A	24 P.S. § 1303-A
22 Pa Code § 10.2	22 Pa Code § 10.21	22 Pa Code § 10.25
18 U.S.C. § 921	18 Pa C.S.A. § 912	24 P.S. § 1301-A

A. Definitions

Possessing is when the weapon is found on the person of the student, in the student's locker, in their backpack, in their car, under the student's control while in the building(s) of or on the grounds of the school, or at a school sponsored event, or in any conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school activity or function.

Weapons shall include, but are not limited to, the following: guns, firearms, paintball, BB, or pellet guns, knives, cutting instruments, cutting tools, nunchaku, metal knuckles, straight razors, razor blades, noxious, irritating or poisonous gases, liquids or solids, bombs, missiles, chains, metal objects, objects designed for personal protection such as tasers or stun guns, replicas of weapons, or any other tool, instrument, implement or object capable of threatening, harassing, harming or doing bodily injury. Objects that are not reasonably considered weapons may be classified as a weapon if used to threaten, harass, harm or do bodily injury.

B. Requirements

Students are prohibited from possessing and bringing weapons into any school building, onto school property, to any school sponsored event, and onto any vehicle providing transportation to a school sponsored activity or while the student is coming to and from school.

If a student is found in violation of this policy, the principal or their designee, shall notify law enforcement. The principal, or their designee, shall take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the student handbook, which may include expulsion.

The administrator, or their designee, shall notify the parent/guardian of any student involved in an incident involving a weapon, and the Catholic Schools Office, as soon as practical. In addition, all incidents involving possession of a weapon are to be reported to the Catholic Schools Office on the Safe and Drug Free Schools Community Act (SDFSCA) School Building Data Form and by the required deadline each year.

Unless the circumstances require otherwise, the School shall provide notification within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident using a communication method reasonably likely to reach the affected parents, guardians, and employees. Notification shall be provided even when a threat assessment determines that the incident does not present an ongoing threat.

Weapons under the control of current law enforcement personnel are permitted.

The pastor or system president may make a written exception to this policy prescribing the special conditions or guidelines to be followed.

302.5 – TERRORISTIC THREATS OR ACTS OF HARM BY STUDENTS

Purpose: To prepare school personnel to respond immediately and effectively to terroristic threats or acts of harm.

Additional Authority:
18 Pa C.S. § 2706
22 PA Code § 12.2

A. Definitions

Terroristic Act shall mean a serious offense against property or involving danger to another person.

Terroristic Threat refers to a threat to commit violence communicated either directly or indirectly with the intent to terrorize another, to cause evacuation of a building, place of assembly or facility of public transportation, or to otherwise cause serious public inconvenience with reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience.

B. Requirements

All threats of harm need to be taken seriously and evaluated carefully. Staff members and students shall be responsible for informing the building administrator regarding any information or knowledge if they believe a threat has been made. The administrator will determine if the incident should be classified as a threat of harm. If classified as a threat of harm, law enforcement should be notified immediately. The administrator then notifies the Pastor/President then the Superintendent. A threat assessment team is then assembled. A team approach must be employed. Depending upon the circumstances of the threat, the recommendations of trained individuals may be sought and considered by the team.

The purpose of threat assessment is to assess the level of danger posed by the threat made and to determine the most effective plan of intervention for the child/children who made the threat.

- When an Incident is Classified as a Threat of Harm – Assemble a Threat Assessment Team Meeting
  - A team approach must be employed. Depending upon the circumstances of the threat, people from the following list would be included:
    - School Administrator
    - Pastor/President
    - All teachers of child/children involved
    - School counselor
    - Law enforcement representative
    - Outside agency/community resources if available
    - Parents of child/children involved

- Threat Assessment Team Draws Conclusions and Makes Recommendations
  - Each threat of harm must be handled on a case-by-case situation.

- Determine severity of threat: Low, Medium, High
  Based on *FBI-The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective*

  LEVELS OF RISK

  - **Low Level of Threat -** A threat which poses a minimal risk to the victim and public safety.
    - Threat is vague and indirect.
    - Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail.
    - Threat lacks realism.
    - Content of the threat suggests person is unlikely to carry it out.
    - Using administrator's discretion, notify parents of potential victims.

  - **Medium Level of Threat -** A threat which could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic.
    - Threat is more direct and more concrete than a low-level threat.
    - Wording in the threat suggests that the individual who made the threat has given some thought to how the act will be carried out.
    - There may be a general indication of a possible place and time (though these signs still fall well short of a detailed plan).
    - There is no strong indication that the individual who made the threat has taken preparatory steps, although there may be some veiled reference or ambiguous or inconclusive evidence pointing to that possibility - an allusion to a book or movie that shows the planning of a violent act, or a vague, general statement about the availability of weapons.
    - There may be a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty: "I'm serious!" or "I really mean this!"
    - Notify parents of potential victims.

  - **High Level of Threat** - A threat that appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others.
    - Threat is direct, specific and plausible.
    - Threat suggests concrete steps have been taken toward carrying it out, for example, statements indicating that the individual who made the threat has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had the victim under surveillance.
    - Notify parents of potential victims.

- Determine continuation of school attendance and/or re-admittance to school.
- Determine if involvement of a diocesan solicitor is required to assess liability.
- Determine recommendations that need to be made to the child's/children's parents (e.g., counseling, psychological evaluation).

When an administrator has evidence that a student has made a terroristic threat or committed a terroristic act, the following guidelines shall be applied:

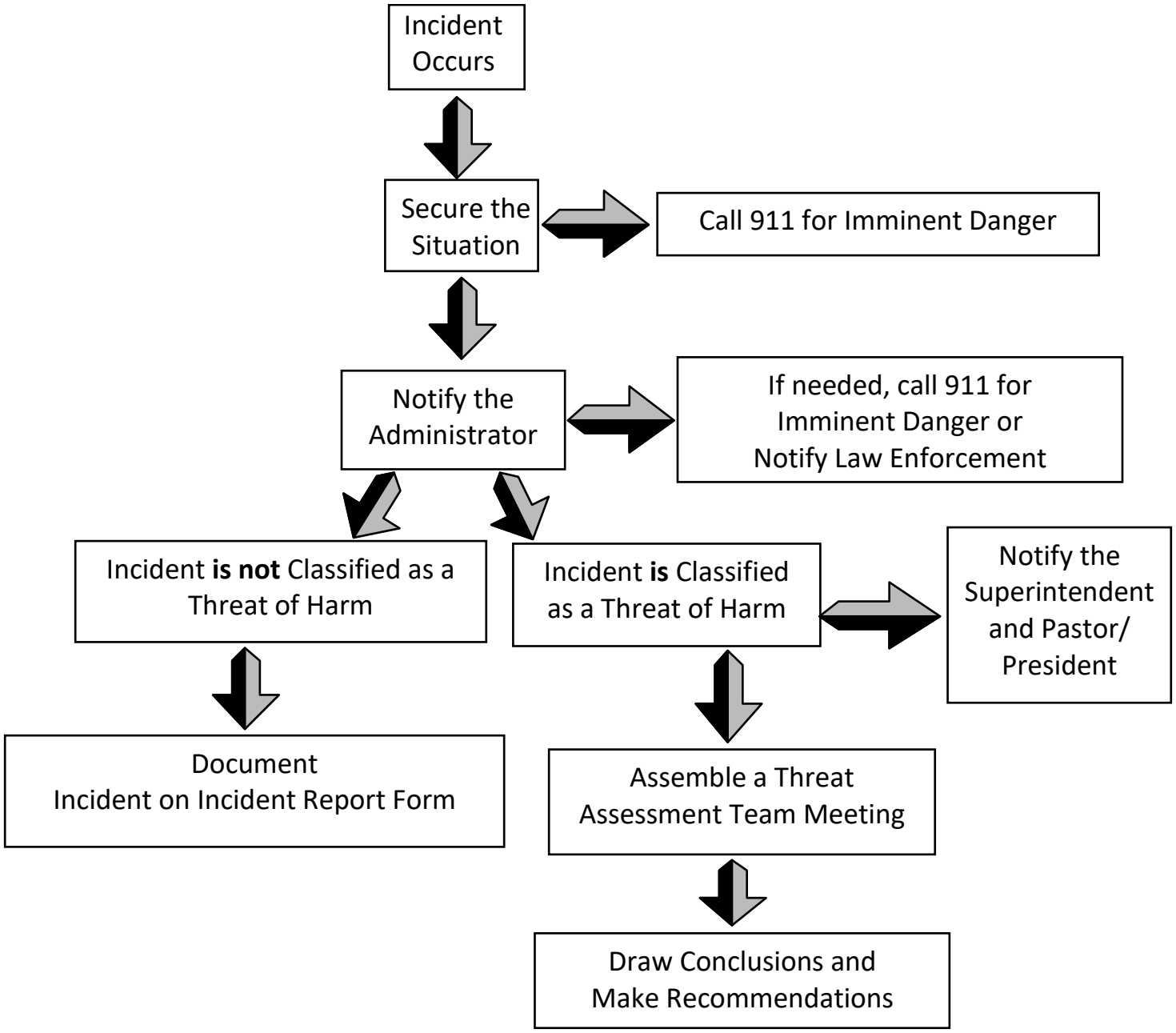
1. The building administrator may immediately suspend the student.
2. The administrator shall report the student to law enforcement officials.
3. The building administrator may inform any person directly referenced or affected by a terroristic threat.
4. The administrator shall report the student's violation to the student's parents/guardians. A conference with the student's parents/guardians shall be scheduled.
5. Depending on the severity of the threat, the Catholic Schools Office may need to be involved.

If a student is suspended for making terroristic threats or committing terroristic acts, the administrator may require, prior to consideration for readmission, that the parent/guardian provide competent and credible evidence that the student does not pose a risk of harm to others.

When a parent/guardian, employee, or community member has made a terroristic threat or committed a terroristic act, the following guidelines shall be applied:

1. If there is imminent danger, the administrator or designee shall immediately call 911. If not imminent, the administrator shall report the incident to local law enforcement officials.
2. The administrator may notify the offender that he/she no longer has the privilege of entering school property or attending any school-related functions to which community members are invited.

TERRORISTIC THREATS OR ACTS OF HARM BY STUDENTS
FLOWCHART



C. Legal Ramifications

Once informed of a threat or potential act of harm, if a school takes no action, the school and the negligent employee(s) could be held liable. If applicable, following all Safe 2 Say Something directives must be followed.

302.5A – Appendix – Threat Assessment Team – Report Form

THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM - REPORT FORM

Complete one form per student involved in the incident classified as a threat of harm. That student may be the only student mentioned by name in this documentation. A copy of this report is placed in that student's permanent record file.

School: _____ City: _____

Person Completing Report: _____ Position: _____

Completion Date of Report Form: _____

Date of threat: _____ Time of threat: _____ A.M. / P.M.

Place threat occurred: _____

Threat took place (Check all that apply.):

_____ Before school, on school grounds
_____ During school
_____ After school, on school grounds
_____ At a school-sponsored event: _____
_____ During non-school hours
_____ Outside of school: _____

Description of threat: (Include any factors leading up to the threat.)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Describe how the situation was secured:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Was it necessary to call 911? _____Yes _____No

Was the principal notified? _____Yes _____No

Was it necessary to notify law enforcement? _____Yes _____No

If yes, who was notified? _____

If notified, describe response in detail:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Date of Threat Assessment Team Meeting: _____

Participants Involved in the Threat Assessment Team Meeting:

Name	Position

Determine severity of threat (Refer to Levels of Risk in Policy #302.5)

_____Low _____Medium _____High

Conclusions Made at Threat Assessment Team Meeting:

Recommendations Made at Threat Assessment Team Meeting:

302.6 – SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Purpose: To ensure that a process is in place and consistently followed when suspending or expelling students.

Additional Authority:
Contract Law

A. Definition

Expulsion occurs when a student is no longer permitted to attend the current school of enrollment and is removed from the attendance roster.

"Good Faith and Fair Dealing" refers to:

1. Notice – the person is told what he/she is accused of doing or not doing
2. Meeting – the person is allowed to present his/her side of the story.

In-school Suspension occurs when a student is excluded from the school day routine with classmates and is isolated in one area during class time and lunch.

Out-of-school Suspension refers to a student being excluded from school in the care of his/her parents for a period of time.

B. Requirements

A disciplinary process must be defined in the student/parent handbook that outlines the steps that will be followed prior to a student suspension or expulsion. The student/parent handbook process must be followed in all cases consistently and fairly. Schools must meet the legal requirements of good faith and fair dealing. Therefore, schools must give notice to the student/parent or guardian and include the opportunity for a student/parent to attend a meeting to present their side to school administration. The student/parent handbook must include if a student is permitted during the suspension or expulsion to attend or participate in school activities or to be on school property.

In a case involving a grave offense, which may include a violation of the law, the student can be immediately suspended. The school may opt to take this action when the continued presence of the student at school will pose, in the reasonable judgment of the administrator, a serious threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the student, other students, staff or other members of the school community. A grave offense may include a significant repudiation of the Catholic Identity of the school.

The school must keep on file a written record of the steps leading to an expulsion, with copies of all communications and reports in the permanent student file.

The Superintendent is to be informed of all student expulsions. The school shall immediately notify the student's public school district of residence that the student has been removed from the school's attendance roster.

C. Legal Ramifications

Under the contract established with students/parents through the tuition agreement and the student/parent handbook, schools are required to treat all persons in a manner that meets the legal requirements of good faith and fair dealing. There can be legal ramifications against the school when this does not occur. If applicable, reference the Terroristic Threats or Acts of Harm by Students policy #302.5.

302.7 – SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Purpose: To protect the health, safety and welfare of the school community.

Additional Authority:
22 Pa. Code §12.14

A. Definitions

Probable cause is a stricter standard than reasonable suspicion. Probable cause exists when a school official has reliable knowledge about the whereabouts of dangerous or potentially dangerous material on school property. Probable cause is supported by facts and circumstances, that a crime has been, is being, or will be committed.

Reasonable suspicion is a suspicion with some basis in fact. Reasonable suspicion refers to what a reasonable person, or a normal, average person, would consider suspicious. The reasonableness of any search involves a two-fold inquiry. First, one must consider whether the action was justified at its inception. Second, one must determine whether the search as actually conducted was reasonably related in scope to the circumstances which justified the interference in the first place.

School property includes the property, materials, equipment and items owned by the school including desks and lockers used by students.

B. Requirements

School policies regarding searches must be in student handbooks with written confirmation of receipt and understanding. This policy is to include language that the lockers and desks, at all times, remain the property of the school and are merely made available for student use. Therefore, student lockers and desks may be searched at any time, and students are advised that they have no expectation of privacy in the use of lockers and desks.

Prior to locker searches, students shall be notified and given an opportunity to be present.

If reasonable suspicion exists, school authorities may search lockers and desks without prior warning. Illegal or prohibited materials seized during a student search may be used against the student in a school disciplinary proceeding.

Possessions are considered personal possessions of the student, without regard to ownership, if the items are in the possession or control of the student. Personal possessions, including backpacks, and motor vehicles on school property can be searched if there is reasonable suspicion of a threat to health, safety or welfare of the school community or that the items to be searched contain contraband or other items not permitted on school property. The search must be limited in scope to the suspected material.

C. Legal Ramifications

Have another staff member present in any searches by school officials of individual students or property. If appropriate, contact parent or guardian. If the police ask to search a student or a

student's personal property, ask for the officer's identification and to view the warrant. If there is no warrant explain that once a warrant is obtained and presented, the student will be available for a search.

School policies concerning search and seizure are to explain what happens to seized possessions.

A school policy can require the search of a student vehicle parked on school property, if the parking permit makes submission to a search a condition of granting the permission. Denial of permission to search the vehicle would be grounds for disciplinary action for violation of school rules.

302.8 – RESTRICTIVE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Purpose: To protect student welfare with the restrictive use of 21st century technology.

Additional Authority:
24 P.S. § 1317.1

A. Definitions

Electronic devices shall include all devices that can take photographs; record audio or video data; store, transmit or receive messages or images; or provide a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet. Examples of these electronic devices include, but shall not be limited to, iPads, smartphones, smartwatches, and laptop computers, as well as any new technology developed with similar capabilities.

B. Requirements

The school prohibits the unlawful use of electronic devices by students. Use of any electronic device to record audio or video data is prohibited in locker rooms, bathrooms, health suites and other changing areas at all times. Use of an electronic device to call 911 in an emergency is permitted.

The school prohibits possession of laser pointers by students in school buildings, on school property, on school buses and vehicles, and at school-sponsored activities.
The school shall not be liable for the loss, theft, damage or misuse of any electronic device.

C. Legal Ramifications

Students shall be notified that bringing personal technology devices onto school grounds, school buses or vehicles, or to school-sponsored events, subjects them to search and seizure of that personal technology device when school administration has reasonable suspicion that the student has violated school rules, policy, or state and/or federal law through the use of his/her technology device.

302.9 – SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Purpose: To ensure each school/system adopts a youth suicide awareness and prevention policy and provides ongoing professional development.

Additional Authority:
Act 71 of 2014
Act 211 of 1990
24 P.S. §15-1526

A. Definition
Not Applicable

B. Requirements
Each school/system must develop an age-appropriate youth suicide awareness and prevention policy. This policy must include the following:

- A statement on youth suicide awareness and prevention
- Protocols for administering youth suicide awareness and prevention education to staff and students
- Methods of prevention, including procedures for early identification and referral of students at risk of suicide
- Methods of intervention, including procedures that address a safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide
- Methods of responding to a student or staff suicide attempt or suicide death
- Reporting procedures and
- Recommended current resources on youth suicide awareness and prevention programs, including current contact information for such programs.

In addition, four (4) hours of training in youth suicide awareness and prevention are required every five (5) years for professional educators in school buildings serving students in grades six through twelve.

Each school/system employee and the parent/guardian of each student enrolled in the school/system shall be informed of the youth suicide awareness and prevention policy. This policy must also be posted on the school/system's website.

C. Legal Ramifications
If a student suicide should occur and the school had an awareness of the issue, took no action or did not have a suicide awareness and prevention policy, the school could be liable.

302.9 – Best Practices – SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

****

A sample School-level Suicide Awareness and Prevention policy is below:

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Policy and Procedures

Purpose

The _____ school/system has adopted a Suicide Awareness policy in acknowledgement of our school's commitment to:

- Maintain a safe school environment by having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in and respond to suicide,
- Protect the health and well-being of our students and school community, and
- Safeguard against the threat or attempt of suicide among our school-aged youth, and
- Engage professional educators and students in regular educational experiences to gain knowledge related to youth suicide awareness and prevention methods.

Definitions

At-Risk for Suicide shall mean any youth with risk factors or warning signs that increase the likelihood of suicidal behavior.

Behavioral Health shall mean the emotion, behaviors and biology related to a person's mental well-being, their ability to function in everyday life and their concept of self.

Postvention shall mean activities which reduce risk and promote healing after a suicide death.

Prevention refers to efforts that seek to reduce the factors that increase the risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors and increase the factors that help strengthen, support, and protect individuals from suicide.

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress or "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

Suicide shall refer to death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with intent to die as a result of the behavior.

Suicidal Act or Suicide Attempt shall mean a potentially self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person intended to kill him/herself; a suicidal act may result in death, injuries, or no injuries.

Suicide Threat shall mean a verbal or nonverbal communication that an individual intends to harm him/herself with the intention to die but has not acted on the behavior.

Warning Signs are evidence-based indicators, often observable, that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future.

Confidentiality

The _____ school/system believes students identified as at-risk of self-harm shall receive access to mental health support as quickly as possible. The primary responsibilities of school personnel working with students dealing suicidal thoughts or actions is

to provide immediate support for the student, inform the parent/guardian, and request, or require when appropriate, the parent/ guardian make a referral to a qualified health professional or emergency service provider for an external mental health evaluation. In these life-threatening situations, school officials have a duty to report suicidal ideation to protect the student's well-being. Information about potential suicidal ideation will be shared with the building principal and other appropriate authorities when the health, welfare, or safety of the student or any other person is deemed to be at risk.

Any mental health records collected by the school must be kept in a confidential file separate from the student's permanent records and medical records. Students aged 14 and older legally control their mental health records. Therefore, a release of information from the student is required to share these records. This includes the student's parents.

Prevention Requirements

- Each school/system employee and the parent/guardian of each student enrolled in the school/system shall be informed of the youth suicide awareness and prevention policy. This policy shall be included in the student/parent and faculty handbooks and posted on the school/system's website.
- Students in grades 6-12 shall receive age-appropriate suicide awareness and prevention lessons in their classrooms through health education or other appropriate curricula annually. Curricula will include information about the myths and facts, importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, how to recognize risk factors and warning signs, as well as help-seeking strategies for self or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help.
- All professional educators in school buildings serving students in grade six (6) through grade twelve (12), shall receive one hour of training in youth suicide awareness and prevention every year.

Prevention Procedures and Resources

- Schools will communicate prevention policy and procedures to stakeholders via:
  - Student/parent handbooks
  - Faculty handbook
  - School website
- Age-appropriate Suicide Awareness and Prevention education
  - Research shows the most effective suicide awareness and prevention education occurs in small group settings. Therefore, all schools will include suicide awareness and prevention education as a part of a selected curriculum within the educational program. (i.e., health, wellness, Theology).

- Suicide Awareness and Prevention Resources:
  - Climate and Well-Being | Department of Education | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Information to provide safe, healthy & supportinve learning environments
  - Jason Foundation: Training as well as several valuable resources for educators
  - Prevent Suicide PA: Pre and postvention resources
  - PBS – In the Mix: Suicide prevention lesson plans for grades 7-12
  - Mental Health Units of Instruction: Suicide prevention curriculum for grades 7-12
  - National Institute of Mental Health: Resources to raise awareness about suicide prevention
  - SAMHSA: National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Strategy and federal action plan social media toolkit
  - Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Resources and virtual learning labs
  - The American Association of Suicidology: Offers a wide array of school resources
  - The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops offers this analysis: Youth Suicidal
  - Youth Suicide Education Awareness and Prevention Curriculum: Act 71, PDE model curriculum

- Professional Development for Professional Educational Staff
  - Professional educators shall complete a minimum of one hour of suicide awareness and prevention training annually and can utilize the following training options:
    - PDE approved: Prevent Suicide PA Learning: Free online courses including, "Suicide Prevention for Educators." Prevent Suicide PA Learning (pspalearning.com)
      - ◊ This program offers eight, 30-minute suicide awareness and prevention courses
      - ◊ Educators shall complete a minimum of two (2) of the 30 minutes online courses list below annually and submit an end of course generated transcript showing progress to date.
    - USDHHS/ SAMSHA approved: QPR Online Gatekeeper Training: This is a 1-hour training that can be provided in a face-to-face setting or online by a trained, certified, mental health specialist. More information can be found at https://qprinstitute.com/individual-training.

Intervention Procedures: Response to a Student Suicide Threat

A professional educator who becomes aware of suicidal ideation (i.e., verbalized thoughts about suicide, presents with risk factors such as agitation, intoxication, an act of self-harm, written threats, expressions about suicide and/or death in school assignments, another student reports concerns about a student, etc.) must view the situation with seriousness and

immediately (within the same school day) report this information to the principal and school counselor (if applicable) immediately.

Immediate Procedures:

- The principal and school counselor shall see the identified student immediately.
- Ensure an adult always stays with the student. Do not leave the student alone.
- Assess the level of risk by collecting and documenting all pertinent information about the student, including an interview with the student. (See 302.9 BP-A Appendix)
- Notify parent or guardian immediately of the student's suicidal ideations and/or actions. If unable to contact parent or guardian, call the local mental health services. (Mental health services Phone #: _____)
- When appropriate, request an external mental health evaluation be conducted by a qualified mental health professional
- Conduct in-person parent/guardian conference and require parent/guardian to sign a form that includes: (See 302.9 BP-B Appendix)
    - Reason for parent conference
    - Date and time of the conference
    - Signatures of all present for meeting
    - Specific information about any recommendations for external mental health evaluations
    - A number for local mental health provider
- Require a "school safety plan" for student's return to school and share safety plan requirements with student's teachers. (See 302.9 BP-C and BP-D Appendices)

Follow-Up Procedures:

- Document all meetings and communications with student and family and on-going school actions, including dates and times.
- Request a copy of the mental health evaluation and recommendations made by a qualified mental health professional. Documentation is to be reviewed by principal.
- Before student returns to school, convene a conference with parents to discuss student's readiness for return and devise a reentry safety plan. (See 302.9 BP-C Appendix)
    - Communicate on a regular basis with student's parent/guardian about the student's ongoing progress.
- Convene a meeting every three weeks to discuss current in-school safety plan to adjust as warranted. (See 302.9 BP-C Appendix)
- Inform appropriate school personnel of student's return and communicate requirements of safety plan. (See 302.9 BP-D Appendix) School staff members who are likely to interact with the student should be verbally notified to be on alert for signs of on-going risk factors. (In the case of suicidal ideation school staff members who are likely to interact with students do have an "educational need to know," however, these

individuals should be aware that they need to maintain confidentiality for the student and the family being served.)

- Implement safety plan. (See 302.9 BP-C and BP-D Appendices) Document student's ongoing progress.
- If parents do not comply with evaluation request or mental health recommendations, principal shall meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss continued enrollment.
- If suicidal ideation continues, repeat the immediate intervention procedures.

Response to an In-School Suicide Attempt

In the event of a student attempting suicide during the school day, on school grounds, the following procedures will be followed:

Immediate Procedures:

- Call 911 for ambulance.
- Administer first aid until professional medical services arrive.
- Call the predetermined school personnel to assist with immediate needs of the student.
    - Always ensure an adult stay with the student. Do not leave student alone.
- Make an announcement asking all teachers and students to stay in their classrooms.
- The building Principal will notify:
    - Parent or guardian
    - Police
    - Pastor/president and superintendent
    - Mental health services (as needed)
- Identify students who may have witnessed the event or who were in close physical or emotional proximity to the student. Arrange for opportunity for student to meet with a mental health provider to ensure safety and well-being.
- Principal and all involved personnel will document all actions and communications. This documentation should contain factual information and accurate timeframes and locations of school response to the crisis. (i.e., "At 1:25 (student name) was found unconscious in stairwell.")

Follow-Up Procedures:

- A formal external mental health evaluation conducted by a qualified medical health professional shall be required for the student, as soon as possible.
- Request a copy of the mental health evaluation and recommendations made by a qualified mental health professional. Documentation is to be reviewed by principal.
- The student must have a completed mental health assessment prior to readmission to school.
    - If parents do not comply with evaluation request or mental health recommendations, principal shall meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss continued enrollment.

- If a student requires hospitalization or medical absence, continued contact with the student's parents should be maintained to extend support, encourage parental involvement, and monitor student's progress.
- Before student returns to school, convene a conference with parents to discuss student's readiness for return and devise a reentry safety plan. (See 302.9 BP-C Appendix)
    - Communicate on a regular basis with student's parents/guardians about the student's ongoing progress.
        - Convene a meeting every three weeks to discuss current in-school safety plan to make adjustments as warranted. (See 302.9 BP-C Appendix)
- Inform appropriate school personnel of student's return and communicate requirements of safety plan. (See 302.9 BP-D Appendix) School staff members who are likely to interact with the student should be verbally notified to be on alert for signs of on-going risk factors. (In the case of suicidal ideation school staff members who are likely to interact with students do have an "educational need to know," however, these individuals should be aware that they need to maintain confidentiality for the student and the family being served.)
- Implement safety plan. (See 302.9 BP-C and BP-D Appendices) Document student's ongoing progress.
- If parents do not comply with evaluation request or mental health recommendations, principal shall meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss continued enrollment.
- If suicidal ideation continues, repeat the intervention procedures.
- Continue to monitor other students who had close physical or emotional proximity to student who made the suicide attempt.

Response to a Suicide Attempt Outside of School

Immediate Procedures:

- Principal will verify the validity of the report with parent/guardian.

Follow-Up Procedures:

- A formal external mental health evaluation conducted by a qualified medical health professional shall be required for the student, as soon as possible.
- Request a copy of the mental health evaluation and recommendations made by a qualified mental health professional. Documentation is to be reviewed by principal.
- The student must have a completed mental health assessment prior to readmission to school.
    - If parents do not comply with evaluation request or mental health recommendations, principal shall meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss continued enrollment.

- If a student requires hospitalization or medical absence, continued contact with the student's parents should be maintained to extend support, encourage parental involvement, and monitor student's progress.
- Before student returns to school, convene a conference with parents to discuss student's readiness for return and devise a reentry safety plan. (See 302.9 BP-C and BP-F Appendices)
    - Communicate on a regular basis with student's parents/guardians about the student's ongoing progress.
        - Convene a meeting every three weeks to discuss current in-school safety plan to adjust as warranted.
- Inform appropriate school personnel of student's return and communicate requirements of safety plan. (See 302.9 BP-D Appendix) School staff members who are likely to interact with the student should be verbally notified to be on alert for signs of on-going risk factors. (In the case of suicidal ideation school staff members who are likely to interact with students do have an "educational need to know," however, these individuals should be aware that they need to maintain confidentiality for the student and the family being served.)
- Implement safety plan. (See 302.9 BP-C and BP-D Appendices) Document student's ongoing progress.
- If parents do not comply with evaluation request or mental health recommendations, principal shall meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss continued enrollment.
- If suicidal ideation continues, repeat the immediate intervention procedures.
- Continue to monitor other students who had close physical or emotional proximity to student who made the suicide attempt.

Response to a Suicide Attempt on a School Bus
The principal will communicate with sending schools to establish a communications plan regarding any issues related to student endangering themselves or others if incidents occur during transportation between home and school.

Response to a Suicide
If a suicide does occur, support will be provided for students, parents, and members of the school community.

Immediate Procedures:
- Principal will verify the report.
- Principal or designee will consult with student's parents to determine what information they will allow to be released to the teachers, students, and wider school community.
- Principal or designee will consult with parents of deceased student to find out the names of students who were close to the deceased and who will need special attention.
- Principal will notify the pastor/president, superintendent, who will inform the Bishop and Communications Office.

- Principal will engage local mental health professionals to come to school and provide mental health services.
- If police wish to question students, call parents of those students to notify them and ask if they wish to be present for this questioning or have administration present at the questioning.
- Notify staff of student's death, sharing only verified information that has been deemed permissible by the parents.
- Notify students of student's death, sharing only verified information that has been deemed permissible by the parents, and is developmentally appropriate.
- Announcement will be made to the students.
    - This must be a simultaneous announcement to prevent students texting others the news.
    - This announcement should begin with prayer and the reading of a prepared statement.
    - Mental health professionals will be in place to support students and to identify any students who may need additional mental health support.
    - Identify students who may have witnessed the event or who were in close physical or emotional proximity to the student. Arrange for opportunity for student to meet with a mental health provider to ensure safety and well-being.
- An announcement to parents, priests, pastoral center, and school should be drafted and approved by the director of communication and superintendent. Once approved, the announcement can be sent by email.
- Draft a letter of notification of a suicide that includes intervention and prevention information (See After a Suicide: A Toolkit For Schools), seek approval by the director of communications and superintendent, and send notification to the wider school community.
- Parents may pick up their children from school using all regular school attendance and school dismissal protocols.
- Students should not be permitted to leave in their own vehicles, with other students, or with other student's parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Principal will call a faculty meeting to explain post-suicide procedures.
- Document all actions and communications.

Follow-Up Procedures:

- Establish a schedule with mental health professionals to be present in the building for at least a period of 3-5 days, or longer as needed.
    - Students and staff needing additional mental health consultation should be encouraged to continue to meet with mental health professionals.
    - Emphasize help is available and people do care.
    - Emphasize no one is to blame.
    - Provide small group opportunities to discuss this incident.

        - Document all actions and communications.
- Ensure students and families have access to suicide prevention information and suicide prevention hotlines via the school's website, handbooks, and printed materials.
- Maintain regular school schedule and activities.
- Teachers will monitor students' reactions and refer to mental health professional when appropriate. Remember not all students are invested in the situation.
- Meet with local members of religious communities to plan appropriate pastoral support to staff, students, and their families.
- Funerals and Memorial Services:
    - Do not hold funeral and memorial service at the school.
    - Do not demand attendance at the funeral or the funeral home.
    - Students will not attend the funeral as a school event, instead students can attend under the supervision of their parent/guardian following regular school protocols.

Suicide Contagion and the Media/Social Media Response
(For more information see: "After a Suicide: Toolkit for Schools")
Research has shown a link between certain kinds of suicide-related media (including social media) coverage and increases in suicide deaths. Suicide contagion has been observed when there is increased media coverage of an individual's suicide or when a particular death is reported in detail in the media or on social media.

To avoid suicide contagion:
- Triage students for contagion by monitoring students with a close emotional or physical proximity (e.g., siblings, friends, teammates, witness, or neighbor) or who have other pre-existing mental health issues or trauma.
- Refer any students who are exhibiting behavioral changes or presenting with suicide warning signs to the building administrator for screening and support.
- Administrators will remind all personnel that talking about suicide with students is an evidenced based practice that promotes open dialogue and increases help-seeking, it does not elevate risk.

Working with the Media:
- All contact with the media will be communicated through a designated spokesperson for the school. The local school spokesperson will communicate in conjunction with the Catholic Schools Office and the director of communications for the Diocese.
    - Schools will designate a media spokesperson to field media inquiries, prepare a media statement, and oversee the school's use of social media.
    - Schools will advise staff that only the media spokesperson is authorized to speak to the media.

Monitoring social media:

- Students will turn to social media to express their feelings, create online memorials, and plan impromptu gatherings. Social media sites provide both safe and unsafe environments for students to do these things after a suicide.
  - Schools will utilize their own social media to share information about counseling resources, post information related to the warning signs of suicide, and provide direct access to local, state, and national suicide hotlines.
    - Local community mental health partner contact information
    - Hotline: PA – Safe2Say Something: Home - Safe2Say Something (safe2saypa.org)
    - Hotline: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
  - Schools should also monitor social media to help identify at-risk youth.

Memorials:

Adolescents are especially vulnerable to the risk of suicide contagion. Schools must carefully consider how they will manage planned and spontaneous memorials at the school. (See 302.9 BP-E Appendix and After a Suicide: Toolkit for Schools)

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

Suicide #2280 - Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of.

#2281 - Suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life. It is gravely contrary to the just love of self. It likewise offends love of neighbor because it unjustly breaks the ties of solidarity with family, nation, and other human societies to which we continue to have obligations. Suicide is contrary to love for the living God.

#2282 - If suicide is committed with the intention of setting an example, especially to the young, it also takes on the gravity of scandal. Voluntary co-operation in suicide is contrary to the moral law. Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide.

#2283 - We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. the Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives.

References:

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302.9 BP-A **–** Appendix – Suicide Risk Severity Rating

COLUMBIA-SUICIDE SEVERITY RATING SCALE – *Screen with Triage Points for Schools*

	Past month	
Ask questions that are in bold and underlined.	**YES**	**NO**
Ask Questions 1 and 2		
1) *Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?*		
2) *Have you actually had any thoughts of killing yourself?*		
If YES to 2, ask questions 3, 4, 5, and 6. If NO to 2, go directly to question 6.		
3) *Have you been thinking about how you might do this?* e.g., "*I thought about taking an overdose but I never made a specific plan as to when where or how I would actually do it….and I would never go through with it.*"		
4) *Have you had these thoughts and had some intention of acting on them?* as opposed to "*I have the thoughts but I definitely will not do anything about them*."		
5) *Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Did you intend to carry out this plan?*		
6) *Have you ever done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life?* Examples: Collected pills, obtained a gun, gave away valuables, wrote a will or suicide note, took out pills but didn't swallow any, held a gun but changed your mind or it was grabbed from your hand, went to the roof but didn't jump; or actually took pills, tried to shoot yourself, cut yourself, tried to hang yourself, etc. **If YES, ask: *Was this within the past 3 months?***	**Lifetime** / **Past 3 Months**	

Possible Response Protocol to C-SSRS Screening

Item 1 Hold parent conference and make referral for follow-up with family doctor and/or Behavioral Health Referral

Item 2 Hold parent conference and make referral for follow-up with family doctor and/or Behavioral Health Referral

Item 3 Request an external mental health evaluation to be conducted by a qualified mental health professional.

Item 4 Require student safety precautions, assessment, and an external mental health evaluation be conducted by a qualified mental health professional. (Crisis services/EMT/Emergency room)

Item 5 Require student safety precautions, assessment, and an external mental health evaluation be conducted by a qualified mental health professional. (Crisis services/EMT/Emergency room)

Item 6 Lifetime: Request an external mental health evaluation to be conducted by a qualified mental health professional.

Item 6 3 months ago or less: Require student safety precautions, assessment, and an external mental health evaluation be conducted by a qualified mental health professional. (Crisis services/EMT/Emergency room)

302.9 BP-B – Appendix – Suicide Risk Parent Notification

Parent Notification Emergency Conference Regarding Suicide Risk

(To be completed during the in-person conference, by parents & school administrator)

I/we, _____, the

parent(s)/guardian(s) of, _____ (Student Name),

participated in a conference with school personnel on _____, (Date/Time)

at _____ (School Name).

_____ We have been notified that our child may be suicidal and/or at risk for self-harm.

_____ We have been further advised that we should seek some form of psychological/ psychiatric consultation for our child immediately by contacting either our child's primary care physician, who will recommend/refer our child for treatment/aid, or by contacting the community within which we live to obtain aid in diagnosing and assisting our child with their mental health needs.

_____ We have been provided with a list of community services available.

_____ The school has clarified its role in supporting our child in school once they have been cleared to return by a qualified medical expert.

_____ Upon my child's return to school, we will:

- Participate in a transition meeting to develop a school safety plan
- Bring a doctor's clearance of child's ability to return to school
- If applicable, bring a copy of any prescribed medication
- Sign a release of information form so the school can work with medical professionals
- Participate in on-going follow-up meetings with the school.

Local Crisis Phone Number: _____

Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s) Signature(s): _____

School Administrator Signature: _____

Other Participants: _____

Date and Time: _____

302.9 BP-C – Appendix – Suicide School Safety Plan

School Safety Plan for Suicidal Ideation/Self-Harm

(To Be Completed by Student & School Counselor/Administrator)

Student's Name: Grade: Date:

Completed By: *(Individuals/title of those involved in the creation of the Safety Plan – i.e., school officials, parent(s)/guardian(s), school counselor, teachers, student's therapist/mental health advocate)*

Safety Procedures and Restrictions:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Warning Signs/Causes: *Things (TRIGGERS) that tend to "set me off" (thoughts, images, mood, situation, activity, behavior), make me feel angry, sad, anxious, upset, escalated, worried, etc. (Prioritize – Biggest trigger = #1)*

1.

2.

3.

4.

☐ I understand that I am responsible for my behavior, and if life/the day becomes overwhelming, or if I'm upset, and want to harm myself in any way, I will do the following:

Coping Strategies: *Things or activities I will do to help me take my mind off my problems/distract myself/ calm myself at school. (i.e., relaxation technique, physical activity, drawing, writing, listening to music, lifting weights, working out, playing drums, going for a walk, watching TV, taking a hot shower, walking the dog, positive self-talk/affirmations)*

This week I will use the following coping strategies:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Support in School: While at school, the adults I can contact for help/support are: ☐ _____ (initial) I will inform my teacher (via a hand signal/medical hall pass) that I am in need of help/support. ***(**Administrator will share Safety Plan with these in-school contacts.)***	
Name:	
Location/Office/Room #:	
Name:	
Location/Office/Room #:	
Name:	
Location/Office/Room #:	

Supports at Home: While at home or away from home, the adults I can contact for help/support are: (Examples: Parent/guardian, relative, friend's parent, clergy member, teacher, coach, therapist) ***(**Parent/guardian should inform adults of the Safety Plan)***	
Name:	
Contact Info. (Phone #):	
Name:	
Contact Info. (Phone #):	
Name:	
Contact Info. (Phone #):	

☐ _____(initial) If I feel suicidal, I will immediately inform the adult contacts listed/my parent/ guardian or call 9-1-1.

☐ _____(initial) If I feel suicidal, I understand I can call the hotline at any time - day or night.

☐ _____(initial) If my adult contacts at school are not accessible, I will go to the main office to seek help/ support.

☐ _____(initial) I will use my coping strategies to attempt to calm and center myself.

Parent contact made by: _____

Parent Name/Number: _____

(Copies should be given to the student, administrator, and school counselor (if applicable) and be kept in a confidential file.)

302.9 BP-D – Appendix – Staff Instructions

Instructions for Teachers/Support Staff

(To be completed by administrator/school counselor)

Name of Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Staff Member Preparing Safety Plan: _____

Our student _____ has a Safety Plan. While the student is under your supervision, please follow the procedures marked below. This plan is confidential and will stay in place until further notice.

If the student has permission to leave your class unsupervised to use the bathroom or visit another classroom, please monitor the time the student is gone. Call the office at extension _____ if you are concerned the student has been gone too long.

If the student is visibly upset or expressing thoughts of unsafe behavior, call the office at extension _____. Please escort the student to the office or wait until the office can send an escort for the student. **Do not** send the student to the office with another student. It is important to never allow the student to be unaccompanied when you are concerned for his/her well-being.

Keep this information confidential and follow this plan until further notice.

Please remember to include this document with your sub notes when you are absent.

Student's safety procedures and restrictions: (*Insert here*)

-

Building Administrator: _____ Date: _____

302.9 BP-E – Appendix – Memorials

Making Decisions about School-Related Memorials

(Copied from: After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools)

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, & Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2018). *After a suicide: A toolkit for schools* (2nd ed.). Waltham, MA: Education Development Center.

This tool poses questions to consider about both planned and spontaneous memorials associated with a school, although not necessarily sponsored by the school. Examples include a school event, student-created memorial, and a page in a yearbook.

- Does the school or school district have a policy (or standard procedure) on memorialization for the death of a student (or school staff person), regardless of the cause?
  - If yes, how would implementing what is usually done for other types of deaths be done for a death by suicide? How might those procedures be interpreted with a suicide? For example:
    - If a memorial page in the yearbook is a standard procedure, are there other deaths (from other causes) during the school year that would also have pages or be on the same page? Could a memorial page also have a message to promote help-seeking among students or a similar supportive message?
  - If no, look at district-wide practices or consult with other schools.
- Has the family expressed a desire for or opposition to any public acknowledgment of the death as a suicide?
- How might a memorial on school grounds help facilitate (or impede) grieving of the loss by students and school staff?
- How will the school deal with a spontaneous memorial initiated by students?
- Could a memorial be something other than a physical object, such as a suicide prevention program?
- What other ways are there for students to acknowledge and express their grief following a suicide?
- When would be a good time to memorialize a student's death?
  - Does the plan for memorialization coincide with other student events (e.g., graduation)?
- How might the memorial procedure affect vulnerable students? Teachers and other staff?
  - Is there a way to memorialize so that a life-affirming message is the focus?
- If the school puts up a physical memorial, what will the students and staff who were not at the school during the year of the death be told about the memorial?

302.9 BP-F – Appendix – Re-entry Meeting

Re-entry Meeting Form

(To be completed by parents & school administrator)

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Incident Date: _____

Absence Date(s) From/To: _____

Re-entry meeting participants: _____

_____

☐ Steps taken by family and student to follow up on suicidal ideation or attempt. Discuss resources in place or connect to additional resources.

☐ Recommendations by student's medical practitioner and/or therapist.

☐ Questions/concerns about missed work, credits, absences etc.

☐ Completed school Safety Plan. (Restrictions during lunch/passing periods. Supervision during after school activities/sports. When to notify teachers/coaches/after school activity supervisors and by whom. Duration of safety plan and check in/review process.)

☐ Next steps in case of continued safety concern. (When student needs to go home and with whom.)

Student: _____ Date: _____

Parent(s): _____ Date: _____

Administrator: _____ Date: _____

School Counselor: _____ Date: _____

303.1 – FOOD ALLERGY MANAGEMENT

Purpose: To ensure the health, welfare, and protection of all students and provide an environment that is safe and healthy for children with severe or life-threatening food allergies.

Additional Authority:
24 P.S. § 14-1422.3
42 Pa C.S.A. § 8337.1

A. Definitions

Anaphylaxis is a sudden, severe allergic reaction that involves various areas of the body simultaneously. In extreme cases, anaphylaxis can cause death.

Epinephrine Auto-Injector is a prescribed disposable drug delivery system designed for the administration of epinephrine to provide rapid first aid for students suffering the effects of anaphylaxis.

First Aid is the immediate care given to a suddenly ill or injured person/child until a medical professional or parent/legal guardian assumes responsibility.

Food Allergy is an abnormal, adverse reaction to a food that is triggered by the body's immune system.

Officer or Employee of the School is the president/pastor, principal, teacher, guidance counselor, support staff member or other educational employee who is employed by the school.

B. Requirements

To maintain the health and safety of the students, first aid or emergency care may be administered by an officer, employee of the school, or volunteer.

Parent/guardians are responsible for informing the school, coaches/activity sponsors and bus drivers of any allergies that a student may have that would cause a severe allergic reaction. This information is to be submitted in writing at the start of each school year or upon initial diagnosis. If a parent wishes to have the student self-administer medication via an EpiPen or asthma inhaler, an authorization form (Appendix 303.1A, Appendix 303.1B) must be signed by the physician and parents and kept on file.

Administrators must notify all school employees and volunteers that come in contact with a child, who has a severe food allergy, at the start of each school year or upon initial diagnosis.

For students with severe food allergies, an Emergency Medical Plan should be written and available in case of an extreme reaction. The Emergency Medical Plan must include which, if any, peers need to be notified due to lunch seating, locker location, and/or field trips. Students do carry the responsibility of not putting themselves in a situation that might cause an allergic reaction.

Annual training for staff must be provided to those who may have to utilize the Epinephrine Auto-Injector. The Epinephrine Auto-Injector must be kept in a quickly accessible, but secure, location.

In case of an allergic reaction, such as anaphylaxis, occurring in school or at school-sponsored activities, school personnel who in good faith believe that a student requires emergency care, first aid care, or rescue shall provide such care until a medical professional or parent/legal guardian assumes responsibility for the medical care of the student. Immediate notification of the student's parent/guardian should occur. Any such first aid must be recorded on the Student Accident / Injury Report form (Appendix 303.1C). This would include the use of an epinephrine auto-injector by an adult or the student him/herself. A school employee or volunteer that provides first aid to a student is immune from civil liability due to an act or omission by the employee, except an act or omission intentionally designed to seriously harm the student receiving first aid care.

C. Legal Ramifications

At the elementary school level, a letter is to be sent home to notify all parents/guardians, in writing, if their child has a classmate with severe food allergies and to request that the parent/guardian avoid foods that contain the allergen for school parties and events.

303.1A – Appendix – EpiPen Administration Authorization

AUTHORIZATION FOR SCHOOL MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION EPIPEN

School Year _____

SCHOOL _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

Child's Name _____ Grade _____

Allergies _____

Physician's Request

Name of prescribed medication _____

Reason _____

Dosage _____

Side Effects _____

____ I believe this child is able and responsible to carry and self-administer his/her EpiPen. He/she has permission to do so and has been instructed on how to self-administer.

____ I believe this child is able and responsible to carry and self-administer the medication during field trips and extra-curricular activities. He/she has permission to do so and has been instructed on how to self-administer.

Physician's Signature _____ Date _____

Physician's Phone _____

Parent Request

I, the parent/guardian of _____ request that the employees of _____ School allow my child to follow the guidelines as set above by my child's physician. My signature on this document constitutes a complete waiver of liability claim in any and all respects against the school and all employees unless the school is negligent with regard to any claim for injury in connection with administration of the prescribed medication.

My wish is for my child to:

____ Carry his/her EpiPen and self-administer as per the physician's order.

____ I request the EpiPen be locked up with the understanding that there will not be access to the medication other than during the academic school day. In other words, my child may not be able to get to the medication if he/she is having a reaction before or after school hours.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

List all medications currently being taken by this child: _____

_____

303.1B – Appendix – Asthma Inhaler Administration Authorization

AUTHORIZATION FOR SCHOOL MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION ASTHMA INHALER

School Year _____

SCHOOL _____ **PHONE** _____
ADDRESS _____

Child's Name _____ Grade _____

Allergies _____

Physician's Request

Name of prescribed medication _____

Reason _____

Dosage _____

Side Effects _____

____ I believe this child is able and responsible to carry and self-administer his/her inhaler. He/she has permission to do so and has been instructed on how to self-administer.

____ I believe this child is able and responsible to carry and self-administer the medication during field trips and extra-curricular activities. He/she has permission to do so, and has been instructed on how to self-administer.

Physician's Signature _____ Date _____

Physician's Phone _____

Parent Request

I, the parent/guardian of _____ request that the employees of _____ School allow my child to follow the guidelines as set above by my child's physician. My signature on this document constitutes a complete waiver of liability claim in any and all respects against the school and all employees unless the school is negligent with regard to any claim for injury in connection with administration of the prescribed medication.

My wish is for my child to:

____ Carry his/her inhaler and self-administer as per the physician's order.

____ I request the inhaler be locked up with the understanding that there will not be access to the medication other than during the academic school day. In other words, my child may not be able to get to the medication if he/she is having a reaction before or after school hours.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

List all medications currently being taken by this child _____

_____

303.1C – Appendix – Accident / Injury Report - Students

ACCIDENT / INJURY REPORT (Students)

School: _____

Individual Injured

Name _____ Address _____
Last First MI

Student _____, if so grade _____ Staff _____ Volunteer _____ Guest _____

Injury Details

Description of Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Cause of Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Part(s) of Body Injured _____

Accident Details

Time of Accident / Injury _____
Date Day of Week Exact Time

Location of Accident (be specific) _____

Activity of Injured Person at Time of Accident / Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Treatment Provided (be specific) _____

_____

If student, Supervision at Time of Accident / Injury ____ yes ____ no (If yes, give name and title) _____

_____

Parent / Insurance Notification

Were the parents notified? ____ yes _____ no (If yes, by whom and date) _____

Was report made to claims adjuster, Autumn Vinopal (724.261.3337) at Gallagher Bassett (800.779.2980)? ____ yes ____ no

If yes, by whom and date? _____

Signature

Report prepared by (name and title) _____ Date of Report _____

Principal's Signature _____ Date _____

Keep original in school's accident file. Send a copy to Gallagher Bassett: autumn_vinopal@gbtpa.com

303.1 – Best Practices – FOOD ALLERGY MANAGEMENT

****

1. A sample letter (Appendix 303.1 BP-A) is provided that can be sent home to notify all parents/guardians if their child has a classmate with severe food allergies and to request that the parent/guardian avoid foods that contain the allergen for school parties and events.

2. It is important for a school to gather the appropriate health information to help a student with food allergies. The correct medical information will assist school personnel in establishing necessary precautions for reducing the risk of a food-allergic reaction and will aid in the creation of appropriate emergency procedures. See the policy on Emergency Medical Plan (303.5).

3. Additional Ideas:
   - Have a “no food sharing” or “no food trading” rule.
   - Encourage hand washing after food handling and eating. Liquid soap, bar soap, and sanitizing wipes effectively clean hands of potential allergens, but antibacterial sanitizing gels do not.
   - Wash surfaces after food is eaten or used. Commercial wipes and spray cleaners are most effective at removing peanut protein from tables and other surfaces.
   - Use nonfood items for classroom projects, academic rewards, and classroom celebrations.
   - Encourage packaged food items with ingredient labels, as opposed to home-baked goods.
   - Avoid modeling clay, paper mâché, crayons, soaps, and other materials that may contain allergens.
   - Keep “safe snacks” in the classroom for unplanned events, along with safe, nonperishable meals in case lunch is compromised or in the event of a shelter-in-place emergency or evacuation to another location.
   - Have students store their lunches in a specific location.
   - Encourage parents of students with allergies to participate in class events and field trips.
   - Make sure that a copy of the child’s Emergency Medical Plan is available for substitute teachers.
   - Consider designating allergy free tables in the cafeteria.

303.1 BP-A – Appendix – Classmate's Allergies Letter

REPRODUCE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Letter to Parent Regarding a Classmate's Allergies

Date:

Dear Parent / Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that a student(s) in your child's classroom has severe food allergies to: _____.
Exposure to these allergens could cause a life-threatening reaction.

It is our goal to ensure that every student in our school is safe. Our school policy for managing students with food allergies is:

- To notify parents/guardians in writing if their child has a classmate with severe food allergies and
- To avoid foods that contain the allergen for birthday celebrations, school functions and fundraisers.

Because these students cannot be in contact with foods containing this/these allergen(s), we are requesting that you not send these foods to school for snacks or treats. Even trace amounts of these allergens could result in a severe allergic reaction. Please Note: Sometimes these elements may be hidden in processed foods.

Please discuss the following with your child:

- Do not offer, share, or exchange any foods with other students at school.
- Hand washing with soap and water, after eating, is necessary to decrease the chance of cross-contamination on surfaces at school.
- If your child rides the bus, remind her/him that there is a "no eating on the bus" policy.

Thank you for your consideration and help in this matter. Please call if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Principal

303.2 – TOBACCO USE

Purpose: To protect the health of all students and staff from the harmful effects of tobacco, a tobacco-free environment will be maintained in our schools, in transportation vehicles, and on school grounds.

Additional Authority:
35 P.S. § 1223.5
18 Pa C.S.A. § 6306.1
20 U.S. Code § 7183

A. Definitions

Nicotine shall mean a product that contains or consists of nicotine in a form that can be ingested by chewing, smoking, inhaling, or through other means.

Nicotine delivery product shall mean a product or device used, intended of use or designed for the purpose of ingesting nicotine or another substance. This definition includes, but is not limited to, any device or associated product used for what is commonly referred to as vaping or juuling.

Tobacco Use, for the purpose of this policy, shall include smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco in any form. For the purpose of this policy tobacco is a lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe or other smoking product or smokeless tobacco products in any form.

Vaping refers to the action or practice of inhaling and exhaling the vapor produced by an electronic cigarette or similar device.

B. Requirements

Students are prohibited from possessing or using tobacco, in any form, nicotine, nicotine delivery products or possessing any implement intended to deliver tobacco, nicotine or other vapors, including but not limited to e-cigarettes, on school grounds, in school buildings and facilities, in school buses and vehicles, or at any school authorized event at all times.

If a student is found in violation of this policy, the school administrator or his/her designee, may initiate prosecution of a student who possesses and/or uses tobacco, nicotine, nicotine delivery products or any implement intended to deliver tobacco, nicotine or other vapors. A student in violation of this policy will be fined any applicable court costs and a BLeST, SAP or other team referral may be initiated. Additional fines may be levied, by the school, as defined in their student handbook.

C. Legal Implications

If a student has violated this policy, the administrator may pursue charging the student with a summary offense.

303.3 – DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND OTHER CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Purpose: To address the use of drugs, alcohol and controlled substances by students.

Additional Authority:

35 P.S. § 780 – 113
42 Pa. C.S.A. § 8337
21 U.S.C. § 801 et seq
21 U.S.C. § 812
35 P.S. § 780 – 101 et seq
35 P.S. § 807.1 et seq

A. Definitions

Controlled substances, for the purpose of this policy, includes all of the following: alcoholic beverages, anabolic steroids, any volatile solvents or inhalants, controlled substances prohibited by state and federal law, any drug paraphernalia, look-alike or counterfeit drugs, prescription or nonprescription (over-the-counter) drugs, excluding those for which permission for use in school has been granted by school administration, and any substance, when ingested and/or vaped, causes physical and/or physiological effect that replicates the effect of a controlled substance as defined by federal or state law. Human growth hormone (HGH) is not included as an anabolic steroid.

Distributing is to deliver, sell, pass, share or give any illegal substance, as defined in this policy, from one person to another or to aid therein. The definition shall not include the administration or dispensing of a prescription medication in accordance with its prescription or of a nonprescription medication by authorized staff.

Drug paraphernalia includes any utensil or item which, in the school's judgment can be associated with the use of controlled substances. Examples include, but are not limited to, roach clips, pipes and bowls.

Look-alike drug shall include any pill, capsule, tablet, powder, plant matter or other item or substance that is designed or intended to resemble a controlled substance prohibited by this policy or is used in a manner likely to induce others to believe the material is a controlled substance.

Possession is the state of having, owning, or controlling a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia.

Under the Influence includes any consumption or ingestion of a controlled substance by a student.

B. Requirements

Students are prohibited from using, possessing, distributing, and being under the influence of any controlled substances during school hours, at any time while at school or during school sponsored programs, on school property, at any school function under the jurisdiction of the school, or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from any school function. This excludes those controlled substances for which permission for use in school has been granted by school administration in accordance with a valid prescription which must be taken during school hours.

If a student is found in violation of this policy, the school administrator or their designee, may initiate prosecution of a student who possesses, distributes and/or uses and/or is under the influence of any controlled substance or found to possess an implement intended to deliver a controlled substance.

School administration will establish procedures for dealing with suspected student use, being under the influence, in possession of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia and/or distributing a controlled substance. These procedures include student assistance provided through a support team, such as an SAP, suspension, expulsion from school and the involvement of law enforcement. If a student is demonstrating observable factors that could indicate reasonable suspicion of being under the influence of a controlled substance, such as medical symptoms or suspicious behavior, the student may be required to submit to testing for a controlled substance. That testing may include, but is not limited to, analysis of saliva, blood, urine or another test deemed necessary by the administration.

C. Legal Implications

Any school official or school employee, in their scope of official duty that reports use or abuse of a controlled substance to another school official or appropriate school employee, to a parent or guardian or refers a student for treatment or counseling shall not be liable to the student or the parents or guardian for civil damages. This also applies to actions or omissions undertaken in good faith by school administration in reporting a student or students to law enforcement.

303.4 – MEDICATIONS

Purpose: To ensure the health, welfare, and protection of all students and provide an environment that is safe and healthy.

Additional Authority:
24 P.S. § 1401; 1409; 1414.1; 1414.2
42 Pa C.S.A. § 8337.1
2014 Act 195

A. Definitions

Allergy is an abnormal, adverse reaction that is triggered by the body's immune system.
Asthma Inhaler is a prescribed device used for self-administration of short-acting, metered doses of prescribed medication to treat an acute asthma attack.
Epinephrine Autoinjector is a prescribed disposable drug delivery system designed for the administration of epinephrine to provide rapid first aid for students suffering the effects of anaphylaxis.
Licensed Prescriber for this policy, includes licensed physicians (M.D. or D.O.), dentists, optometrists, certified registered nurse practitioners and physician assistants.
Medication is comprised of all medicines prescribed by a licensed prescriber and any over-the-counter medications.
Officer or Employee of the School refers to the president, administrator, teacher, school counselor, support staff member or other educational employees who are employed by the school.
Self-Administration means a student's use of medication in accordance with a prescription or written instructions from a licensed prescriber.

B. Requirements

Medication regulations must be sent home to parents/ guardians at the beginning of each school year. An Authorization for Medication to be Taken During the School Hours is required prior to any medication being dispensed (Appendix 303.4A) or in the event of a change (dosage, time, or kind) in medication. For prescription medication this form must be signed by both parent/guardian and physician. For nonprescription medication or over-the-counter medication this form must be signed by the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian of a student must notify the school via e-mail or phone message that the student is being sent to school with the authorization and medicine so that the school will know to collect the medicine from the student upon arrival. All medication dispensed must be recorded and logged in with the date, name of student, name of medication, amount of medication and frequency of dosage. Prescription and nonprescription medication must be delivered in its original packaging and labeled with the student's name.

Medicine for children must be administered by the school nurse, parent or office personnel. All standing medication orders and parental consents must be renewed at the beginning of every

year. Every time medication is dispensed to students, it must be recorded on a medication log. To maintain the health and safety of the students, first aid or emergency care may be administered by an officer, employee of the school, or volunteer.

During the school day and for overnight field trips, there should be at least two adults present who know how to administer the necessary treatment for a severe allergic reactions or asthma attack.

Disposal of Medications
Procedures for the disposal of medications must be consistent with the Department of Health Guidelines, which shall include:

- Proper disposal of contaminated needles or other contaminated sharp materials immediately in an appropriately labeled, puncture resistant container
- Processes for immediately returning to parents/guardians all discontinued and outdated medications, as well as all unused medications at the end of the school year
- Methods for safe and environmentally friendly disposal of medications
- Proper documentation of all medications returned to parents/guardians and for all medications being discarded. Documentation shall include, but not be limited to, date, time, amount of medication and appropriate signatures.

Emergency Medications
A school/system may maintain a supply of epinephrine autoinjectors to use in an emergency situation for a child that does not have, at that time, a specific autoinjector in the school building. A prescription from a physician or a certified registered nurse practitioner must be obtained to purchase the supply of epinephrine autoinjectors. (Appendix 303.4B) A designated individual in the building must be made responsible for storing and administering the epinephrine autoinjectors. That individual must also receive training on an annual basis.

A student who has his/her first life-threatening allergic reaction to an unknown or undiagnosed allergy while at school may be administered the epinephrine auto injector by the school nurse or a trained unlicensed school employee.

Parents must be given notice and the opportunity to op-out of the administration of these “stockpiled” epinephrine autoinjectors if they do not want one administered to their child (Appendix 303.4C).

Student Self-Administration of Emergency Medications
Prior to allowing a student to self-administer emergency medication, the school shall require the following:

- An order from the licensed prescriber for the medication, including a statement that it is necessary for the student to carry the medication and that the student is capable of self-administration
- Written parent/guardian consent

- Demonstration of student responsible behavior and administration skills to the nurse or school official. Determination of competency for self-administration shall be based on the student's age, cognitive function, maturity and demonstration of responsible behavior.

The student shall notify the school nurse/office personnel immediately following each occurrence of self-administration of medication.

A student who has asthma attacks or allergic reactions may, if approved by a licensed prescriber, self-administer the asthma medication or epinephrine autoinjector. The student must:

- Understand when and why to use asthma inhalers and epinephrine autoinjectors
- Be able to demonstrate the ability to use the asthma inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors
- Behave responsibly when using the asthma inhalers and epinephrine autoinjectors
- Notify the school nurse/office personnel immediately following each use of the asthma inhalers and epinephrine autoinjectors.

The school must have on file an asthma inhaler form and/or an epinephrine autoinjector form completed by the child's health care provider and parent/guardian. These forms must indicate that the student is responsible to carry and self-administer the medicine. The student must be made aware that the inhaler or epinephrine autoinjector is for his/her personal use and may not be shared. Students shall demonstrate a cooperative attitude in all aspects of self-administration of medication. The school has the right to deny the privilege to carry an inhaler or epinephrine autoinjector, or to restrict their use, if school policies are not followed. If the school prevents a student from self-carrying an asthma inhaler or epinephrine autoinjector it shall ensure that they are appropriately stored at locations in close proximity to the student.

Administration of Medication During Field Trips and Other School-Sponsored Activities
Prior to a field trip or other school-sponsored activity, planning must occur when medication must be dispensed during the school event. The planning must include addressing with parent/guardian the possibility of obtaining from the licensed prescriber a temporary order to change the time of the dose or omit dose.

If changing the time of dose is not possible then the following should be considered:

- Assigning a school employee, child's parent, or school nurse to be responsible for administration of medication
- Asking parent/guardian to accompany the child on the field trip, with proper clearances
- Arranging for medications to be provided in an original labeled container with only the amount of medication needed.

Security procedures shall be established for the handling of medication during field trips and other school-sponsored activities. For overnight field trips, there should be at least two adults

present who know how to administer the necessary medications and/or treatments for a severe allergic reactions or asthma attack.

All medication shall be stored in the original pharmacy-labeled container and kept in a locked cabinet. Medications that require refrigeration shall be stored in a refrigerator that is secure from student access.

C. Legal Ramifications

Due to the fact that an epinephrine autoinjector only lasts about ten to fifteen minutes, it is standard medical procedure to call 911 after administering the epinephrine autoinjector.

303.4A – Appendix – Medication Authorization

(Name of School)

AUTHORIZATION FOR MEDICATION TO BE TAKEN DURING SCHOOL HOURS

The following section is to be completed by the parent:

I request that my child, _____Grade _____H.R. _____ be assisted in taking the medications described below at school by authorized persons. I understand that I am responsible for submitting the medication in a proper and timely manner, and that, if necessary, the school may request additional information from the physician regarding this medication. I agree to abide by the Medication Regulations that accompanied this form, and I understand that this form must be renewed annually and anytime there is a change in drug, time administered or dosage.

I agree to waive the School, their officers, representatives and employees from any and all liability, claims, demands, and causes of action arising out of or in any way connected with the giving of the prescribed medication or treatment. The undersigned parent or guardian hereby assumes all risk of injury or damage to the minor child receiving prescribed medication or treatment during school activities, and specifically waives any claim for acts of negligence by employees of the School.

Furthermore, as parent or guardian of the minor child to receive prescribed medication and/or treatment, the undersigned hereby expressly agrees to indemnity and forever hold harmless the Catholic Schools Office/Diocese of Erie, officers, and their employees against loss or any claims, demands, causes of action that might be brought by the minor incurred by the taking of the prescribed medication and/or treatment given by the School during regularly scheduled school hours or activities. As parent or guardian, I hereby waive all exemption rights under all state laws against any claims for reimbursements of indemnification.

_____	_____	_____
Date	Parent/Guardian Signature	Daytime Phone

The following section is to be completed by the physician:

Diagnosis for which medication is given _____
Name of medication(s) _____
Dosage _____ Time _____
Can this time be adjusted to accommodate class schedules? _____
If so, by how much _____
If medication is to be given as needed, describe indications and intervals _____
_____
List significant side effects _____
_____
Other information _____
_____

From _____to _____ _____
(dates medication to be given) Physician Signature

Note: Any alterations to the printed portion of this form will render it null and void.

303.4B – Appendix – Epinephrine Standing Order Protocol

Epinephrine Standing Order Protocol

I, the undersigned Physician, for the purpose of facilitating the use of Epinephrine in the case of Potentially Life-Threatening Allergic Reactions (anaphylaxis) in individuals and in compliance with all applicable state laws and regulations, issue this Epinephrine Standing Order Protocol ("Protocol") on the following terms:

Physician License: I represent that I: (a) am licensed to prescribe legend drugs in this state as set forth below; (b) am qualified to practice medicine in this state; and (c) am in good standing with the appropriate professional licensing board.

Epinephrine: This Protocol constitutes my standing order for the treatment of anaphylaxis and the use of Epinephrine in emergency situations as further described below in a school setting.

Delegation: I, the undersigned Physician, delegate authority to all appropriate medical and school personnel employed by or acting on behalf of the below described school/system.

Issued to: Name of School/ System _____
Street Address _____
City, Zip Code _____

Standing Order: All appropriate medical and school personnel (including, but not limited to, any Registered Nurse) employed by or acting on behalf of the school system may administer Epinephrine via an undesignated Epinephrine autoinjector to an individual using professional judgment if an individual is experiencing a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction, such as anaphylaxis.

Emergency Treatment Procedures: The following treatment Protocol will be utilized to manage anaphylactic reactions. Anaphylaxis is described as the sudden onset of generalized itching, erythema (redness), or urticaria (hives); angioedema (swelling of the lips, face, or throat); severe bronchospasm (wheezing); shortness of breath; shock; abdominal cramping; or cardiovascular collapse. In the event of a serious adverse reaction, including anaphylaxis, the following shall be done:

1. **Symptoms:** If itching and swelling are confined to a localized area, observe the patient closely for the development of generalized symptoms. If symptoms are generalized, activate the emergency medical system (e.g., call 911). This should be accomplished by a second person while the individual is being evaluated and managed by the first person.

2. **Dosage:** If conditions of anaphylaxis are developing or present themselves, administer Epinephrine USP, 1 mg/mL, (1:1000) as epinephrine auto-injector, EpiPen, intramuscularly into the antero-lateral aspect of the thigh (through clothing if necessary) according to the manufacturer's recommendation.
    - For individuals less than 66 pounds, use oneEpiPen Jr. (0.3 mL epinephrine injection, USP, 1:2000) autoinjector to deliver 0.15 mg of epinephrine injection, USP.

- For individuals 66 pounds and greater, use one EpiPen (0.3 mL epinephrine injection, USP, 1:1000) autoinjector to deliver 0.3 mg of epinephrine injection, USP.

3. **Monitoring:** Closely monitor the individual until EMS arrives. Perform CPR and maintain airway, if necessary. Keep the individual in a supine position unless he/she is having difficulty breathing. If having difficulty breathing the individual's head may be elevated, provided blood pressure is adequate to prevent loss of consciousness.

4. **Frequency:** Monitor vital signs frequently. If EMS has not arrived and symptoms persist, a repeat dose of Epinephrine auto-injector every 5-20 minutes after the first dose may be administered.

5. **Referral:** The individual must be referred to a physician for medical evaluation, even if symptoms resolve completely. Symptoms may recur after the Epinephrine wears off, as much as 24 hours later.

6. **Documentation:** The details of the incident must be immediately documented in a writing.

7. **Notification:** Within 4 hours, the school must notify the individual's parent, guardian or caretaker and must notify the individual's primary care physician of the anaphylactic reaction.

In every case, emergency services must be contacted as soon as possible by calling 911.
Please review the attached prescription:

Effective Date: _____

Physician Signature: _____

Physician Name (printed): _____

Physician Contact Number: _____

Physician Address: _____

Physician State of License: _____

Physician State License Number: _____

Strength	**Quantity Requested**
0.3mg EpiPen 2-Pak	_____
0.15mg EpiPenJr 2-Pak	_____

303.4C – Appendix – Epinephrine Opt-Out Form

Emergency Epinephrine Opt-Out Form

Information You Should Know About Emergency Epinephrine

Emergency epinephrine is:

- Used to counteract anaphylaxis, a rapid, severe, life-threatening allergic reaction that can cause skin itching and hives, throat tightness, wheezing, and inability to breathe, and may result in death. Common allergens that can cause anaphylaxis include food, bee sting venom, medications and latex. A life-threatening reaction can occur within minutes or hours after exposure to an allergen. The treatment for anaphylaxis is prompt administration of epinephrine and transport by emergency medical services (EMS) to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Per Pennsylvania law, emergency epinephrine may be administered to:

- Students who have a known history of severe life-threatening allergies and have a prescription for an epinephrine auto-injector
- Students who have their first life-threatening allergic reaction to an unknown or undiagnosed allergy while at school.

Persons who may administer emergency epinephrine include:

- A nurse working in the school building
- A trained unlicensed school employee

Emergency epinephrine is administered by an Autoinjector.

Emergency epinephrine is stored in a secured location on school premises.

I acknowledge that I have read this document in its entirety and fully understand it. By signing this form, I am declining administration of emergency epinephrine for my student in the event he or she exhibit signs of a severe allergic reaction. I understand the possible negative health consequences for my student if he or she is experiencing a severe allergic reaction and does not receive emergency epinephrine. I understand that I may change my choice at any time by contacting the principal in writing.

Student Name:_____Grade:_____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

School Personnel Witness of Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

303.4 – Best Practices – MEDICATIONS

****

1. A Monthly School Medication Log is provided in Appendix 303.4 BP-A

2. Appendix 303.4 BP-B provides a sample Medication Regulations notice for parent/guardian.

3. The school administrator should designate one person, and a back-up person, to distribute and log medications when the nurse is not present in the building.

4. Medications should only be administered during school hours when failure to take such medicine would jeopardize the health of a student and he/she would not be able to attend school if the medicine were not made available.

5. All medications are dispensed by appropriate school personnel. Students should not have medication with them during school hours with the exception of physician approved asthma inhalers or epinephrine autoinjectors.

6. Non-prescription medicine should be brought in the original bottle, with only a limited supply to give in school, accompanied by a note from the parent/guardian.

7. Students should be responsible to report to the school office or nurse's office to receive their medication at the proper time.

303.4 BP-A – Appendix – Monthly School Medication Log

MONTHLY SCHOOL MEDICATION LOG

School Name: _____ **Month** _____

	Record Date for Each Day ➡																												
	Student Last Name, First	**Grade & Room #**	**Medication Name & Dosage**	**M**	**TU**	**W**	**TH**	**F**	**M**	**TU**	**W**	**TH**	**F**	**M**	**TU**	**W**	**TH**	**F**	**M**	**TU**	**W**	**TH**	**F**	**M**	**TU**	**W**	**TH**	**F**
1																													
2																													
3																													
4																													
5																													
6																													
7																													
8																													
9																													
10																													
11																													
12																													
13																													
14																													
15																													

Any students in the school receiving medication during the school day must be listed on the monthly medication log. Record the student's name, grade & room, medication name and dosage for each medication. For example, if a student receives 3 medications, he/she should be listed 3 times on the log.

Each time medication is administered to a student, the person administering must initial with time of day in appropriate box.

If medication is not given, please use the following abbreviations to indicate the reason why:

A-absent **O**-out of medication **F**-field trip **R**-refused **ED**-early dismissal **V**-vacation/school closed

303.4 BP-B – Appendix – Medication Regulations
(Name of School)

MEDICATION REGULATIONS

If at all possible, medication should be administered at home. Medications will be administered during school hours only when failure to take such medicine would jeopardize the health of a student and he/she would not be able to attend school if the medicine were not made available. All medications are dispensed by appropriate school personnel. Students are not to have medication with them during school hours with the exception of physician approved inhalers or EpiPens.

In order for school employees to dispense prescription medication, an authorization form must be signed by both parent (guardian) and physician.

All prescription medication must be brought to the school office in a properly labeled current prescription bottle with the student's name, doctor, name of medicine, dosage and time it is to be given. (Your pharmacy can give you a separate bottle for school if you ask.) Non-prescription medicine must be brought in the original bottle, with only a limited supply to give in school, accompanied by a note from the parent (guardian).

Each change in medication (dosage, time or kind) throughout the year requires a new authorization form signed by both parent (guardian) and physician. Forms must be renewed annually.

Students will be responsible to report to the school office or nurse's office to receive their medication at the proper time.

REMEMBER: THE SCHOOL MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING BEFORE ANY MEDICATION CAN BE GIVEN:

- Authorization for Medication to be Taken During School Hours form signed by parent/guardian AND physician
- Medication in a current, properly labeled prescription bottle or original container

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT MEDICATIONS FOR FIELD TRIPS

If your child is going on a field trip, medicine should be administered before the trip, if possible. If it is necessary for him/her to take a daily medication, put the dose clearly marked in an envelope with the child's name, name of medication, and time to be given. Seal the envelope, and make sure the teacher receives it. Also, notify the school office or building nurse so they know not to administer the medication that day. Do not ask the school to take a dose from your child's supply to send on the trip. This constitutes "relabeling medication" and is actually against medical practice regulations. Of course, you may come in and request a return of medication from the school supply at any time. If there are any questions, please call the school office for assistance.

303.5 – EMERGENCY MEDICAL PLAN

Purpose: To ensure the health, welfare and protection of students who have been diagnosed with a long-term medical condition.

Additional Authority:
24 P.S. § 1401
24 P.S. § 1414.1
24 P.S. § 1422.3

A. Definitions

Emergency Medical Plan is a document that outlines the responsibility of the school for students with long-term illnesses that could cause a medical emergency while in the care of school personnel.

Epinephrine Auto-Injector is a prescribed disposable drug delivery system designed for the administration of epinephrine to provide rapid first aid for students suffering the effects of anaphylaxis.

First Aid is the immediate care given to a suddenly ill or injured person/child until a medical professional or parent/legal guardian assumes responsibility.

Officer or Employee of the School is the president/pastor, principal, teacher, guidance counselor, support staff member or other educational employee who is employed by the school.

B. Requirements

An Emergency Medical Plan should be developed for students who have been diagnosed with long-term illnesses who have a greater risk of having a life-threatening situation during the school day or school sponsored event. The Emergency Medical Plan is to be prepared by the school administrator with input from the parent/guardian, physician and school nurse. The Emergency Medical Plan should include, at minimum, the following information:

1. Student demographics
2. Emergency contact information
3. Description of all medical conditions
4. Potential Problems: Changes/issues that need addressed
5. Actions that will be taken by school staff if a problem occurs
6. Outline of responsibilities regarding medical changes and/or modifications to the plan
7. Signature of school administrator and parent/guardian.

Once completed and signed, the Emergency Medical Plans should only be shared with school personnel that may need to assist in implementation of the plan. The Emergency Medical Plan should be filed with the Emergency Contact Information that is collected for all students.

Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school upon the onset of a long-term illness diagnosis or if a change occurs in the medical condition of a student. Emergency Medical Plans should be reviewed, at least annually, with the parent/guardian, physician, school nurse and

teacher(s) who instruct the student. In addition, updates must be shared with pertinent school staff that supervises the student.

With or without an Emergency Medical Plan, first aid care of all students is a responsibility of an officer or employee of the school in case of a medical emergency, until a medical professional or parent/legal guardian assumes responsibility for the medical care of the student. Notification to the parents should occur as soon as practical without compromising appropriate medical attention to the student. Any such first aid must be recorded on the Student Accident / Injury Report form. (Appendix 303.5A) This would include the use of an epinephrine auto-injector by an adult or the student him/herself. An officer or employee of the school employee or volunteer that provides first aid to a student is immune from civil liability due to an act or omission by the employee, except an act or omission intentionally designed to seriously harm the student receiving first aid care.

The Emergency Medical Plan may also be used for children with less severe illnesses at the discretion of the school administrator.

C. Legal Ramifications

A copy of the Emergency Medical Plans must be filed in the student permanent record folder.

303.5A – Appendix – Accident / Injury Report - Students

ACCIDENT / INJURY REPORT (Students)

School: _____

Individual Injured

Name _____ Address _____
Last First MI

Student _____, if so grade _____ Staff _____ Volunteer _____ Guest _____

Injury Details

Description of Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Cause of Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Part(s) of Body Injured _____

Accident Details

Time of Accident / Injury _____
Date Day of Week Exact Time

Location of Accident (be specific) _____

Activity of Injured Person at Time of Accident / Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Treatment Provided (be specific) _____

_____

If student, Supervision at Time of Accident / Injury ____ yes ____ no (If yes, give name and title) _____

_____

Parent / Insurance Notification

Were the parents notified? ____ yes _____ no (If yes, by whom and date) _____

Was report made to claims adjuster Autumn Vinopal (724.261.3337) at Gallagher Bassett (800.779.2980)? ____ yes ____ no

If yes, by whom and date? _____

Signature

Report prepared by (name and title) _____ Date of Report _____

Principal's Signature _____ Date _____

Keep original in school's accident file. Send a copy to Gallagher Bassett: autumn_vinopal@gbtpa.com

303.5 – Best Practices – EMERGENCY MEDICAL PLAN

****

Two sample templates are provided:

1. Emergency Medical Plan for Student with Allergies (Appendix 303.5 BP-A)

2. Emergency Medical Plan Diabetes – Hyperglycemia (Appendix 303.5 BP-B)

303.5 BP-A – Appendix – Emergency Medical Plan, Allergies
(Name of School)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PLAN FOR STUDENT WITH ALLERGIES

Emergency Information for School Year: _____

_____
(Name)

Life-threatening allergies to:

☐ Peanuts ☐ All nuts from trees (pecans, walnuts, etc.)
☐ Milk ☐ Eggs
☐ Fish ☐ Shellfish
☐ Soy ☐ Wheat
☐ Sesame seed/sesame oils ☐ Other: (indicate) _____

The following action must be taken **immediately.**

STEP 1. Determine how to treat reaction promptly.

Symptoms:	**Give Checked Medication**:** **(To be determined by physician authorizing treatment)
☐ If a food allergen has been ingested, but *no symptoms*:	☐Epinephrine ☐Antihistamine
☐ Mouth: Itching, tingling, or swelling of lips, tongue, mouth	☐Epinephrine ☐Antihistamine
☐ Skin: Hives, itchy rash, swelling of the face or extremities	☐Epinephrine ☐Antihistamine
☐ Gut: Nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea	☐Epinephrine ☐Antihistamine
☐ Throat:† Tightening of throat, hoarseness, hacking cough	☐Epinephrine ☐Antihistamine
☐ Lung:† Shortness of breath, repetitive coughing, wheezing	☐Epinephrine ☐Antihistamine
☐ Heart:† Weak or thready pulse, low blood pressure, fainting, pale, blueness	☐Epinephrine ☐Antihistamine
☐ Other† _____	☐Epinephrine ☐Antihistamine
☐ If reaction is progressing (several of the above areas affected), give:	☐Epinephrine ☐Antihistamine

†All of the above symptoms can progress to a life-threatening reaction.

DOSAGE

Epinephrine: inject intramuscularly (circle one) EpiPen® EpiPen® Jr. Twinject® 0.3 mg Twinject® 0.15 mg Other _____

Antihistamine: give _____
medication/dose/route

Other: give _____
medication/dose/route

STEP 2. Call 911 and request a paramedic with epinephrine. If epinephrine has already been given, state that more is required.

Emergency Contact Information:

Mother:	Emergency cell phone:	(_ _ _) _ _ _-_ _ _ _
	Home telephone:	(_ _ _) _ _ _-_ _ _ _
	Work telephone:	(_ _ _) _ _ _-_ _ _ _
Father:	Emergency cell phone:	(_ _ _) _ _ _-_ _ _ _
	Home telephone:	(_ _ _) _ _ _-_ _ _ _
	Work telephone:	(_ _ _) _ _ _-_ _ _ _

EVEN IF PARENT/GUARDIAN CANNOT BE REACHED, DO NOT HESITATE TO MEDICATE OR TAKE CHILD TO MEDICAL FACILITY!

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date_____

Doctor's Signature _____

Date_____

303.5 BP-B – Appendix – Emergency Medical Plan, Diabetes

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PLAN

DIABETES – HYPERGLYCEMIA

Student:		Grade:	DOB:
Mother:	MHome #:	MWork #:	MCell #:
Father:	FHome #:	FWork #:	FCell #:
Emergency Contact:		Relationship:	Phone

SYMPTOMS OF A HYPERGLYCEMIC EPISODE MAY INCLUDE ANY/ALL OF THESE:

- Gradual Onset
- Extreme Thirst, very frequent urination, drowsiness
- Flushed skin, heavy breathing, blurred vision
- Vomiting, fruity or wine-like odor to breath

SEVERE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Stupor
- Unconsciousness

STAFF MEMBERS INSTRUCTED: ☐ Classroom Teacher(s) ☐Special Area Teachers ☐Administration ☐Support Staff ☐Other:

TREATMENT:

Healthcare Provider:	Phone
Written By:	Date:

☐Copy Provided to Parent ☐Copy sent to Healthcare Provider

Parent/Guardian Signature:

_____

To share this plan with Provider and School Staff.

303.6 – HIV/AIDS

Purpose: To address the acceptance of students and continued enrollment of students diagnosed with HIV or AIDS.

Additional Authority:
35 P.S. § 7601 et seq.
24 P.S. § 1409

A. Definitions

AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and is the most severe phase of HIV infection. People with AIDS have such badly damaged immune systems that they get an increasing number of severe illnesses.

HIV stands for *human immunodeficiency virus*. HIV attacks the body's immune system, specifically the CD4 cells (T cells), which help the immune system fight off infections. HIV is a virus spread through certain body fluids. It is the virus that can lead to *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome,* or AIDS, if not treated.

B. Requirements

Parents/guardians are expected to inform the administrator if or when their child has HIV/AIDS in order that the school administrator can provide for the protection of the child and other individuals in the school.

Students with HIV or AIDS shall not be excluded from school by reason of infection with HIV unless the student poses a reasonable risk to himself or to other persons in the school. Level of risk is determined by the student's parent/guardian, student's physician, school nurse and the school superintendent. The final decision rests with the local administration.

The right to privacy of the infected student shall at all times be respected. School administrators will determine if any person in the school has a direct need to know that the child is infected. If a school employee is deemed to have such a need, the school administrator, with advance notice to the parent/guardian, will inform these persons making clear the confidentiality requirement.

If a communicable disease (e.g., measles or chicken pox) occurs in a school or classroom which could be threating to an AIDS-infected student, the AIDS infected student's parent/guardian and the physician will be notified so that the parent/guardian may make a decision as to whether the AIDS-infected student should be withheld from the school during the outbreak.

Periodic meetings should be scheduled with the student's parent/guardian, student's physician, school nurse, and school administration to re-evaluate the condition of the student.

303.7 – STUDENT ACCIDENT OR INJURY

Purpose: To ensure the health, welfare, and protection of all students and provide an environment that is safe and healthy.

Additional Authority:
24 P.S. § 1401; 1414.1; 1414.2
42 Pa C.S.A. § 8337.1
34 C.F.R. § 99.36
Pennsylvania Act 17 of 2026, Cardiac Preparedness Legislation, also known as Greg Moyer's Law

A. Definitions

First Aid is the immediate care given to a suddenly ill or injured person/child until a medical professional or parent/legal guardian assumes responsibility.
Good Faith includes, but is not limited to, a reasonable nonmedical opinion that the immediacy of the situation is such that the rendering of care should not be postponed.
Licensed Prescriber for this policy, includes licensed physicians (M.D. or D.O.), podiatrists, dentists, optometrists, certified registered nurse practitioners and physician assistants.
Medication is comprised of all medicines prescribed by a licensed prescriber and any over-the-counter medications.
Officer or Employee of the School is the superintendent, administrator, teacher, school counselor, support staff member or other educational employees who are employed by the school.

B. Requirements

To reduce the possibility of accidents, students in classrooms and other school areas must have supervision.

To maintain the health and safety of the students, first aid or emergency care may be administered by an officer or employee of the school. An officer or employee of the school who in good faith believes that a student needs emergency care, first aid or rescue and who provides such care or who removes the student to a hospital or other place of medical care shall be immune from civil liability. This immunity provided to the officer or employee of the school will apply to claims of further injury due to the result of any acts or omission by the officer or employee. This immunity will not apply in cases of acts of omissions intentionally designed to seriously harm or gross negligent acts or omissions which result in serious bodily harm to the student.

The school may disclose personally identifiable information from a student's educational record to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

School personnel, who in good faith, believe that a student requires emergency care, first aid, or rescue shall provide such care until a medical professional or parent/legal guardian assumes

responsibility for the medical care of the student. Immediate notification of the student's parent/guardian should occur. Any such first aid must be recorded on the Accident / Injury Report form (Appendix 303.7A). A school employee or volunteer that provides first aid to a student is immune from civil liability due to an act or omission by the employee, except an act or omission intentionally designed to seriously harm the student receiving first aid care.

Emergency Care of Students

Emergency care of students arises when a serious accident (i.e., those requiring further medical attention) occurs. A Student Emergency Data form must be on file for each student. This form must be completed and updated for each student at the beginning of each school year. Forms are to be maintained in a secure but accessible area. When a serious accident occurs, there is to be an attempt to contact the parent unless the condition of the student warrants immediate attention. In these cases, the Emergency Data Form should be sent along with the student to the place of medical treatment. An Accident / Injury Report (Appendix 303.7A) must be completed and, if appropriate, sent to the insurance company, as noted on the form.

Universal precautions and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training is to occur periodically for all school employees. At the initial faculty meeting, a review of universal precautions is to be offered to all staff. Every two years, staff are to be offered CPR training. Schools are required to have at least one person on the premises during regular school hours who is currently certified in CPR.

Pennsylvania Act 17 of 2026, Cardiac Preparedness Legislation, also known as Greg Moyer's Law, requires athletic coaches (head coaches, assistant coaches and sponsors of extracurricular athletic activities) to be trained in CPR once every two years. The instruction must be conducted by recognized organizations such as the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or the National Safety Council.

Act 17 also mandates that any school entity or nonpublic school participating in interscholastic athletics must have an AED "readily accessible" for students during all school-sponsored athletic events and practices. This requirement applies regardless of whether the activity takes place on school grounds or at an external venue.

C. Legal Ramifications

Parents should be notified that the diocesan/school insurance programs do not include student accident coverage.

303.7A – Appendix – Accident / Injury Report - Students

ACCIDENT / INJURY REPORT (Students)

School: _____

Individual Injured

Name _____ Address _____
Last First MI

Student _____, if so grade _____ Staff _____ Volunteer _____ Guest _____

Injury Details

Description of Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Cause of Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Part(s) of Body Injured _____

Accident Details

Time of Accident / Injury _____
Date Day of Week Exact Time

Location of Accident (be specific) _____

Activity of Injured Person at Time of Accident / Injury (be specific) _____

_____

Treatment Provided (be specific) _____

_____

If student, Supervision at Time of Accident / Injury ____ yes ____ no (If yes, give name and title) _____

_____

Parent / Insurance Notification

Were the parents notified? ____ yes _____ no (If yes, by whom and date) _____

Was report made to claims adjuster, Autumn Vinopal (724.261.3337) at Gallagher Bassett (800.779.2980)? ____ yes ____ no

If yes, by whom and date? _____

Signature

Report prepared by (name and title) _____ Date of Report _____

Principal's Signature _____ Date _____

Keep original in school's accident file. Send a copy to Gallagher Bassett: autumn_vinopal@gbtpa.com

303.7 – Best Practices – STUDENT ACCIDENT OR INJURY

****

1. All accidents or injuries should be reported to the diocesan self-insurance claim representatives, in the following circumstances:
   - If the student is sent home because the injury is too serious to finish the school day
   - If the student goes to the hospital
   - If the student is hurt when there is no adult supervision.

2. If in doubt as to whether the claims representative needs to be notified, contact the liability claims representative. Contact information may be found at Financial Services link on the diocesan website in the Parish Financial Practices Manual.

3. A Student Incident Report (Appendix 303.7 BP-A) may also be completed if the accident / injury was part of a larger scale incident that might need further tracking and documentation.

4. An example of a Student Data Emergency Form is found in Appendix 303.7 BP-B.

5. Retention of forms:
   - Accident / Injury Report – five years
   - Student Emergency Data Form – one year after provided to the school.

303.7 BP-A – Appendix – Student Incident Report

Student Incident Report

School Name: _____ **Date Reported:** _____

City: _____ Incident date: _____ Time: _____
Reported by:_____ Person in charge: _____
Location of incident: ❑School ❑Bus ❑Other (describe): _____
If in school: ❑Classroom ❑Recess ❑Hallway ❑Bathroom ❑Office ❑Gym ❑Cafeteria ❑Library
Other place in school (be specific): _____
Name(s) and grade level(s) of student(s) involved:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Type of offense: _____
Incident description (e.g., **In detail,** what happened and who was involved?) use additional sheets as needed and include interview details of **all parties**.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Names, positions and contact information of witness(es):

_____
_____
_____

Review of: ❑CSO Policy Manual ❑Handbook ❑Code of Conduct ❑Other (describe): _____
Specific action taken: _____

_____
_____
_____

Name of people who were notified of this incident. Please indicate by **phone, letter, or both**:
❑ Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____
_____ Date and Time: _____
❑ Law Enforcement: _____ Date and Time: _____
❑ Pastor/President: _____ Date and Time: _____
❑ Hospital/EMT: _____ Date and Time: _____
❑ Catholic Schools Office: _____ Date and Time: _____
❑ Student File: _____ Date and Time: _____

I certify that the information contained in this report is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
Printed name of person and position completing this form: _____

_____ _____ _____
Signature Date Telephone & Extension or Cell

Please see page 2 for further considerations

Student Incident Report

School Name: _____ **Date Reported:** _____

Should the incident warrant more detailed and specific information than on page one, please consider documenting the following items. Please use additional pages as needed.

Interview details with supervising adult(s): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Interview details with witness(es): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Interview details with all involved student(s) and/or parent(s)/guardian: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Referral details to law enforcement: _____

_____

Determination of law enforcement: _____

Legal consequences: _____

Name and contact information of attorney(s) involved: _____

_____

School specific action taken with student(s). Please check all that apply and describe:

- ❑ Parent contract: _____
- ❑ Behavior contract: _____
- ❑ Bus suspension for _____ days
- ❑ In-school suspension for _____ days
- ❑ Out-of-school suspension for _____ days
- ❑ Counseling – details: _____

_____

- ❑ Other (specify): _____

_____

I certify that the information contained in this report is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Printed name of person and position completing this form: _____

_____ _____ _____

Signature Date Telephone & Extension or Cell

303.7 BP-B – Appendix – Student Emergency Data Form

STUDENT EMERGENCY DATA FORM

School Name _____ School Year _____

NAME OF STUDENTS IN THIS SCHOOL

Oldest to Youngest:		M/F	Grade/Rm.	List any handicaps, drug allergies, etc.
_____		_____	_____	_____
Child's Last Name	First Name			
_____		_____	_____	_____
Child's Last Name	First Name			
_____		_____	_____	_____
Child's Last Name	First Name			
_____		_____	_____	_____
Child's Last Name	First Name			
_____		_____	_____	_____
Child's Last Name	First Name			

Family Last Name _____ Address _____ Home Phone _____

City/Township/Borough _____ County _____ State _____ Zip _____

Family E-mail _____ Parish _____

Child Lives With ____ Both Parents ____ Father ____ Mother ____ Grandparents ____ Guardian ____ Other _____

Father's Name _____ Employer _____ Work Phone _____

Father's Cell Phone _____ Father's Address (if different) _____ Work E-mail _____

Mother's Name _____ Employer _____ Work Phone _____

Mother's Cell Phone _____ Mother's Address (if different) _____ Work E-Mail _____

In the event your child becomes ill and neither parent can be contacted, we will contact a relative or friend designated by you. We must have at least three names listed below.

Name	Relationship	Telephone (home/work/cell)
1st _____	_____	h _____ w _____ c _____
2nd _____	_____	h _____ w _____ c _____
3rd _____	_____	h _____ w _____ c _____

In case of a serious accident or illness, to which hospital do you want your child sent: _____

In case of a serious accident or illness, which physician do you wish called for your child:

Primary Care Physician _____ Phone _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

303.8 – PREGNANT STUDENTS AND NURSING MOTHERS

Purpose: To address the continued enrollment of a student who is pregnant and the needs of a nursing mother.

Additional Authority:
Can. 806 in support of Catholic Identity and Mission

A. Definitions
Not applicable

B. Requirements
Pregnancy is not grounds for dismissal.

The school will provide students who are nursing reasonable accommodation to express milk for their infant child(ren) for up to one year following the child's birth.

Accommodations will include a space, other than a restroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from peers and the public.

Expressed milk can be stored in a personal cooler and must be sufficiently marked or labeled.

The length and frequency of these necessary breaks is to be discussed with the parent, student, and administrator.

303.9 – GENDER IDENTITY

Purpose: to provide a framework and policy guidance for Catholic school leaders and educators to respond in truth and love to young people who may experience confusion or distress about their gender.

Authority:
Bishop's Directive 2019
Catechism of the Catholic Church
"Male and Female He Created Them:" Toward a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Identity in Education, Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education (2019)
Encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* (2015)
Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (March 19, 2016)
"Dignitas Infinita," Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (April 8, 2024)

Introduction
A Catholic school is a particular community of faith called to live in accordance with, and to witness to, the God of love as revealed in Christ Jesus. Each parish-based school or school system will have its distinct way of expressing in words and actions the mission common to all ministries within the life of the Catholic Church.

The purpose of this document is to provide policy guidance for Catholic school leaders and educators to respond in truth and love to young people who may experience confusion or distress about their gender.

More information related to a Catholic response to gender concerns can be found here: https://www.csa.edu.au/common/Uploaded%20files/Resources/Created%20and%20Loved_Final_2022.pdf

Context
A Catholic school has a responsibility to create an environment hospitable to a life of faith, which can be expressed in multiple ways. For a culture of lively Catholic witness to thrive, the language of school leaders is instrumental in encouraging a celebration of each individual in their uniqueness, balanced with the dynamics of the whole community. Because of this healthy diversity and witness, school leaders will be diligent in resisting the incursion of political lobbying, ideological postures, organizations, and movements at odds with the school's mission, along with their language and symbols. For the good of the whole community, sometimes a school principal will respectfully decline the involvement of such movements or organizations in the life of their Catholic school.

All schools naturally wish to provide effective pastoral care for gender variant students. At the same time, it is important to note that while the motivations behind some pastoral initiatives are good and commendable, the use of ideas, words and images that conflict with the generosity of the Christian vision should be respectfully avoided. Popular rhetoric around

gender variance sometimes accepts perceptions of sex and gender that are inconsistent with a Catholic understanding: that gender is something entirely separate from biological sex; that gender is arbitrarily assigned rather than usually a given aspect of the gift of life; and the concept that gender can be fluid and oscillate between a male or female gender identity entirely according to a subjective personal choice.

In order to fulfil their duty of care, as they must with all students, Catholic leaders should seek to understand the needs of the student and the full scope of support options.

Application of this Policy

A. Definitions

Gender "denotes the public, sociocultural (and usually legally recognized) lived role as boy or girl, man or woman, or other gender. Biological factors [such as sex] are seen as contributing, in interaction with social and psychological factors, to gender" (American Psychiatric Association, DSM-5-TR). Catholic anthropology strongly affirms a natural correspondence and harmonious relationship between biological sex and gender.

Gender Dysphoria refers to distress that is caused by a discrepancy between a person's gender identity and that person's sex assigned at birth (and the associated gender role and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics). For more information on gender dysphoria in children, adolescents and adult visit: Psychiatry.org - What is Gender Dysphoria?

Gender Identity refers to one's internal deeply held sense of one's gender which may be the same or different from one's sex assigned at birth.

Gender Variant a nondiagnostic equivalent term for "gender-atypical".

Sex "referring to the biological indicators of male and female (understood in the context of reproductive capacity), such as in sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, and non-ambiguous internal and external genitalia". (American Psychiatric Association, DSM-5-TR).

B. Requirements

Admission/Retention Policy (Reference Admissions Policy 203.1, Appendix 203.1A and Appendix BP-A)

Students experiencing gender dysphoria or gender variance may be admitted to the Catholic school with the expectation that the student will adhere to all school policies and consent to the Diocese of Erie Catholic Mission Memorandum of Understanding. Gender dysphoria or gender variance are not grounds for dismissal; however, students who are not able or are unwilling to follow school policies and consent to the Catholic Mission Memorandum of Understanding will need to find another educational placement.

Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities

- Participation in school and CYO activities and athletics shall conform to the biological sex of the participant. Schools are encouraged to provide opportunities for sports and extra-curricular activities that are open to participation of individuals of both sexes.

- PIAA-member schools will follow the PIAA policies and procedures as outlined in the handbook.[1]

Attire
Uniform and dress code expectations for all students must be outlined in the school's student handbook.

Documentation
Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie are required to maintain certain pupil records ("official records") which include the student's legal name and biological sex as indicated on official government issued documents. The official records may include but are not limited to student transcripts, assessment data, health records, Individualized Education Programs (IEP), Section 504 Plans and the student's cumulative folder. Schools shall change a student's name and gender on official records only when the name of the student is changed by the appropriate court action, such as by a change of name proceedings or through amendment of state or federally issued identification. Schools will not change the official records of any student pre-dating the date of the notice of a change of name.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie may permit a student to use a preferred name on unofficial records.

Medication
Reference Policy #303.4 – Medications

Preferred Pronouns
- Pronouns used for students should reflect their biological sex. Efforts can be made to avoid the use of pronouns for students who are experiencing gender dysphoria or gender variance (i.e., referring to the student by name instead of he/she etc.)
- Use of the "they/them," or other gender-neutral pronouns to refer to students who are experiencing gender dysphoria or gender variance may be used if agreed upon by the parents and administration.

Restrooms, Locker Rooms, Etc.
- For the purposes of child protection, all schools must make separate provisions for students and for adults.[2] Providing restrooms and changing facilities that are private (i.e., used by one person at a time) and not aligned to biological sex increases the access and safety options of vulnerable students and may alleviate anxieties. Each school shall designate at least one bathroom that meets these requirements.
- All members of the community may choose to use facilities either designated as private or as aligned to their own biological sex.

[1] See PIAA Handbook – Section II, Policies and procedures, transgender policy.
[2] See the diocesan "Policy for the Protection of Children" III.C.3, understood here to apply not only to overnight trips but also to school facilities.

Single-Sex Schools, Buildings, and other Programs and Institutions

- Students shall seek admission to single-sex programs (including but not limited to schools, camps, and retreats) according to their own biological sex. Students may only enter single-sex dormitories, single-sex sections of dormitories, and other similar buildings (e.g., freestanding shower facilities) that are aligned to their own biological sex.

C. Legal Ramifications - Failure to comply with this policy may expose the school or diocese to legal liability in the form of sex or gender discrimination and/or harassment claims, including both administrative proceedings and potential legal action.

303.9 – Best Practices – GENDER IDENTITY

****

Case Team is the group of school employees and others, assembled for a particular case to review collectively and assess collaboratively all gender identity accommodation requests of merit.
Core Team is the standing committee comprised of school personnel assembled to review and determine the merit of a request for accommodation.

Core Team and Case Team
Best Practice is to create a Core Team and a Case Team to address questions related to accommodations for students experiencing gender dysphoria or gender variance.

1. Each school/system is encouraged to establish a Core Team to address gender identity issues. Team members include:
   - School principal
   - School counselor (if a counselor is not available, contact the CSO for support)
   - Clergy or clergy appointee.

2. Each school/system is encouraged to establish a Case Team, specific to each request of merit. The Case Team is to be comprised of the standing Core Team and may include the following additional members:
   - At least one teacher providing direct educational services to the student
   - The students' parents or guardians, or emancipated student
   - The student requesting accommodations as appropriate; and
   - Where the student is being treated by a medical or mental health professional, that individual may be invited.

Before any requested accommodation for a student experiencing gender dysphoria is considered, the following are required:
1. A written request presented to the school principal
2. A willingness of the student and parents/guardians to meet with school administration
3. An understanding by the individual requesting the accommodation that the doctrines of the Catholic Church will direct what accommodations might be provided, an understanding that each school/system will accommodate the individual within the tenets of the Church while not attempting to change the individual's personal beliefs
4. An understanding that some accommodations may not be feasible due to not having personnel, programs and facilities in place to address the request.

Process
The following process is to be used to determine if, and how the requested accommodation(s) may be supported in the school/system environment.

Phase I:

1. A written request, made by a student or the parent(s)/guardian of a student who is currently enrolled in the school, a potential student, or the parent(s)/guardian of a potential student, is to be given to the school principal.
2. The principal assembles the standing Core Team to deliberate and determine the merit of the request.
3. The members of the Core Team will review Church teaching, the Gender Identity policy, as well as any medical, and or counseling records submitted with the request for accommodations.
4. The principal shall discuss the request for accommodations with the Catholic Schools Office. This discussion shall be completed as part of the review process and prior to making a determination of merit on a request for accommodation.
5. The Core Team, (or Case Team in Phase II), may request permission from the parent and/or student, as appropriate, to communicate with outside medical or counseling professionals currently involved with the student and/or family.
6. The Core Team (or Case Team in Phase II) may recommend to the principal, a request for records, and/or ongoing communication with the counselor, if the student currently receives outside counseling support.
7. Requests for accommodation(s), determined by the Core Team to have merit, shall be forwarded to the Case Team.

Phase II

1. The principal shall assemble the Case Team.
2. The members of the Case Team will review Church teaching and the Gender Identity policy.
3. The Case Team will review the request for accommodations, and address each of the following "consideration questions." The goal of the review is to make recommendations regarding which, if any, of the requested accommodations can be met, and how each can be met.
    a. Is this request contrary to the doctrines and teachings of the Catholic faith?
    b. Can the current facility or educational program meet the request?
    c. Would allowing the request create a substantial disruption to the educational environment of the school/system?
4. The school members of the Case Team are to recommend in writing, to the school principal, which accommodations can be met and how they will be met.
5. The principal shall see that the accommodations are implemented appropriately.
6. Any recommendations made to the principal may be appealed to the pastor or president of the school system. The pastor or president will have the final say regarding accommodations.

Phase III

1. The accommodations that the school is able to offer the student shall be documented in a format similar to educational accommodations. The parents will be requested to sign

the form with documented accommodations. The principal shall provide copies of the signed accommodation form to the Catholic Schools Office.

2. The Case Team shall develop procedures for monitoring the implementation of accommodations and the student's experience within the school/system environment with regular reports of progress to the school principal.
3. Accommodations may be denied if, after due consideration based upon all available information, the Case Team reaches the determination grounded in the tenets of the Catholic Church, or the school is unable to meet the request due to personnel, program or facility limitations. Final decisions about accommodations will be presented in writing and the Case Team will discuss possible options or next steps with the student and the parent(s)/guardians. All documentation from the case and core team will become part of the student's educational record.

Additional considerations for school attire:
The school will develop a uniform policy which lists attire that corresponds with a student's biological sex. A school may develop and maintain a list of attire from which all students may choose regardless of sex or biological gender. Offering flexibility with uniform expectations will cater to the diversity of the student body without compromising the benefits of having uniform expectations.

- Schools with a dress code or uniform policy may develop and maintain a list of attire from which all students may choose regardless of sex or gender (e.g., Oxford-style shirts, polo shirts, slacks, shorts, sweaters, blazers, etc.)
- Dress-down/Dress-up day attire should apply the same principles listed in the dress code policy and correspond with the student's biological sex.

303.10 – TYPE 1 DIABETES PARENTAL EDUCATION

Purpose: This policy is established in compliance with Act 117 of 2024 of Pennsylvania, which mandates that schools provide parents and guardians with information about Type 1 Diabetes (T1D). The purpose is to ensure early identification, promote awareness, and support the health and academic success of students.

Additional Authority:
Act 117 of 2024
School Code (24 P.S. § 14-1423.1)

A. Definition
Type 1 Diabetes (T1D): A chronic autoimmune condition where the pancreas produces little or no insulin.
Parent/Guardian: The legal guardian(s) or custodian(s) of a student enrolled at the school.

B. Requirements
The school shall provide Type 1 Diabetes educational materials developed and published by the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) to parents or guardians.

Distribution of Materials
- Upon a student's initial enrollment in elementary school (e.g., kindergarten or first grade); and
- Again, when the student enters grade six**.**

The materials must be made available in at least one of the following ways:
- Provided in writing (e.g., hard copy) to parents/guardians;
- Provided electronically (e.g., email or parent portal); or
- Published and accessible on the school's public website.

Type 1 Diabetes Parent Fact Sheet

The school shall use the official informational materials created by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, which will be periodically updated by the Department and made available on its public website. The school must ensure it is distributing the most current version of these materials at the time of dissemination.

C. Legal Ramifications
Failure to comply with this statutory requirement may result in corrective administrative action or state compliance review.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

401.1 – EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Purpose: To defend and promote human rights in accordance with the Gospel mandate by operating as Equal Opportunity employers.

Additional Authority:
The Equal Employment Opportunity Act
The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (43 P.S. § 951—963) and Chapter 44

A. Definitions
Not applicable

B. Requirements
Schools are to promote equal opportunity in the areas of recruitment, employment, training, compensation, development, transfer and promotion. Employment in Catholic schools and subsequent development, transfer or promotion will go to those individuals whose training and experience most nearly qualify them for positions offered without regard to the person's race, color, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information, religion (except where religious belief or practice is determined by the school, in its sole discretion, to be a qualification for a position), marital or veteran status, and any other legally protected status. Bona fide occupational qualifications are found in the Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines for Employees that is signed at both interview and upon hire.

Catholic schools will not discriminate based on disability, and reasonable accommodation will be made for those qualified individuals with disabilities unless hardship on the part of the school will result. All staff members share in the responsibility to foster work environments where all persons are treated with fairness, dignity and respect.

Due to the religious mission of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie, all employees must follow the *Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines* as a condition of hire and of remaining employed. (Appendices 401.2A & B)

As a paid employee, I agree to abide by (respect) those teachings delineated below.

1. ***The Church Believes in the Truth of the Gospel***
   The Church is a witness to the truth of the Gospel. Our employees do not publicly reject the doctrine, morals or laws of the Catholic Church, nor publicly hold them up to doubt or question. The employee is faithful to their personal religious obligations and practices their own faith.

2. ***The Church is a Witness to Justice***
   The Church is a witness to the virtue of justice. Our employees will support the Church's social teaching and doctrine. They will avoid any form of scandal, that is, any word or action that may lead another into evil (see CCC# 2284). This means that employees should avoid conduct or comment inside or outside the workplace that could cause scandal or damage the reputation of the parish, school, or agency for which they work or the Church. They will not hold public membership, employment

or participate in any organization or activity that is incompatible with Catholic doctrine or morals. They will not engage in criminal activity. All communications with young people or adults are carried out in a professional manner. They will not exploit or endanger a child or vulnerable adult in any way. Appropriate boundaries are respected at all times with young people, in any contact, whether physical, verbal, written and electronic.

3. ***The Church is a Witness to Life***
   The Church upholds the respect for and the dignity of every human life from conception until natural death. Our employees do not engage in, assist, or support abortion. (CCC 2322, 2271, 2272) They do not support embryonic stem cell research or cloning. They respect the sanctity of procreation as the fruit of the marital activity of husbands and wives. The do not engage in, assist, or support contrary approaches such as in-vitro fertilization, freezing embryos, or surrogate parenthood. They uphold the sanctity and the integrity of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and do not engage in or support immoral surgical or other attempts to change the gender given at birth or any other physical mutilation. (CCC 2274, 2275, 2376, 2377) In addition, employees do not engage in, assist, or support euthanasia or physician assisted suicide. (CCC 2276, 2277, 2278, 2324)

4. ***The Church is a Witness to Marriage and Family***
   The Church respects the dignity of marriage and the Christian moral doctrine on human sexuality. Our employees respect the teaching of the Church regarding the Sacrament of Marriage and understand that a Catholic employee is expected to seek a marriage recognized by the Church. (CCC 1621) They do not condone or seek to enter into a same-sex relationship, union or marriage. (CCC 1601, 1611, 1617, 1625) They do not engage in unchaste behaviors be these heterosexual or homosexual, or procreation outside of marriage. This includes activities such as cohabitation, adultery and viewing or producing pornography. (CCC 2353, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2380)

The Mission of the Church and its employees

In his Apostolic Constitution Fidei Depositium, promulgated in October of 1992, Saint John Paul II stated, "guarding the deposit of faith is the mission which the Lord entrusted to his church, and which she fulfills in every age. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which was opened 30 years ago by my predecessor Pope John XXIII, of happy memory, had as its intention and purpose to highlight the Church's apostolic and pastoral mission, and making the truth of Gospel shine forth to lead all people to seek and receive Christ's love which surpasses all knowledge (cf. Eph:319)".

To that end the Church constantly strives to make the teachings of Jesus Christ clear and understandable in every generation and place. This agreement between <u>(name of institution)</u> and the employee is an effort to explain some fundamental doctrines and beliefs of the Catholic Church which every employee should understand and be willing to respect and promote during their employment.

I acknowledge that I have read, and that I understand the above-mentioned doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. I also acknowledge that I have had a satisfactory explanation of the above-mentioned ***Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines****. I further acknowledge that it is my responsibility to become familiar with the teachings of the Church and to seek clarification regarding any matter about which I am uncertain.*

I acknowledge that the above-mentioned statements are not complete list of all of the teachings and beliefs. Rather the statements are an effort to highlight a few important teachings that are imperative for every employee to understand before employment.

401.2 – HIRING

Purpose: To clarify the roles and responsibilities of school administration/pastors and the Catholic Schools Office in the hiring process for administrators, teachers and non-educators.

Additional Authority:
Can. 805
Can. 806 § 2
Policy for the Protection of Children
Bishop's Directive 2019

A. Definition

Administrative Opening refers to president, vice-president, headmaster, or principal vacancy.

B. Requirements

Administrative Openings

When an administrative opening occurs, the pastor or president is to notify the Superintendent. The Superintendent will provide support in the hiring process as needed.

At the beginning of the interview, the applicant is to sign the Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines for Employees. (Appendix 401.2A)

Prior to being offered a position, the applicant must provide the following documentation:

1. Office for the Protection of Children and Youth Clearance (one time before hire - new employees after July 1, 2018)
2. Employment Application and references, if applicable
3. PA State Police Criminal Record Check (5 years)
4. PA Child Abuse History Certification (5 years)
5. Federal Criminal History Record (5 years – includes fingerprints. The official report is kept in the Catholic Schools Office.)
6. Act 24 Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification Form
7. Sexual Misconduct/Abuse Disclosure Release Form(s) (Act 168)
8. Resume, if applicable
9. Educational Certificates, if applicable
10. College transcripts
11. Pastor Recommendation (Catholic applicant) or Character Reference (non-Catholic)

The proposed candidate is to be recommended by the pastor/president to the Superintendent, who may request to interview the candidate and review applicant documentation. The Superintendent will present the candidate recommendation to the Bishop for final approval prior to any formal job offer.

If the position is accepted by the applicant, the following documentation is to be completed and kept on file at the school/system:

1. Contract (unless the employment arrangement does not involve a contract)
2. Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines for Employees (Appendix 401.2A – Interview, Appendix 401.2B – Hire, & Appendix 401.2B - Annually)
3. Health Certificate
4. Intent for Compliance
5. Diocesan Mandated Reporter Compliance Document (yearly)
6. Certificate of Completion from the Diocesan Safe Environment Training
7. Certificate of Completion for Pennsylvania Mandated Reporter Training
8. New Hire Reporting Form

Educator Openings

Once the administrator has determined that there will be a need to hire a faculty member, a process should be defined as to who will be interviewing, the timeframe for accepting applications, etc.

At the beginning of the interview, the applicant is to sign the Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines for Employees. (Appendix 401.2A)

Prior to being offered a position, the applicant must provide the following documentation:

1. Office for the Protection of Children and Youth Clearance (one time before hire - new employees after July 1, 2018)
2. Employment Application and references, if applicable
3. PA State Police Criminal Record Check (5 years)
4. PA Child Abuse History Certification (5 years)
5. Federal Criminal History Record (5 years – includes fingerprints. The official report is kept in the Catholic Schools Office.)
6. Act 24 Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification Form
7. Sexual Misconduct/Abuse Disclosure Release Form(s) (Act 168)
8. Resume, if applicable
9. Educational Certificates, if applicable
10. College transcripts
11. Pastor Recommendation (Catholic applicant) or Character Reference (non-Catholic)
    If the applicant is being offered a position to teach religion/theology, he/she must be a practicing Catholic.

After all documentation is received and reviewed a job offer may be extended. If the position is accepted by the applicant, the following documentation is to be completed and kept on file at the school/system:

1. Contract
2. Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines for Employees (Appendix 401.2A – Interview, Appendix 401.2B – Hire, & Appendix 401.2B - Annually)
3. Health certificate
4. Intent for Compliance
5. Diocesan Mandated Reporter Compliance Document

6. Certificate of Completion from the Diocesan Safe Environment Training
7. Certificate of Completion for Pennsylvania Mandated Reporter Training
8. New Hire Reporting Form

All new teachers at the elementary / middle school level must attend the New Teacher Orientation and the New Teacher Retreat.

Non-Educator Openings
Once the administrator has determined that there will be a need to hire for a non-educator position, a process should be defined as to who will be interviewing, the timeframe for accepting applications, etc.

At the beginning of the interview, the applicant is to sign the Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines for Employees. (Appendix 401.2A)

Prior to being offered a position, the applicant must provide the following documentation:

1. Office for the Protection of Children and Youth Clearance (one time before hire - new employees after July 1, 2018)
2. Employment Application and references, if applicable
3. PA State Police Criminal Record Check (5 years)
4. PA Child Abuse History Certification (5 years)
5. Federal Criminal History Record (5 years – includes fingerprints. The official report is kept in the Catholic Schools Office.)
6. Act 24 Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification Form
7. Sexual Misconduct/Abuse Disclosure Release Form(s) (Act 168)

After all documentation is received and reviewed a job offer may be extended. If the position is accepted by the applicant, the following documentation is to be completed and kept on file at the school/system:

1. Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines for Employees (Appendix 401.2A – Interview, Appendix 401.2B – Hire, & Appendix 401.2B - Annually)
2. Health certificate
3. Intent for Compliance
4. Diocesan Mandated Reporter Compliance Document (yearly)
5. Certificate of Completion from the Diocesan Safe Environment Training
6. Certificate of Completion for Pennsylvania Mandated Reporter Training
7. New Hire Reporting Form

401.2A – Appendix – Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines – Interview

Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines for Employees of (Insert Name of Institution) in the Diocese of Erie

(To be presented and signed at time of Interview)

As a part of the Catholic Church our mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to bring people into a loving relationship with God and one another. (cf. Mt 22:35-40, *CCC* 2055) As employees, we fulfill this mission while following the doctrines and laws of the Roman Catholic Church as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Code of Canon Law* and in all of the magisterial pronouncements of the Church.

- If hired as an employee, do you understand that you will be a representative of Catholic employer, the Diocese of Erie and the Catholic Church at large? Yes ____ No ____

- If hired as an employee, do you understand that, while you will not be required to believe all aspects of Catholic Theology, you will be required to NOT publicly speak against or hold up for public ridicule the theological or moral teachings of the Church? Yes ____ No ____

- If hired as an employee, do you understand that you will be expected to conduct yourself according to Catholic moral principles which prohibit certain public lifestyles that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church? Yes ____ No ____

- If hired as an employee, do you understand that certain activities work against the Catholic identity and mission, and that active participation in, encouragement of or public endorsement of certain activities may result in negative employment action which may include termination? Some of the certain activities include but are not limited to the following:
  - Abortion
  - Assisted Suicide
  - Euthanasia
  - Fornication
  - Adultery
  - Unchaste heterosexual or homosexual behaviors
  - In vitro fertilization
  - Marriage or union between same sex partners
  - Surrogacy parenthood
  - Marriage with a person who was validly married in the eyes of the Church to another person, without the benefit of a Church (annulment) process?

  Yes ____ No ____

- If hired, do you understand that you will be expected to participate during work hours in workshops and other programs designed to help you fully understand the Catholic theological, moral and social teachings of the Church? Yes ____ No ____

_____ _____
Applicant Signature Date

401.2B – Appendix – Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines – Hire & Annually

Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines for Employees of (Insert Name of Institution) in the Diocese of Erie

(To be presented and signed at time of Hire and Annually thereafter)

Our Fundamental Mission:
As a part of the Catholic Church our mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to bring people into a loving relationship with God and one another. (cf. Mt 22:35-40: *CCC* 2055) As employees of *(name of institution)* we fulfill this mission while following the doctrines and laws of the Roman Catholic Church as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Code of Canon Law* and in all of the magisterial pronouncements of the Church. As a paid employee, I agree to abide by (respect) those teachings delineated below.

1. **The Church Believes in the Truth of the Gospel**
   The Church is a witness to the truth of the Gospel. Our employees do not publically reject the doctrine, morals or laws of the Catholic Church, nor publically hold them up to doubt or question. The employee is faithful to their personal religious obligations and practices their own faith.

2. **The Church is a Witness to Justice**
   The Church is a witness to the virtue of justice. Our employees will support the Church's social teaching and doctrine. They will avoid any form of scandal, that is, any word or action that may lead another into evil (see *CCC*# 2284). This means that employees should avoid conduct or comment inside or outside the workplace that could cause scandal or damage the reputation of the parish, school, or agency for which they work or the Church. They will not hold public membership, employment or participate in any organization or activity that is incompatible with Catholic doctrine or morals. They will not engage in criminal activity. All communications with young people or adults are carried out in a professional manner. They will not exploit or endanger a child or vulnerable adult in any way. Appropriate boundaries are respected at all times with young people, in any contact, whether physical, verbal, written and electronic.

3. **The Church is a Witness to Life**
   The Church upholds the respect for and the dignity of every human life from conception until natural death. Our employees do not engage in, assist, or support abortion. (*CCC 2322, 2271,* 2272) They do not support embryonic stem cell research or cloning. They respect the sanctity of procreation as the fruit of the marital activity of husbands and wives. The do not engage in, assist, or support contrary approaches such as in-vitro fertilization, freezing embryos, or surrogate parenthood. They uphold the sanctity and the integrity of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and do not engage in or support immoral surgical or other attempts to change the gender given at birth or any other physical mutilation. (*CCC* 2274, 2275, 2376, 2377) In addition, employees do not engage in, assist, or support euthanasia or physician assisted suicide. (*CCC* 2276, 2277, 2278, 2324)

4. **The Church is a Witness to Marriage and Family**
   The Church respects the dignity of marriage and the Christian moral doctrine on human sexuality. Our employees respect the teaching of the Church regarding the Sacrament of Marriage and understand that a Catholic employee is expected to seek a marriage recognized by the Church. (*CCC* 1621) They do not condone or seek to enter into a same-sex relationship, union or marriage. (*CCC* 1601, 1611, 1617, 1625) They do not engage in unchaste behaviors be these heterosexual or homosexual, or procreation outside of marriage. This includes activities such as cohabitation, adultery and viewing or producing pornography. (*CCC* 2353, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2380)

The Mission of the Church and its employees

In his Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositium*, promulgated in October of 1992, Saint John Paul II stated, "guarding the deposit of faith is the mission which the Lord entrusted to his church, and which she fulfills in every age. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which was opened 30 years ago by my predecessor Pope John XXIII, of happy memory, had as its intention and purpose to highlight the Church's apostolic and pastoral mission, and making the truth of Gospel shine forth to lead all people to seek and receive Christ's love which surpasses all knowledge (cf. Eph:319)".

To that end the Church constantly strives to make the teachings of Jesus Christ clear and understandable in every generation and place. This agreement between ***(name of institution)*** and the employee is an effort to explain some fundamental doctrines and beliefs of the Catholic Church which every employee should understand and be willing to respect and promote during their employment.

I acknowledge that I have read, and that I understand the above-mentioned doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. I also acknowledge that I have had a satisfactory explanation of the above-mentioned ***Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines***. I further acknowledge that it is my responsibility to become familiar with the teachings of the Church and to seek clarification regarding any matter about which I am uncertain.

I acknowledge that the above-mentioned statements are not complete list of all of the teachings and beliefs. Rather the statements are an effort to highlight a few important teachings that are imperative for every employee to understand before employment.

I understand that adhering to (respecting) the above Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines is a condition of remaining in the employment of *(name of institution)*.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Witness: _____ **Date:** _____

401.2C – Appendix – Pastor's Recommendation for a Catholic Professional

Dear Monsignor / Father:

_____ has applied for the position of _____

at _____ .

The responsibilities of this position would be best met by a person who is a practicing Catholic, with a sound reputation. The Diocese of Erie relies on the judgment of pastors (or other priests who know the individual well) for this positive affirmation. For our purposes, practice of the faith is primarily manifested by participation in the sacramental life of the Church (Sunday Mass and valid marriages), formation of children in the faith, support for the teachings of the Church's Magisterium, and a life free of public scandal. Pastors are respectfully asked to not base such practice solely on the person's financial contribution or the "use of envelopes."

Directions: Please affix your parish seal to this form. Mail directly to the school listed above OR place the form in a sealed envelope with your name signed across the flap then give the form directly to the individual requesting it. Thank you.

_____ is a member of _____

Catholic Professional's Name *(Parish)* *(City)*

as indicated by (check any that apply):

☐ domicile, ☐ registration, and/or ☐ regular attendance/participation in this parish.

I have known this person for _____ years.

1. I am ☐ very ☐ somewhat ☐ not very familiar with this person's *practice* of the Faith.
Comments: _____

2. I am ☐ very ☐ somewhat ☐ not very familiar with this person's *knowledge* of the Faith.
Comments: _____

3. I am ☐ very ☐ somewhat ☐ not very familiar with this person's *moral* character.
Comments: _____

4. Do you recommend the applicant for the position and why?

5. Do you have any reservations and why?

DATE: _____

PARISH SEAL:

PARISH: _____
ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____
PRINTED NAME of PASTOR _____

_____
SIGNATURE of **PASTOR** (or PRIEST designated by him)
(Verified Digital or Ink signature required)

CONFIDENTIAL

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A PRACTICING CATHOLIC?

A practicing Catholic is a person who is in good standing with the Church and lives in accord with the teachings of Christ and the Church. The following list provide essential components of the practice of the Faith:

- He/she participates in the sacraments of the Church
    - is fully initiated, i.e., has been baptized, confirmed and admitted to Holy Communion;
    - participates in Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation;
    - celebrates the Sacrament of Penance as needed, but not infrequently.

- He/she is a registered member of a Catholic parish and supports the parish with time, talent and treasure, according to his/her ability.

- If married, he/she is in a marriage in accord with the laws of the Church and is committed to raising children in the practice of the faith.

- If not married, he/she is living a life in conformity with the single state;

- He/she is in agreement with and willing to impart the teachings of the Catholic Church as taught by the Church's magisterium.

- He/she will lead by example, encourage students to learn and practice the faith by word and example.

- He/she lives a life free of scandal and is not bound by any ecclesiastical penalty.

Approved by Bishop Persico, March 15, 2013

401.2D – Appendix – Character Reference for a Non-Catholic Employee

_____ has applied for the position of _____ at _____ .

The responsibilities of this position are such that the person needs to be of good moral character, with a sound reputation. The Diocese of Erie relies on the judgment of pastors, religious leaders, long-time family friends, or members of the same faith community for this positive affirmation. This reference must be a non-family member. In this position of a Catholic School employee, the individual will need to create a Christian climate of compassion, service, and faith development. The educator will need to publicly support the Catholic Church's teachings and the mission of the school.

Directions: Mail directly to the school listed above OR place the form in a sealed envelope with your name signed across the flap then give the form directly to the individual requesting it. Thank you.

I attest that I am a non-family member, and I have known this person for ____ years through _____

1. I am □ very □somewhat □not very familiar with this person's *practice* of the faith.
   Comments:

2. I am □ very □somewhat □not very familiar with this person's r*eputation*.
   Comments:

3. I am □ very □somewhat □not very familiar with this person's *moral character*.
   Comments:

4. Do you recommend the applicant for the position and why?

5. Do you have any reservations and why?

Name _____ **Title** _____
Address _____
Phone Number _____ **Signature** _____

401.2 – Best Practices – HIRING

****

Church teachings that require particular sensitivity in supporting the Catholic Mission and Identity for schools in the Diocese of Erie

Catholic Schools, their directors, administration and staff are called to participate in the mission of the Catholic Church to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to bring people into a loving relationship with God and one another (cf. Mt 22:35-40). Representatives and employees of the school faith community have a duty to fulfill this mission in accord with the doctrines, teachings and laws of the Roman Catholic Church as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), in the *Code of Canon Law* and in magisterial pronouncements of the Church. Employees are expected to understand and live in accordance with Catholic Church teaching. This document is intended to highlight various issues of our time that require particular sensitivity and awareness in order to avoid confusion, conflict or public scandal within the school community.

The entirety of Catholic teachings are a rich source of hope, guidance and wisdom to many people. The great majority of the teachings of the Catholic faith are considered the bedrock of basic human morality for Western society and the essentials for Christian living. At the same time, the Catholic Church preserves the challenging teachings of Jesus as well as the Church's subsequent teachings based on Sacred Scripture. The Church recognizes that some of these teachings, especially in today's cultural environment, seem challenging to values and moral standards commonly held by many people in our larger public community. Employees should become familiar with Church teaching on some of the sensitive issues where teaching may be misunderstood and/or opposed. These are examples only, and by no means a comprehensive list.

- The Church Believes in the Truth of the Gospel – "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God." (*Dei Verbum* 10) The Word of God, interpreted authentically by the Magisterium, i.e., the living teaching office of the Church, nourishes and strengthens us and recognizes the need to support doctrine, morals, and laws of the Catholic Church.[1]
- The Church is a Witness to Justice – This witness includes support for Catholic social teaching: respect for human life and dignity, the call to family, community, and participation, rights and responsibilities, the option for poor and vulnerable, the dignity of work and the rights of workers, solidarity, and care for God's creation. This support includes working toward the common good and justice for all.[2]
- The Church is a Witness to Life – This witness includes the respect for the dignity of every human life from conception until natural death and excludes abortion, embryonic stem cell research, cloning, in-vitro fertilization, freezing embryos, surrogate parenthood, euthanasia, and physician assisted suicide.[3]
  The Church is a Witness to Marriage and Family – The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been founded and endowed with its own special laws by the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and

[1] Dei verbum (vatican.va)
[2] Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching | USCCB
[3] Life and Dignity of the Human Person | USCCB

education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament which is to be faithful, fruitful and indissoluble. Further, the Church speaks on gender issues by recognizing that biological sex and the socio-cultural role of gender can be distinguished, but they cannot be completely separated.[4]

The following documents and resources are recommended for anyone who is interested in learning more:

1. Catechism of the Catholic Church, USCCB online version
2. YouCat: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church. Ignatius Press, 2011.
3. Catholic Social Teaching
    a. DoCat: Social doctrine of the Catholic Church. Ignatius Press, 2016.
    b. https://www.crs.org/resource-center/CST-101
4. Human Sexuality and Gender Identity:
    a. 23 Keys for Unlocking the Mystery of Gender, Identity, and Human Sexuality - Ascension Press Media
    b. Homosexuality | USCCB
    c. Life Matters - Reproductive Technologies | USCCB
    d. Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a path of dialogue on the question of gender theory in education, Vatican City 2019

[4] Catechism of the Catholic Church (usccb.org)

401.3 – CONTRACTS

Purpose: To establish minimum contract language.

Additional Authority:
Contract Law
Title 34 Pa. Code § 65.161
Bishop's Directive 2019

A. Definition
Not applicable

B. Requirements
The contract must contain the following elements:

1. Catholic Identity Clauses:
   For all employees –
   The employee recognizes the religious nature of the Catholic Schools and agrees that the employer has the right to dismiss a teacher for immorality, public scandal, or public rejection of the official teachings, doctrine or laws of the Roman Catholic Church, or for any other cause, including but not limited to incompetency, insubordination, intemperance, cruelty, two consecutive unsatisfactory ratings, persistent and willful violations of school laws and rules (including policies of the school), persistent and willful negligence, and avocation of un-American activities, thereby terminating any and all rights that the teacher may have hereunder, subject, however to the personal due process rights promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church.
   For professional staff, the following paragraphs must also be included –
   1. *The teacher shall observe and support the philosophy of Catholic education and shall abide by all the rules and regulations of the school and those of the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie, which are incorporated herein by reference and made part of this contract.*
   2. *The teacher acknowledges that, as an educator in a Catholic school, his/her responsibilities include providing a daily example of Christian values, regardless of his/her faith or the subject matter taught. Additionally, teachers will participate in school-sponsored liturgical activities during the course of the academic year and are expected to assist in the formation process for students, either directly, or by the incorporation of Catholic teachings and values in their classroom activities.*

- Beginning and end date for contract. Contracts are for one school year.
- Minimum number of days
- Annual salary with a description of pay periods (number and frequency)
- Calculation method for a day's salary
- Number of sick days and personal days, both cumulative and associated with contract
- Separation of service with a required two-week notice

- Full Time Equivalency
- Educational level
- Years of experience

A school contract template is available within the Administrator Resources on MyDioErie website.

A contract may have an addendum that requires a contracted employee to:

- complete certain professional certification, such as Level I, Level II, Active Status, etc.
- satisfactorily complete a disciplinary action plan.

The original signed contract is kept in the personnel file in the school. A copy is given to the contracted employee.

Reasonable Assurance

All school employees must sign a letter of reasonable assurance, which is to be kept on file in the school office. (Appendix 401.3A)

The purpose of this letter is twofold:

1. It clearly defines that interruptions to work schedules based upon holidays, breaks, and the summer "out of session" are part of the normal work schedule for all employees.
2. The letter of reasonable assurance prevents school employees from attempting to make unemployment claims during school breaks including the summer school break.

This letter is not a guarantee that the employee's position will be secure. Staffing changes may be readily made to compensate for enrollment declines or other economic changes which may affect a school.

A reasonable assurance letter must be signed by all school employees prior to summer break.

C. Legal Ramifications

If a contracted employee terminates his/her employment and provides the notice within the required period, the Pastor/President may opt to pay the teacher the required period and not have them return to their duties once a termination notice has been given.

401.3A – Appendix – Letter of Reasonable Assurance

REPRODUCE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

LETTER OF REASONABLE ASSURANCE TEMPLATE

School Employee Name
School Name
School Address

Dear School Employee Name:

Through this letter, we give you reasonable assurance of continued employment at (enter applicable school name here) in the fall of _____.

We appreciate your service during the past year and look ahead to your continued work at our school.

Please sign below where indicated to verify that notice of reasonable assurance has been given and understood.

Sincerely,

Pastor / President / School Administrator

School Employee Signature _____

School Employee Name (please print) _____

Date _____

401.3 – Best Practices – CONTRACTS

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1. Contracts should be written for a one year period.

2. Teacher contracts should commence on the first in-service day and end on the last in-service date or June 30th.

3. When a teacher hired at a school in the diocese has previous experience in another school in the diocese, he/she should be given credit for that previous experience.

4. A teacher does not need to be credited for previous employment in public schools, private nondiocesan schools or in Catholic schools of other dioceses.

5. If a teacher accumulates academic credits between the date of signing for the new school year and the actual beginning of the school year, a new contract should be signed indicating the additional credits.

6. Signed contracts should be returned to teachers before the first in-service day or before the first day of teaching, if hired during the school year.

7. Contracts are available at MyDioErie in Administrator Resources.

401.4 – COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Purpose: To ensure all employees are properly compensated and schools are following the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Additional Authority:
Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
Contract Law

A. Definitions

Exempt employees are for *most* professions, if he or she meets the following three tests:

1. Is paid at least $23,600 per year (or $455 per week)
2. Is paid on a salary basis
3. Performs exempt job duties

Most teachers are defined as "professional employees" under the FLSA, and therefore, are "exempt" from the provisions of the Act**.**

Nonexempt employees refer to employees who are at least paid minimum wage and overtime pay for any time worked beyond 40 hours in a given week. Under FLSA rules, nonexempt employees are entitled to time and one-half of their regular pay rate for each hour of overtime.

Permanent Part-time is one who teaches a minimum of one-half day, five days a week, or an equivalent of two and one-half school days per week. This can also be interpreted as someone who would teach 90 school days or be the equivalent of one-half FTE (full time equivalency) for the entire school year.

Salary basis means employee regularly receives a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period.

B. Requirements

Overtime for Nonexempt Employees

Nonexempt employees may be asked to work more than the normal 40 hour workweek. When this happens, they receive 1 ½ times the hourly rate for hours more than 40. Explicit permission to work overtime must be obtained from the supervisor and/or school administrator prior to working the overtime hours.

Payroll Deductions

Besides the applicable federal, state, local tax deductions, and Social Security taxes, eligible employees may voluntarily authorize deductions from their pay to participate in benefit programs, such as health insurance.

Workers Compensation Insurance

Employees are covered by the Workers Compensation insurance policy if they are incapacitated by injury or illness arising out of their employment. This insurance is provided at no cost to the employee. The amount of benefits payable and the duration of payment are governed by the Pennsylvania Workers Compensation Act.

If an employee is injured on the job, no matter how slightly, report the incident immediately to the supervisor.

The employee's supervisor is responsible for contacting the Workers Compensation insurance carrier for necessary paperwork.

Consistent with applicable state law, failure to file any paperwork of an injury within a reasonable time could jeopardize the claim.

Optional Benefits

- Group Health Insurance
  All full-time employees in the schools of the Diocese of Erie will be offered health insurance coverage. Each school/system will pay the employer portion of the individual coverage. Employees will pay the remainder of the cost.

  Incumbent teachers are covered for the summer even though their contracts may not extend through the summer months. If teachers transfer their employment from one school within the diocese to another school within the diocese at the end of the school year, the obligation for paying the premium for coverage during the summer months falls upon the school from which the teacher is leaving.

  A teacher not wishing health insurance coverage because of coverage by a spouse's insurance plan must sign a health insurance waiver. (Appendix 401.4A)

  If a teacher is terminating employment, insurance coverage extends to the last day of the last month of pay.

- 401K Retirement Account
  All full-time and permanent part-time personnel are eligible to participate in the diocesan 401K retirement account.

  Each employee must be age 21, complete at least four months of service, and agree in writing to make the required contributions. It is the responsibility of the employee to contact the administrator after four months of service if he/she wishes to participate in the 401K retirement account.

  Employees will be required to contribute at least 3 percent of their earnings as a basic contribution in order to receive the employer contribution of a flat rate of 6 percent. Employees may also contribute a percentage of their earnings in addition to the basic contribution.

  An employee not wishing to participate in the 401K retirement account must sign a 401K retirement plan waiver. (Appendix 401.4B)

- Life Insurance
  All full-time employees will be provided a $35,000 term life insurance policy at no cost to the employee. This policy will remain in effect during the period of employment.

- Disability Coverage
  All full-time employees will be provided the opportunity to enroll in a disability plan. The employee will pay the cost of the plan. An employee not wishing disability coverage must sign a participation in disability program waiver. (Appendix 401.4C)

- Dental Insurance
  All full-time employees will be provided the opportunity to enroll in a dental insurance plan. The employee will pay the cost of the plan. Employees not wishing to participate in the dental insurance plan must sign a dental insurance waiver. (Appendix 401.4D)

- Vision Insurance
  All full-time employees will be provided the opportunity to enroll in a vision insurance plan paid by the school. If an employee does not wish to enroll, a waiver form must be completed. (Appendix 401.4E)

- Continuing Education at Gannon University
  All full-time employees of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie are eligible for discounted tuition for most coursework at Gannon University. This discount is available to eligible employees who enroll as part-time graduate or undergraduate students. Gannon University retains the right to identify specific programs which are not eligible for discounted tuition. To request the discounted tuition a Gannon University Scholarship Voucher for Diocesan Employee form must be completed and submitted with proper signatures.

C. Legal Ramifications

If waiver forms are not completed by staff opting out of insurance coverage, the school may be held liable.

401.4A – Appendix – Waiver of Health Insurance

WAIVER OF HEALTH INSURANCE

School / School System _____

City _____

Employee Name: _____

Employer Name: _____ Hire Date: _____

I elect to waive health care coverage offered by my employer through Highmark.
I currently:

- ❑ Do not have health coverage under any health plan.
- ❑ Do have health coverage through (please complete the following information):

  Contract Holder Name: _____

  Name of Health Care Plan/Insurer: _____

  Group Number: _____ Subscriber ID Number _____

  Relationship of Contract Holder to You: _____

I hereby certify that I have been given the opportunity to participate in the group health insurance plan offered by my employer through Highmark. I understand that I may be able to enroll myself and my dependents in this plan if I or my dependents lose eligibility for the other coverage. However, I must request enrollment within 30 days after my other coverage ends. In addition, if I have a new dependent as a result of marriage, birth, adoption, or placement for adoption, I may be able to enroll myself and my dependents. However, I must request enrollment within 30 days after the marriage, birth, adoption, or placement for adoption.

Employee Signature _____ Date: _____

401.4B – Appendix – 401(k) Retirement Plan Sign-Off

401(k) RETIREMENT PLAN

EMPLOYEE SIGN-OFF FORM

School / School System _____

City _____

By signing this document, I acknowledge that my employer has offered me enrollment into the 401(k) Retirement Plan and I have chosen not to enroll at this time.

I fully understand that no employer retirement contributions will be made in my name unless I am enrolled in the Plan.

_____
Printed Name of Employee

_____ _____
Signature of Employee Date

401.4C – Appendix – Long-Term Disability Sign-Off

LONG-TERM DISABILITY

EMPLOYEE SIGN-OFF FORM

School / School System _____

City _____

I have been made aware that I can participate in the Long-Term Disability Program offered by my employer. I choose not to participate in this program.

_____
Printed Name of Employee

_____ _____
Signature of Employee Date

401.4D – Appendix – Dental Coverage Sign-Off

DENTAL COVERAGE

EMPLOYEE SIGN-OFF FORM

School / School System _____

City _____

I understand that by declining dental coverage through my employer, I cannot revoke or change this election during the Plan Year unless I have a qualifying change in family and/or job status and that change is consistent with my change of election. I may then revoke my prior election and sign a new agreement if a change in election event occurs.

_____
Printed Name of Employee

_____ _____
Signature of Employee Date

401.4E – Appendix – Vision Insurance Sign Off

VISION INSURANCE COVERAGE

EMPLOYEE SIGN-OFF FORM

School / School System _____

City _____

A. APPLICANT INFORMATION (Please Print):

Employee Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ SS#: _____

Employer Name: _____ Hire Date: _____

B. OTHER INSURANCE INFORMATION:

I elect to waive vision coverage offered by my employer.

I currently:

_____ Do have vision coverage through my spouse's employer plan (please complete the following information):

Contract Holder Name: _____

Name of Employer: _____

Name of Vision Plan/lnsurer: _____

Group Number: _____

VALIDATION / AUTHORIZATION STATEMENT:

I hereby certify that I have been given the opportunity to participate in the group vision insurance plan offered by my employer. I understand that in the event that I decide to enroll at a later date, I may have to wait until open enrollment unless a qualifying life event has occurred.

_____

Printed Name of Employee

_____ _____

Signature of Employee Date

401.5 – AT WILL EMPLOYMENT

Purpose: To clarify at-will employment.

Additional Authority:
Pennsylvania Employment Law
Geary v. United States Steel Corp., 456 Pa. § 171, 319 A.2d 174 (1976) (Absent a statutory or contractual provision to the contrary, either party may terminate an employment relationship for any or no reason.)
Darlington v. General Electric, 350 Pa. Super. 183, 188, 504 A.2d 306, 309-310 (1986) (Since at least 1891, Pennsylvania courts have recognized the rule that, absent a contract, employees may be discharged at any time, for any reason, for no reason at all.)

A. Definition
Not applicable

B. Requirements
For those employees not working under a contract, employment with a school system or parish-based school is at-will which means the employment relationship may be terminated with or without cause and with or without notice at any time by the system or school or employee. In addition, the system or school may alter an employee's position, duties, title or compensation at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause. Nothing in this policy or any policy or handbook or in any document or statement and nothing implied from any course of conduct shall limit the system or school's or employee's right to terminate employment at-will.

C. Legal Ramifications
At-will employment does not permit the employer to discriminate in any way or use any unfair employment practices.

401.6 – SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Purpose: To provide effective supervision and evaluation of educators

Additional Authority:
Can. 806 in support of Catholic Mission and Identity, Educational Integrity

A. Definition
Evaluation refers to assessments used to measure and improve performance, encourage professional growth, promote positive behavior, and facilitate attainment of school goals and objectives.

B. Requirements
Effective supervision and evaluation will:

- Encourage an emphasis on the Catholic nature of the school and spiritual growth
- Provide teachers with constructive feedback to improve their professional practices
- Recognize excellence and best practices
- Suggest staff development needs
- Assist in determining whether a contract will be offered for the following school year

Teacher Observations
Every teacher will be observed several times each year. New teachers will be observed more frequently than veteran teachers. Informal observations may be scheduled or unscheduled.

Teacher Evaluations
All schools will use the formal evaluation schedule set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The forms that are to be used to document the evaluations of teachers are the forms designed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and edited by the Catholic Schools Office. The Catholic Schools Office has created an additional Catholic Identity domain rubric that is to be used in conjunction with the PDE evaluation forms.

The original signed copy must be maintained in the school personnel file. The teacher is to receive a copy.

Teachers with an Instructional I certification will receive a formal observation at least twice a year.

Teachers with an Instructional II certification may be assigned to an evaluation rotation that includes formal observation, informal observations and/or project/research development through the Differentiated Supervision Plan.

Teachers who do not possess a Level I or a Level II certification are to receive a formal observation, minimally twice a year for up to three years; and at least once a year thereafter.

When a teacher receives an unsatisfactory rating, an improvement plan must be developed by the school administrator and teacher to target the area(s) of skill needing improvement. Frequent meetings and observations must take place on a schedule set by the school administrator.

The teacher's signature does not constitute agreement with the evaluation but indicates that the teacher has read and discussed the report. The teacher may respond to the formal evaluation by submitting a written statement within two weeks. The teacher's written statement should be attached to the evaluation and placed in the personnel files.

School Administrator Evaluations
The school administrator and pastor/system president shall meet annually in consultation with the Superintendent or his/her designee to discuss performance, set professional goals and school goals. At the beginning of the school year, they are to meet to confirm goals and plans for the school year.

C. Legal Ramifications
Evaluations will assist in determining whether a contract will be offered for the following year.

401.7 – PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

Purpose: To ensure compliance with policies, regulations, rules and procedures which must be applied fairly and consistently.

Additional Authority:

22 PA Code § 235.1 et seq
24 P.S. § 111
24 P.S. § 510
Pa C.S.A. § 6301 et seq

A. Definition

Not Applicable

B. Requirements

The primary objective of the progressive approach to discipline is rehabilitation or resolution and not termination. Therefore, disciplinary actions for performance deficiencies will generally be handled in a progressive fashion. The school or school system reserves the right, however, to take disciplinary measures in a non-progressive fashion in cases of severe performance deficiencies or clear negligence.

Additionally, disciplinary actions related to breaches of policy or violations of the standards of conduct and the severity of the infraction or violation, as well as the work history of the employee in question will be taken into consideration. In the appropriate circumstances, disciplinary action for even a first-time violation may include discharge.

Progressive discipline may include the following steps in a disciplinary process. The school or school system reserves the right to begin progressive discipline at any step, depending on the severity of the employee's conduct.

1. **Verbal Warning:** If work performance is deficient for any reason, the school administrator will meet with the employee to explain the deficiency, set objectives and expectations for resolving it and establish a deadline to review the progress. There must be documentation of this step.

2. **Written Notice:** Should the deficiency continue, the school administrator will meet with the employee and specify, in writing, the nature of the problem and cite examples. The employee may offer observations and comments in writing. Both parties will formulate a plan or course of action for the resolution of the matter and set a date to review progress. Both the employee and the school administrator shall read and sign the improvement plan. Should there be unsatisfactory improvement, the administrator will notify the Superintendent to discuss options.

3. **Suspension:** In some cases, unsatisfactory performance or more serious infractions of the rules may result in suspension. **Prior to the suspension, the administrator will consult with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.**

4. **Dismissal: Prior to progressing to this step, consultation with the Superintendent is required.** The most extreme measure for unsatisfactory performance, habitual or excessive absences, repeated lateness, insubordination, violation of policy, or inappropriate conduct is dismissal. In most cases, dismissal will follow a written warning; however, a serious infraction may warrant immediate dismissal. Before dismissal, the administrator must consult the Superintendent of Catholic Schools who will confer with diocesan staff to ensure that legal concerns are considered.

Documentation of each step is required and is to be placed in the employee's personnel file with copies, if requested, provided to the Superintendent.

401.8 – AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) ACCOMMODATION PROCESS

Purpose: To define the treatment of applicant/employee based on merit and ability regardless of any disability.

Additional Authority:
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (43 P. S. § 951—963) and Chapter 44

A. Definitions

Essential functions of the job are those core duties that are the reason the job position exists.
Qualified individual refers to an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position that such individual holds or desires.
Reasonable accommodation refers to any modification or adjustment to a job, the job application process, or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process, perform the essential functions of the job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment.

B. Requirements

Discrimination is not to occur in the workplace. This includes not only hiring and firing, but job application procedures (including the job interview), job assignment, training, and promotions. It also includes wages, benefits, leave, and all other employment-related activities.

Reasonable accommodation is available to a qualified individual with a disability when the disability affects the performance of job functions. Employment decisions are made based on the merits of the situation in accordance with defined criteria, not the disability of the individual.

Qualified individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal pay and other forms of compensation (or changes in compensation) as well as job assignments.

Leaves of absence are available to all employees on an equal basis.

Accommodations Process

To receive accommodations through a Catholic School, the requesting individual is required to put their request in writing and provide supporting documentation, if applicable, to the school administrator. Processing of accommodation requests begins after both the request form and the appropriate documentation information are received.

The requesting individual is required to provide documentation that demonstrates credible assurance of a disability issue. The documentation should directly support the request for accommodations. The documentation must state the specific disability and recommendations

to allow the requesting individual to participate fully and equally in the activity or program. The documentation is kept on file for verification purposes.

The documentation should include the appropriate official signature and contact information for the associated medical professional or facility for verification purposes. These documents must be legible and clear.

A determination will be made regarding whether a covered disability exists. In cases where a covered disability exists, the administrator will begin working with the requesting individual in a collaborative process to provide a reasonable accommodation. The school cannot provide accommodations that are not requested.

The school will engage in a collaborative process to determine what accommodation may be reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. The school need not provide accommodations that would fundamentally alter the essential characteristics or nature of a program. Likewise, the school need not provide the exact accommodation requested by the requesting individual. The school may provide alternate accommodations if they are reasonable and appropriate to make the school's programs, activities, services, and facilities accessible to that individual.

If the documentation provided does not meet the administrator's requirements it will not be accepted as the official documentation. The requesting individual will receive notice and will be asked to provide alternative supporting documentation. Individuals requesting additional accommodations after their initial approval may be asked to provide additional documentation.

C. Legal Ramifications

Appeal Process

If the requesting individual is not satisfied with the determination of the school that individual can submit an appeal within seven (7) calendar days of the decision. Appeals should be submitted in writing first to the school administrator, and subsequently to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools or designee who will consult with school administrators, diocesan staff and the employee to resolve the issue.

401.9 – ACCOMMODATIONS FOR NURSING MOTHERS

Purpose: To safeguard the rights of nursing mothers in our schools.

Additional Authority:
Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

A. Definition

Nonexempt employees are typically hourly workers who must receive at least minimum wage and overtime for all hours they work according to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

B. Requirements

The school will provide nursing mothers reasonable unpaid break time to express milk for their infant child(ren) for up to one year following the child's birth.

Nursing mothers will be provided with a space, other than a restroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from school employees and the public.
Expressed milk can be stored in a personal cooler and sufficiently marked or labeled.
Breaktime should, if possible, be taken concurrently with any other break time already provided. If the employee is nonexempt, she should clock out for any time taken that does not run concurrently with normally scheduled breaks.
Employees are required to discuss the length and frequency of these breaks with the administrator.

401.10 – IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT

Purpose: To ensure Catholic schools employ individuals who are authorized to work in the United States.

Additional Authority:
The Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) as amended

A. Definition
Not applicable

B. Requirements
In compliance with the Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA as amended, Catholic schools are committed to employing only individuals who are authorized to work in the United States.

Each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. I-9 forms must be completed within three business days of hire.

If an employee is authorized to work in this country for a limited time, the individual will be required to submit proof of renewed employment eligibility, prior to expiration of that period, to remain employed by the Catholic School.

401.11 – PERSONNEL FILES

Purpose: To safeguard the confidentiality of personnel files.

Additional Authority:
Can. 806 in support of Catholic Identity and Mission
43 P.S. 1321, 1322, 1322.1
Policy for the Protection of Children

A. Definition

Employees are all clergy and lay individuals employed by or serving in the Diocese, its parishes, schools, related agencies, and institutions who are paid on a full-time, part-time, or stipend basis and have direct contact with children.

Regular volunteers are adults who perform a service for the Diocese or its parishes, schools, or related agencies and institutions, who have direct volunteer contact with children on an unpaid full- or part-time basis (scheduled at least once a month).

Occasional Volunteers are adults who perform a child-related service for the Diocese or its parishes, schools, or related agencies and institutions on an irregular basis (scheduled or occurring less than once a month).

Independent Contractor/Contracted Employee is an individual who has or will have direct contact with children and who is employed or offered employment by:

- an independent contractor or subcontractor
- a subcontractor of an independent contractor
- an individual independent contractor.

Note: Act 89, Title 1, or itinerant staff of the public school district or IU are NOT Independent Contractors.

Personnel, as defined in the Policy for the Protection of Children of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie, are employees, regular volunteers, occasional volunteers, independent contractors, and contracted employees.

B. Requirements

The personnel file shall contain the following:

1. Office for the Protection of Children and Youth Clearance (one time before hire - new employees after July 1, 2018)
2. Employment Application and references, if applicable
3. PA State Police Criminal Record Check (5 years)
4. PA Child Abuse History Certification (5 years)
5. Federal Criminal History Record (5 years - includes fingerprints. The official report is kept in the Catholic Schools Office.)
6. Act 24 Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification Form
7. Sexual Misconduct/Abuse Disclosure Release Form(s) (Act 168)
8. Diocesan Mandated Reporter Compliance Document (yearly)
9. Diocesan Statement of Intent for Compliance (dated July 1, 2018 or later)
10. Diocesan Creating a Safe Environment Training (5 years)

11. PA State Mandated Reporter Training (5 years)
12. Resume, if applicable
13. Educational Certificates, if applicable
14. College transcripts, if applicable
15. Pastor Recommendation (Catholic applicant) or Character Reference (non-Catholic), if applicable
16. Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines for Employees (Appendix 401.2A – Interview, Appendix 401.2B – Hire, & Appendix 401.2B - Annually)
17. Health Form
18. New Hire Reporting Form
19. Annual Contracts, if applicable
20. Evaluations, if applicable
21. Verification of Completion of Teacher Induction Program, if applicable
22. Exit Interview, if applicable
23. Other Documentation, as needed

An annual audit will determine policy compliance.

Performance evaluations, ongoing appraisals, health information and disciplinary matters require strict confidentiality. No information found in personnel files is to be disclosed or offered to the news media or made public to anyone, including co-workers. All information exchanged between the employee and supervisor pertaining to performance evaluations, ongoing appraisals, health information and disciplinary actions shall be shared only with the President/Pastor, Superintendent of Catholic Schools and/or with the Vicar General and Bishop, or other supervisor or contracted professional with a legitimate need to know.

A disclosure or release of any information relative to any disciplinary action requires the consent of the employee and the school administrator and the approval of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

On an annual basis schools will provide the Superintendent with an assurance (Appendix 401.11A) that all required valid clearances, all state and diocesan mandated training certificates, and signed Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines (Appendices 401.2A & B) are maintained in the personnel files of all current employees.

On an annual basis schools will provide the Superintendent with an assurance (Appendix 401.11B) that all required valid clearances and all state and diocesan mandated training certificates are maintained in the files of all current volunteers. A comprehensive list of documentation for inclusion in a volunteer file can be found in the Policy for the Protection of Children, Article III Prevention of Child Abuse, A. Screening of Personnel, 3. School Personnel, c. Volunteers.

Retention of personnel files is permanent. If a school closes, the personnel files will be maintained at the Catholic Schools Office, St. Mark Catholic Center.

C. Legal Ramifications

If the employee has been asked to sign a document but has refused to do so, this refusal shall be documented and included in the file.

The employee shall have the right to respond in writing to any material filed and this response shall be included in the file.

Documentation obtained during the interview process for applicants not hired must be retained for one year after the application date.

401.11A – Appendix – Annual Assurance Form, Employees

Diocese of Erie
Catholic Schools Office
Annual Assurance Form
Employees

To be completed by the school administrator responsible for employee documentation and submitted annually to the Superintendent. Reference Policy #401.11 for "employee" definition.

Due Date: Annually by the first Friday in September:

1. A separate sheet listing **all employees** and their positions in the school

   Example: Jane Doe Advancement Director
   John Smith Teacher

2. A signed annual assurance form

By signing and completing this form, I _____, provide assurance that
print name
the attached list is all inclusive of employees of _____ as of _____.
print school name date

Additionally, I provide assurance that the personnel files for the employees listed contain all required valid clearances, all state and diocesan mandated training certificates, and signed Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines.

_____ _____
Signature: Principal/President or designee Date

An annual audit will be conducted to assure policy compliance regarding the following policies:

Hiring Policy #401.2
Personnel Files #401.11
Policy for the Protection of Children

Note: A list of all individuals hired after the date on this assurance form should be presented at the time of the on-site Child Protection/Personnel File Audit.

401.11B – Appendix – Annual Assurance Form, Volunteers

Diocese of Erie
Catholic Schools Office
Annual Assurance Form
Volunteers

To be completed by the school administrator responsible for volunteer documentation and submitted annually to the Superintendent. Reference Policy #401.11 for "volunteers" definition.

Due Date: Annually by the first Friday in September:

3. A separate sheet listing **all volunteers** in the school

Example:	Jane Doe	Coach (regular)
	John Smith	Cafeteria Monitor (occasional)

4. A signed annual assurance form

By signing and completing this form, I _____, provide assurance that
print name
the attached list is all volunteers of _____ as of _____.
print school name date

Additionally, I provide assurance that the files for the volunteers listed contain all required valid clearances and all state and diocesan mandated training certificates.

_____ _____
Signature: Principal/President or designee Date

An annual audit will be conducted to assure policy compliance regarding the following policies:

Policy for the Protection of Children

Note: A list of all new volunteers assisting in the school, after the date on this assurance form, should be presented at the time of the on-site Child Protection/Personnel File Audit.

401.11C – Appendix – Annual Assurance Form, Independent Contractors

Diocese of Erie
Catholic Schools Office
Annual Assurance Form
Independent Contractors/Contracted Employee

To be completed by the school administrator responsible for independent contractor/ contracted employee documentation and submitted annually to the Superintendent. Reference Policy #401.11 for "independent contractor/contracted employee" definition.
NOTE: *Act 89, Title 1, or itinerant staff of the public school district or IU are NOT Independent Contractors.*

Due Date: Annually by the first Friday in September:

1. A separate sheet listing **all independent contractors/contracted employees** in the school

   Example: Jane Doe School Security Officer
   John Smith Food Service

2. A signed annual assurance form

By signing and completing this form, I _____, provide assurance that
print name
the attached list is all independent contractors/contracted employees of

_____ as of_____.
print school name date

Additionally, I provide assurance that the files for the independent contractors listed contain all required valid clearances and all state and diocesan mandated training certificates.

_____ _____
Signature: Principal/President or designee Date

An annual audit will be conducted to assure policy compliance regarding the following policies:

Policy for the Protection of Children

Note: A list of all new independent contractors assisting in the school, after the date on this assurance form, should be presented at the time of the on-site Child Protection/Personnel File Audit.

401.11 – Best Practices – PERSONNEL FILES

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1. All school employees should have a completed emergency data form on file at the school. This file should have limited access and all information should be kept confidential. Emergency data forms for all administrators will also be kept on file at the Catholic Schools Office.

401.12 – ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILES

Purpose: To help clarify the employee's right to his/her own personnel files and access by others.

Additional Authority:
43 P.S. § 1321, 1322, 1322.1

A. Definition

Personnel files include any application for employment, wage or salary information, notices of commendations, warning or discipline, authorization for a deduction or withholding of pay, fringe benefit information, leave records, employment history with the employer, including salary information, job title, dates of changes, retirement record, attendance records and performance evaluations.

B. Requirements

An employee's personnel file is maintained in a confidential manner by the administrator in a locked file. The employee, the administrator, the Superintendent, and/or the Vicar General and Bishop have the right to access an employee's personnel file.

When an outside request for information is made, only the employee's name, employment date and position title will be provided unless the employee has personally authorized, in writing, the release of additional information.

An employee, or an agent designated by the employee, may inspect his/her file provided a timely and reasonable request is made. The inspection must be done during regular office hours, on non-working time, and in the presence of the administrator. Employees are not permitted to alter, copy, remove or destroy any materials. Notes may be taken on materials found in the file or offer written comments about such materials. Written comments will then become part of the file.

C. Legal Ramifications

An exception to this policy will be made for matters pertaining to pending litigation or criminal investigation.

401.13 – WORKPLACE SEARCHES

Purpose: To help school personnel realize the potential for workplace searches.

Additional Authority:
Contract Law

A. Definitions
Not applicable

B. Requirements
The Catholic school may, from time to time, conduct unannounced, reasonable inspections of its property or an employee and/or an employee's property.

When such inspections are necessary, they will be performed by the immediate supervisor with at least one other witness present. Inspections may consist of asking employee to open and/or reveal items carried with him/her. This may include, for example, packages, purses, briefcases, outerwear, or other personal effects. Inspections also may consist of opening and examining desks, file cabinets, and the like, which are school property.

C. Legal Ramifications
Should the employee not cooperate with a reasonable request to inspect or should fail to cooperate in any further investigation, the employee may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

401.14 – PROCESS FOR INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS AND/OR RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Purpose: To ensure all employees are working together cooperatively and complying with all policies, regulations, rules and procedures.

Additional Authority:
Can. 806 in support of Catholic Identity and Mission, Safety

A. Definition
Not applicable

B. Requirements
Any personnel complaints involving charges of illegal discrimination or harassment will be handled according to the complaint procedures specified in the Workplace Harassment, Bullying and Violence Policy.

The following procedure is to be followed in investigating complaints and/or in resolving conflicts between employees, employee(s) and administrator, administrator and pastor/president: The person who has the complaint or conflict is to attempt, where possible, to resolve it directly with the person with whom the complaint or conflict exists.

Level One

1. If the person is unable to resolve the complaint or conflict with another, the person who has the complaint or conflict is to bring it to the most immediate supervisory authority not involved with the issue. The complaint or conflict shall be properly investigated, and every attempt will be made to resolve the situation at this level. The following order of recourse shall be followed:
   - Employees take complaint to the administrator.
   - If the administrator is involved in the complaint, then the employee takes it to the pastor/president.
   - If the pastor/president is involved in the complaint, then the employee takes it to the Superintendent.

2. The proper administrative authority to whom the unresolved issue is brought is to conduct a confidential investigation of the situation promptly, fairly, and impartially, with due regard to the right of both parties. Both parties shall be regularly informed of the progress of the investigative process. The investigative process should take no longer than seven (7) calendar days under normal circumstances. At that time, the proper administrative authority is to document his/her findings.

3. This documentation should include:
   - Findings of the investigation

- Whether or not any disciplinary action was taken
- Whether the conflict was resolved to the satisfaction of both parties
- What steps were taken to prevent a recurrence of the present situation
- The written report is given to the Superintendent, if the matter is considered serious or potentially serious.

Level Two

1. If a satisfactory disposition of the complaint or conflict is not reached, the grievant may file a written request for further consideration of the matter within 14 calendar days of receiving the documentation from Level One to the Superintendent.

2. The documentation will be reviewed and any additional information, via interviewing personnel involved in the situation, will be gathered. The Superintendent will document the findings within seven (7) calendar days. If the Superintendent received the original complaint in Level One, then proceed directly to Level Three.

Level Three

1. If a satisfactory disposition of the complaint or conflict is not reached the grievant can file a written request for further consideration of the matter within one week to the Vicar General. The Vicar General will hold meetings within 14 calendar days with the grievant, the direct supervisor and any other appropriate parties as determined by the Vicar General. After completing the review, the Vicar General will respond to the grievant in writing reviewing the issues and stating a course of action.

After this process is followed, a grievant is free to appeal a decision to the Bishop in writing.

Retaliation in any form against any employer, employee, parent or student who exercises his/her right to file or participate in the resolution of a complaint or conflict is strictly prohibited. Anyone found to have engaged in such prohibited retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include termination.

401.15 – STAFF REDUCTION

Purpose: To explain the process that is to be used to reduce the number of educators on staff.

Additional Authority:
Can. 806 in support of Catholic Identity and Mission

A. Definitions
Building seniority means consecutive years of full-time service in the current school or system.

B. Requirements
In the event that school downsizing determines that fewer teachers will be needed, certification and building seniority shall apply in deciding which teachers' contracts will not be renewed.

If two or more teachers have identical building seniority, their ranking is determined by the years of continuous service in the schools of the Diocese of Erie. If two or more teachers have identical building and diocesan seniority, their ranking will be determined by total years of teaching experience. If two or more teachers have identical building, diocesan, and total years' seniority, their ranking is determined by the date upon which their first diocesan teaching contract was signed.

The building seniority for a building administrator who is returning to a teaching position includes the number of continuous years of teaching and administrative service to the school.

Teachers without active Pennsylvania certification will be released first. Teachers whose Pennsylvania certification includes specialization in specific areas, such as math, science, or early childhood, are removed from the seniority list if their specialties are needed in the school unless there are multiple teachers with the same specialty certification area. For example, a teacher with certification in secondary mathematics who teaches middle school mathematics will not be considered for downsizing unless his/her specialty is no longer required for the school's educational program or any needed positions are filled with employees with greater building and diocesan seniority and/or years of teaching experience.

C. Legal Ramifications
The building administrator should make a concerted effort to have the employee who is going through the loss of a job due to downsizing participate in some type of exit interview with and when warranted, the inclusion of the Superintendent. The exit interview process is designed to provide information to the exiting employee regarding the effect that termination will have on his/her benefits, what conversion rights they may have, and to also ensure that all school resources have been returned. An exiting employee is to return all keys, identification card, computer equipment, current passwords, school manuals and any other items belonging to the school.

401.15 – Best Practices – STAFF REDUCTION

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1. Documentation of the Exit Interview should be completed. Appendix 401.15 BP-A should be used when professional staff are terminated due to downsizing. The original Exit Interview form should be placed in the teacher's personnel file at the school.

401.15 BP-A – Appendix – Exit Interview, Downsizing

DIOCESE OF ERIE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

EXIT INTERVIEW FORM DUE TO DOWNSIZING

I,_____, understand that my contract will not be renewed due to school downsizing.

I understand that my portion of benefit coverage which is paid by my employer will be terminated on _____.

COMMENTS:

I agree and understand that the above information was discussed with me and all my questions were answered.

School _____ City_____

Employee_____ Date_____

Administrator_____ Date_____

401.16 – TERMINATION

Purpose: To assist in properly handling terminations.

Additional Authority:
Contract Law

A. Definitions

Good faith and fair dealing is the legal requirement that binds all persons in their interactions with others in the private sector. This requires notice and the opportunity for the person to present his or her side of the "story."

B. Requirements

Termination of employment may be either voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary termination occurs when an employee decides to leave the school for personal reasons or retirement. Involuntary termination occurs when an employee is terminated by the school, with or without cause. If the termination is voluntary, the employee must follow the minimum notice time as indicated in the contract.

Employees who are terminated for reasons other than misconduct generally will be given the same minimum notice time as specified in the contract. The school reserves the right to provide pay in lieu of notice for employees terminated by the school for reasons other than misconduct.

Voluntary Termination - Resignation

Any employee who wishes to resign from his/her position at the school is expected to give written notice of this intent to his/her supervisor/school administrator in accordance with the days of notice outlined in the contract or employee handbook The school reserves the right to provide pay in lieu of the employee finishing out their termination notice.

Involuntary Termination or Non-Renewal - Not for Cause

If the decision is made not to renew or terminate an employee because of the elimination of the position, restructuring, budgetary constraints or any other "not for cause reason," the employee will be notified in writing that their employment has been terminated or if their contract will not be renewed according to the schedule outlined above.

Involuntary Termination -With Cause

Each Catholic school retains the right to terminate an employee for cause. Cause for termination includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Serious violation of the Code of Ethical and Moral Guidelines
- Failure to fulfill the duties of the position or unsatisfactory job performance
- Failure to observe the school's regulations, policies and procedures
- Personal and improper use of school equipment and resources
- Abuse of sick days
- Repeated use of obscene language

- Abandonment of job or two consecutive unexcused or unauthorized absences
- Misconduct
- Substance abuse
- The use, possession, manufacture, or distribution of illegal drugs on school property, including alcohol
- Theft or malicious damage to school property
- Physical abuse to another employee or student
- Insubordination
- Sexual harassment or other types of harassment
- Falsification of employment record
- Violation of one or more provisions of the employee's contract of employment

If the employee feels the notice of termination is unwarranted, the employee will meet with the school administrator for discussion. This process does not postpone the scheduled date of termination. Terminations for cause do not require any notice.

If an exit interview does not take place, information regarding the effect that termination will have on the exiting employee's benefits, what conversion rights he/she may have must be provided to the employee. Administrators must also ensure that all school resources have been returned.

If an employee separates from the school due to retirement, they must inform his/her school administrator as far in advance as possible in writing.

When a full-time regular employee terminates employment with the school, the employee and their dependents may be eligible to continue receiving group health insurance and other benefit plans. Details will be explained at the exit interview.

C. Legal Ramifications

Exit Interview

Each employee going through the termination process with the school should participate in some type of exit interview with the administrator and when warranted, the Superintendent. The exit interview process is designed to provide information to the exiting employee regarding the effect that termination will have on his/her benefits, what conversion rights he/she may have, and to also ensure that all school resources have been returned. An exiting employee is to return all keys, identification card, computer equipment, current passwords, school manuals and any other items belonging to the school.

When terminating an employee "for cause" it is critically important that documentation illustrate good faith and fair dealing was upheld in the termination process.

401.16 – Best Practices – TERMINATION

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1. Documentation of the Exit Interview should be completed. Appendix 401.16 BP-A should be used when professional staff resigns. Appendix 401.16 BP-B should be used for nonrenewal of contracts for professional staff. Appendix 401.16 BP-C should be used for termination of professional staff. The original Exit Interview form should be placed in the teacher's personnel file at the school. Copies of Exit Interview forms are to be sent to the Superintendent.

2. If an employee is charged or has been charged with criminal activity, the pastor/president may suspend the employee with or without pay pending resolution of the criminal charges. The administrator should consult legal counsel for advice. If convicted of a criminal offense, the pastor/president has the right to terminate employment.

3. Considerations regarding the decision to terminate an employee.
   - Identify the reasons for termination. Gather appropriate information, documentation and witness statements. Confirm that it can be demonstrated that a policy has been violated or performance standards have not been met despite opportunities to correct deficiencies.
   - Identify areas of exposure. Determine whether the employee is in a protected class. If termination is for performance or a minor rule violation, ensure that the individual's personnel file supports the discipline.
   - Consider whether other legal liabilities exist.
     - Have similar employees been treated this way in the past?
     - Have similarly situated employees not in the individual's protected class been treated this way?
   - Script out the exit interview. Consult the Superintendent and possibly legal counsel.
   - Adhere to the script; do not debate or discuss the issue. Collect keys or other property and end the interview.
   - Keep complete, accurate, and honest employee records and evaluations.
   - Treat all employee complaints seriously.
   - Keep complete and accurate documentation.
   - Evaluate the situation and consider the employee's actual past performance and recent performance evaluations.
   - Do one final review to be sure everything is in order.
   - Be honest and forthright with the employee regarding reasons for termination.
   - If the employee files a complaint based upon discrimination, this will come through an agency such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC). Upon receipt of a packet from such an agency, consult with the attorney and provide all relevant documents.

401.16 BP-A – Appendix – Exit Interview, Resigning

DIOCESE OF ERIE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

EXIT INTERVIEW FORM FOR RESIGNING POSITION

I, _____, am resigning my position

effective _____.

I understand that my portion of benefit coverage which is paid by my employer will be

terminated on _____.

COMMENTS:

I agree and understand that the above information was discussed with me and all my questions were answered.

School _____ City_____

Employee_____ Date_____

Administrator_____ Date_____

401.16 BP-B – Appendix – Exit Interview, Nonrenewal

DIOCESE OF ERIE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

EXIT INTERVIEW FORM – NONRENEWAL

I,_____, understand that my contract will not be renewed.

I understand that my portion of benefit coverage which is paid by my employer will be terminated on _____.

COMMENTS:

I agree and understand that the above information was discussed with me and all my questions were answered.

School _____ City_____

Employee_____ Date_____

Administrator_____ Date_____

401.16 BP-C – Appendix – Exit Interview, Termination

DIOCESE OF ERIE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

EXIT INTERVIEW FORM DUE TO TERMINATION

I,_____, am being terminated from my

position effective _____.

I understand that my portion of benefit coverage which is paid by my employer will be

terminated on _____.

COMMENTS:

I agree and understand that the above information was discussed with me and all my questions were answered.

School _____ City_____

Employee_____ Date_____

Administrator_____ Date_____

401.17 – EXPECTATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES AND REPRESENTATIVES

Purpose: To provide clarification of the expectations of all school employees and representatives concerning their actions and/or behaviors.

Additional Authority:
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Can. 1281§3; 1282

A. Definition

Financial Interest, within this policy, is defined as a 5% interest in a business.
Representatives, within this policy, refers to those individuals with decision-making roles that have that position as a volunteer, such as those on Board of Directors.

B. Requirements

All employees and representatives must comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Activities of those who benefit through violation of the law, or unethical or immoral practices will not be condoned. This includes any payments for illegal acts, indirect contributions, rebates, bribery and other similar types of activity. All conduct should be clearly above the minimum standards required by law and expected by the Church. All employees and representatives must ensure that their actions cannot be interpreted as being in violation of laws, regulations or principles governing the activities and mission of any Catholic school in the Diocese of Erie. Employees and representatives that are uncertain about the application or interpretation of any legal requirements should refer the matter to their immediate supervisor who, if necessary, should seek the advice of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

General Conduct

All employees and representatives of a school/system are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, Christian, businesslike manner. Fighting, swearing and similar unprofessional activities are strictly prohibited while on the job. Employees and representatives must not engage in sexual harassment or conduct themselves in a way that could be construed as such, for example, by using inappropriate language or jokes, keeping or posting inappropriate materials in their work areas, or accessing inappropriate materials on workplace computers. All school resources, such as copiers, printers and supplies are to be used only for work-related purposes.

Conflicts of Interest

All employees and representatives are expected to perform their duties conscientiously, honestly, and in accordance with the best interests of the Church. Employees and representatives must not use their position, or the knowledge gained as a result of their position, for private or personal advantage. If an employee or representative senses that a course of action they have pursued, are presently pursuing, or are contemplating pursuing may involve them in a conflict of interest, they should immediately communicate all the facts to his/her immediate supervisor.

Outside Activities of Employees
All school/system employees are called always to act in a manner that is consistent with Catholic principles and teachings and demonstrate a serious responsibility for good public relations.

Employees' readiness to help parishes, schools, and other charitable and educational activities is encouraged. Employees must, however, avoid acquiring any business interest or committing to any other activity that would, or would appear to:

- Create an excessive demand upon their time and attention, thus depriving their employer of a satisfactory job performance or
- Create a conflict of interest - an obligation, interest, or distraction - that may interfere with the independent exercise of judgment in their employer's best interest.

Employee Relationships with Clients and Suppliers
Employees should avoid investing in or acquiring a financial interest for their own accounts in any business that has a contractual relationship with the school/system, or that provides goods or services, or both to the school/system. If such investment or interest could influence or create the impression of influencing employees' decisions in the performance of their duties on behalf of the school/system, it must be avoided.

Gifts, Entertainment, and Favors
Employees and representatives must not accept entertainment, gifts, or personal favors that could influence, or appear to influence, decisions in favor of any person or company with whom or with which the school/system is likely to have dealings. Employees and representatives must not accept any other preferential treatment under these circumstances because it may be perceived to place them under an obligation. Meals, entertainment, holiday gifts and similar items that are infrequent and valued under $100.00, are not considered violations of this Expectations for Employees and Representatives policy. In cases of doubt, one should discuss the matter with his/her immediate supervisor.

Kickbacks and Secret Commissions
The acceptance of kickbacks and secret commissions from suppliers or others is strictly prohibited. Any breach of this rule may result in immediate termination and prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.

Funds and Other Assets
Employees and representatives who have access to school/system funds in any form must follow the prescribed policies and procedures for recording, handling, and protecting those funds as detailed in financial policies and procedures. Policies and procedures are in place to prevent fraud and dishonesty. If an employee or representative becomes aware of any evidence of fraud and dishonesty, he/she should immediately advise an uninvolved supervisor so the issue can be promptly investigated. When an employee or representative's position requires spending school/system funds or incurring any reimbursable personal expenses, that individual must use good judgment on the entity's behalf to ensure that good value is received

for such expenditures. It is required to follow the established procedures for submitting reimbursable expenses. School/system funds and all other assets of a school/system are for its purposes only and not for personal benefit.

Records and Communications
Accurate and reliable records are necessary to meet various legal and financial obligations, and to manage the affairs of the school/system. All records concerning students must be maintained according to the Student Records policy (301.1). Records concerning personnel are to be created and accessed according to the Personnel Files policy (401.11) and Access to Personnel Files policy (401.12). Financial records must reflect all business transactions in an accurate and timely manner. The Protection of Children and Youth policies must be strictly followed.

The employees responsible for any record keeping must exercise diligence in fulfilling these responsibilities.

Employees and representatives must not make or participate in making any false record or communication, whether internal or external, including but not limited to:

- false expense, attendance, financial, or similar reports and statements
- false advertising, deceptive practices, or other misleading representations

Interacting with the General Public
Employees and representatives must take care to separate their personal roles from their official positions when communicating on matters not involving school/system business. Employees must not use school/system identification, stationery, supplies, and equipment for personal or political matters. When communicating publicly on matters that involve any school/system business, employees and representatives must not presume to speak for the school/system on any topic. If an employee or representative is directed by his/her supervisor to do so, he/she may express those specific views of the school/system publicly. When interacting with anyone, including public officials, outside the school/system, employees and representatives must not compromise the integrity or damage the reputation of the school/system, the parish, the Diocese of Erie or any individual, business, or government body.

Prompt Communications
In all matters relevant to the school/system, employees and representatives must make every effort to achieve complete and accurate communications — responding promptly and courteously to all proper requests for information and to all complaints.

Privacy and Confidentiality
When handling personal and financial information about the school/system, representatives must observe the following principles:

1. Collect, use, and retain only the personal information necessary for the school's activities. Whenever possible, obtain any relevant information directly from the person concerned. Use only reputable and reliable sources to supplement this information.

2. Retain information only for as long as necessary or as required by law. Protect the physical security of this information.
3. Limit internal access to personal information to those with a legitimate need to know for seeking that information. Use only personal information for the purposes for which it was originally obtained. Obtain the written consent of the person concerned before externally disclosing any personal information, unless legal processes or policies provide otherwise.

C. Legal Ramifications

Civil and criminal action and prosecution may result from act(s) that violate this policy.
Prior to making a civil or criminal case against an individual, approval from the Bishop must be obtained, via the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

401.18 – STAFF HANDBOOK

Purpose: All schools are required to have a current and resourceful staff handbook.

Additional Authority:
Can. 806§1-2

A. Definition

Staff Handbook is a reference document that contains school-level policies, regulations, and guidelines defining and clarifying school processes, procedures and instructions that will assist staff in fulfilling their employment expectations. This handbook also provides employees an overview of what they can expect from their employer.

B. Requirements

A staff handbook must address at minimum the following items. For some items, the online location to where a school-level policy can be found is sufficient, for example the school's Suicide Awareness and Prevention Policy.

- The disclaimer is what defines the nature of the employee handbook. It should clearly state that the handbook is not a contract of employment and expressly state the at-will nature of employment. State that the policies and procedures in the handbook are subject to change.
- Policy for the Protection of Children
- Technology use (Refer to Policy 202.2)
- Description of benefits (Refer to Policy 401.4)
  - Definition of immediate family for bereavement days
  - Non-FMLA School - Leaves of absence benefits
- Boundaries student/staff relationships
- Antiharassment and bullying policy (Refer to Policy 402.6)
- School's Suicide Awareness and Prevention Policy (Refer to 302.1)
- Title IX Notices and Information (Refer to Policy 202.6)
- Description of how to access diocesan school policies and the acknowledgement form
- Expectations for workday presence in building, at open houses, parent meetings, etc.
- Rules of Employee Conduct (Refer to Policy 401.17)
- Disciplinary procedures (Refer to Policy 401.7)
- Problem resolution procedures (Refer to Policy 401.14)
- Procedures for credits earned
- No reasonable expectation of privacy on school property or with school owned items (Refer to Policy 402.7)
- Worker's Compensation injury reporting (Refer to Policy 401.4)
- Dress Code, if applicable
- Situational specific documents (e.g., COVID Acknowledgement Form)
- Equal Opportunity Employment Statement which states:
  The school does not discriminate against any qualified employee because of race, color,

religious creed, national origin, ancestry, disability, age or gender, as required by law, accept where the practice of the Catholic faith is a bona fide occupational qualification. This applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, hiring, training and development, promotion, transfer, termination, layoff, compensation and benefits, social and recreational programs, and all other conditions and privileges of employment in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws. The school will not discriminate on the basis of disability and reasonable accommodation will be made for those qualified individuals with disabilities unless hardship will result.

Annually, there must be a signed acknowledgment form from all staff giving evidence to the reading and understanding of the staff handbook.

C. Legal Ramifications

If school-level policies, regulations and guidelines found in the staff handbook are not consistently enforced then the school/system is placing itself at risk for legal action.

401.18 – Best Practices – STAFF HANDBOOK

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Listed below are additional topics that would be prudent to have in a staff handbook.

- Personnel files
- Responsibilities of the faculty
- General employment policies
  - Outside employment
  - Resignations/End of contract
  - Confidentiality
  - Standards of Conduct
  - Attendance
- Responsibilities of the faculty
  - Teaching duties
  - Non-teaching responsibilities
  - Substitutes
  - Field trips
- Wage and salary policies
- Paid time off
- Unpaid leave
- Insurance coverages
- Other benefits – Gannon Scholarship Voucher
- Performance Reviews
- Health-related Issues – Handling of blood and body fluids
- Communications
- Use of School Property

402.1 – SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

Purpose: To help ensure appropriate supervision of and responsibility for student well-being by administrators, teachers, and support personnel.

Additional Authority:
Can. 796 § 2
In loco parentis, 24 P.S. § 13-1317

A. Definitions

Due Diligence refers to the level of judgment, care, prudence, determination, and activity that a person would reasonably be expected to do under particular circumstances**.**

Duty of Care refers to the legal responsibility to avoid conduct fraught with unreasonable risk of danger to others. Duty of care requires administrators, teachers, and support personnel to take all reasonable steps to reduce risk, including:

- Provision of suitable and safe premises
- Provision of an adequate system of supervision
- Ensuring that medical assistance is provided to a sick or injured student.

Duty of care requires that staff exercise due diligence to protect the safety and security of students under their supervision. Duty of care extends not only to teachers assigned for a particular duty, but includes any teacher in, or moving through, a particular area of the school's grounds. In the absence of a parent the duty of care extends to supervision of students required to be on school grounds outside normal class times and to students participating in any school-sponsored activity outside school grounds.

In loco parentis refers to the legal doctrine under which an individual assumes parental rights, duties, and obligations without going through the formalities of legal adoption.

B. Requirements

All students are to be under adult supervision and duty of care is to be maintained at all times when students are in school, on school grounds, traveling under school auspices, or engaging in school-sponsored activities.

School employees are responsible for the safety of students in their charge within school buildings, on school property, and while traveling and experiencing a school-sponsored event.

Each school employee shall maintain a standard of care and concern for supervision, control and protection of students, commensurate with assigned duties and responsibilities.

Each teacher must be in the classroom or assigned station, or ensure another staff member is present, when students are in the room or at the assigned station.

A school employee should not voluntarily assume responsibility for duties he/she cannot reasonably perform. Voluntary assumption carries the same responsibilities as assigned duties.

Each school employee has the responsibility to immediately report to the administrator, an accident, safety hazard, unsafe condition or dangerous condition.

To help safeguard the well-being of our students, school staff may be assigned extra or alternative duties at the discretion of the administrator. If a teacher is absent for a duty, the administrator or their designee, once notified, must rectify the situation. The children must, under no circumstances, be left without a teacher or school employee on duty.

Administrators must ensure school employees adhere to their assigned work schedules and monitor employees' adherence to this policy to maintain the standards that protect student welfare.

Administrators will annually develop and implement a plan of supervision for the following:

- Student arrivals and departures, including buses
- Halls, restrooms and playgrounds
- Cafeteria
- Before and after school
- Field Trips
- School-sponsored activities
- Release of student(s) into the custody of parents or other authorized persons

C. Legal Ramifications

If a student is injured while being supervised by a school employee or is unsupervised and is injured, the school and the assigned employee may be held liable for negligence.

402.1 – Best Practices – SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

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1. The expectations of teachers while supervising students should be in the faculty handbook.

2. This policy should be reviewed with all teachers at the beginning of each school year.

3. Student – teacher ratios recommended by the state for public schools are:

Pre-school

	3 yr olds	4 yr olds	5 yr olds	Combination of 3 – 5 yr olds
Teacher	12	17	22	15
Teacher and one aide	17	21	27	19
Teacher and two aides	22	25	30	23

Elementary / Middle / High

Grades 1, 2, 3	25
Grades 4 through 8	30
Grades 9 through 12	30

4. In determining the level of supervision expected from the teacher, the administrator must consider several aspects:
   - The age of the children
   - The interests and capabilities of the children
   - The type of activity being supervised
   - Previous discipline issues with students within the group.

5. Additional instruction to teachers while supervising students that may be included in the faculty handbook:
   - Teachers are to move around their duty area constantly.
   - A higher degree of care is expected for younger students.
   - All serious incidents occurring during recreation or class time must be recorded, communicated to the school administration and to parents.
   - Students will only be released into the custody of a parent or other authorized person.

402.2 – SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose: To clearly articulate what is expected from employees regarding social media.

Additional Authority:
Internet Acceptable Use Policy
Guidelines for Use/Disclosure of Photographic and Video Images of Children and Youth
Policy for the Protection of Children
Contract Law

A. Definition
"On duty" is considered the time an employee is fulfilling his/her job responsibilities. This includes additional after-school hours when a teacher has been assigned additional duties outside of the standard school day or is bound by obligation to attend a school-sponsored event.
Social media, for purposes of this policy, includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to an employee's or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the school or Diocese, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

B. Requirements
Employees must avoid posting any information or engaging in communications that violate state or federal laws, as well as, policies and guidelines of the school or the Diocese of Erie. The employee may be personally responsible for any litigation that may arise should the employee make any unlawful defamatory, slanderous, or libelous statements against any student, family, or employee of the school or Diocese. Posting any comments that disparage or degrade a student, school employee or school administrator can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Postings that include unlawful discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or other unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees must make clear that any views expressed on social media are the employee's alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Diocese of Erie or any Catholic school within the diocese.

Employees are not permitted to post student images or photographs, except for immediate family members, on social media sites captured during work time or at school/diocese events when the employee is considered to be on duty without prior approval from the school administration and parents.

Employees may not post images on any social media network of co-workers without the

co-workers' consent. Photographs and audio/video recordings of student instruction is the property of the school/system and may not be posted or shared on any social media network without the consent of the school/system and parent/guardians of students who may be personally identified.

Employees who participate in social media networks may decide to include information about their work as part of their personal profile, as it would relate to a typical social conversation. This may include:

1. Work information included in a personal profile, to include school name, job title, and job duties.
2. Status updates regarding an employee's own job promotion or change in duties.
3. Personal participation in a school-sponsored event, including volunteer activities.
4. Participation of employee's children in school-sponsored events.

When an employee posts information they must:

- Maintain the confidentiality of trade secrets, intellectual property, confidential and/or sensitive information (i.e., financial or budget records/reports, strategies/plans, professional development, school family or student names and lists, copywritten information, logos, etc.) related to the school.
- Not create a link from a personal blog, website, or other social networking site to the school website that identifies the employee as speaking on behalf of the school.
- Never represent self as a spokesperson for the school. If the school is a subject of the content being created, do not represent self as speaking on behalf of the school.
- Respect copyright, trademark, third-party rights, and similar laws and use such protected information in compliance with applicable legal standards.
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality rights of personally identifiable information of students.

Employees are not allowed to use school-owned equipment, including computers, school licensed software or other electronic equipment or facilities while on duty to conduct personal blogging or social network activities.

Employees may not use the school logo or trademark on their personal blogs or networks.

C. Legal Ramifications

While "on duty," an employee who is also a parent of children in the school, must follow all guidelines and policies for employees.

402.3 – USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Purpose: To address the use of personal electronic devices by school employees.

Additional Authority:
Can. 806 in support of Educational Integrity, Safety
24 P.S. § 13-1317.1

A. Definitions

Electronic devices shall include all devices that can take photographs; record audio or video data; store, transmit or receive messages or images; or provide a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet. Examples of these electronic devices include, but shall not be limited to, iPads, smartphones, and laptop and tablet computers, as well as any new technology developed with similar capabilities.

Workday/Hours refers to the time when an employee is expected to be performing assigned responsibilities at the school.

B. Requirements

Devices may be used to text or make brief calls necessary for personal communications. Such calls or texts shall be in accordance with the following:

- Be made or received during periods of non-assignment, i.e., before or after the arrival of students, during lunch or scheduled breaks
- Be limited in length
- Not be made or received in the presence of students, except in the case of extreme emergency
- Be used at any time to respond to or report an emergency situation.

Personal electronic devices shall be turned off or set in silent mode and shall be stored when not in use.

The use of technology to livestream and/or record synchronous or asynchronous instruction shall be permitted. Such recordings of instruction in the classroom shall not constitute an educational record for any student unless some conduct or activity is individualized to a particular student. Video cameras shall be set up to avoid capturing student's individual work or assessments. Audio/video recordings or livestreaming capabilities must be capable of being turned off or disabled by the teacher or technology staff when deemed necessary in the discretion of school staff or administration. Recordings of instruction shall not be posted or shared on any website or social media. Students or other individual recording of livestream instruction on any personal electronic device is prohibited.

The use of any device to make video/photographic records, files or data shall be strictly prohibited in any restroom, locker room or other area where individuals shall have an expectation of privacy.

Personal assistant devices, such as Alexa, Echo Dot, and Google Home, may only be used in the classroom for educational purposes if the device is not making a recording of the sound in the classroom. If the device does not have the option to stop the recording feature, the device is not to be used in the school because it would be creating an educational record.

Employees shall be prohibited from engaging in the use of any personal electronic communication device when operating a school vehicle or machine.

Personal electronic devices shall not be used to conduct any activities which violate state and/or federal law, rules and/or policies.

Individuals not directly employed by the school, yet performing a service for the school through contract, agreement or appointment shall be subject to all guidelines, definitions and responsibilities.

C. Legal Ramifications
Violations may result in disciplinary action.

402.4 – DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

Purpose: To create a drug-free workplace for the protection of the health, safety and welfare of students and employees.

Additional Authority:
35 P.S. § 780 et seq
41 U.S.C. § 8101
24 P.S. § 111

A. Definitions

Controlled substances, for the purpose of this policy, includes all of the following: alcoholic beverages, anabolic steroids, any volatile solvents or inhalants, controlled substances prohibited by state and federal law, any drug paraphernalia, look-alike or counterfeit drugs, prescription or nonprescription (over-the-counter) drugs, excluding those for which permission for use in school has been granted by school administration, and any substance, when ingested and/or vaped, causes physical and/or physiological effect that replicates the effect of a controlled substance as defined by federal or state law. Human growth hormone (HGH) is not included as an anabolic steroid.

Drug-free Workplace is the site for the performance of work at which employees are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance.

B. Requirements

The unlawful or improper presence, influence, or use of controlled substances or alcohol in the workplace during school hours conflicts with the mission of the school. Drinking, using, possessing or selling intoxicants or non-prescribed drugs/narcotics that are taken or used contrary to a valid prescription while on work time will result in immediate discipline up to and including termination. In addition, reporting to work while intoxicated or while abusing non-prescribed drugs or non-prescribed narcotics will result in similar disciplinary action.

If there is reasonable suspicion that an employee is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the employee may be required to submit to drug/alcohol testing.

C. Legal Ramifications

Any employee who refuses to submit to a required drug/alcohol screening test will be terminated. Likewise, an employee who tests positive for any unlawful or unauthorized drug/controlled substance or alcohol during any screening will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees may seek appropriate confidential treatment. Utilizing a treatment program may also be a requirement for continued employment.

402.5 – SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

Purpose: To prohibit smoking and tobacco use by school personnel, visitors and volunteers during school hours and on school grounds as a health and safety hazard.

Additional Authority:
35 P.S. 1223.5
20 U.S. Code 7183

A. Definition

Electronic or E-cigarette is any electronic device or implement used, intended for use, or designed for the purpose of delivering tobacco, nicotine or other vapors or substances for ingestion, or to represent or replace a tobacco product.

Tobacco Use, for the purpose of this policy, shall include smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco in any form. For the purpose of this policy tobacco is a lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe or other smoking product or smokeless tobacco products in any form.

Vaping refers to the action or practice of inhaling and exhaling the vapor produced by an electronic cigarette or similar device.

B. Requirements

Smoking, use of tobacco or electronic or e-cigarette and vaping are strictly prohibited for administration, professional and support staff personnel in a school building and on any school property, buses, vans and vehicles that are owned, leased or controlled by the school and at any school-sponsored activities that are held off school property. This restriction also includes the use of chewing tobacco and e-cigarettes. This policy does not, however, prohibit the use of a nicotine patch, gum, or lozenge as a smoking cessation product by any employee who has a written order by a physician.

This policy applies also to all visitors and volunteers.

C. Legal Ramifications

Violations may result in disciplinary action.

402.6 – WORKPLACE HARASSMENT, BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

Purpose: To communicate to all employees that harassment, bullying and violent behavior will not be tolerated.

Additional Authority:
18 Pa C.S.A. § 2709

A. Definition

Bullying refers to inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether electronic, written, verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or during employment and/or outside of the employment setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of:

- Substantially interfering with the employee's work
- Creating a threatening work environment, or
- Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school or school system.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

Harassment refers to unwelcomed conduct or other conduct that may be harmful or humiliating or interfere with an employee's work performance when such conduct is:

- Sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive and
- Which a reasonable person would deem offensive, threatening or abusive and thus harms morale and interferes with or limits the effectiveness of work.

Prohibited retaliation includes, but is not limited to, termination, demotion, suspension, failure to hire or consider for hire, failure to give equal consideration in making employment decisions, failure to make employment recommendations impartially, adversely affecting working conditions or otherwise denying any employment benefit.

B. Requirements

Workplace Harassment

All employees have a right to work in an environment free from harassment – whether that harassment is based on sex, age, race, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, pregnancy, marital status or membership in other protected groups. Harassment of employees in any form – by supervisors, co-workers, or non-employees is prohibited.

Such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of the employee who harasses others. With respect to non-employees, offenders will be asked to leave and not return to the premises.

Specific Policy on Sexual Harassment
(Sexual Harassment also falls under the Title IX policy, #202.6)

Sexual harassment of employees in any form is prohibited. Such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The following conduct is illegal:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
  - Submission to such is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment
  - Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
  - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment can occur between employees of the opposite sex or of the same sex. It is unlawful for sexual harassment to occur between supervisors and subordinates, employees and non-employees and between co-workers.

Other Types of Harassment

Such prohibited harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Verbal conduct such as threats, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs
- Visual conduct such as derogatory posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings or gestures
- Written communications containing statements that may be offensive to individuals in a protected group, such as racial or ethnic stereotypes or caricatures
- Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching or blocking normal movement
- Retaliation of any kind.

Just as harassment is a serious situation, so too is the filing of a frivolous claim of harassment.

False Reporting

Any person who knowingly files a false allegation or complaint against another in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse or embarrass that individual will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Retaliation

Retaliation for making a complaint, including reprisals, intimidation and/or increased or continuing harassment, against any employee or other person who makes an allegation or complaint of harassment will not be tolerated. Anyone found to have engaged in such prohibited retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include termination.

Workplace Bullying

Bullying behavior is prohibited.

The following are types of bullying behavior:

- Verbal bullying: Slandering, ridiculing or maligning a person or his or her family; persistent name calling that is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; using a person as butt of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks.

- Physical bullying: Pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping, assault or threat of physical assault, damage to a person's work area or property
- Gesture bullying: Nonverbal threatening gestures; glances that can convey threatening messages.
- Exclusion: Socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in work-related activities.

Reporting and Investigating
Allegations and complaints of any type of harassment or bullying must be reported as soon as possible. All such reports should be made in writing. In most instances, allegations and complaints of harassment or bullying should be made to the administrator. Any administrator who receives an allegation or complaint of prohibited behavior must bring the information received to the attention of the Superintendent.

If anyone alleging or complaining of harassment or bullying feels that there is a legitimate reason why he/she cannot discuss the complaint with the administer or supervisor, he/she should bring the allegations or complaints to the attention of the pastor/president. If the employee feels he/she cannot discuss the complaint with the pastor/president, the complaint may be made to the Superintendent.

The person to whom the complaint is brought must conduct an immediate, thorough and objective investigation of any harassment claims.

If it is determined that prohibited behavior has occurred, action will be taken against a person found to have engaged in such behavior. A determination regarding the alleged harassment or bullying will be made and communicated to the person claiming harassment as soon as practical. The type of discipline administered will be dependent upon the severity of the conduct, as well as any other factors presented in the particular circumstances. Employees violating this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Workplace Violence
Violence by an employee or anyone else against an employee or visitor will not be tolerated.

Any employee who commits an act of violence at work against a person or property will face disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Workplace violence involves:

- Physical acts against persons or employer property
- Verbal threats, or vicious statements that are meant to harm or cause a hostile environment
- Written threats, vicious cartoons or notes, and other written material that is meant to threaten or create a hostile environment
- Visual acts that are threatening or intended to convey injury or hostility.

If anyone receives or overhears any threatening communications from an employee or outside third party, it is to be reported to the administrator immediately. If the individual is threatening immediate harm to an employee or visitor on the premises, call 911.

All incidents of violence are to be reported to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools or designee.

All such incidents shall be fully investigated. Any employee who takes any adverse action against a person who reports any act of violence or a suspicion of violence shall be subject to immediate discipline, up to and including discharge.

C. Legal Ramifications

If circumstances warrant, the issue will be referred to legal authorities for prosecution.

402.7 – SCHOOL AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Purpose: To guarantee that property and materials that belong to the school or are on loan to the school are not considered personally owned by an employee.

Additional Authority:
Acts 35/90/195
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
PA Wage Payment and Collection Law

A. Definitions
Not Applicable

B. Requirements
Employees must return all school property or property on loan to the school immediately upon request or upon termination of employment. Any assigned equipment or property that is lost or damaged must be reported to the school administrator. The school reserves the right to withhold the employee's pay for the replacement value of the school property. If necessary, the school may also take legal action.

All materials purchased with government funding or on loan from the government never belong to an employee but rather belong or are on loan to the school entity. These materials are identified by labels which are to include the name of the school and the funding source.

Materials received at professional development events, unless purchased with personal funds, belong to the school not the employee.

Materials purchased with monies from foundations or grants belong to the school, not the employee. These materials will be labeled with the name of the school and the funding source.

C. Legal Ramifications
All employees should be aware that the school is not responsible for employees' personal property that is stolen or damaged. This includes automobiles parked on school premises.

Upon equipment dissemination, employees should be asked to sign an acknowledgement agreeing to payroll withholding for loss or damage of particular items of equipment.

402.8 – CONFIDENTIALITY

Purpose: To protect personally identifiable information.

Additional Authority:
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99)
Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. § 7908)

10 U.S.C. § 503(c)	24 P.S. § 1402
24 P.S. § 1305 – A and sequence	20 U.S.C. § 7165
22 PA Code § 12.31	24 P.S. § 1409
22 PA Code § 15.9	20 U.S.C. § 1232

A. Definitions

Proprietary information refers to any knowledge gained by an employee, due to their job responsibilities, that the school does not want shared.

Protected Health Information, under HIPAA, is considered to be individually identifiable information relating to the health status of an individual.

B. Requirements

Employees are prohibited from disclosing confidential or proprietary information that comes to their attention because of their employment with the school unless it is authorized in advance or within the normal execution of their job responsibilities or otherwise provided by law. Confidential or proprietary information includes, but is not limited to, phone numbers, addresses, health conditions, social security numbers, and the identity of individuals who have confidential appointments.

Posting or sharing of audio/video recording of instruction or capturing and sharing audio/video of livestreamed instruction without consent of the school/system is prohibited.

Employees who acquire protected health information while conducting their job duties are required to treat this information confidentially and in accordance with applicable regulations. This includes confidential personal information about employees, students, families, religious staff, and others served by the school. Employees are bound by this requirement both during and after their employment with the school.

In some circumstances, schools may have consultants or volunteers, who although not employees, may come into contact with confidential or proprietary information. In instances where this may occur, those individuals must complete a Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix 402.8 A) to be kept on file at the school.

C. Legal Ramifications

Abuse of confidentiality is cause for disciplinary action, including dismissal. If you are in doubt about the confidential nature of a matter, consult your school administrator.

402.8A – Appendix – Confidentiality Agreement
REPRODUCE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Confidentiality Agreement

I,_____, acknowledge that the _____School has approved my participation at the School in the following capacity:

- ☐ Contractor (Specify: _____)
- ☐ Consultant (Specify: _____)
- ☐ Volunteer (Specify: _____)
- ☐ Other (Specify: _____)

As a result of my participation or involvement in the activities of the School, I understand that I may learn, acquire, obtain or be given access to certain confidential information, including, but not limited to, student educational records, health records, employment records, and educational testing materials. I understand the statutory and regulatory requirements to maintain such information as privileged and confidential, and I agree to preserve the confidentiality of such information not only during the period of my participation or involvement in the activities of the School, but also after the termination of my participation or involvement in the School. Accordingly, in consideration of my being permitted to participate in the activities of the School, as noted above, I hereby agree as follows:

1) All Confidential information concerning the School, its employees, students, agents, contractors, and vendors, or otherwise, which I might acquire or become privy to during the course of my involvement with the School activities shall be considered CONFIDENTIAL, and I shall treat this information as such during my participation and involvement with the School and thereafter.

2) "Confidential information" shall mean any information regarding the School, its employees, applicants, students, agents, contractors, and vendors.

3) I agree not to disclose, either during or after my participation or involvement in activities of the School, any confidential information protected by law or regulations unless I first obtain the School's written authorization to do so, or unless it becomes publicly known or is no longer protected by law. If I breach this confidentiality agreement, I understand that I may be subject to certain liability as imposed by applicable laws, regulations, or policy.

4) Upon termination of my participation or involvement in the activities of the School, I will promptly return to the School all written documents which may contain confidential information which I may have in my possession.

Witness

_____ Signed:_____

Print Name: _____

Date:_____

402.9 – FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

Purpose: To ensure that systems and school/parishes that qualify as covered employers for the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) follow all requirements for eligible school employees.

Additional Authority:
Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and subsequent amendments
29 C.F.R. § 825.213 (Employer Recovery of Benefit Costs)
29 C.F.R. § 825.216 (Limitations on an employee's right to reinstatement)
29 C.F.R. § 825.601 (Special rules for school employees, limitations on intermittent leave)
29 C.F.R. § 825.602 (Special Rules for school employees, limitations on leave near the end of an academic term)
29 C.F.R. § 825.603 (Special Rules for school employees, duration of FMLA leave)
29 U.S.C. § 2618 (Special rules concerning employees of local educational agencies)

A. Definition

Child, for the purpose of this policy, refers to a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward of a person standing in *loco parentis* of a child under 18 years of age, or a child 18 years of age or older who is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability. An employee's child is one for whom the employee has actual daily responsibility for care.
Covered Employer refers to a system or school/parish who employs 50 or more employees for each working day during each of 20 or more calendar workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year.
Parent, for the purpose of this policy, means a biological, adopted, foster, or step-parent or any other person who stood in *loco parentis* to the employee when the employee was a child. It does not include parents-in-law.
Serious health condition, for the purpose of this policy, refers to an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:

- Inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility
- A period of incapacity that requires absence from work for more than three consecutive calendar days within 30 days of the first day of incapacity (absent extenuating circumstances), AND involves either two or more treatments by a health care provider, or at least one treatment by a health care provider plus a regimen of continuing treatment
- Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or time needed for prenatal care
- Chronic serious health condition
- Long-term conditions for which treatment may not be effective or
- Multiple treatments (including any period of recovery therefrom) for restorative surgery after an accident or other injury, or a condition that is likely to result in a period of incapacity of more than three full consecutive calendar days if left untreated, such as physical therapy for severe arthritis or chemotherapy for cancer.

B. Requirements

Systems or a school/parish that employs 50 or more employees for at least 20 workweeks

within the current calendar year or the preceding year are required to adhere to FMLA laws.

Whether or not a situation is covered by FMLA depends on whether the law's requirements have been met, not on whether an employee requests FMLA leave. The system or school/parish will inform the employee if he/she is eligible for FMLA leave and if the law's other requirements are satisfied.

Leaves Available
An eligible employee will be granted up to twelve (12) work weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave each twelve-month period for any of the following qualifying reasons:

- The birth of and/or need to care for a newborn child
- The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care
- The need to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition
- A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's job.

Eligibility Requirements
To be eligible for family and medical leave, employees must have worked for the system or school for at least twelve (12) months, and for at least 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the start of the leave.

Effective January 1, 2015 the "twelve-month period" during which the leave entitlement occurs is designated as the twelve (12) month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave.

Married Employees
If the employee and spouse are both employed by the system or school, and are both eligible for family and medical leave, the employee and spouse will be limited to a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of family and medical leave a year taken for any one or all of the following reasons:

- The birth of a child or to care for the child after birth
- The placement of a child for adoption or foster care, or to care for the child after placement
- The need to care for a parent with a serious health condition.

In the case of a request for FMLA to care for the serious health condition of a spouse or a serious health condition of a child or the employee's own serious health condition, the employee and spouse are both eligible for 12 weeks.

Leave Rights related to Military Service (as amended in 2008):
Eligibility
Eligible employees are entitled to up to 12 weeks of leave because of "any qualifying exigency" arising out of the fact that the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on active

duty or has been notified of an impending call to active-duty status, in support of a contingency operation. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, arranging for care for the military member's parent who is incapable of self-care necessitated by the covered active duty, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

Entitlement

An eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service-member who is recovering from a serious illness or injury is entitled to up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service-member. This military caregiver leave is available during "a single 12-month period" during which an eligible employee is entitled to a combined total of 26 weeks of all types of FMLA leave.

A covered service-member is:

a. A current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness; or
b. A veteran who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable at any time during the five-year period prior to the first date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran, and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness. The definition of "serious injury or illness" for current service-members and veterans is distinct from the definition of "serious health condition" used elsewhere in this policy, and generally encompasses injuries and illnesses sustained in the line of duty or aggravated by military duty.

How and When Leave May Be Taken

Family and medical leave is taken either in consecutive workweeks; intermittently in separate blocks of time; or by reducing the number of days the employee works per week, or hours per day.

Intermittent or reduced schedule leave may be taken when medically necessary to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition, or because of the employee's own serious health condition. The employee must provide the system or school with medical certification of the need for intermittent or reduced schedule leave and must attempt to schedule intermittent or reduced schedule leave so as not to disrupt school operations. To accommodate an intermittent or reduced schedule leave when the leave is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment for the employee or a covered family member, the employee may be transferred on a temporary basis to an alternative position for which the employee is qualified. The alternative position will have equivalent pay, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment.

Leave for childbirth, adoption or foster care may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule only if the employee's supervisor agrees to the proposed intermittent or reduced leave schedule.

Leave for the birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care must be taken within twelve (12) months of the birth, adoption or placement.

Special Rules for FMLA Leave Near the End of a Semester
Where an instructional employee begins a leave more than five weeks before the end of a semester, the employer may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if the leave will last at least three weeks, and the employee would otherwise return to work during the three-week period before the end of the semester.

Where the instructional employee begins a leave during the five-week period before the end of a semester because of the birth of a son or daughter; the placement of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care; to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; or to care for a covered servicemember, the employer may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if the leave will last more than two weeks, and the employee would return to work during the two-week period before the end of the semester.

Where the instructional employee begins a leave during the three-week period before the end of a semester because of the birth of a son or daughter; the placement of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care; to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; or to care for a covered servicemember, the employer may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if the leave will last more than five working days.

In the case of an employee who is required to take leave until the end of an academic term, only the period of leave until the employee is ready and able to return to work shall be charged against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.

Where the instructional employee requests an FMLA leave on an intermittent basis or reduced schedule for greater than 20 percent of the total number of working days in the period during which the leave would extend, the employer may require that such employee elect either to take leave for periods of a particular duration, not to exceed the duration of the planned medical treatment; or to transfer temporarily to an available alternative position offered by the employer for which the employee is qualified, and that has equivalent pay and benefits; and better accommodates recurring periods of leave than the regular employment position of the employee.

Notice Requirements
If an employee knows in advance that the employee will be taking leave because of birth, adoption or placement of a foster child in the employee's home, or because of planned medical

treatment for the employee or a covered family member, the employee must notify his or her supervisor in writing using a "Request for Family/Medical Leave" form at least thirty (30) days in advance. Forms are available on the website for the U.S. Department of Labor; Wage and Hour Division – FMLA Forms.

If circumstances require that the leave begin in less than 30 days, the employee must notify his or her supervisor as soon as it is practical.

When the need for leave is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment for the employee or a covered family member, the system or school administration expects the employee to consult with the employee's supervisor and to make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to unduly disrupt school operations.

Employees must provide enough information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Enough information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

Medical Certification
The system or school reserves the right to require written medical certification from the appropriate health care provider when leave is requested to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition, or because of the employee's own serious health condition. The certification will include the date of onset, the probable duration, type of treatment, and other appropriate medical facts concerning the condition. If the employee is seeking leave for the employee's own health condition, the certification must also state that the employee is unable to perform the functions of the employee's position. For leave to care for a family member, the certification must state that the employee is needed to care for the family member, and an estimate of the amount of time that will be needed. Other certification requirements apply in the case of intermittent or reduced schedule leave.

The system or school may also require medical recertification, and/or periodic reports from the employee during FMLA. Medical certification may also be required when an employee is returning to work after leave for the employee's own serious health condition.

Employees are to submit a completed medical certificate within fifteen (15) days of the request or provide an explanation why additional time is needed.

Use of Paid Leave
The system or school will require the employee to use appropriate paid leave as part of his/her family and medical leave as follows:

- Any earned personal time (sick leave, vacation and personal leave) for any portion of the twelve (12) week leave for birth, adoption, foster placement, or to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition
- Any earned personal time (sick leave, vacation and personal leave) for any portion of the twelve (12) week leave because of the employee's own serious health condition. Any situation in which the employee uses personal time because the employee is unable to work due to a condition that qualifies as a serious health condition under this policy will be counted against the twelve-week FMLA entitlement.

When the employee has used all required personal time (sick leave, vacation leave and personal leave) for any portion of a FMLA leave, the balance of the leave will be without pay.

Rights and Benefits During Leave
Seniority will accrue only during periods of paid leave.

All benefits which an employee had earned or accrued before taking leave will be retained after returning from an approved FMLA leave, if not depleted during the leave.

While the employee is on family or medical leave, paid or unpaid, the system or school will continue group health insurance coverage at the same level and under the same conditions that coverage would have been provided had the employee continued working. The employee will be required to pay the same cost of coverage as if he or she were actively at work. Employee contributions to the premium will be required either through payroll deduction or by direct payment to the system or school by the 15th of the current month for continued coverage is required. The employee will be informed of the amount and method of payment at the beginning of the leave. Loss of insurance coverage may result if the premium amount is more than thirty days late. If the employee misses a premium payment and the system or school pays the employee's contribution, the employee will be required to reimburse the system or school for the delinquent payment upon return from leave.

Under certain circumstances, if the employee fails to return to work after an approved FMLA leave, the system or school may require employees to reimburse it for the amount the system or school paid for health insurance premiums during the leave.

Employer Responsibilities
Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the employer must notify the employee.

Returning to Work
Eligible employees are entitled on return from leave to be reinstated to their former position or an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. Exceptions to this provision may apply if system or school circumstances have changed (e.g., if the employee's position is no longer available due to a job elimination). In addition, employees on a leave extension are not guaranteed reinstatement.

Before an employee is permitted to return from medical leave, she/he will be required to present the system or school with a note from his/her physician indicating that she/he can return to work and performing the essential functions of your position with or without reasonable accommodation. Where required, the system or school will consider making reasonable accommodation for any disability you may have in accordance with applicable laws.

Non-Discrimination
Administration will not interfere with, restrain, or deny an employee the opportunity to exercise any right provided under FMLA. Administration will not discharge or discriminate against any employee for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or because of an employee's involvement proceeding under or related to FMLA.

Confidentiality
Administration will also keep any medical information it obtains in complying with the FMLA confidential, pursuant to this statute, as well as the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act (GINA).

C. Legal Ramifications
Enforcement
An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer to enforce the employee's rights under the FMLA. The FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

402.10 – WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Purpose: To help protect and support whistleblowers by providing a framework for the disclosure and investigation of wrongdoing.

Additional Authority:
Whistleblower Law of Pennsylvania
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Can. 1281 § 3; 1282
43 P.S. 1422

A. Definition

Concerns as they relate to this policy shall be:

- Questionable or improper accounting or auditing matters, financial waste or wrongdoing
- Violations and suspected violations of policy #401.17, Expectations for Employees and Representatives
- Other financial, legal, or canonical concerns

Stakeholder is a person who has an interest in the school.
Whistleblower is a person who witnesses or has evidence of wrongdoing or waste while employed and who makes a good faith report of the wrongdoing or waste, verbally or in writing.

B. Requirements

Reports of concerns should be made to the school administrator. If the school administrator is suspected, then the concerns should be made to the pastor/president. If the pastor/president is suspected, then the concerns should be made to the Superintendent in the Catholic Schools Office. All concerns are to be reported as soon as possible and should include all relevant information about the suspected act(s), including any material evidence that exists. Reports of concern can also be made via the Financial Misconduct Hotline at www.eriercd.org.

Employees and stakeholders are encouraged and empowered to raise concerns within the school for investigation and appropriate action. No person who, in good faith, reports a concern shall be subject to threats, discrimination, retaliation or, in the case of an employee, be subject to discharge, discipline, or receive other adverse employment consequences. Moreover, any employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from their employment within the school.

The administrator who receives the report shall be responsible for a thorough and expeditious investigation of the reported concern. Proposed decisions on disposition of a case will be discussed with the direct supervisor of the school official. The results of all reported concern investigations will be reported to the Superintendent in the Catholic Schools Office.

Anyone reporting a concern must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates an improper accounting or auditing practice, or a violation of the

Expectations for Employees and Representatives Policy #401.17 or other management policies. The act of making allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated, and that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or with the foreknowledge that the allegations are false, will be viewed as a serious offense and may result in discipline, up to and including dismissal for employees.

Reports of concerns, and the investigations into them, shall be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct a thorough investigation. Disclosure of reports of concerns to individuals not involved in the investigation will be viewed as a serious offense and may result in discipline, up to and including termination of the violator's position. Innocence is assumed until guilt is proven.

C. Legal Ramifications

In addition, some issues and actions may have a civil or criminal aspect. Prior to initiating a civil or criminal case against an individual, approval from the Bishop must be obtained, via the Superintendent and/or Director of Parish and School Financial Services

COMMUNITY RELATIONS POLICIES

501.1 – INVOLVEMENT WITH COMMUNITY AGENCIES & GUESTS

Purpose: To guarantee that community agencies and their representatives involved with the students are not publicly in contradiction to the Catholic mission and identity of the school.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Directive 2019

A. Definitions

Community Agency is any non-profit and for-profit organization at the local, national or international level that provides funding or resources for schools or accept funds from schools as donations.

Guest is any individual that interacts with students in an official capacity in the school environment or other activity sponsored by the school and would have the opportunity to share ideologies that are in contradiction to Church teaching.

B. Requirements

When students choose to raise funds for a worthy cause, privileged consideration is to be given to our own diocesan and other Catholic agencies/efforts, e.g., Catholic Charities, Missions.

A school is not to engage with a community agency or funding source that has been publicly supportive of issues in conflict to Catholic teaching. This engagement includes fundraising, speaking engagements, accepting donations, giving donations, grant dollars or advertising/ promotion.

Prior to a guest coming into the school to address or interact with our students, the guest must be clearly aware of the expectations set forth in the Guidelines for Guests (Appendix 501.1A).

C. Legal Considerations

Prior to making a commitment to an unapproved community agency or funding source, contact the Catholic Schools Office to determine if the organization is approved for involvement with Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie.

501.1A – Appendix – Guidelines for Guests

GUIDELINES FOR GUESTS IN THE DIOCESE OF ERIE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

It is very important that guests who address our students, parents, and faculty do so in a manner that is respectful and consistent with Church teaching. These guidelines for guests are being provided to assist a presenter, speaker, a student teacher, or a volunteer in determining the appropriateness of an action or comment while on the school premises. Your willingness to follow the guidelines in a spirit of cooperation while in the school or parish is critical to maintaining a Catholic environment throughout our school building and your continued presence in the building.

A GUEST / SPEAKER IS EXPECTED TO:

1. Recognize the true nature of all individuals as children of God and deserving of the respect granted to them by our Creator.

2. Act in a manner both verbally and physically that models professional decorum.

3. Respect and refrain from contradicting the Catholic identity and mission of Catholic schools in the diocese.

4. Respect and refrain from contradicting Catholic teachings and the Catholic faith including, but not limited to, the following:

    - Respecting that the Catholic faith recognizes that marriage is between a man and a woman, and is the only legitimate place for sexual relations
    - Respecting that the Catholic faith recognizes abstinence from sexual relations until marriage is both a standard of moral behavior as well as the proper strategy for preventing sexually transmitted disease
    - Respecting the teaching of the Catholic Church that regards homosexual activity as morally unacceptable, while promoting the respect due to all persons regardless of sexual orientation
    - Respecting Catholic teaching on abortion, namely, that human life is to be respected and protected from the moment of conception
    - Respecting the teaching of the Catholic Church that regards artificial methods of birth control as morally unacceptable.

5. Any organization or its representative that self-discloses a pro-abortion stance or support is not to be invited into the school to speak.

6. Regarding formation in chastity, only information appropriate to each phase of a young person's individual development should be presented to children and young people.

FINANCE POLICIES

601.1 – ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

Purpose: To define the expectations of tracking, reporting, and monitoring the financial transactions of a school/system.

Additional Authority:
Can. 1284; 1276 §2
Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)

A. Definition

Generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) refers to a common set of accounting principles, standards, and procedures issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB).

B. Requirements

Each school/system must accurately and completely record, summarize and report the financial activity of the school on a timely basis. Each school/system is to use the standard chart of accounts currently in use by the Catholic Schools Office unless permission is given by the Director of Financial Services (Finance Department) and the Director of School Finance and Operations (Catholic Schools Office).

Each school/system is to summarize financial transactions in standard financial reports that accurately reflect the financial condition of the school and should be issued on a timely basis following each month-end.

Each school/system is to provide a comparison between actual expenses and budgeted expenses so that readers of the statements have as basis for comparison to assess financial performance.

Parish-based elementary schools may use a cash basis of accounting. All systems are required to use the accrual basis of accounting or the modified accrual basis of accounting.

The pastor/president or his/her designee is required to be the authorized signatory on all school related bank accounts.

Bank reconciliations must be promptly prepared for all checking accounts, ideally by an individual who is independent of the cash receipt and cash disbursement processes. The bank must provide cancelled checks or images of them which must be included in the monthly bank statements or cancelled checks must be viewable online. Upon completion of the bank reconciliations, the cancelled checks, if available, including any voided checks should be filed numerically with the previously returned checks. A finance council/school board member must randomly review the reconciliations several times a year.

No person or other organization/ministry is to commingle their financial assets with the assets of the school.

C. Legal Ramifications

Civil and criminal action and prosecution may result from act(s) that violate this policy.

601.1 – Best Practices – ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

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All financial activity should be under the direction of the parish/school business office with advisory guidance from the administrator. School invoices should be checked, approved and initialed by the administrator prior to payment through the business office. The establishment of a personal school funds checking account for the administrator is strongly discouraged.

Receipts/Revenue

Revenue is to be recorded when earned - usually when funds are received. Advance payments are to be recorded as a liability (unearned income) and reclassified to income when the revenue is earned.

Custodial receipts, receipts over which the school has no discretion as to their use, are to be recorded as a liability until paid. This includes receipts from tuition scholarship dollars from outside agencies.

Pledges should only be recognized as revenue when they are collected.

Expenses/Liabilities

Expenses are to be recorded when incurred (upon receipt of merchandise/service and the supporting invoice) and recorded as a liability (accounts payable).

When teacher salaries are paid over the course of the school year and following summer, deferred salaries, taxes and benefits are to be expensed and recorded as a liability over the course of the school year. Upon payment of the deferred salaries, taxes and benefits, the accrual is to be charged (eliminated).

Expenses paid in advance are to be recorded as a pre-paid asset. Upon receipt of the merchandise and completion of services, the appropriate expense account is to be debited and the pre-paid asset account credited.

Reimbursable Expenditures

Payments that will be reimbursed are to be recorded to accounts receivable until reimbursement is received.

Capital Assets

Property and equipment are not required to be recorded in the financial statements. As an option, property and equipment can be recorded at cost when purchased and at estimated fair value when received via donation.

Debt

The principal amount of all loans payable is to be recorded as a liability (notes payable) and

reported on the balance sheet. The principal portion of payments is to be recorded to the notes payable account and the interest portion is to be recorded to the interest expense account.

Net Assets

Net assets and revenues, expenses, gains and losses are classified based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Accordingly, net assets consist of net assets with donor restrictions or net assets without donor restrictions.

Credit Cards

While it is preferable that schools use vendors who will bill them directly, schools may choose to use credit cards to facilitate their purchases of goods and services. Such cards are to have a reasonable dollar limit and are to be obtained in the name of the school, not in the name of the administrator or any other staff person. In order to prevent use by unauthorized persons or for unauthorized purposes, it is imperative that there be adequate controls governing access and signoff.

For each credit card account, a list of those persons authorized to use the card should be kept on file which details the name, card number, expiration date, and credit limit.

For each card transaction, the person using it is responsible for obtaining a receipt as documentation of the purchase. Schools are to avoid incurring finance charges on a credit card by paying off any balances within each billing cycle. The disposition of any incentives or rewards (e.g., points, miles, rebates) accruing from the use of the credit cards shall be determined by the pastor/president or his/her designee.

Only on rare occasions may personal credit/debit cards be used for the purchase of goods or services for the school. In most cases, the Pennsylvania sales tax exemption is lost when school purchases are charged to a personal card. Reimbursement for items charged to the personal card of an employee or volunteer requires that the purchase be preapproved by the administrator and be supported by adequate documentation which is to be retained with the accounting records of the school.

Bank and Other Financial Institution Accounts

Maintain only one operating school checking account and request bank statements dated as of the last day of the month. The administrator may decide to open other accounts as needed for special purposes. If this is done, it will be necessary to include them on the Financial Assets Report section of the Annual Report. Therefore, schools are encouraged to keep the number of separate accounts to a minimum and to use the operating checking account for most on-going activities.

If a school organization or department has a specific need for a separate checkbook the pastor/administrator must be an authorized signer and the statements are to be mailed to the school office. The bookkeeper should not be authorized to sign checks.

Auxiliary organizations are accountable to the pastor/administrator and therefore monthly activity must be reported to the business manager. The pastor/administrator should be the signatory and the receiver of the monthly bank statements for any accounts held by these organizations.

All bank accounts that use the school/parish tax identification should be included in financial reports. This is the case even when the school/parish provides no funds to the organization (e.g., a fundraising group or program).

No school funds, securities, or valuables can be held in the name of the pastor/administrator or any other person.

Cash Receipts (Cash, Checks, Electronic Transfers)

Groups, organizations and clubs that utilize the school/parish federal identification number should account for all cash receipts and disbursements on the parish general ledger.

All monies received, from any income source, should be deposited intact on a daily basis. The individuals counting and/or depositing the monies should not be maintaining the financial system. All checks should be restrictively endorsed as soon as possible. A copy of the deposit slip should be attached.

Cash should never be counted at locations other than on parish/school property or the point of collection.

The various income received by the school should be entered into the accounting system (i.e., checkbook register, cash receipts journal) on a prompt basis.

Cash Disbursements

All expenditures are to be approved by the pastor/administrator after a review of the supporting documentation and be paid by check. The administrator should also sign all checks. A set day(s) of the week is recommended for check approval and payment. The documentation supporting the payment (invoice, payroll summary, petty cash receipts) should note the account charged and should be filed alphabetically by fiscal year. The unused checks should be stored in a locked safe or file cabinet accessible only by the pastor and the bookkeeper. Receipts must be maintained for all payments including reimbursements.

It is suggested that a petty cash fund be established for the purchase of incidental items. A check should be drawn payable to petty cash or the person responsible for petty cash. The check should be for a fixed amount of money, e.g., $100. This check should be cashed with the proceeds immediately deposited into a locked cash box. One individual should be in charge of the petty cash distributions. Receipts, noting the date, payee, amount, purpose, and the account to be charged should be maintained for all expenditures. When almost all of the cash in the box is depleted, another check can be drawn equal to the total amount expended. The expenditure receipts are then cancelled, with the amounts posted to the cash disbursements

journal under their appropriate account categories. At all times, the total of cash and receipts contained in the cash box should equal the beginning cash amount. No other cash sources should be used to replenish petty cash.

Signature Stamps

The use of a signature stamp is discouraged. If a signature stamp is to be used, then proper controls must be in place. The person stamping has strict control over the stamp and does not prepare the checks. Bank reconciliations are prepared promptly and reviewed by an independent person at least three or four times a year directly from the unopened bank statements or online with the images of cleared checks included in bank statements or viewable on-line.

601.2 – AUDITS, REVIEWS AND FINANCIAL EVALUATIONS

Purpose: To ensure the school's financial operations meet standard accounting procedures.

Additional Authority:
Bishops Directive 2020
Canon 1284 §1, 2 and 3

A. Definition

External audits/reviews are examinations that are conducted by an independent certified public accountant. An audit provides reasonable assurance in the form of a positive statement. A review provides limited assurance rather than a reasonable level of assurance.
Internal financial evaluation is an evaluation of a school's accounting practices, financial stability, and policy compliance completed by the Financial Services Office of the Diocese of Erie.

B. Requirements

The internal financial evaluation provides assurance that financial activities are being properly recorded, summarized, reported and are in compliance with diocesan polices and civil regulations.

The primary role of the internal financial evaluation is to aid pastors and school boards and others in fulfilling their canonical and legal responsibilities. An effective internal evaluation will help safeguard the assets of a school, review recordkeeping, internal control, accounting and financial reporting of the school, identify areas of improvement and report findings and observations to the pastor/president, finance council/finance committee and the diocese.

Generally, each parish-based elementary school receives an on-site internal financial evaluation by the Financial Services Department of the Diocese of Erie every five years.

School Systems

School systems are to have either an external audit or review every year, with the understanding that external audits are required at least every three years. A formal board resolution is required in the non-audit years to engage in an annual review instead of an audit.

Parish-Based Schools

Parish-based schools are part of the financial evaluation process as implemented by the diocesan Financial Services Department.

C. Legal Ramifications

Inaccurate or erroneous financial information discovered during an audit can cause legal implications. Auditors are responsible for making sure that all line items on financial statements are presented fairly. The audit reports ultimately affect business decisions of banks, government, investors, and other business-related entities.

601.3 – BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS

Purpose: To strengthen and accurately reflect the school's financial operations through transparency, management and accountability.

Additional Authority:
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Canon 1284 §1, 2 and 3
Accounting Standards Update (ASU) 2014-09; 2014-15; 2016-02; 2016-14

A. Definition
Not applicable

B. Requirements
The primary objectives for preparing realistic budgets and periodically reviewing budgets and financial reports are:

- To accurately and completely record, summarize and report the financial activity of the school/system on a timely basis
- To summarize financial transactions in standard financial reports that accurately reflect the financial condition of the school/system and which are issued on a timely basis following each month-end
- To provide a "benchmark" in conjunction with the financial statements in the form of a budget so that readers of the statements have a basis of comparison to assess financial performance.

On at least a quarterly basis, financial reports are to be reviewed. Reports should include a year-to-date comparison with the budget. For system schools these responsibilities belong to the president and finance committee of the board. For parish-based schools these responsibilities belong to the pastor and parish finance council.

The due date for the school system's preliminary budget is at the Members' Board meeting in January of each year. The final budget for the school systems and the parish-based schools are due on May 31 of each year. Year-end reports for school systems are due November 30. Year-end reports for parish-based schools are due by September 30 of each year. These reports are signed by the pastor and building administrator or the president and board chair and are to be sent to the Catholic Schools Office on or before the due date.

The finance committee of boards' other duties are:

- To monitor and report to the board on the status of the current fiscal year budget (monthly, quarterly, and annually - actual versus projected)
- To formulate with the chief administrator a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year with detailed written assumptions to support the school/system's mission and strategic plan goals and objectives.

Financial reports and significant financial facts should be prepared for every meeting of the finance council/finance committee of the board. These reports must include:

- Budget amounts that are compared to the actual income and expenditures to monitor results in comparison to budget projections
- Reports that accurately and completely record, summarize and report the financial activity of the school/system on a timely basis
- Reports that summarize financial transactions in standard financial reports that accurately reflect the financial condition of the school and which are issued on a timely basis following each month-end
- Reports that provide a "benchmark" in conjunction with the financial statements in the form of a budget so that readers of the statements have a basis of comparison to assess financial performance.

In preparation of a realistic budget:

- Accurate projections based on historical data must be used for tuition income
- Fundraising projects must be based on historical data or other reasonable information
- Loans are not included in revenue but provide cash flow
- Withdrawals from savings accounts or reserves are not to be considered as income or revenue but provide cash flow.

C. Legal Ramifications

Civil and criminal action and prosecution may result from act(s) that violate this policy.

601.5 – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Purpose: To ensure that business practices are only for the benefit of the school/system and do not provide any private benefit, as well as to protect the use of privileged information from providing any private benefit.

Additional Authority:
Internal Revenue Code – Tax-exempt organizations
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Canon 1282

A. Definitions

Conflict of Interest is a situation in which a person has multiple interests, financial or otherwise, and serving one interest would directly or indirectly benefit or harm the other interests.
Direct Conflict occurs when a person serving the school has a business relationship with the person or entity doing business with the school. For example, a board member would have a direct conflict if he/she has ownership interest in a company selling goods or services to the school.
Duality of Interest is a situation in which an individual has multiple responsibilities which may result in conflicts of interest**,** real or perceived.
Indirect Conflict occurs when a person serving the school has a family, social, or close relationship with a person or entity doing business with the school. For example, the business manager will have an indirect conflict if he/she is the spouse or close relative of a company owner whose firm sells goods or services to the school.
Interested party is the term used to designate a person who has disclosed a conflict of interest.
Representatives, within this policy, refer to those individuals with decision-making roles that serve in a volunteer capacity, such as those on Board of Directors.

B. Requirements

Employees or representatives who make recommendations or decisions on financial matters must avoid any conflict or appearance of conflict between their own interests and those of the school, either individually or as a result of a family relationship or close friendship.

The relationship between the school and those responsible for its care implies an assumption of common purpose. If an employee, representative or volunteer uses his/her role in the school to service a personal interest, then the commonality of purpose breaks down and the school's tax-exempt status may be placed in jeopardy.

Information known to be confidential that is acquired by an employee, representative or volunteer in the course of his/her association with the school shall be used only for the benefit and purposes the school intends. Individuals shall neither disclose confidential information outside of their authorized duties nor use their position with the school for personal gain.

If a direct or indirect conflict of interest occurs the interested party must disclose the conflict to the pastor/president. Once the disclosure has been made, the pastor/president must exercise due diligence when deciding whether such duality of interest may undermine the best interests of the school. If it is determined that the duality of interest will undermine the best interests of the school, the interested party shall be excluded from any deliberations concerning the issue and/or business transaction. In reaching such a decision, the pastor/president shall be guided by the needs of the school, the availability of quality goods or services to satisfy those needs, and the result of an open and informed selection process.

Each such case shall be reviewed upon its own facts and circumstances. If it is determined that the duality of interest creates a substantial conflict of interest, then the school/system must either refrain from entering into a business relationship with the interested party or exclude the interested party from any deliberations concerning the issue.

The Conflict of Interest policy is to be shared with all persons serving the school (except school system boards) who are involved with financial matters and in the selection of vendors or supplies. Those individuals, upon reviewing the Conflict of Interest Policy, are to complete and sign the Conflict of Interest Information and Compliance Statement (Appendix 601.5A). This form is to be signed annually. School system boards have a specific Conflict of Interest form to sign.

Members of school system boards are to reference and utilize the Conflict of Interests and Self-Dealings form found in the Board Membership Guide. The form is to be signed annually.

C. Legal Ramifications

The pastor/president must take appropriate action upon receiving a report of possible conflict of interest or face potential legal liability.

601.5A – Appendix – Conflict of Interest

Conflict of Interest Information and Compliance Statement

I have read and understand the Conflict of Interest Policy and agree to abide by its terms and conditions.

Please describe below any relationship, positions, or circumstances in which you are involved that you believe could contribute to a conflict of interest as defined in the Conflict of Interest Policy or write “none” if such conflicts do not exist:

I agree that if any situation arise of which I am aware that in any way contradict the above statement, I will immediately notify the pastor or school system president of any conflict, real or potential, and make full disclosure thereof.

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____

Printed Name

601.6 – FEDERAL FISCAL COMPLIANCE

Purpose: To provide clarification for systems and schools receiving federal funds subject to the Uniform Guidance under the Office of Management and Budget.

Additional Authority:
2 CFR Part 200 et all
34 CFR 75.730-75.732
34 CFR 76.730-76.731
Uniform Guidance under the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), if applicable
OMB Compliance Supplement

A. Definitions

Federal Awards include not only cash but also other types of assistance. There are fifteen types of assistance, of which eight are the most prevalent:

- Formula grants
- Project grants
- Direct payments for specified use
- Direct payments with unrestricted use
- Direct loans
- Guaranteed or insured loans
- Insurance
- Sale, exchange, or donation of property and goods

Federal funds may be received directly or indirectly (i.e., the funds may be passed through from state or local governments or other non-profit organizations). Even if the funds are received indirectly, the organization is still subject to Uniform Guidance requirements.

EDGAR stands for the Education Department General Administrative Regulations which defines guidance for federal funding.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is an agency of the federal government that evaluates, formulates, and coordinates management procedures and program objectives within and among departments and agencies of the executive branch.

Uniform Guidance refers to the Office of Management and Budget uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements for federal awards**.**

B. Requirements

All recipients of federal funds must ensure administration of those funds in accordance with federal requirements, including but not limited to the federal Uniform Guidance. All recipients must follow the guidelines set forth in the Uniform Guidance regarding all programmatic and fiscal requirement.

Accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the financial results of each federal award or program must be made in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

C. Legal Ramifications

Consultation with the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie will help clarify any questions that arise so that programs or program funding are not jeopardized.

When considering applying for federal funds, care should be taken to safeguard the free exercise of our Catholic faith.

The receipt of federal funds in any form implicitly acknowledges acceptance of grant-imposed responsibilities. Ignoring or inadequately adhering to these requirements may cause the federal agency to refuse further funding or even require the return of the federal funds granted.

Acceptance of certain funds may impose additional requirements, such as accepting special education students.

601.7 – FRAUD PREVENTION

Purpose: To provide clarification regarding fraud within Catholic schools.

Additional Authority:
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Canon 1281§3; 1282

A. Definition

Fraud is defined, for this policy, as the intentional misuse or misappropriation of resources or assets for the personal enrichment of the perpetrator or others. Fraud also includes the intentional false representation or concealment of a material fact relating to the misuse or misappropriation of resources or assets. Fraud also includes any intentional falsification of, or misrepresentation in, financial statements.

Actions constituting fraud include, but are not limited to:

- misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies or other assets
- impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions
- breach of fiduciary duty, including disclosing confidential information to outside parties
- seeking anything of value from contractors, vendors or persons providing (or seeking to provide) services/materials to the school for one's or another's personal benefit
- accepting anything of value, over $50, from contractors, vendors or persons providing (or seeking to provide) services/materials to the school for one's or another's personal benefit, in violation of the diocesan Conflict of Interest Policy #601.5
- bribery
- inappropriate use of computer systems or other property of the school (See Acceptable Use of Internet, Computers and Network Resources Policy #202.2)
- unauthorized destruction or removal of records, furniture, fixtures and equipment
- forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the school
- forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- intentional falsification of, or misrepresentation in, financial statements
- any dishonest act.

B. Requirements

Suspected fraud must be reported to the school administrator immediately. If the school administrator is suspected, then the report must be made to the pastor/president. If the pastor/president is suspected, then the report must be made to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools or his/her designee. All suspected frauds are to be reported as soon as possible. Failure to promptly report suspected acts of fraud may jeopardize the school's ability to recover stolen funds and/or property, or to correct improperly prepared financial statements on a timely basis. Reports of suspected fraud should include all relevant information about the suspected act, including any material evidence that exists.

The school administrator, pastor/president, or Superintendent (or designee) shall be responsible for a thorough and expeditious investigation of the suspected fraud. Unless the report was anonymous, the person submitting the initial report will receive confirmation indicating that their report was received, and that the subsequent investigation is confidential. That person may or may not be contacted during the investigation.

Proposed decisions on disposition of a case will be discussed with the direct supervisor of the accused. The results of all fraud investigations will be reported to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Fraud investigation files should be retained permanently.

Information about cases will be disclosed to those parties with a legitimate need to know. All parties with knowledge of such cases are to maintain confidentiality in order to avoid damaging the reputations of persons suspected but subsequently found innocent of wrongful conduct, and to protect the school from potential civil liability.

C. Legal Ramifications

Civil and criminal action and prosecution may result when fraudulent act(s) occur.
Prior to making a civil or criminal case against an individual, approval from the Bishop must be obtained, via the Director of Parish and School Financial Services.

601.8 – INVESTMENTS

Purpose: To ensure socially responsible and sound investment practices are utilized.

Additional Authority:
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

A. Definition

Catholic Deposit and Loan Fund of Northwest Pennsylvania was created by the Diocese of Erie as a separate corporation to accept deposits from parishes, schools, agencies, and other ecclesiastical entities within the Diocese. In turn, these funds are made available to be loaned to parishes and other Catholic entities within the diocesan community.

Catholic Foundation of Northwest Pennsylvania is a separately incorporated foundation created to provide a permanent and secure funding stream to stabilize, strengthen, and grow the Church's mission and ministries in Northwest Pennsylvania.

Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) – to ensure the school invests in companies whose products/services and/or policies support the values of Catholic moral teaching and promote social justice.

B. Requirements

Schools/school systems are required to follow the socially responsible investment guidelines created by the Unites States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and utilize investment strategies that align with the Catholic faith. There are two principles:

1. The school should exercise responsible financial stewardship over its economic resources obtaining a reasonable rate of return on its investments.
2. The school should exercise ethical and social stewardship in its investment practices.

These two major principles work together to help the school to identify investment opportunities that meet both the financial needs and the social criteria. These principles are carried out through strategies that seek:

- to avoid participation in harmful activities,
- to use the school's role as stockholder for social stewardship, and
- to promote the common good.

Access the complete outline of the Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines created by the USCCB. Diocesan guidelines can be found in 601.8 BP.

Finance Councils/school boards must annually review all investment practices and investments.

Prohibited investments include:

- Short sales or margin purchases
- Securities lending
- Venture capital
- Private placement or other securities not publicly traded
- Direct placement of mortgages to individuals
- Commodities

Catholic Deposit and Loan Fund of NWPA

The Catholic Deposit and Loan Fund accepts deposits from Catholic entities enabling other Catholic entities that need financing to borrow money to help pay for various projects. The rate of return on the deposits is guaranteed and approximates the three-month U.S. Treasury Bill rate. The diocesan website lists current rates. Interest paid on deposits is not subject to diocesan assessments. The Catholic Deposit and Loan Fund abides by socially responsible investing.

Catholic Foundation of Northwest Pennsylvania

Income earned through investments with the Catholic Foundation of Northwest Pennsylvania are not subject to diocesan assessments. The Catholic Foundation abides by socially responsible investing.

C. Legal Ramifications

Some schools may use alternative investments such as hedge funds, private equity funds, real estate funds, etc. Prior to investing in such alternatives, schools should investigate if there will be problems with valuation, excessive risk, liquidity, taxation of unrelated business income, etc. They should also be aware that it may be very difficult to determine if the social responsibility guidelines are being observed by alternative investment funds.

601.8 – Best Practices – INVESTMENTS

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In selecting individual securities, the schools shall endeavor at all times to exclude issues whose underlying operating activities are not compatible with the moral, social, and economic teachings and philosophy of the Catholic Church as known at present and as further defined from time to time in official church documents, pronouncements, and actions. The schools are also encouraged to invest in companies which promote the values of the Catholic moral and social teachings provided that they are also acceptable from a standpoint of return and risk.

The following explicit principles, abiding by the Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), are to be observed as related to specific market sectors and industry groups. These policies cover the areas of protecting human life, promoting human dignity, reducing arms production, pursuing economic justice, protecting the environment, and encouraging corporate responsibility.

1. No investments are to be made in companies whose activities include direct participation in, or support of, abortion. Direct participation may include, but is not limited to, the manufacture of abortifacients and/or publicly held health-care companies that perform abortions when not absolutely required by federal or state law.

2. No investments are to be made in companies materially involved in the manufacture or distribution of contraceptives and birth control products. A 5% of revenue threshold will be used to define materiality.

3. No investments are to be made in companies that engage in scientific research on human fetuses or embryos that (1) result in the end of pre-natal human life; (2) make use of tissue derived from abortions or other life-ending activities; or (3) violate the dignity of a developing person. Specific activities include:
    a. Embryonic stem cell research (ESCR)
    b. Fetal tissue research or stem cell research derived from embryos and
    c. Human cloning.

Because this field of research is dynamic, new forms of research, or products and services derived from such research, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

4. The Diocese will actively promote human dignity through its investment activities. Specific activities may include:
    a. Human Rights – actively promote and support shareholder resolutions directed toward protecting and promoting human rights.
    b. Racial Discrimination – divesting from those companies whose policies are found to be discriminatory against people of varied ethnic and racial backgrounds disadvantaged historically.

c. Gender Discrimination – divesting from those companies whose policies are found to be discriminatory against women.
d. Access to Pharmaceuticals – encourage companies to undertake or participate in programs designed to make life-sustaining drugs available to those in low-income communities and countries at reduced, affordable prices consistent with Catholic values.
e. Curbing Pornography – not investing in companies that derives a significant portion of its revenues from products or services intended exclusively to appeal to a prurient interest in sex or to incite sexual excitement. These would include, but not be limited to, sexually explicit (X-rated) films, videos, publications, and software; topless bars and strip clubs; and sexually oriented telephone and internet services. A 5% of revenue threshold will be used to define materiality.

5. The Diocese will avoid investment in firms materially engaged in military weapons production or the development of weapons inconsistent with Catholic teaching on war (e.g., biological and chemical weapons, arms designed or regarded as first-strike nuclear weapons, indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction, etc.) A 5% of revenue threshold will be used to define materiality.

6. No investments are to be made in companies that are directly involved in the manufacture, sale, or use of anti-personnel landmines.

7. The Diocese will actively promote and support shareholder resolutions directed towards avoiding the use of sweatshops in the manufacture of goods. The Diocese will actively promote and support shareholder resolutions to promote generous wage and benefit policies and adequate worker safety guidelines.

8. The Diocese will not deposit funds in a financial institution that receives less than a "satisfactory" rating from federal regulatory agencies under the Community Reinvestment Act.

9. The Diocese discourages investment in companies whose records in the areas of environmental contamination (e.g., air and water pollution), hazardous waste disposal, and consumer or employee safety are not acceptable in terms of applicable government standards. It will actively promote and support shareholder resolutions which encourage corporations to act to preserve the planet's ecological heritage, addressing the rampant poverty in the poorest nations, redirecting development in terms of quality rather than quantity in the industrial world, and creating environmentally sensitive technologies.

10. The Diocese will encourage companies to report on social, environmental, as well as financial performance.

11. In all other investment matters, the assets shall be invested in a socially conscious manner consistent with the social principles of the Catholic Church.

Questions regarding the compliance of certain investments with these principles are to be directed to the investment consultant and/or the Chief Financial Officer.

Investments in companies found to be in violation of the letter or intention of these guidelines should be removed from the manager's portfolio immediately.

601.9 – ROLE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Purpose: To define the responsibilities of the Finance Committee on system boards.

Additional Authority:
System Board By-Laws

A. Definition
Not applicable

B. Requirements
The overarching role of the Finance Committee on school boards is:

- To prepare, update, and monitor short and long-range financial plans for the school
- To develop and propose to the full board a budget for the next fiscal year with appropriate assumptions, and to monitor the current year budget versus actual
- To oversee, from policy and planning perspectives, business operations of the school.

Responsibilities include:

- To develop and regularly update a long-range financial plan with detailed written assumptions and best-case, probable-case, and worst-case scenarios
- To monitor and report to the board on the status of the current fiscal year budget (monthly, quarterly, and annually - actual versus projected)
- To formulate with the chief administrator a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year with detailed written assumptions to support the school's mission and strategic plan goals and objectives
- To recommend to the board (and its policy/planning committee) financial policy that ensures sound and consistent financial management, just salaries, fair tuition rates, financial assistance, payment plans and capital expenditures
- To oversee the school's endowment, including polices for endowment growth, management and distribution of proceeds
- To provide key metrics (dashboard indicators) and to provide an annual analysis of school operations based upon defined metrics
- To formulate with the school's administration and the policy/planning committee, policy concerning the business affairs and activities of the school, including such areas as bookstore, cafeteria, fundraising, transportation, outside contractors, purchasing, insurance, rental agreements, contracts and athletic gate receipts
- To work with the school administration, development office and business office to ensure publication of a comprehensive annual report
- To annually review source documents, e.g., cash disbursement and receipts, images of cleared checks, payroll, investment accounts and benefit documents
- To annually review internal controls regarding school financial operations and fundraising
- To ensure that the audit/review is completed per requirement (See Audits, Reviews and Financial Evaluations Policy #601.2)

C. Legal Ramifications

Civil and criminal action and prosecution may result from act(s) that violate this policy.

602.1 – AUCTIONS, SMALL GAMES OF CHANCE, BINGO and OTHER FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Purpose: To define the expectations for licensure, record keeping and reporting for school-sponsored fundraising activities, such as auctions, festivals, bingo, small games of chance, etc.

Additional Authority:
Local Option Small Games of Chance Act, 1988 P.L. 1262, No. 156
PA Bingo Law 10 P.S. §§ 301—308.1
10 P.S § 328.302
IRC 501(c)(3)
Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board
Act 39, 2016

A. Definition

Auction is a sale in which goods or property are sold to the highest bidder.

Bingo is a game of chance played with cards that are typically printed with five rows of five squares each. In addition, for a game to meet the legal definition of bingo, wagers must be placed, winners must be determined, and prizes or other property must be distributed in the presence of all persons placing wagers in that game.

Dual Control is a security enhancement where two persons are each held accountable for an action, such as counting cash.

Small games of chance, for the purpose of this policy, are raffles, daily/weekly drawings, fifty-fifty (50/50 drawings), pull-tab games, punchboards, race night games and pools.

Special Occasion Permits allow schools/systems to sell alcohol during fundraising events such as bazaars, galas, etc.

B. Requirements

Each event or activity must have a designated leader/chairperson. The leader/chairperson, along with the planning committee where applicable, will develop procedures and guidelines for the given event and distribute them to the event participants, both employees and volunteers. Adequate procedures must be provided for the control over cash and inventory. The procedures related to control of cash are to be reviewed with and approved by the business officer of the school/school system.

For festivals and other significant events, the school/school system should contact the property and casualty insurance carrier concerning documented procedures that must be incorporated into what the school is organizing.

A Special Occasion Permit

- May only be granted for an event used by the school/system as a means of raising funds for itself.
- Only the area where sales of alcohol will take place needs to be licensed under the permit.
- May only be used for nine consecutive or nonconsecutive days and an additional 10 consecutive days during a calendar year.

The pastor/president, or designee, is to be a signatory and receiver of information on any bank account held for the purpose of these events. The original bank statement and images of cleared checks are to be transmitted to the school/school system where a copy is retained in file. The reconcilers of the account must be school/system employees, with payment requests submitted by the designated leader conducting the event. The individual who reconciles the account must not be a signer on the account.

The revenue from a fundraising activity should be counted and deposited intact. Cash is never to be taken from event receipts for repayment of expenditures prior to deposit. The receipts must be recorded in detail on a Cash Receipts Log.

Adequate physical safeguards must be established over cash and inventory. Large quantities of cash must be kept in an area with access limited to only those responsible for counting or deposit preparation. When cash is kept in a public area for the purpose of running the event, excess monies should be periodically removed to a safe location with limited access. If inventory includes certificates or other items like cash, these also must be kept in a secure safe where access is limited to the designated leader of the event.

The collection, counting, and deposit of funds raised during an activity or event must be performed by separate individuals. Reconcilement of cash like inventory is to be verified by separate individuals and under dual control in a limited access area.

Event revenue must never be used to pay for expenses prior to deposit. Receipts must be retained to document any reimbursable expense. The authorization and substantiation of payments must conform to standard accounting practices when it comes to vendor invoices and expense reimbursements.

Reporting of Results of Fundraising

Regular income and expense statements are to be generated on a monthly basis throughout the duration of the event/program.
The statements must reflect:

1. Cash in accounts
2. An inventory of certificates or goods
3. Revenue for the period being reported
4. Expenses for the period
5. Distributions from the event/program to the sponsoring entity

The business office of the school/school system is to create a reporting format, specific to the event, that provides the above information in sufficient detail to allow control over receipts and disbursements, and the recording of all appropriate accounting entries.

State and local laws must be strictly adhered to when conducting fundraising activities.

SCRIP
The running of a SCRIP program with the intention of credits for tuition may require a SCRIP program agreement with the program participants.

Since SCRIP functions as a form of currency, it is to be treated as cash. Schools/systems must follow safe procedures in the handling of SCRIP. The following procedures are to be followed:

1. Volunteers should not take SCRIP home for delivery.
2. Purchasers participating in the program should pick up SCRIP at a centralized location.
3. SCRIP can be sent home from school with a person's son or daughter if the person signs a waiver providing the parish or school permission to do this.
4. SCRIP is to be stored in a safe, which is locked at all times. The safe is to be kept in a non-obvious, secure area on school/parish premises.
5. A large inventory of SCRIP is not to be maintained. Schools should only order the amount of SCRIP which has been requested by program participants.
6. Adequate bookkeeping that tracks the purchase and distribution of SCRIP is required. At least two people should have dual responsibility for the maintenance of SCRIP records. When a school receives an order of SCRIP, serial numbers are to be recorded
7. SCRIP records are to be audited or reviewed by an employee of the school on a monthly basis. This employee is not to be one of the people responsible for maintenance of SCRIP records.
8. The SCRIP records are not to be stored with the SCRIP, but in a separate area.

Small Games of Chance
There are two types of licenses available to schools/school systems. A regular license is an annual license and the term runs for a calendar year. A monthly license is valid for 30 consecutive days from the date of issuance. The licensing authority is the county treasurer.

Pull-tab games, punchboards and race night games must be purchased from registered manufacturers.

The following prize values, cash or nonmonetary, limits apply:

- A prize for a single chance in any game may not exceed $2,000
- During an operating week (7 consecutive days) a school/school system is limited to awarding $35,000 in prizes
- No more than $15,000 may be awarded in raffles during a calendar month.

There are some limited exceptions. See the PA Department of Revenue document Rev-1750.

All games of chance proceeds are to be used for the activities and operation of the school/school system.

A separate bank account must be used for small games of chance income and expenses if the school/school system has games of chance proceeds that exceed $40,000 per year. Other funds, including bingo income, are not to be commingled in the account.

A school/school system is required to keep records related to games of chance activity sufficient to demonstrate the school/school system's compliance with the law upon inspection. Records must be retained for at least two years.

For small games of chance, if an individual is paid $600 or more and at least 300 times the amount of the wager, a completed W-2G must be given to the winner. The original is provided to the winner and a copy is maintained at the school/school system.

Bingo
A license must be obtained through an application process with the county treasurer and must be on public display at all games. No person under the age of 18 shall be permitted to play bingo unless accompanied by an adult.

Income earned from bingo generally does not qualify as Unrelated Business Income due to the Bingo and Gambling Activities Exception. This exception applies to bingo games where participants place wagers, winners are determined, and prizes are distributed in the presence of all persons placing wagers in the game. The bingo exception does not apply to scratch-off bingo cards, bingo machines or to other forms of "walk- away" games.

Prizes awarded must not exceed a value of $250 for any one game of bingo, except for jackpot games which shall not exceed a value of $2,000 for one such game. No more than $4,000 in prizes shall be awarded on any calendar day.

Records must be maintained of the moneys and merchandise collected and distributed for each day that bingo is conducted. These records will indicate the total proceeds collected, the total prize money distributed, the total value of all merchandise awarded as a prize and the amount of moneys paid as rentals or wages and to whom such rentals or wages were paid. All prizes awarded having a value greater than $250 shall be specifically described in the records.

No person may be employed in the operation of the actual running of a bingo game for compensation greater than $50 per day. Reduction of tuition counts as compensation.

<u>Summary of Reportable Winnings</u>
(See table next page)

Type of Game	Winnings Amount at Least:	Reduced by Amount of Wager?
Bingo	$1,200	No
Slot Machines	$1,200	No
Keno	$1,500	Yes
Other wagering transactions (instant bingo, pull-tabs, raffles and so on)	$600 and at least 300 times the wager	At option of payer
Poker Tournaments	$5,000.01	Yes

Each time reportable winnings are paid, a Form W-2G must be completed.

C. Legal Ramifications

Bingo licenses may be revoked or refused to be renewed if:

- Funds are used for purposes which do not support the nonprofit purposes.
- Anyone under the age of 18 unaccompanied by an adult is playing bingo.
- Building does not provide adequate means of ingress and egress or sanitary facilities.
- Compensation for workers is over the maximum allowed.
- Faulty bingo equipment.
- False information provided in application.
- Other items noted in the law.

Similarly, not following all the requirements for small games of chance can cause the school's license to be revoked or refused to be renewed.

The district attorney may require the licensee to produce their books, accounts and records relating to the conduct of bingo or small games of chance in order to determine whether a license should be revoked or renewal denied.

602.1 – Best Practices – AUCTIONS, SMALL GAMES OF CHANCE BINGO and OTHER FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

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Advance documentation and review of the roles and responsibilities of volunteers will aid participants in carrying out their duties.

When planning an event, the number of employees/volunteers should include those needed to conduct the event as well as those needed to fulfill the financial requirements.

Preferably, excess cash should be kept in a secure and lockable safe and on school property. It is not to be stored at a personal residence or in a personal car.

For control purposes, it may be very beneficial to have one person designated as the SCRIP coordinator.

In the event that SCRIP would be lost or stolen, the recording of the serial numbers will allow the parish or school to quickly identify which SCRIP was missing. Local stores could then be alerted to watch for the stolen SCRIP.

For SCRIP agreement samples, contact the Director of School Finance and Operations.

602.2 – BEQUESTS

Purpose: To provide clarification for schools/systems who receive and accept bequests.

Additional Authority:
Can. 1299 – 1310; esp. cc. 1301 and 1304
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

A. Definition
Bequest is a financial term describing the act of giving assets such as stocks, bonds, jewelry, real estate and cash, to individuals or organizations, through the provisions of a will or an estate plan.

B. Requirements
Schools/systems may sometimes be named as the beneficiary in a will or under a trust or other form of planned giving. Upon receiving notification of such a bequest or gift that is greater than $50,000 or involves real estate, the administrator is to notify the diocesan bishop, via an e-mail to the Director of Parish and School Financial Services.

Written permission of the bishop may be required prior to accepting a bequest. Consultation with the Director of Parish and School Financial Services will assist in determining if permission is required.

C. Legal Ramifications
Caution is to be exercised in accepting bequests or gifts which carry donor restrictions as there are potential legal consequences in the event that compliance with such restrictions becomes difficult or impractical.

602.3 – ENDOWMENTS

Purpose: To provide clarification for schools/systems who receive and accept endowments.

Additional Authority:
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Pennsylvania Act 141

A. Definition

Endowments are funds originating from a gift of money or other donated property (stocks, bonds, real estate, etc.) invested to financially sustain the mission of a charitable organization. The gifts contributed to an endowment are referred to as the "principal" or "corpus." These gifts always remain intact and are invested so that the endowment will continue to grow. Each year, an annual distribution is made available to each beneficiary to be used for the purpose specified. Endowments have governing documents which regulate disbursements.

In contrast to an endowment, a school/system may have long-term investments set aside for a particular purpose, such as tuition assistance. These long-term investments do not necessarily qualify as an endowment, unless the originating documentation establishes the investment as a perpetual account with donor restrictions on distributions.

B. Requirements

Pennsylvania law governs how endowments benefitting non-profit corporations and charitable trusts are managed. Any school/system endowment must comply with applicable civil law.

While schools/systems may consider establishing their own endowment funds for the benefit of the school/system, written permission from the bishop, requested via an e-mail to the Director of Parish and School Financial Services, is to be obtained before doing so.

If there is to be an annual distribution from the endowment, it must comply with the endowment documents or financial policy of the system or parish. System boards/pastors are to determine the distribution percent unless the percent is specified in the endowment document.

An agency fund may be established by the school/system with the Catholic Foundation of Northwest Pennsylvania or its successor agency. An agency fund is for the benefit of the same organization. Distributions from these funds go directly to the school/system named in the agreement and for the purpose of the fund. Once established, the endowment provides a perpetual source of income.

C. Legal Ramifications

Caution is to be exercised in accepting funds which carry donor restrictions as there are potential legal consequences in the event that compliance with such restrictions becomes difficult or impractical.

602.4 – FUNDRAISING

Purpose: : To ensure responsible and sound fundraising practices are utilized in Catholic schools.

Additional Authority:
Canon 1262
Bishop's Directive 2008
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

A. Definitions

Fundraising is any program for solicitation of funds undertaken either directly by a Catholic institution itself or in the name of a Catholic institution (such as by booster or alumni associations) and which is intended to raise a net total of $40,000 or more. Excluded from this definition are:

- Student-led efforts to raise monies, such as candy bar sales, magazine sales, car washes, etc.
- All fundraising efforts which have a goal of raising less than a net total of $40,000
- All applications for grants
- Advancement solicitations targeting specific individuals

B. Requirements

All fundraising activity for Catholic schools must be approved by the Diocesan Bishop. Approval should not be presumed and therefore no steps should be taken to implement the proposed fundraising activity (e.g., advertising the fundraising activity, enlisting volunteers to assist, or signing contracts with professionals to conduct fundraising activities) until the Bishop's approval has been granted in writing.

Diocesan fundraising instructions and forms may be found at the Office of Financial Services website under the link for the Parish Financial Practices Policy manual.

The request for the Bishop's approval must:

- Be submitted in writing to the Bishop via the Director of Parish & Financial Services during the initial stages of the planning for fundraising activities.
- Be responded to in a timely manner, normally within 30 days of the request having been received by the Bishop's Office. Some requests may take longer to process.
- Include any items required by law.

The Bishop can give standing (enduring) permission for repetitive fundraising efforts, such as a school's annual appeal.

The standing (enduring) request of the Bishop's approval must:

- Clearly indicate that the permission being requested is for standing permission

- Only those permissions are considered to be standing permissions which expressly state such
- Standing permissions will remain in effect only as long as there are no substantive changes in the information originally submitted with the request for approval
- The Bishop is the one to judge when such a substantive change has occurred
- For a just cause, the Bishop can revoke the standing (enduring) nature of a permission at any time after it has been given

Those who request and obtain the Bishop's permission to solicit funds are to submit annual reports concerning their fundraising activity to the Director of Parish & Financial Services. Copies of annual reports sent to benefactors and financial statements also are to be sent to the Director of Parish & Financial Services.

C. Legal Ramifications
The Bishop is the final and ultimate authority to practice oversight of fundraising activities.

Compliance with government regulations and laws must be strictly adhered to concerning fundraising activities, such as auctions, small games of chance and bingo. See Policy 602.1.

602.5 – GIFTS

Purpose: To ensure that all gifts are recorded and acknowledged to benefit the donor.

Additional Authority:
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3); 170, 2055, 2522, 6701, 6115, 6714

A. Definitions

Donee charity is the non-profit receiving a gift from a donor, such as a school/system.

Gift, for this policy, is defined as a voluntary transfer of money or property without receipt of or expectation of a commensurate return benefit.

Quid Pro Quo Contributions are payments made to a charity by a donor partly as a contribution and partly for goods or services provided to the donor by the charity. Typical quid pro quo contribution situations include charity golf tournaments, auctions, dinner dances, and so forth, where part of the payment constitutes a contribution.

B. Requirements

One of the primary benefits of section 501(c)(3) exemption is deductibility of contributions for federal income, estate, and gift tax purposes. In order to be deductible, a payment must first qualify as a gift.

No contribution of $250 or more will be deductible unless the donor obtains, prior to filing his or her tax return, written acknowledgment from the school/system showing the name of the donee charity, the date of the contribution, the amount of the contribution and whether any goods or services were received in return. (Appendix BP-A is a sample form.) If so, such goods or services must be identified and must be valued by the donee charity. If the benefits received consist solely of intangible religious benefits, a statement to that effect must be included. This will make it important that donors use checks, contribution envelopes or use online giving.

Charitable organizations must inform donors in writing that quid pro quo contributions in excess of $75 are deductible only to the extent that they exceed the value of any goods or services provided by the charitable organization in return, and the organizations must provide a good-faith estimate of the value of such goods or services. This disclosure must be made either at the time of solicitation or upon receipt of the quid pro quo contribution. Penalties are imposed on any charity that fails to make appropriate disclosure under section 6115 at $10 per contribution, capped at $5,000 per particular fundraising event or mailing. In such situations, the disclosure statement may be placed in solicitation materials, in event programs or brochures, or on the face of event tickets – i.e., in any reasonable manner likely to come to the attention of the donor.

Additional substantiation requirements are imposed with respect to certain contributions. Most

non-cash contributions require that the donor receive a receipt from the charitable organization showing the name of the charitable organization, the date and location of the contribution and a reasonable description of the item(s) donated. Items donated must be in "good used condition or better." While the IRS provides no guidance on what constitutes "good used condition or better," it is recommended that items be in usable condition. Household items must be operable and not broken; clothing should not be torn. An exception to the "good used condition" would be for any single item that is worth $500 or more based upon a qualified appraisal of the item's value. In this case, IRS Form 8283 must be filed.

The donee charity is required to report to the IRS on Form 8282 if such contributions are subsequently sold or otherwise disposed of within three years of receipt. There are limited exceptions. When non-cash contributions are sold or disposed of within three years, legal obligations should be reviewed with the Director of Parish & School Financial Services.
The IRS has issued special rules for the claiming of deductions for donated vehicles.

Schools/systems often benefit from contributed services. These acts of charity are welcomed. It is not permissible to give the volunteer a tax receipt or include the value of services on the volunteer's annual contribution statement.

The payment of tuition, whether made directly to a school or to a church operating the school, is not deductible. In addition, payments made in various fundraising contexts may or may not be deductible, depending on whether goods or services are received in return. For example, payment for a purchase at a charity auction will be deductible only to the extent the payment exceeds the stated fair market value (FMV) of goods or services received in return. Payments for charity raffle tickets are not deductible, since the amount paid is not a gift, but rather payment for the chance to win whatever prize is being offered.

C. Legal Ramifications
Caution is to be exercised when accepting gifts that can carry donor restrictions. There are potential legal consequences in the event that compliance with such restrictions becomes difficult or impractical.

Although the burden of requesting appropriate acknowledgment is placed on the donor and not imposed on the donee charity, schools/systems that knowingly provide false written substantiation statements may be subject to penalties for aiding and abetting an understatement of tax liability.

602.5 BP-A – Appendix – Single Gift Acknowledgement

(Place on School Letterhead)

Single Gift Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement Date:

This acknowledgement of your contribution to (School/System Name) is provided pursuant to section 170 (f) (8) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Name of Contributor:

Address of Contributor:

Date of Contribution:

Amount of Cash Contribution or Description of Property:

Check as Appropriate:

___ The donee organization either did not provide any goods or services in whole or partial consideration for the above contribution or provided only intangible religious benefits.

___ The donee organization provided the donor with the following goods and/or services in return for the above contribution.

Description of goods and services:

(School/System Name)

By: _____

Title: _____

602.6 – TUITION

Purpose: To ensure that the tuition procedures and guidelines within a school or system are consistent and fair among families with children attending Catholic schools within the diocese.

Additional Authority:
Rev. Rul. 83-104, 1983-2 C.B. 46
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

A. Definition

Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) is a program established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to provide tax credits to eligible businesses contributing to a Scholarship Organization, an Educational Improvement Organization, and/or a Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship Organization.

B. Requirements

Setting Tuition Schedules

The applicable school administration, president/business manager in consultation with the board of directors or the pastor for parish-based schools, works to establish a tuition rate that is representative of the school budget needs and the anticipated enrollment. Tuition rates may differ for parishioners and non-parishioners.

Tuition in the school must in no manner be contingent on offertory giving or other donations to the parish or school/school system. Whether expressed or implied, schooling or reduced tuition payments must not otherwise be dependent upon such giving.

Tuition contracts

Tuition contracts are to be signed by all parents. The contract must include:

- School year of the agreement
- All financial obligations on the part of the parent
- Financial aid information
- Any required fundraising, volunteer hours, etc.
- The chosen method for payment
- The process for tuition payment in arrears
- The handling of tuition payments if the student is expelled or transfers.

Eligibility for Financial Aid and Tuition Reductions

Schools must adopt a policy for determining eligibility for school-based financial aid and tuition reductions. Factors which may be considered in determining eligibility for tuition reductions/benefits include:

- Being registered in a Catholic parish and attending Mass regularly
- Participating in parish life with time and talent.

It is important for the school to clearly communicate the determinative factors to parents.

Record Retention

All financial records concerning tuition are to be retained for seven years.

Tuition Assistance Programs

Two tuition assistance programs are managed collaboratively by the Finance and Catholic Schools Offices of the Diocese of Erie.

1. **Bishop's Tuition Assistance Program (BTAP)** is a diocesan, needs-based scholarship program that helps students attend Catholic elementary, middle, and high schools located within the Diocese of Erie. There are no income thresholds that automatically disqualify applicants. Awards are based on demonstrated financial need and the availability of funds. International and out of state students are not eligible.

2. **Student Tuition Assistance Program (STAG)** is a separate scholarship program funded through a third-party grant source. This program provides tuition assistance to eligible PreK-8 school employees who have at last one student enrolled in a Catholic elementary, middle or high school (excluding PreK enrollment). Applicants must meet established employment and enrollment requirements. Income restrictions may be applied when the number of applicants exceeds available funding.

Tax Credit Scholarship Organization Programs

Numerous scholarship organizations provide tuition assistance through the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program, including, among others, BLOCS (Business Leaders Organized for Catholic Schools), Central Pennsylvania Scholarship Fund, Children's Scholarship Fund of Pennsylvania, FundEDU. Schools are encouraged to partner with scholarship organizations to maximize scholarship opportunities for their students. To qualify for EITC-funded scholarships, families must be Pennsylvania residents and meet the applicable income eligibility requirements established yearly by the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

Application Process

All Catholic schools within the Diocese of Erie are expected to use FACTS Management, a secure online platform, to process tuition assistance applications for diocesan, school, and tax credit scholarship programs. Key application requirements include:

- Only one (1) application per family is required.
- Applications are submitted through FACTS Management.
- The online portal should be available after January 1 of each year.
- FACTS determines the priority ranking of economic need.

Recommended Application Deadlines

Applications may vary by school; however, the following timelines have historically been recommended:

- **March 1** – Families with children enrolled in Erie Catholic high schools or families with children enrolled in both Erie Catholic high schools and Erie Catholic elementary schools.
- **April 15** – Families with children enrolled in regional Catholic elementary, middle, and high schools as well as families with children enrolled only in Erie elementary schools, including PreK.

Confidentiality and Record Retention

All information and applications submitted for tuition assistance consideration must be treated as confidential, used only for evaluation purposes, and shared only on a need-to-know basis. Records related to tuition assistance applications must be retained for seven years.

C. Legal Ramifications

When reviewing delinquent tuition accounts, schools may use a collection agency as a resource for collection efforts. The practice of filing legal action to recover past-due tuition should be avoided.

602.6 – Best Practices – TUITION

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1. A general norm is that at least 50% of a school's income should come from tuition.

2. If a student's tuition is in arrears at a Catholic school in the diocese, that balance should be cleared before being admitted to another Catholic school in the diocese.

3. If a parish or school system is going to raise tuition beyond a 7% increase, there should be communication with both the Director of Financial Services and the Director of School Finance and Operations.

4. A tuition policy could contain the following language concerning lack of payment:
   Tuition Payment in Default
   If a payment is not made, for whatever reason, the following process will be followed:
   a) The parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the payment not being received.
   b) The parents/guardians will be given 20 calendar days to bring the account to current status or meet with school administration to have an adjusted payment contract approved (not a guarantee).
   c) If the account is not brought to current status, and an adjusted payment contract is not agreed upon and approved by school administration, the student enrollment will cease at the end of the quarter.

5. If a school has differentiated rates for parishioners, the pastor of the family's parish will determine if the family qualifies for the parishioner rate. Should a discrepancy arise regarding a family's parishioner status, it must be resolved through the parish. It is the responsibility of the family, not the school administrator, to resolve the discrepancy with the pastor.

602.7 – UNRELATED BUSINESS INCOME

Purpose: To explain that even though a school/school system is tax-exempt, it may be required to pay unrelated business income tax (UBIT).

Additional Authority:
Internal Revenue Code 511 – 514
Treas. Reg. §1.513-1(c)(1)

A. Definitions

Fragmentation Rule is used to classify different aspects of what might otherwise appear to be a singular business endeavor as being either related or unrelated. An example would be the sale of advertising in an otherwise exempt educational periodical is considered a trade or business, which will generally be unrelated to its exempt purposes.

Passive income includes interest, dividends, rents from real property, revenue from property sales, and royalty payments.

Unrelated Business is as follows: (1) any activity carried on for the production of income from the sale of goods or the performance of services, (2) one that is regularly carried on, and (3) one that is not substantially related to an organization's exempt purposes.

Unrelated Business Income derives from regularly conducted activities that are not substantially related to the organization's charitable, educational, or other purpose.

B. Requirements

The following do not give rise to unrelated business income and therefore the revenue generated is not subject to taxation:

- Volunteer Exemption: Activities in which substantially all the work is performed by volunteer labor (e.g., bake sales)
- Convenience Exemption: Activities conducted primarily for the convenience of members, students, or employees (a typical example of this is a school cafeteria)
- Donated Merchandise Exemption: Resale of donated merchandise (e.g., fund-raising auctions)
- Bingo and Gambling Activities Exception: Applies to bingo games where participants place wagers, winners are determined, and prizes are distributed in the presence of all persons placing wagers in the game. The bingo exception does not apply to scratch-off bingo cards, bingo machines or to other forms of "walk-away" games.

An exempt organization that has $1,000 or more of gross income from an unrelated business must file Form 990-T. Although organizations included in the Group Ruling are exempt from federal income tax, they are subject to tax on the income from any unrelated trade or business in which they regularly engage.

All three conditions must be met for income to be considered UBIT:

1. For the Production of Income
   Includes any activity carried on for the production of income from the sale of goods or the performance of services. Characterization as a trade or business depends on the level of active participation by the exempt organization in generating revenue.

2. Regularly Carried On
   To be considered "regularly carried on," a trade or business must exhibit "frequency and continuity" and be carried on in a manner similar to its commercial counterpart.

3. Not Substantially Related
   A substantial causal relationship must not exist between the activity and an organization's exempt purposes. The fact that an organization uses funds derived from its unrelated business activity in order to further its exempt programs does not convert an unrelated activity into a related one.

Example – The school decides to open its library every Saturday for families. During this library time, the school sells used books and other items.

1. For the Production of Income – Money is earned with the sale of used books and other items.
2. Regularly Carried On – The activity is done every Saturday
3. Not Substantially Related – The school's non-profit status is of no relation to selling used books.

Unrelated business taxable income is the gross income derived from an unrelated trade or business less deductions which are directly connected to the carrying on of such trade or business. Unrelated taxable income is subject to the regular corporate income tax rates. Exempt organizations also must make quarterly estimated tax payments under the same rules applicable to corporate income.

When an exempt organization derives income from two or more unrelated activities, unrelated taxable income is the aggregate of all unrelated income minus the aggregate of all allowable deductions.

The fragmentation rule must be used for purposes of calculating gross unrelated income.

Passive income is generally excluded from unrelated business income. This may include borrowed funds and use of unrelated debt for financed property.

C. Legal Ramifications

The tax-exempt status of a school can be put in jeopardy if unrelated business income is not reported accurately or makes up a substantial portion of an exempt organizations' income.

603.1 – EXPENDITURES

Purpose: To clarify the threshold of expenditures that need approval and define required insurance coverage.

Additional Authority:
Can. 1276§1, 2
Can. 1292-1295
Bishop's Decree 1985

A. Definitions
Not Applicable

B. Requirements
All real estate acquisitions need Diocesan approval regardless of the purchase price.

The dollar limits for expenditures, including renovation, new construction, equipment, professional service contracts, are different between systems and parish-based schools. The threshold for required approval from the bishop is as follows:

School systems: $200,000
Parish-based schools: $50,000

Expenditures below the threshold
The pastor/president has authority to spend up to the threshold for capital items, professional services, construction contracts, or other expenditures (e.g., furniture, office furnishings and equipment, and vehicles). For projects or items exceeding $5,000, at least two written bids are recommended, and the Finance Committee is to be informed in advance of the expenditure. Any borrowing that occurs to fund these expenditures must be approved by the diocesan Chief Financial Officer or the Director of Parish and School Finances.

Expenditures in excess of the threshold
For system schools the Board must approve the expenditure first. Pastors/presidents must obtain the written approval of the Bishop for all capital expenditures in excess of the thresholds and for any borrowing needed in conjunction with such projects. This limit is not only for individual transactions but is also applicable to any project or purchase with a completed or total price that exceeds this amount. This limit applies regardless of the funding source.

Renovating or remodeling of a worship space requires the permission of the Bishop regardless of the cost involved. If possible, at least three written bids are to be obtained and approval of the Finance Committee is recommended.

If the school is contemplating the construction of a new facility, or a major remodeling of, or addition to an existing structure, the pastor/president is expected to meet with the Bishop for a preliminary review of the proposed project. This review will generally include matters such as

the needs which the construction project will address, its compatibility in view of both diocesan plans and the future of the school, and the proposed timetable. Consideration should also be given to the process for choosing an architect and contractor, developing cost projections, and determining its financial feasibility, which may include the need for a capital campaign and/or the incurrence of indebtedness.

In certain cases, the Bishop may determine that additional meetings with the pastor/president, and the professionals engaged for the project should be held before he renders a final decision on the approval of the project. Generally, at least 50 percent of the total construction cost must be on hand in cash before permission to proceed with actual construction will be granted. Depending on the size and nature of the project, the consent of the Diocesan Finance Council and the College of Consultors may also be required.

Any contractor performing work on school property must furnish a certificate validating current insurance coverage for comprehensive general liability insurance and complete operational liability coverage. The Certificate of Insurance must name the Bishop of Erie, the Diocese of Erie and the parish/parish charitable trust or school system as insureds. Under no circumstances can the general liability coverage be less than $1,000,000. Bodily injury coverage is to be at least $500,000 and property damage coverage is to be at least $200,000. A contractor should not be allowed to work on school projects without furnishing a valid certificate of Workmen's Compensation. A contractor working on school property must provide a "hold harmless" agreement in favor of the school for whom the work is being performed. A "no lien" clause is to be secured if the work exceeds $25,000.

C. Legal Ramifications

It is required to follow the policies for the Protection of Children and Youth for all contractor clearances.

603.2 – INSURANCE

Purpose: To ensure all Catholic schools comply with the requirements regarding insurance.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Directive 2007
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Affordable Care Act

A. Definition
Not applicable

B. Requirements
Health Insurance
Eligible lay employees of a school/system are to be offered to be enrolled in the diocesan group health insurance plan. The rates and amounts of expected premium contribution will vary depending on the coverage option selected and whether family members of the employee are to be included.

Property and Casualty Insurance
Property and casualty insurance coverage is provided to Catholic schools through a service agreement via the protected self-insurance program which is arranged by the diocesan Office of Financial Services. In addition to buildings and contents, coverage is included for general liability, school/system-owned vehicles, boiler and machinery, workers' compensation, and employee fidelity.

As part of their responsibility to oversee the school physical plant, the building administrator should be aware of the need for risk management and loss control. Conditions which are in need of repairs or maintenance should be addressed before an accident occurs. Likewise, a priority should be given to providing a safe learning and work environment for students and staff.

Event Insurance
Catholic schools that rent out their social halls or other facilities to individuals or organizations for private, non-school events are required to have adequate liability insurance for any third-party rentals of school-controlled, parish-controlled or diocesan-owned property. Examples of such events would include wedding receptions, banquets, reunions, family parties and the like.

In order to enable the proper amount of liability insurance protection to be in place, event insurance coverage continues to be available through the Office of Financial Services. The Application for Event Insurance Coverage is located on the Office of Financial Services section of the diocesan website and is updated yearly in November.

In lieu of purchasing this coverage, renters of school facilities may be given the option of obtaining a "Certificate of Insurance" from their own insurance company. However, the certificate must name the bishop of Erie, Diocese of Erie, and the school as additional insureds. The amount of coverage listed on the certificate also must be at least $1,000,000. The certificate must be a separate document issued for the specific event which is to be held at the school. Photocopies of the face or declarations page of a homeowners' policy are not the same as certificates and are not acceptable for this purpose. In addition to obtaining the certificate, school staff is to complete an Event Notification Form. Both that form and the certificate of insurance are to be sent to the Office of Financial Services at least five business days in advance of the event.

Motor Vehicles

Motor vehicles, which are school/system-owned, are insured by way of a service agreement through the diocesan protected self-insurance program.

Directors and Officers

Governing bodies, for example, boards of directors, also are covered by directors' and officers' insurance via a service agreement with the Diocese.

C. Legal Ramifications

Schools not providing any or enough liability insurance for third-party rentals are responsible for any costs associated with the third-party rental.

When alcoholic beverages are sold or served at events held on school premises, the individuals or group responsible for the event must ensure that persons who are under the legal age of alcohol consumption or those who are visibly impaired by alcohol consumption, are not served.

A risk assessment should be performed to determine the need for security guards.

603.3 – TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

Purpose: To provide an understanding of the tax-exempt status granted to schools through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Additional Authority:
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3); 170, 2055, 2522, 6701, 6115

A. Definition

Group Tax Exemption Ruling occurs when the IRS recognizes a group of organizations as tax-exempt if they are affiliated with a central organization. This avoids the need for each of the organizations to apply for exemption individually. A group exemption letter has the same effect as an individual exemption letter except that it applies to more than one organization.

Inclusion in the Group Ruling has no effect on an organization's liability for any federal excise taxes, nor does it automatically establish an organization's exemption from state or local income, sales, or property taxes.

Private benefit/inurement activities are activities that serve the private interests of an individual or business, i.e., not in alignment with tax exempt purpose.

Substantial lobbying activities are measured by either the amount of expenses incurred by the tax-exempt organization or by the amount of time devoted to such activities.

B. Requirements

The USCCB Group Tax Exemption Ruling is issued annually to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, with respect to the Catholic organizations listed in *The Official Catholic Directory* (OCD) for a particular year by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This Group Tax Exemption Ruling qualifies all Catholic organizations in the OCD to be classified as a 501 (c)(3).

The Group Ruling establishes that:

(1) organizations included in the OCD are exempt from federal income tax and from federal unemployment tax
(2) contributions to such organizations are deductible for federal income, gift, and estate tax purposes.

There are six areas that can cause a school/system to lose its tax-exempt status:

1. Private benefit/inurement activities
2. Substantial lobbying activities
3. Political campaign activities
4. Unrelated business income (UBI) reporting (See Policy 602.7)
5. Annual reporting obligation, if applicable
6. Alignment with stated exempt purpose(s).

C. Legal Ramifications

Any violation of section 501 (c)(3) prohibition on activities carried out by tax-exempt organizations may result in revocation of tax-exempt status. This could include an organization's ability to receive contributions from donors eligible for the charitable income tax deduction. Further, excise tax penalties may be imposed in addition to revocation of exemption.

The Pennsylvania Sales Tax-Exemption Certificate must be renewed prior to its expiration date.

604.1 – 401(k) RETIREMENT PLAN

Purpose: To define the responsibilities of the school to employees regarding the 401(k) retirement plan.

Additional Authority:
SECURE Act 2019

A. Definitions
Not applicable

B. Requirements
Diocese of Erie 401(k) plan is a voluntary "qualified" retirement plan, meaning it is eligible for special tax benefits under IRS guidelines. The 401(k) plan is a defined-contribution plan. This means that the available balance in the account is determined by the contributions made to the plan and the performance of the investments. There is an employer match.

Enrollment is to be offered to all school employees, including priests, who have reached 21 years of age and have completed four consecutive months of service and at least 333 hours. All participants are immediately vested in the 401(k) Plan employer contributions as well as their own contributions. Once a participant meets the eligibility requirements and participates in the Plan any reductions in work hours will not change their eligibility.

The employer instructions found on the Diocesan Financial Services website are to be followed.

C. Legal Ramifications
Schools not complying with this policy could be held liable.

604.2 – PAYROLL

Purpose: To ensure that payroll processing is fair, consistent and accurate.

Additional Authority:
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3); 170, 2055, 2522, 6701, 6115
Bishop's Directive 2020

A. Definition

An independent contractor is a person contracted to perform work for—or provide services to—another entity as a non-employee. As a result, independent contractors must pay their own Social Security and Medicare taxes.

B. Requirements

All lay and religious employees are to be paid by check or direct deposit. Priests and lay employees are to be placed on a formal payroll and issued IRS Form W-2 for their salary payments.

The school/system must correctly classify each payee as either an independent contractor or employee. Assistance with this classification is available through consultation with the diocesan Office of Human Resources at St. Mark Catholic Center. Independent contractors, including sports officials, receiving $600 or more (yearly aggregate) are to be issued an IRS Form 1099.

Women religious are paid in accordance with the annual document entitled, Compensation for Women Religious in the Diocese of Erie. Priests are paid in accordance with the diocesan compensation policy.

The payroll must be outsourced, including the preparation of the tax returns and the payment of the taxes and other withholdings.

It is vital that a person independent of the payroll and accounting processes periodically verify that payroll tax reports have been prepared and tax payment and other deduction checks or transfers have cleared the bank. This should be performed at least semiannually.

Payroll records should be maintained for at least seven years.

604.3 – UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Purpose: To clarify the responsibilities of the involved parties concerning unemployment compensation.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Directive 2016

A. Definitions
Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC) is the public affairs arm of Pennsylvania's Catholic bishops and the Catholic dioceses of Pennsylvania.

Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) is an employer tax that provides for payments of unemployment compensation to workers who have lost their jobs.

Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation (PA UC) is administered by the Commonwealth of PA and provides temporary wage replacement income to qualified workers.

B. Requirements
Schools fall into the reimbursable category for unemployment compensation. Schools need to remit the employee PA UC withholding on a quarterly basis to Pennsylvania.

There is no employer rate. The PCC and the Commonwealth of PA have an agreement on behalf of the dioceses where the PCC pays the claims of the unemployed employees. Schools must pay the PCC an annual amount based on the number of employees. The invoice from the PCC is semi-annual.

Catholic schools are exempt from the FUTA and therefore do not pay the FUTA tax.

C. Legal Ramifications
Negligence in not remitting the employee PA UC withholding in a timely manner can cause significant legal issues.

ATHLETICS POLICIES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ATHLETICS

Purpose: To ensure all athletic activities are safely conducted and demonstrate Catholic values, fairness, respect, integrity, teamwork, self-discipline and good sportsmanship.

Additional Authority:
Bishop's Directive 2021

A. Definition

Good sportsmanship is a manner of acting and thinking which includes essential elements such as character-building and ethics and contains the core principles of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship. Those exhibiting good sportsmanship face victory and defeat with humility and graciousness.

B. Guiding Principles

1. The purpose of participating in a sports program is to enhance and support the overall Catholic educational experience. The positive effect of participating in sports is significant and can produce well-rounded individuals, help educate for life-long health, increase self-esteem and self-confidence. Participating in sports also promotes higher academic performance, helps develop the inner sense of fair play and good sportsmanship and illustrates the need for teamwork.

2. Participating in athletics is a privilege earned, not a right and therefore requires taking responsibility for one's actions on and off the field, pool, rink, or court, demonstrating a commitment of time and energy and making sacrifices toward fulfillment of shared goals. An athlete must be self-disciplined by making smart choices and abstaining from activities that would limit his/her academic, athletic and personal potential.

3. All those who participate in any capacity in athletic activities in the Diocese of Erie, which includes students, student-athletes, coaches, officials and spectators are to participate in a manner to teach, model and cultivate Gospel values in our Catholic tradition.

4. The safety and well-being of all students remain the top priority. As such, all students, student-athletes, coaches and spectators must follow all applicable policies and procedures during all athletic activities. All rules of the sport must be understood and adhered to by all involved.

5. All school/system sponsored athletics are under the direct authority of the principal.

6. At all times, students, student-athletes, coaches and spectators will conduct themselves with honor and dignity and display good sportsmanship and respect towards opponents and officials. All involved will demonstrate courtesy towards students, coaches, officials and spectators before, during and after any athletic activities.

7. Teaching and demonstrating a cooperative, positive attitude toward winning, losing and competing with dignity and graciousness is essential for all involved. Students, athletes, coaches and spectators must always communicate and act in accordance with Catholic values.

C. Recommendations

At the beginning of each sport's season, parents, coaches and volunteers should receive a copy of the Guiding Principles.

Each school/system should create a Parent's Code of Ethics and distribute it at the beginning of each sport's season.

701.1 – PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ATHLETICS IN THE SCHOOL

Purpose: To clarify the role and responsibility of the principal regarding all athletic activities in a Catholic school.

Additional Authority:
Guiding Principles for Athletics

A. Definition

Athletic activity means interscholastic athletics, and other athletic events or programs that are sponsored by the school. This includes but is not limited to open gyms, intramurals, practices, interschool practices, scrimmages and athletic contests.

B. Requirements

The principal is responsible for the athletic program and all athletic activities.
Duties of the principal, or designee(s) such as athletic director or coach include:

- Define responsibilities for self and designee(s)
- Provide and ensure appropriate adult supervision at the school's home gymnasium, field, pool or facility
- Exclude any player who has demonstrated improper conduct
- Provide parents with program expectations and parental expectations
- Be responsible for the fair treatment and safety of all visitors, coaches, teams and officials attending games conducted by the school
- Review of the school/system level policies and their dissemination
- Ensure that all roster forms for interscholastic athletic programs in which the school participates are in writing and bear the signature of the principal
- Guarantee proper adult supervision, specifically, two adults with all required clearances are present at all athletic activities, as referenced in the *Policy for the Protection of Children*. (See Section III.C.2.)
- Be responsible for verifying, in writing, the eligibility of contestants in accordance with the policies of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA), if applicable, school/system level policies and *Policies for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie*
- Ensure all legal and safety aspects of the programs are in compliance with applicable policies
- Safeguard that all adults in the programs uphold and model behaviors that are consistent with Catholic teachings.

If an athletic activity is occurring on school property, but is not sponsored by the school, the principal must be assured by the sponsoring agent that no school level sponsorship will be implied via advertising and/or use of school logos.

C. Legal Ramifications

While some of the management of an athletic program may be delegated to an athletic director and/or coach, the delegation does not relieve the principal of the responsibility for the athletic programs.

702.1 – SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS IN ATHLETICS

Purpose: To help ensure appropriate supervision of and responsibility for student well-being by coaches and athletic directors.

Additional Authority:
Guiding Principles for Athletics
Policy for the Protection of Children
42 Pa.C.S.A. §8337.1

A. Definition

Athletic activity means interscholastic athletics, and other athletic events or programs that are sponsored by the school. This includes but is not limited to open gyms, intramurals, practices, interschool practices, scrimmages and athletic contests.
Due diligence refers to the level of judgment, care, prudence, determination, and activity that a person would reasonably be expected to do under particular circumstances.
Supervision, for this policy, refers to the duty of care provided by the coach or other adult, with all necessary clearances. The duty of care includes the responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect students from risks of injury or harm.

B. Requirements

All students are to be under supervision during athletic activities. This includes when students are on school property, on school grounds and when they are engaging in a school-sponsored athletic activity.

All coaches and athletic directors are to exercise due diligence to protect the safety and security of students under their supervision. Clear expectations of behavior in emergency situations should be reviewed with the athletes.

Coaches and athletic directors have the responsibility to immediately report to the principal an accident, safety hazard, defective or unsafe equipment, and dangerous or unsafe conditions.

All requirements of the *Policy for the Protection of Children* must be strictly adhered to while supervising students.

C. Legal Ramifications

A school employee or volunteer that provides first aid to a student is immune from civil liability due to an act or omission by the employee, except an act or omission intentionally designed to seriously harm the student receiving first aid care.

If a student is injured while not being supervised appropriately, the school and the coach and/or athletic director may be held liable for negligence.

703.1 – ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN NON-PIAA SPORTS

Purpose: To ensure all students participating in athletic activities meet and abide by the eligibility rules for Catholic schools.

Additional Authority:
Guiding Principles
Safety in Youth Sports Act (24 P.S. 5321 et seq)
Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act (24 P.S. 5331 et seq)

A. Definition

Varsity level, in this policy, refers to a middle school setting of 7th- 8th grade.
Junior Varsity, in this policy, refers to a grade grouping of 5th through 6th grade.

B. Requirements

Required Participant Forms for non-PIAA Athletics

Check your school website for the required forms.

All participants, listed on the roster form, must annually submit completed:

- Catholic Schools Release and Authorization to Participate form
- Understanding of Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms and Warning Signs form
- Understanding of Risk of Concussion and Traumatic Brain Injury form
- Participation Waiver for Communicable Diseases

These forms are kept on file at the school. Students are not eligible to participate without these signed forms.

Elementary School - Grade Level Eligibility for Participation

Students must be in 4th through 8th grade to participate in inter-school athletic programs. Students in K, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade are not permitted to participate in inter-school athletic programs. Students in K through 3rd grade are permitted to participate in non-competitive athletic events. For schools with single-grade teams, students from the specific grade-level may compete unless written school policy includes exceptions.

For schools with a Junior Varsity Team, a 4th grade student may participate at the Junior Varsity Level to augment a Junior Varsity team due to low participation numbers if the following criteria are met:

- A request must be submitted in writing to the school principal or designee.
- This request and approval of the request must be completed before the 4th grade student is allowed to play.

For schools with a Varsity team, a 6th grade student may participate at the Varsity Level to augment a Varsity team due to low participation numbers if the following criteria are met:

- A request must be submitted in writing to the school principal or designee.

- This request and approval of the request must be completed before the 6th grader is allowed to play.
- Once a player is placed on the Varsity roster, he/she may not be moved back down and may not compete in a Junior Varsity level contest, unless a specific exemption is granted.

See Best Practices for guidelines to define "low participation numbers."

A 5th grade student may not participate at the Varsity Level, except for the cross-country exception.

A 7th or 8th grade student may not participate at the Junior Varsity Level.

Elementary School - Age Requirements for Participation
A player must not have reached his/her 15th birthday before September 1st of the current school year to participate at the Varsity Level.

A player must not have reached his/her 13th birthday before September 1st of the current school year to participate at the Junior Varsity Level.

Parish Religious Education and RCIC (Rite of Christian Initiation for Children) Eligibility
Each school or school system must determine the eligibility of public school students who attend parish religious education. Decisions concerning eligibility of a student must be consistent with the written school-level policy.

Transfer Students
Each school/system is to have written procedures on handling students transferring in from a public, private, or another Catholic school. These procedures must include a sign-off from the new school's principal verifying that the transfer is not due to athletics.

C. Legal Ramifications
Having written school-level policies and consistently following those policies concerning eligibility of play are very important when discrimination claims are made.

703.1A – Appendix – Participation Waiver for Communicable Diseases

INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL

Participation Waiver for Communicable Diseases

Interscholastic athletics present a myriad of challenges concerning contagious illnesses that primarily attack the upper respiratory system.

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of communicable diseases, ***SCHOOL NAME*** will take necessary precautions and comply with guidelines from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, PA DOH, as well as the NFHS and PIAA, to reduce the risks to students, coaches, and their families. ***SCHOOL NAME*** reserves the right to adjust and implement precautionary methods as necessary to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators.

Some precautionary methods may include but are not limited to:

1. Health screenings (including testing and temperature checks) prior to any practice, event, or team meeting with participation in the activities being limited and/or prohibited where an individual displays positive responses or symptoms.
2. Encourage and promote healthy hygiene practices
3. Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities. Intensify cleaning and disinfection of equipment.
4. Educate Athletes, Coaches, and Staff on health and safety protocols.
5. Require Athletes and Coaches to provide their own water bottle for hydration.

By signing this form, the undersigned voluntarily agree to the following Waiver and release of liability. The undersigned agree to release and discharge all claims for ourselves, our heirs, and as a parent or legal guardian for the Student named below, against the Diocese of Erie and the ***SCHOOL NAME***, its Board of Directors, successors, assigns, officers, agents, employees, and volunteers and will hold them harmless from any and all liability or demands for personal injury, psychological injury, sickness, death, or claims resulting from personal injury or property damage, of any nature whatsoever which may be incurred by the Student or the undersigned relating to or as a result of the Student's participation in athletic programs, events, and activities.

The undersigned acknowledge that participating in athletic programs, events, and activities may include a possible exposure to a communicable disease. The undersigned further acknowledge that they are aware of the risks and that certain vulnerable individuals may have greater health risks, including individuals with serious underlying health conditions such as, but not limited to: high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised by chemotherapy for cancer, and other conditions requiring such therapy. While particular recommendations and personal discipline may reduce the risks associated with participating in athletics, the risk of serious illness, medical complications and possible death does exist.

We knowingly and freely assume all such risks, both known and unknown, even if arising from the negligence of others, and assume full responsibility for Student's participation in athletics. We willingly agree to comply with the stated recommendations put forth by ***SCHOOL NAME*** to limit the exposure and spread of communicable diseases. We certify that Student is in good physical condition or believe Student to be in good physical condition and allow participation in this sport at our own risk.

Sport: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Student Athlete: _____ Date: _____

703.1 – Best Practices – ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

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When writing the school-level eligibility requirements, consider defining the eligibility parameters for public school students.

Consider using the following guidelines for students to move up to a higher grade-level team.

Basketball: Nine (9) or fewer students would allow for a 4th grader to move up to junior varsity or a 6th grader to move up to varsity level.

Soccer: 16 or fewer participants would allow for a 4th grader to move up to a junior varsity level or a 6th grade to move up to a varsity level.

The 4th or 6th grade student's physical maturity and any safety concerns should be considered before moving the student to a higher grade-level team, regardless of the student's eligibility to move up.

704.1 – COED PARTICIPATION IN WRESTLING AND TACKLE SPORTS

Purpose: To clarify coed participation in contact sports in Catholic school athletic programs.

Additional Authority:
Guiding Principles for Athletics
Pennsylvania Catholic Conference
Bishop's Directive 2021

A. Definition

Athletic activity means interscholastic athletics, and other athletic events or programs that are sponsored by the school. This includes but is not limited to open gyms, intramurals, practices, interschool practices, scrimmages and athletic contests.

B. Requirements

All Catholic schools in the diocese must follow the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC) guidelines for coed participation in coed contact sports. Excluding exceptions noted below, coed participation is forbidden in the following contact sports or athletic activity: wrestling, tackle football and tackle rugby.

The following are specific to the sport:

Wrestling:

- Under no circumstances may a Catholic school athlete wrestle someone of the opposite sex.
- Catholic schools shall not permit a female on a wrestling team.
- In the event a match is scheduled with someone from the opposite sex from an opposing team, the Catholic school athlete would either have to forfeit the match or negotiate the match with the opposing team, so a female wrestler would not wrestle a Catholic school athlete.
- If a wrestler reaches the individual competition level, it will be left to the discretion of the wrestler's parents whether or not to allow him to wrestle a female opponent.
- If the school enters into a co-op arrangement with another team, that team would have to honor the Catholic coed contact sports policy regardless of which team is the host.

Tackle Football:

- Catholic schools shall not permit a female on a tackle football team.
- This would not prevent Catholic schools from playing teams with female athletes on the opposing team. The Catholic coed sports policy is only for Catholic teams and cannot impose its policies on any other team.
- If the school enters into a PIAA co-op agreement hosted by a public school team, it will be left to the discretion of each football player's parents whether or not to allow that player to play on a team with a member of the opposite sex. A Catholic school team would not be permitted to host a co-op team that includes members of the opposite sex.

Tackle Rugby:

- Catholic schools shall not permit a female on a tackle rugby team.
- This would not prevent Catholic schools from playing teams with female athletes on the opposing team. The Catholic coed sports policy is only for Catholic teams and cannot oppose its policies on any other team.
- If the school enters into a co-op arrangement with another team, that team would have to honor the Catholic coed contact sports policy regardless of which team is the host.

Coed participation in all other sports activities in Catholic schools would be at the discretion of the school administrator after having consulted with the Catholic Schools Office.

C. Legal Ramifications

As the PCC continues to review and revise it guidelines for coed participation in contact sports, schools must abide by the most recent updates. The Catholic Schools Office will notify schools if the PCC Coed Contact Sports policy changes

705.1 – ATHLETICS DURING WEATHER CONCERNS

Purpose: To help keep student-athletes, coaches and spectators safe during all athletic activities.

Additional Authority:
Guiding Principles of Athletics

A. Definition
Supervision, for this policy, refers to the duty of care provided by the coach or other adult, with all necessary clearances. The duty of care includes the responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect students from risks of injury or harm.

B. Requirements
The principal will assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during athletic events. An important aspect of supervision of students is that all watches, warnings and advisories be taken seriously.

Each team is to develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a vehicle or school bus.

Lightning and Thunder
When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.

Review the lightning safety policy annually with all coaches and train all personnel. Inform student-athletes and their parents of the lightning policy at start of the season.

Heat
Coaches must adopt strategies to acclimatize athletes to perform in the heat, along with a fluid replacement plan that anticipates already dehydrated athletes.

Practices must be modified to reduce intensity, duration, and equipment depending on the environmental heat stress. All players must be watched for any signs and symptoms of developing heat related injury and be treated immediately.

C. Legal Ramifications
All individuals have the right to leave an athletic site in order to seek a safe structure if the person feels in danger of impending lightning activity, without fear of repercussions or penalty from anyone. If practical, students should inform the coach of their intended location.

705.1 – Best Practices – ATHLETICS DURING WEATHER CONCERNS

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In order to acclimatize athletes to the heat and reduce risk for heat injury the following should be provided:

- Easy and often access to fluids. Athletes must have unlimited access to appropriate fluids. Fluid breaks must be scheduled for all practices and become more frequent as the heat and humidity levels rise.
- Every team must have an emergency action plan for obtaining emergency medical services as needed.
- An athlete who has ceased to be active due to heat related stress may become active again as soon as he or she is symptom-free. However, it is important to continue to monitor the athlete.

First aid kits should accompany the team to the safe shelter.

706.1 – CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

Purpose: To educate students, parents and coaches regarding concussions and traumatic brain injury and to help keep athletes safe.

Additional Authority:
Safety in Youth Sports Act (24 P.S. 5321 et seq)
Guiding Principles of Athletics

A. Definition

Appropriate medical professional shall mean one of the following:

1. A licensed physician who is trained in the evaluation and management of concussions
2. A licensed or certified health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and designated by a licensed physician trained in the evaluation and management of concussions
3. A licensed psychologist neuropsychologically trained in the evaluation and management of concussions or who has postdoctoral training in neuropsychology and specific training in the evaluation and management of concussions.

Athletic activity means interscholastic athletics, and other athletic events or programs that are sponsored by the school. This includes but is not limited to open gyms, intramurals, practices, interschool practices, scrimmages and athletic contests.

Concussion, relative to this policy, is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. A concussion can change the way a student's brain normally works, can occur during practices and/or contests in any sport and can happen even if a student has not lost consciousness. A potentially concussed student may exhibit one or more of the following symptoms: headache or pressure in the head, feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy, ringing in the ears, nausea or vomiting, difficulty paying attention, balance problems or dizziness, memory problems, slurred speech, delayed response to questions double or blurry vision, confusion or bothered by light or noise. Students may have some symptoms of concussions immediately. Others may be delayed for hours or days after injury, such as concentration and memory complaints, irritability and other personality changes, sensitivity to light and noise, sleep disturbances, psychological adjustment problems and depression and disorders of taste and smell.

B. Requirements

Each school year and prior to participating in athletic events, the student and the student's parent/guardian must sign and return, to the student's school, the Understanding of Risk of Concussion and Traumatic Brain Injury Form.

Removal from Play

A student who, as determined by a game official, coach from the student's team, certified

athletic trainer, licensed physician or other official designated by the student's school, exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion or traumatic brain injury while participating in an athletic activity shall be removed by the coach from participation at that time.

If a student is known to have exhibited signs or symptoms of a concussion or traumatic brain injury at any time prior to or following an athletic activity, the student shall be prevented from participating in an athletic activity until he/she is cleared to return to play. The coach shall not return a student to participation until the student is evaluated and cleared for return to participation in writing by an appropriate medical professional.

Training for Coaches

Once each school year, a coach of an athletic activity shall complete the concussion management certification training course offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or another provider approved by the Department of Health. Proof of completion must be kept on file at the school. A coach of an athletic activity shall not coach the athletic activity until the coach completes the required training course.

Penalties for coaches found in violation of the training component shall be as follows:

1. For a first violation, suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the remainder of the season
2. For a second violation, suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the remainder of the season and for the next season
3. For a third violation, permanent suspension from coaching any athletic activity.

C. Legal Ramifications

Coaches who continue to coach without proper training could be held liable in the case of a student-athlete who suffers a concussion or traumatic brain injury.

706.1 – Best Practices – CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

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Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends:

It is important for an athlete's parent(s) and coach(es) to watch for concussion symptoms after each day's return to play progression activity. An athlete should only move to the next step if they do not have any new symptoms at the current step. If an athlete's symptoms come back or if he or she gets new symptoms, this is a sign that the athlete is pushing too hard. The athlete should stop these activities and the athlete's medical provider should be contacted. After more rest and no concussion symptoms, the athlete can start at the previous step.

Step 1: Back to regular activities (such as school)

Athlete is back to their regular activities (such as school).

Step 2: Light aerobic activity

Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase an athlete's heart rate. This means about 5 to 10 minutes on an exercise bike, walking, or light jogging. No weightlifting at this point.

Step 3: Moderate activity

Continue with activities to increase an athlete's heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, moderate-intensity weightlifting (less time and/or less weight from their typical routine).

Step 4: Heavy, non-contact activity

Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting routine, non-contact sport-specific drills (in three planes of movement).

Step 5: Practice & full contact

Young athlete may return to practice and full contact (if appropriate for the sport) in controlled practice.

Step 6: Competition

Young athlete may return to competition.

It is important to monitor symptoms and cognitive function carefully during each increase of exertion. Athletes should only progress to the next level of exertion if they are not experiencing symptoms at the current level. If symptoms return at any step, an athlete should stop these activities as this may be a sign the athlete is pushing too hard. Only after additional rest, when the athlete is once again not experiencing symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours, should he or she start again at the previous step during which symptoms were experienced.

707.1 – SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST PREVENTION

Purpose: To educate students, parents and coaches regarding sudden cardiac arrest and to make provisions to help keep athletes safe.

Additional Authority:
Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act (24 P.S. 5331 et seq)
Guiding Principles of Athletics
Pennsylvania Act 17 of 2026, Cardiac Preparedness Legislation, also known as Greg Moyer's Law

A. Definition

Athletic activity means interscholastic athletics, and other athletic events or programs that are sponsored by the school. This includes but is not limited to open gyms, intramurals, practices, interschool practices, scrimmages and athletic contests.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is a portable and easy-to-use medical device that can analyze the heart's rhythm and, if necessary, deliver an electrical shock, or defibrillation, to help the heart re-establish an effective rhythm.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is a life-saving emergency procedure performed when a person's heart stops beating or fails to pump blood effectively.

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), as understood in this policy, is a condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating. If this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing the heart to suddenly stop beating. Although SCA happens unexpectedly, some people may have signs or symptoms such as the following: dizziness, lightheadedness, shortness of breath, extreme fatigue, difficulty breathing, weakness, nausea, vomiting, racing or fluttering heartbeat, chest pains, or fainting.

B. Requirements

Each school year and prior to participating in athletic events, the student and the student's parent/guardian must sign and return to the student's school the sudden cardiac arrest symptoms and warning signs information sheet.

Removal from Play

A student who, as determined by a game official, coach from the student's team, certified athletic trainer, licensed physician or other official designated by the student's school, exhibits signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest while participating in an athletic activity shall be removed by the coach from participation at that time and seek medical assistance.

If a student is known to have exhibited signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest at any time prior to or following an athletic activity, the student shall be prevented from participating in an athletic activity until evaluated and cleared for return. A student removed or prevented from

participating in an athletic activity shall not return to participation until the student is evaluated and cleared for return to participation in writing by a licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or cardiologist.

Training for Coaches

Cardiac Preparedness

Pennsylvania Act 17 of 2026, Cardiac Preparedness Legislation, also known as Greg Moyer's Law, mandates that any school entity or nonpublic school participating in interscholastic athletics must have an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) "readily accessible" for students during all school-sponsored athletic events and practices. This requirement applies regardless of whether the activity takes place on school grounds or at an external venue.

The legislation also requires athletic coaches (head coaches, assistant coaches and sponsors of extracurricular athletic activities) to be trained in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) once every two years. The instruction must be conducted by recognized organizations such as the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or the National Safety Council.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Once each school year, a coach of an athletic activity shall complete the sudden cardiac arrest training course offered by a provider approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Evidence of completion must be kept on file at the school. A coach of an athletic activity shall not coach the athletic activity until the coach completes the required training course.

Penalties for coaches found in violation of the training component shall be as follows:

1. For a first violation, suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the remainder of the season.
2. For a second violation, suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the remainder of the season and for the next season.
3. For a third violation, permanent suspension from coaching any athletic activity.

C. Legal Ramifications

Coaches who continue to coach without proper training could be held liable in the case of a student athlete who suffers Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

708.1 – SAFETY OF ATHLETES

Purpose: To list expectations of coaches/supervising adults to ensure the maximum opportunity for athlete safety.

Additional Authority:
Guiding Principles for Athletics
Student Accident or Injury Policy #303.7

A. Definition
Not Applicable

B. Requirements
Coaches must inspect the playing environment (clean floor, proper padding, glass on field, etc.) prior to allowing the athletes to begin practice.

Coaches must provide access to drinking water. If a water fountain is not nearby, coaches must make sure the players understand who will provide drinking water. Determine if the coach will provide water for the entire team or if players provide their own water. Coaches may never discipline players by denying them water or water breaks. Regular water breaks should be built into each practice.

Coaches must ensure that any equipment worn by a player fits properly, is used correctly, and meets standard requirement/inspections. Coaches must also instruct the player on consequences of improper use of equipment.

Coaches must have a completed Release/Authorization to Participate Form for each participant on his/her team at all practices and games. This must be completed and in the coach's possession before the team's first practice.

1. In the case of a youth's illness or accident, notification of parents is required before action is taken or as soon as possible thereafter.
2. When it is impossible to notify parents before acting, the coaching staff is to provide emergency care, first aid or rescue for any injury or illness.

Medication must not be given to any youth by a coach unless he/she has been given a written request by the player's parent or legal guardian. All personnel should be informed that the administration of any drug (prescribed or over the counter) without the order of the physician and permission of parent or guardian could be interpreted as practicing medicine and is, therefore, prohibited by law.

Coaches must be aware of policies and procedures for treating injuries where communicable diseases could be transmitted, see Communicable Diseases and Infectious Conditions Policy #202.4.

In case of an injury that requires emergency care, one person stays with the injured athlete while the other person places a call for emergency care. In the event of an injury:

1. Coaches must take time to evaluate injuries.
2. Parents must be notified by the coach whenever an injury occurs.
3. A player must never be allowed to re-enter a game or practice unless a coach has reasonably determined that he/she can perform without risk of further injury.
4. An "Injury Report" form (Appendix 202.3A) must be completed by the coach and submitted to the school administrator within 24 hours of the occurrence of the injury. This form must be completed if the injury took place during a game or practice session.

Every player must be insured by his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) through an insurance program. The Diocese of Erie, Catholic schools within the diocese and all of their agents, in no way will assume responsibility for injuries sustained in games or practices. Parents must sign a release on the athlete's player contract.

C. Legal Ramifications

Failure to comply with all aspects of this policy could increase the school's liability and the coach's personal liability.

709.1 – COACHING IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Purpose: To clarify the roles and responsibilities of Catholic school coaches.

Additional Authority:
Guiding Principles for Athletics
Policy for The Protection of Children and Youth
Pennsylvania Act 17 of 2026, Cardiac Preparedness Legislation, also known as Greg Moyer's Law

A. Definition

Athletic activity means interscholastic athletics, and other athletic events or programs that are sponsored by the school. This includes but is not limited to open gyms, intramurals, practices, interschool practices, scrimmages and athletic contests.

Due diligence refers to the level of judgment, care, prudence, determination and activity that a person would reasonably be expected to demonstrate under particular circumstances.

Season, for this policy, refers to the time period or portion of one year in which regulated games or competitions of the sport are in session.

B. Requirements

All coaches are required to have the appropriate and current child protection and other clearances and paperwork on file in their corresponding school/parish and completed any necessary trainings before they are permitted to coach at any athletic activities.

Coaches are responsible for the safety and welfare of the team and must always demonstrate proper due diligence. All student-athletes are to be under coaching supervision at all times, when involved in any athletic activity. Coaches are responsible for the safety of student-athletes within school buildings, on school property, and while traveling and experiencing any athletic activity. The coach is ultimately responsible for athlete conduct and behavior during all athletic activities and must provide a safe physical environment for all. Catholic school administrators must have reasonable assurance that participating in a league or tournament will not conflict with Catholic teachings. If an administrator or coach becomes aware of a conflict with Catholic teachings, the Catholic athletic team must withdraw from participation in the particular game, contest or activity.

Basic coaching requirements

Coaches must possess, at the very least, basic knowledge in skills, tactics and strategies for the sport they are coaching. In addition, basic knowledge in training, nutrition and injury prevention is highly encouraged.

All athletes, coaches, officials and spectators must adhere to the Guiding Principles for Athletics and the Code of Conduct.

C. Legal Ramifications

If a student-athlete is injured while unsupervised, the school and the coach may be held liable for negligence.

710.1 – SOCIAL MEDIA FOR VOLUNTEER COACHES AND ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

Purpose: To clearly articulate what is expected from volunteer coaches and athletic directors regarding social media.

Additional Authority:
Guidelines for Use/Disclosure of Photographic and Video Images of Children and Youth
Policy for The Protection of Children of Youth
Guiding Principles for Athletics Policy

A. Definition

Social media, for purposes of this policy, includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to a coach's or athletic director's or someone else's personal web site, web log or blog, journal or diary, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated with the school or Diocese of Erie, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

B. Requirements

Coaches and athletic directors must avoid posting any information or engaging in communications that violate state or federal laws, as well as applicable policies and guidelines of the school and/or the policies for all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie. All policies for the Protection of Children and Youth must be followed.

Coaches and athletic directors must never post identifiable youth athlete information, including photographs or videos, without the written permission of both the athlete and the parent/guardian. Coaches and athletic directors must not 'tag' photos of other coaches, parents, athletes, or league administrators without the prior written permission from the adult or parent/guardian of the minor. If written permission is received from athletes and parents to post team photos to a site, never post a child's first and last name—use only first names. Do not discuss injuries or status of any of the athletes. The coach or athletic director may be personally responsible for any litigation that may arise should that individual make any unlawful defamatory, slanderous, or libelous statements against any athlete, family, team, coach or any other person or organization. Posting any comments that disparage or degrade an athlete, family, team, coach or any other person or organization, can result in disciplinary action.

Postings that include unlawful discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or other unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject the coach/athletic director to disciplinary action.

Coaches and athletic directors must make clear that any views expressed on social media are the coach's or athletic director's alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Diocese of Erie or any Catholic school within the Diocese.

When a coach or athletic director posts information they must:

- Not create a link from a personal blog, website, or other social networking site to the school website that identifies the coach/athletic director as speaking on behalf of the school.
- Never represent self as a spokesperson for the school. If the school is a subject of the content being created, do not represent self as speaking on behalf of the school.
- Coaches and athletic directors may not use the school logo or trademark on their personal blogs or networks.
- Do not engage with fans or players from other schools if they are making derogatory comments online.
- Never engage with fans or players if they are making derogatory comments online.

C. Legal Ramifications

The landscape of social media is ever-changing. Always err on the side of caution.

Any coach or athletic director who is an employee of the school/system, must also comply with the Social Media Policy #402.2.

711.1 – PARTICIPATION IN PIAA (PENNSYLVANIA INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION)

Purpose: To define the expectations for teams that participate in the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA). This policy is only applicable to schools that are members of PIAA.

Additional Authority:
PIAA Constitution, Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, Rules and Regulations

A. Definition

Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) is a state-level organization with the purposes of:

A. Promoting and supporting the educational values of interscholastic athletics and the high ideals of good sportsmanship
B. Promoting, establishing, and enforcing uniform standards in interscholastic athletic competition among member schools
C. Promoting and supporting safe and healthy interscholastic athletic competition.

B. Requirements

All schools that are PIAA members, must follow the constitution, bylaws, policies and procedures, and rules and regulation of PIAA whenever applicable.

The responsibility to comply with and enforce the PIAA constitution, bylaws, policies and procedures, and rules and regulations rests with the school principal. The principal may delegate some of these powers, but this does not relieve the principal of the responsibility for any infraction by the school.

The Coed Participation in Wrestling and Tackle Sports policy (Policy #704) limits the participation and competition within certain sports.

C. Legal Ramifications

Failure to comply with all PIAA policies, procedures, rules and regulations, may cause penalties to be imposed against the school or dismissal from the PIAA.

712.1 – STUDENT-ATHLETES AND THE USE OF THEIR OWN NAME, IMAGE, AND/OR LIKENESS

Purpose: In accordance with Pennsylvania law and the Bylaws of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA), this policy has been developed to address name, image, and likeness (NIL) activities of student-athletes as well as the notification of requirements for student-athletes who enter into an agency contract.

Additional Authority:
PIAA Bylaws
Act 139 of 2022

A. Definitions

Agency Contract is an agreement in which a student-athlete authorizes a person to negotiate or solicit on behalf of the student-athlete a professional-sports-services contract or an endorsement contract.

Collective refers to individuals and/or companies who cooperatively associate together to form an entity whose goal is to provide NIL opportunities to student-athletes of one or more specific schools.

Consideration consists of cash, items which are the equivalent of cash, items which are a representation of value, and items which have intrinsic value other than those permitted under Article II, Section 3 of the PIAA Bylaws.

Endorsement Contract is an agreement under which a student-athlete is employed or receives consideration to use on behalf of the other party value that the student-athlete may have because of publicity, reputation, following, or fame obtained because of athletic ability or performance.

Professional Sports Services Contract is an agreement under which an individual is employed as a professional athlete or agrees to render services as a player on a professional sports team or with a professional sports organization.

B. Requirements

A student-athlete may receive consideration for the use of his/her own NIL through commercial endorsements, promotional activities, social media presence, product or service advertisements, and unique digital items/assets.

A student-athlete shall not enter into an NIL contract as an incentive for enrollment decisions or membership on a team.

No school within the Diocese nor anyone employed by or affiliated therewith, including booster clubs, coaches, collectives, administrators and alumni, shall solicit, arrange, negotiate or pay for a student-athlete's use of his/her NIL and/or the provision of consideration to a student-athlete for the use of his/her NIL. This prohibition does not apply to such actions on behalf of an individual's own child.

Prohibited NIL Activities

In engaging in NIL activities, a student-athlete may not:

1. Make any reference to PIAA or a PIAA member school (including the school and/or team name, nicknames, terms by which a school or team is commonly referred or identified, logo)
2. Wear school uniforms or school-identifying apparel or items
3. Endorse or promote any third party entities, goods, or services- during team/school activities; or
4. Wear the apparel or display the logo, insignia , or identifying mark of an NIL partner during any team/school athletic activities unless it is a part of the standard school uniform for that sport.

A student-athlete may not engage in any NIL activities involving, displaying, or endorsing the following categories of products and services, including a person, company, or organization related to or associated therewith:

1. Adult entertainment products or services
2. Alcohol products
3. Casinos and gambling, including sports betting, the lottery, and betting in connection with video games, on-line games and mobile devices
4. Tobacco and electronic smoking products and devices
5. Opioids and prescription pharmaceuticals
6. Controlled dangerous substances
7. Weapons, firearms, and ammunition.

A student-athlete may not engage in any NIL activities involving, displaying, or endorsing an activity or product that is contrary to the school's Catholic identity and mission.

Disclosure of NIL Contract/Agreement

If entering into any type of NIL contracts/agreements, a student-athlete shall notify the principal and the athletic director within seventy-two (72) hours after entering into the agreement.

Disclosure of Agency Contract

If entering into an agency contract, a student-athlete shall notify the athletic director within seventy-two (72) hours after signing the contract or before the student-athlete's next scheduled athletic event, whichever occurs first.

As part of this notification, the student-athlete shall provide the name and contact information of his/her athlete agent.

Penalties

Failure to comply with this policy may result in loss of eligibility to compete as a student-athlete or disciplinary action, up to and including, expulsion.