



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

Policies and Procedures Manual

2.00 ORGANIZATION

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RIGHT TO AMEND

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

2.00 ORGANIZATION

To carry out policies and guide the child’s experiences in learning, our Catholic schools are organizations which follow Canon Law. This organization is composed of the Bishop, Diocesan superintendent, associate superintendents, Diocesan Board of Education for Catholic schools, Diocesan school consultants, pastors, principals, assistant principals, teachers, the individual consultative school boards, parents, and volunteers. Each of these entities has specific roles.

2.01 BISHOP

The Bishop of Little Rock is the chief teacher of the Catholic faith in the Diocese. As participants in the teaching mission of the Church, Catholic elementary and secondary school personnel are responsible to the Bishop and his delegates, the superintendent, and the pastor.

The Bishop has sole authority to recognize and designate a school as “Catholic”. Fiscal responsibility for a non-parish school must be contractually determined with the Bishop and the superintendent of Catholic schools.

All policies and procedures in the manual are approved by the Bishop.

2.02 SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent is appointed by the Bishop and is responsible for providing direction, services, and leadership to ensure the Catholic identity of and support for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock.

The superintendent ensures the curriculum provides a quality Catholic education.

The superintendent works with clergy and the administration to support the operations of the school.

The superintendent provides data and other information to the Bishop and clergy when proposals are presented for new schools, amalgamation, grade reductions, or school closures.

2.03 ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT/S

The Associate Superintendents assist the superintendent in providing direction, services, and leadership to ensure the Catholic identity of and support for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock.

2.04 DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The Diocesan Board of Education is the chief advisory body to the superintendent regarding the formulation of policies affecting Diocesan, parish, and private Catholic schools.

When approved by the Bishop, policies recommended by the Diocesan Board of Education are binding to the superintendent, parish school boards, pastors, school principals, staff, and faculty.

The Diocesan Board of Education is appointed by the Bishop from a list of candidates recommended by

pastors, principals, and the Diocesan Board of Education.

The charter and bylaws of the Diocesan Board of Education are available from the Office of Catholic Schools.

2.05 DIOCESAN SCHOOL CONSULTANTS

School employees may be appointed to serve as consultants to the Office of Catholic Schools on matters pertaining to the general operation of a school.

2.06 PASTOR

The pastor has final approval over policies of the parish school, which is integral to the teaching mission of the parish. He fulfills this function, guided by Diocesan policies and in collaboration with the Office of Catholic Schools, the principal, the school board, and the finance council of the parish.

The pastor is responsible for the fiscal operations of the school. The pastor should subsidize the parish school from parish resources according to a reasonable formula, with due consideration to the mission and the operating needs of the school, the resources, and the mission of the parish.

The pastor of a parish without a school, whose parish children attend a Catholic school in another parish, shall consider in good faith the ability to subsidize an in-parish rate for parishioners and to participate in fundraising efforts by the parish with the Catholic school.

Pastors shall ensure that schools collaborate with parishes' religious education programs by sharing facilities, activities, curricula, and teachers, whenever possible.

The pastor, as the primary spiritual leader of the school, supports the school by providing school liturgies and sacraments, attending school functions, speaking about the school at weekend liturgies, and promoting the school within the parish and larger community.

In parishes where the Bishop has appointed a lay person, priest, deacon, or religious to administer a parish, the Office of Catholic Schools will request the Bishop provide specific responsibilities toward the school in writing.

2.07 PRINCIPAL

The principal must be degreed, qualified, and approved by the pastor in consultation with the Office of Catholic Schools.

The principal serves as the chief educational leader of the school and reports to the pastor. The principal administers and supervises the school in conformity with Diocesan and local school policies under the direction of the pastor and the Office of Catholic Schools and represents the school to the community.

The principal must be a practicing Catholic, live a lifestyle consistent with Catholic moral values, exercise

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professional conduct consistent with Catholic teachings, and promote the Catholic identity of the school through personal example. As the school's spiritual leader, under the direction of the pastor, the principal must ensure the school's Catholic identity, practice, and culture, and provide for the faith formation of students and staff.

As the school's educational leader, the principal is responsible for implementing the Diocesan curriculum, assigning and evaluating teachers, hiring new personnel (with approval of the pastor); providing teachers professional growth, managing resources, and administering operational procedures. The principal may delegate responsibilities to the assistant principal, if applicable.

As the school's fiscal leader, under the direction of the pastor, the principal is responsible for overseeing and administering the financial and marketing needs of the school.

In a Diocesan parish or regional elementary school, the principal reports directly to and is evaluated by the pastor. Procedures for evaluations are available from the Office of Catholic Schools.

The principal will promote the school and foster good communication with the staff, students, parents, parish community and within the larger community.

2.08 ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

A full-time assistant principal that is degreed, qualified, and approved by the pastor is recommended for schools with 300 or more students. Assistant principals minimally must have a teaching license.

A part-time assistant principal is recommended for schools of 200 – 300 students.

The assistant principal must be a practicing Catholic, live a lifestyle consistent with Catholic moral values, exercise professional conduct consistent with Catholic teachings, and promote the Catholic identity of the school through personal example.

In buildings without an assistant principal, the principal will designate a certified staff member to assume emergency responsibility when the principal is absent from the building.

The assistant principal assumes responsibilities as delegated by the principal.

The assistant principal will promote the school and foster good communication with the staff, students, parents, parish community and within the larger community.

2.09 TEACHERS

The teacher is directly responsible for the educational experiences and supervision of students. Each teacher reports to the principal and is responsible for carrying out Diocesan and school policies and procedures.

The teacher in a Catholic school is to live a lifestyle consistent with Catholic moral values, exercise

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professional conduct consistent with Catholic teachings, and promote the Catholic identity of the school through personal example.

The teacher will promote the school and foster good communication with the students, parents, the parish community and within the larger community.

2.10 SCHOOL BOARD

School boards are to follow the guidelines recommended by the Diocesan Board of Education and approved by the Bishop.

Each parish with a Catholic school shall establish a school board as a consultative body to advise and support the pastor and principal.

The responsibilities of the school board, in cooperation with the pastor and principal may include: recommending a mission statement grounded in Catholic faith traditions; recommending policy; setting long-range goals for the school; developing means to finance the school (including tuition structures, financial development, and fundraising); promoting communication and public relations; and evaluating the school's goals and plans.

The school board will promote the school within the larger community.

2.11 PARENTS

The Church's vision of the parent's role in educating their child/children is put forth in the following passage from the Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, Vatican Council II.

“Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. (GE,3)

“It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and sacrament of matrimony, that from their earliest years children should be taught, according to the faith received in baptism, to have a knowledge of God, to worship Him, and to love their neighbor. (GE,3)

“While belonging primarily to the family, the task of imparting education requires the help of society as a whole. As for Catholic parents, the Council calls to mind their duty to entrust their children to Catholic schools, when and where this is possible, to support such schools to the extent of their ability, and to work along with them for the welfare of their children.” (GE,8)

The parents will promote the school within the larger community.

2.12 VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers cooperate with the principal in providing a positive educational climate for the students.

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Volunteers are accountable to the principal. Volunteers agree to abide by the established Diocesan policies and procedures. Training and background checks must be conducted on volunteers who have contact with students in accordance with the Diocesan Safe Environment policies. The coordinator for volunteers, if any, may supervise volunteers at the discretion of the principal.

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