

CATHOLIC IDENTITY & MISSION STANDARDS

1000 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' PURPOSE

“Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the good news. First and foremost, every Catholic institution is a place to encounter the Living God, who in Jesus Christ, reveals His transforming love and truth” (Pope Benedict XVI). Catholic schools exist to form young people in the faith and to provide a faith-based environment for their education. In cooperation and partnership with parents – the first educators of their children – these schools seek to educate the whole child by providing an excellent education. Catholic schools cultivate the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity; the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance; and the intellectual virtues of understanding, knowledge, philosophical wisdom, prudence and art. Based on these three sets of virtues, a comprehensive curriculum shall have as its goal the spiritual, moral, emotional, intellectual and physical development appropriate to the needs of each child. Non-Catholic students also benefit from Catholic school education and are welcomed.

1100 DESIGNATION OF A SCHOOL AS CATHOLIC

All Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese are canonically responsible to the Bishop and shall maintain true communion with the Church. The Bishop, as the pastoral head of the Church of Joliet-in-Illinois, has sole authority to recognize and designate a school as “Catholic.” All proposed new Catholic schools shall be approved by the Bishop as a Catholic school in the Diocese.

1200 CATHOLIC IDENTITY STANDARDS FOR ALL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

All Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese shall abide by the four Catholic identity standards and the supporting Catholic identity policies that are central to the nature of a Catholic school. The four standards are: Communion and Cooperation with the Bishop; Appropriate Celebration of Sacramental Life; Teaching the Faith; and Environment and Catholic Identity.

It is also imperative that any school called “Catholic” provide a level of academic excellence that is at least as distinguished as that in other schools of the region. Schools owned and operated by the Diocese of Joliet shall be governed by additional policies, particularly those in the areas of excellence, affordability and accessibility.

1210 Standard One: *Communion and Cooperation with the Bishop*

All Catholic schools shall have a formal and defined relationship with the Diocese and specifically with the Bishop who has oversight of the teaching of the faith in all Catholic schools. These practices are the practical mechanism to maintain communion within the Church.

1211 Communion with the Local Church

All Catholic schools shall communicate, consult and collaborate with all involved parties, particularly the appropriate diocesan offices in an effort to ensure communion with the local Church.

1212 Pastor or Canonical Administrator Responsibilities

Throughout this document the term “pastor” or “canonical administrator” is used to designate the priest who is duly appointed to the pastoral governance of the parish (pastor or parochial administrator) and is therefore responsible for and exercises oversight regarding all aspects of the school program because of his pastoral office. This responsibility follows on his appointment as pastor of a parish that has a school or that participates in an agreement with other parishes relative to a regional school.

Diocesan parish-based schools are a ministry of the parish, and therefore the pastor or canonical administrator is directly responsible for and has oversight over all aspects of the school, including supervising the principal. The pastor or canonical administrator has a particular responsibility to ensure the school has a strong Catholic identity and culture manifested in all areas of school life.

1213 Child Protection Policy

All Catholic schools in the diocese shall adhere to diocesan child protection policy, “Diocese of Joliet Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors, Revised February 2013,” as presented in the Handbook of School Policies.

1214 Catholic Identity Review

All Catholic schools’ religious education programs, sacramental life and Catholic identity shall be reviewed by diocesan officials at least once every three years. Such review shall include submission of a written report by the school and a visit by diocesan officials.

1215 Relationship with Local Pastors and Parishes

All Catholic schools shall maintain a close and collaborative relationship with local pastors and parishes, particularly in the areas of religious education and sacramental life.

1220 Standard Two: *Appropriate Celebration of Sacramental Life*

All Catholic schools shall adhere to all universal and diocesan sacramental norms and policies to ensure the development of an authentic spiritual and sacramental life for students.

1221 Spiritual Formation

All Catholic schools shall provide appropriate and regular occasions for prayer, liturgical worship and the celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist to ensure religious instruction and spiritual formation of students.

1222 Religious Instructions and Worship Attendance

All Catholic schools are places of faith formation and all Catholic school students, regardless of religious background, shall attend school prayer and worship services and fully participate in religious instruction. All Catholic students are expected to attend regular Sunday liturgies at their home parish and to receive frequently the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, once they are eligible.

1223 Sacramental Norms

All Catholic schools shall adhere to the sacramental norms and policies of the diocese, and respect local parishes as the sacramental home for parents, students and all parishioners.

1224 Sacramental Space

The celebration of the sacraments in all Catholic schools shall occur in appropriate spaces that are respectful and well suited to authentic worship.

1225 Sacramental Preparation

Pastors shall be responsible for the sacramental preparation of their parishioners. All Catholic schools, diocesan and independent, shall collaborate with the pastors of students to ensure any school instruction for sacramental preparation is fully integrated with and supportive of the student's primary parish sacramental preparation program.

1226 Sacramental Celebration

First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation shall be celebrated in the parish that the student's family attends. Pastors may allow exemptions to this policy.

1227 Prayer Life

Regular prayer and devotions shall be standard practice in all Catholic schools. The school day begins and ends with prayer and all meals are blessed.

1230 Standard Three: *Teaching the Faith*

All Catholic schools shall adhere to all diocesan policies regarding religious education to ensure that the faith is effectively and authentically taught in the school.

1231 Oversight of the Bishop

All Catholic schools shall conform in all matters of religious education to the oversight of the Bishop.

1232 Teaching of Religion

The teaching of religion in all Catholic schools shall be subject to the same standards of professionalism and excellence as all subjects in the school to include, but not be restricted to, allocation of resources, teacher professional development, evaluation, assessment and hours of instruction.

1233 Religious Education Foundation

The religious education program of all Catholic schools shall have as its foundation the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, the *General Directory of Catechesis* and the *National Directory of Catechesis*, and also follow national and diocesan textbooks.

1234 Religion Teachers

All religion teachers shall be practicing Catholics, in good standing, giving assent to the teaching of the Church, qualified and certified to teach religion by the diocese and have a deep knowledge of doctrine and live as an authentic witness to the faith.

1240 Standard Four: *Environment and Catholic Identity*

Catholic identity shall be present and explicit in all aspects of all Catholic schools, including the school's mission statement. The school presents evidence of clear commitment to witness the faith in all activities. The entire school shall be permeated with the Spirit of the Gospel for the effective formation and faith development of students.

1241 Diocesan School Mission Statements

Diocesan Catholic school mission statements shall reflect the teaching mission of the Catholic Church and the Diocese and shall be approved by and on file with the Catholic Schools Office. These statements shall be effectively communicated to all stakeholders with an emphasis on ensuring that all parents and guardians fully understand the Catholic identity of the school. The mission statement shall include and/or reflect the following elements:

- A. Fosters the love of Jesus and the Church, including the development of sacramental and spiritual life;
- B. Education in the truth of the faith based in the fullness of revelation contained in the Catholic Church;
- C. Development of virtues within the student that reflect the person of Christ and lead to a lifetime of Christian discipleship.

1242 Catholic Schools' Self Evaluation

All Catholic schools shall regularly engage in Catholic identity self evaluation. The principal, pastor or canonical administrator, and advisory board shall review all plans, policies, handbooks, guidelines, teaching practices and events to ensure support for the implementation of the six tasks of catechesis outlined in the *National Directory for Catechesis* and the *General Directory for Catechesis*. Assessment instruments shall be approved by the Diocese.

1243 Principals and Catholic Identity

All principals or chief administrators shall be practicing Catholics who uphold the teaching of the faith and are committed to Catholic education that is academically excellent and rooted in Gospel values.

1244 Teachers and All School Staff

Catholic teachers and Catholic staff shall be hired whenever possible. Administrators, faculty and staff shall be qualified, supportive of the teachings of the Church and imbued with a strong sense of the mission of Catholic schools and act in ways that promote the best interests of the Church and do not violate the principles or tenets of the Catholic faith. All staff shall be responsible for integrating Catholic identity and Church teaching across the curriculum and in all school activities.

All school administrators and all faculty shall adhere to Catholic faith, teaching and moral discipline, and shall not contradict the Catholic faith, teaching and moral discipline, and shall not harm communion with the Church.

1245 School Sponsored Guests and Activities

School sponsored guests, public statements, public events and community activities of all Catholic schools shall not contradict the Catholic faith, teaching and moral discipline, and shall not harm communion with the local Church.

1246 Physical Environment

The Diocesan Catholic school physical environment shall include religious signs and symbols that reflect the Catholic identity of the school, including pictures of the Holy Father and the Bishop, and a statue of Mary. Every classroom shall have a crucifix and should have visible prayer/sacred spaces.

1247 Fostering Vocations

All Catholic school communities shall promote and foster interest in, and respect for, all vocations, examining vocations to religious life and the priesthood as a real life option for students.

1248 Social Doctrine

The life of Catholic schools shall reflect the legacy of the Church's social doctrine which proposes a humanism capable of creating a new social, economic and political order, founded on the dignity of the human person brought about in peace, justice and solidarity.