

Policy # 1000.0

Communications Between School and Community

Effective: April 1982

Revised: April 2019

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both | |

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

Policy # 1010.0

**Secondary School
Public Relations Procedures**

Effective: August 1992

Revised: April 2019

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secondary | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regulation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Both | |

Public Announcements

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

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

1. Decision or actions by the Bishop, Episcopal Moderator for Education, Superintendent, or Office of Catholic Schools staff.
2. Decisions or actions by diocesan committees, such as the Diocesan Schools Advisory Commission.
3. Announcements of resignations, terminations, or hiring of any new principals, openings, closings, or mergers.

Crisis Communications

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

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

Elementary School Public Relations Procedures

Effective: August 1992

Revised: April 2019

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regulation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Both		

Public Announcements

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

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

1. Decision or actions by the Bishop, Episcopal Moderator for Education, Superintendent, or Office of Catholic Schools staff.
2. Decisions or actions by diocesan committees, such as the Bishop’s Elementary Planning Committee, or Diocesan Schools Advisory Commission.

Crisis Communications

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

The Communications Office is available to assist in developing a news release or statement and respond to questions. This procedure should be communicated to the local school advisory board, home and school association, and volunteers as part of their annual training/orientation.

Service Activities for Students

Effective: August 1982

Revised: April 2019

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | Elementary | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> | Regulation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Both | | |

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

Relations with Local Community Emergency Agencies

Effective: August 2008

Revised: April 2019

<input type="checkbox"/>	Elementary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Both		

Each school in the Diocese of Columbus, in compliance with ORC 3737 and the State of Ohio Fire Codes, will follow the drill schedule as illustrated in the matrix below and found in the *Diocese of Columbus Emergency Operations Manual*:

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

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

Each school must annually upload the following to NaviGate Prepared:

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

Policy # 1500.0

Parent and Student Handbook

Effective: August 2002

Revised: April 2019

<input type="checkbox"/>	Elementary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Both		

Every school shall develop and distribute (either on paper or electronically) a parent and student handbook to assist both the parents and the students in becoming knowledgeable about school rules and policies. The handbook must be distributed annually, and it must be reviewed and revised on annually. School handbooks constitute a contract between the school and the families it serves. For that reason, all families must sign a handbook acknowledgement statement (see below), which may be either a printed document or a digital document. If the acknowledgement is signed digitally, a printed record of the acknowledgement must be on file. Acknowledgement forms must be on file in the school office no later than September 1 of the current school year. The parent and student handbook must address, but is not limited to the following items:

- Asbestos plan to inform
- Acknowledgement signature page (see below)
- Amendment statement (see below)
- Attendance
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Cell phone and electronic device usage
- Child custody issues
- Crisis plan
- Directory information notice
- Discipline Policy
- Dispensing medication
- Dress code
- Drug and substance abuse
- Feeder school areas (high schools)
- Fidelity to Church teachings
- Fingerprinting (all paid school staff and volunteers)
- Grading
- Harassment
- Mission and belief statements
- Non-discrimination statement
- OHSAA athletic transfer policy (high schools)
- Parent communication system
- Parish sports (elementary schools)
- Personally identifiable information release notice
- Pregnancy policy (high school)
- Protecting God’s Children
- Publishing student information
- Reporting sexual abuse

- School violence
- Social media policy
- Student code of conduct
- Suspension and expulsion policies
- Technology and acceptable use policy
- Tuition payment and refund policy
- Use of name / Branding policy
- Visitors

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

Amendment Statement

All school handbooks must include the following statement:

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

Acknowledgement Statement

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

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

The specific diocesan policies identified in this Handbook are summaries only. For complete copies of the policies referenced, refer to the Office of Catholic Schools Administrator's Manual. In the event of any conflict between the summary and the complete policy, it is the Administrator's Manual that governs.

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

Policy # 1500.5

Policies

Effective: September 2002 (as Policy 2430.05)

Revised: May 2019

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both | |

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

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

Policy # 1600.0

Use of Name

Effective: August 2019

Revised:

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both | |

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

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

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

Conferences and Policy Interpretation

Effective: September 1993 (as Policy 2450.1)

Revised: May 2019

<input type="checkbox"/>	Elementary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Both		

All schools in the Diocese of Columbus operate on the principle of subsidiarity in relationships and structure. Therefore, disagreements or complaints should be dealt with and solutions sought at the lowest possible level. This means by those persons involved in the disagreement and/or with that person to which the complaint has been made in a conference setting. Since the goal in these situations is to achieve a reconciliation of differences, and so that an adversarial situation does not occur, no legal counsel for either party will be permitted to attend said conference. This applies to all conferences through and including those held at the Diocesan level.

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

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

1. State the policy in question.
2. Describe the interpretation of the policy by the school (party A).
3. Describe the interpretation of the policy by the student/family (party B) and how it is affecting the family.
4. Describe the efforts that have been made by both parties to address the interpretation differences.

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

Policy # 1800.0

Awards, Honors, and Speakers

Effective: April 1973 (as Policy 2211.23)

Revised: May 2019

<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/> Regulation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	

Protecting the Integrity of a Catholic School

During the course of the academic year, many schools host fundraisers or other events at which they might seek to honor their alumni or benefactors. While these types of activities are generally encouraged, they can occasionally pose a conflict for a Catholic institution when the honoree, award recipient, or speaker does not live a life in conformity with the Catholic faith. Accordingly, it is mandatory that principals, presidents, and any development officials connected to our schools comply with the policies below.

Honors and Awards

Great care and prudence must be exercised in giving awards and honors. When a Catholic school holds up as a role model an individual whose actions contradict the Catholic faith or moral teachings, it causes confusion for students, their parents, and alumni. Further, should the contrast between what the school purports to stand for and the life of the honoree be great enough, it is cause for scandal among the faithful. Therefore, if a proposed award recipient is Catholic, schools are expected to obtain a letter of good standing from any proposed awardee’s pastor to ensure he or she is a practicing Catholic and that nothing in the person’s life, if known to the greater community, would cause scandal to the faithful or embarrassment to the Church. It is also mandatory that this reference be obtained prior to offering any honor or award to an alumnus/ae or any other person associated with the institution. If the individual is not Catholic, a similar acknowledgement that nothing in the person’s life, if known to the greater community, would cause scandal to the faithful or embarrassment to the Church.

It is not enough to say that, “We are only honoring this person because of his or her contributions to our school, and not for their positions on other issues.” When an honor or award is extended by a Catholic school, there is an implicit endorsement of the totality of that person’s life. Complying with this policy also avoids the difficult situation of having to disinvite a speaker or rescind the offer of an honor or award.

Invitations to Elected Officials or Candidates for Public Office

It is generally discouraged for schools to invite elected officials or candidates for public office to speak at a school or accept an award or honor from a school. Exceptions to this policy may be requested from the Superintendent, who will present the question to the Bishop or his designee for approval. A request such as this must be made at least one month prior to any proposed event and prior to the extension of any invitation to a speaker. In no event may any invitation be extended to participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Speakers or Presentations

The same considerations governing honorees are also applicable to speakers. No speaker who is publically known for supporting positions in opposition to the teachings of the Catholic Church should be presenting any material in a Catholic school, even if the content of the talk does not touch upon inappropriate subject matter.

For elementary schools, guest speakers are expected to present themselves and the content of their presentation such that nothing is contrary to, or rejects or offends the teachings, doctrines, or principles of the Catholic Church. The pastor will either approve or reject the speaker and his or her content prior to the planned event. As a courtesy, school personnel inviting the speaker are to clarify this expectation in advance with the guest speaker in writing and prior to their arrival on campus.

For Diocesan high schools, guest speakers are expected to present themselves and the content of their presentation such that nothing is contrary to, or rejects or offends the teachings, doctrines, or principles of the Catholic Church. Approval for speakers or presentations will be given by the Superintendent in consultation with the Bishop or his designee. High schools are required to request permission in writing of the Superintendent for a speaker at least one month in advance of the planned event and prior to the extension of any invitation to the speaker. The following “Diocese of Columbus Approval Form for Incoming Speakers” should be used for this request. As a courtesy, school personnel inviting a speaker are to clarify this expectation in advance with the guest speaker in writing and prior to their arrival on campus.

Vetting Requirements

- If the speaker is a cleric, notify him that he should have a clergy letter of good standing sent to the Diocese of Columbus Chancellor from his bishop’s or superior’s office.
- If the speaker is a Catholic layperson, notify him or her that a letter of good standing should be issued by his or her pastor or by the diocesan official delegated by his or her Bishop to handle these inquiries to the Chancellor of the Diocese of Columbus.
- If the speaker is not Catholic, follow these vetting guidelines:
 - It is prudent to do a basic internet search to ensure that the individual is not hostile toward the Catholic Church and the teachings of the Church and to assure that no other difficulties are noted.
 - Seek client testimonials. Speakers generally have a list of past clients you can contact to discuss the pros and cons of former speaking engagements.
 - Ask to meet with a prospective speaker before negotiating and signing a contract. Much insight can be gleaned from this interaction, including the speaker’s passion, knowledge, and fit.
 - If your speaker will be presenting locally, sit in on the session.
 - Overall, those inviting speakers are expected to use prudent judgment on matters such as vetting.
- If the speaker will be participating in an event with minors, criminal background check and child protection training verification information must be submitted to the Safe Environment Director by

the Diocese of the cleric or Catholic layperson. If the speaker is not Catholic and will be at an event with minors, he or she is to undergo an FBI background check that is to be submitted to the Safe Environment Director of the Diocese of Columbus.

- It is recommended that the potential speaker send a resume or biography to the Chancellor as well.

School Requirements

1. The principal is responsible for guests who visit the school and speakers who address the student body, whether in individual classrooms or in a general assembly.
2. Teachers must consult with and receive approval from the principal before inviting outside speakers to the school.
3. When in the building, outside speakers shall be accompanied by a staff member or adult volunteers at all times.

Controversial and Political Issues

Effective: May 2019

Revised:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Elementary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Both		

Controversial Issues

A controversial issue is defined as a current problem or subject that has publically evoked opposing viewpoints on the part of any mass medium or communication or of any organized group, or as any subject that arises in the classroom on which strong emotional bias is expressed by members of the classroom group.

1. Catholic school administrators and teachers have the obligation of teaching and advocating Church doctrine, which is contained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* or in other authentic teaching documents of the Catholic Church when this doctrine is relevant to any controversial issue being considered.
2. Principal Responsibility. The presentation of controversial issues in the classroom shall take place solely at the discretion of the principal and only after the principal has approved all materials and information to be used in the presentation. The principal shall also supervise the manner in which controversial issues are presented and discussed in the classroom.

The principal shall exercise professional judgment in granting permission for outside speakers to address any class or the entire student body. Please consult the Speaker Approval Policy for procedures to obtain permission for outside speakers.

Political Issues

The teaching of political matters should evoke faithful citizenship, an obligation to study the issues, and political involvement. Guidance on this may be found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and in documents provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). However, advocating a specific political stance, party affiliation, support for a candidate for public office, and/or political agenda is not to be exercised by faculty, parents, and students in the building, in the name of the school, or during school-sponsored activities.

The posting of political materials in Diocesan schools is strictly prohibited, unless it has been specifically approved by the Bishop, such as materials from the Catholic Conference of Ohio.