

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
HANDBOOK**

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS  
Section 7000**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### Community Section 7000

7010	Communication with the Community
7020	Communication with the Public
7030	Media Communications
7040	School Support-Parish Involvement
7050	Student and School-Related Publications
7060	Student Performances
7070	Names and Addresses of Students
7080	Community Resources
7090	Visitors to the School
7100	Unauthorized Solicitations
7110	Use of School and Parish Facilities
7120	Public Schools
7130	Health Records
7140	National Associations
7150	Fund Raising Activities
7160	Home and School Association
7170	Research Projects in Catholic Schools
7180	Health and Communicable Diseases
7190	Relationship between Government Agencies and Diocesan Schools
7200	Relations with Local, State and Federal Authorities
7210	Relations Between the Public and Schools
7220	Diocesan Principals' Association

**COMMUNICATION WITH THE COMMUNITY**

**POLICY:**

The school promotes good working relationships with the civic community including social and cultural agencies as well as other educational systems.

**GUIDELINES:**

The Catholic School is an integral part of the educational mission of the Church. As such, the school community relates closely to the parish(es), deanery and diocese. It is conscious of the role that parents play in the education of their children and recognizes that parents and the school are partners in education.

The broader community plays a very significant role in the educational process.

**COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC****POLICY:**

All means of communications are used as a method of establishing increased understanding, confidence and creditability between schools and their public.

**GUIDELINES:**

The school through letters to parents, newsletters and parish bulletin announcements keeps the school and parish community informed of what the school is about, what the school is doing and what the school plans to do in the future.

The school, also, provides opportunities for different groups to visit by scheduling:

- ❑ open house
- ❑ parent/teacher conference
- ❑ student performances
- ❑ family/school activities

**MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS**

**POLICY:**

Through appropriate media every Catholic school program should strive to communicate to its communities the vital contributions made by students, parents or guardians and school programs.

**SCHOOL SUPPORT—PARISH INVOLVEMENT**

**POLICY:**

Every school shall attempt to involve parents/guardians and other members of the parish community as active supporters of the school.

**STUDENT AND SCHOOL-RELATED PUBLICATIONS****POLICY:**

Schools are encouraged to keep the public informed of current activities through the use of student publications. Student and school-related publications should reflect journalistic excellence, good taste and Church teaching.

It is the responsibility of the publication's advisor to assess both intent and quality before publication. In doubtful cases, the school administrator should be consulted in the review process.

**STUDENT PERFORMANCES****POLICY:**

Plays and other performances by students are to reflect Christian values and aesthetic taste. It is the responsibility of the faculty moderator to review both content and quality. In doubtful cases, the school or program administrator should be consulted in the review process.

**NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF STUDENTS**

**POLICY:**

Schools are not permitted to furnish lists of students to be used for commercial or promotional purposes or solicitation.

**COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

**POLICY:**

School staff members are encouraged to use community resources and seek the cooperation of citizens to further the educational program.

**VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

**POLICY:**

All visitors shall report to the school office or the school administrator.

**UNAUTHORIZED SOLITATIONS**

**POLICY:**

Unauthorized solicitations may not be conducted in the school or at school-related functions.

**USE OF SCHOOL AND PARISH FACILITIES**

**POLICY:**

If school or parish facilities are used for social or community affairs, care should be taken that such affairs do not interfere with the educational program.

**GUIDELINES:**

Students should not be dismissed from class to make preparations for social affairs. Adequate janitorial service should be provided so that socials do not interfere with the educational process.

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**POLICY:**

Teachers and administrators in Catholic schools should actively develop cordial and professional relationships with the professionals in the public school systems.

**HEALTH RECORDS**

**POLICY:**

Health records shall be maintained properly and be readily available to authorized public personnel on request.

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

**POLICY:**

Schools in the Diocese of Savannah are required to have an institutional membership in the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).

**GUIDELINES:**

Memberships in area, state, regional and national educational associations are encouraged. Active membership, as indicated by contributions to association publications, service on committees and program participation should be promoted. School and religious education budgets should provide funds for institutional members in associations and for subscriptions to professional publications.

**FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES****POLICY:**

Fund raising activities are permitted by the principal, pastor and the local school board when these activities are necessary, well planned and controlled.

**GUIDELINES:**

The following guidelines should be followed:

- ❑ only a limited number permitted each year
- ❑ the regular routine of the instructional day is not disturbed
- ❑ no student or family is pressured into participating
- ❑ students are not personally handling large amounts of money
- ❑ careful and accurate records are kept
- ❑ diocesan procedure regarding major fund raising and the handling of money are followed (See Business Section 3130).

**HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION****POLICY:**

Each school in the diocese shall have a formal organization of parents (Parent/Teacher Organization) which will provide parents the opportunity to be informed on all facets of the organization.

**GUIDELINES:**

The organization should have the following objectives:

- to be of service to parents and teachers
- to serve as a means of communication between parents and teachers
- to provide opportunities for education of parents, especially regarding educational trends, curriculum design, school procedures and obstacles to learning, etc.
- to help the school financially by fund raising

**RESEARCH PROJECTS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS****POLICY:**

It will be the responsibility of the Catholic Schools Office to review all proposals for research projects to be conducted in the diocesan Catholic schools.

The approval of any such proposal shall be contingent upon protecting the rights of the students, parents and other parties as specified by law.

**GUIDELINES:****Responsibilities of the Researcher:**

1. Individuals asking to conduct research projects in Catholic elementary and secondary school must submit a formal, written request to the Catholic Schools Office. Requests should include the following:
  - a. Cover letter including researcher's name, university/agency address and affiliation.
  - b. Statement of the purpose of the study.
  - c. Population to be utilized.
  - d. Procedures for conducting the research project including the school's involvement.
  - e. Timeline projected.
  - f. Potential usefulness of the research to education.
  - g. Copies of materials to be used.
  - h. Sample letter to be sent to parents, if applicable.
  - i. Provisions and assurances for anonymity and confidentiality regarding data collecting procedures should be included.
  - j. Information concerning any known risks that the research might have for those who participate in it.
  - k. Appropriate educational activities for children who may be part of the control group should be included.

**GUIDELINES:****Responsibilities of the Researcher (Continued):**

2. Permission to contact the schools directly will be given to the researcher only if written approval for the research project is given by the Catholic Schools Office. It is the responsibility of the local principal to determine whether to participate in a research study. Researchers should provide local principals with a copy of the approval letter from the Catholic Schools Office.
3. A copy of any communication to teachers, parents, etc., about the research should be provided to the principal.
4. A copy of all materials and/or instruments to be used in the study should be accessible to the principal for the school file.
5. The researcher should provide information about how and where he/she can be reached.
6. Professional courtesy suggests that an abstract and final report be forwarded ultimately to the participating schools and to the Catholic Schools Office.

**Role of the Catholic Schools Office:**

1. Written requests to conduct research in Catholic schools will be reviewed by the Catholic Schools Office; consultation with experts in the field, where appropriate, will be undertaken in evaluating research proposals.
2. Criteria to be used will be the following:
  - a. Potential education merit of the study.
  - b. Evidence of bona fide university/agency affiliation and appropriate supervision of the researcher (if the researcher is a student).
  - c. Minimum disruption to the school schedule.

**GUIDELINES:****Role of the Catholic Schools Office (Continued):**

- d. Adherence to standard, ethical research guidelines.
3. Notification that the research proposal is approved or not approved will be given in writing to the researcher by the Catholic Schools Office. The names of the researchers receiving approval to conduct research in Catholic Schools will be published periodically by the Catholic Schools Office. (Approval from the Catholic Schools Office gives the researcher the right to contact Catholic schools within the diocese.)
4. The Catholic Schools Office reserves the right to terminate any research project involving Catholic schools in the diocese with or without cause at any time.

**Responsibilities of the School Administrator:**

1. When approached by the researcher, the principal should first determine whether the proposal has been approved by the Catholic Schools Office.
2. It is the prerogative of the local school administrator to determine whether to participate in a research project and to communicate that decision to the researcher.
3. Where practicable, all efforts to minimize disruption to the daily school schedule should be made.
4. If the subjects involved are students, at either the elementary or secondary level, permission for them to participate must be obtained in writing from a parent or guardian. Informed consent implies that parents are given sufficient information about the research prior to requesting permission for their children's participation. Informed consent, also, implies that parents, upon written request to the school and to the researcher, may receive permission to preview the materials at the school.

**GUIDELINES:****Responsibilities of the School Administrator (Continued):**

Such materials must be carefully supervised by the principal or the researcher, since appropriate ethical and professional standards must be observed in the use of copy righted materials such as test instruments. (Some tests are protected under copyright laws and ethical guidelines prohibiting prior review must be observed.)

5. Where necessary, provision for appropriate educational activities should be considered for children in the control group or for children not participating in the research project.
6. Communication to parents about research projects should be handled in collaboration with the school administrator. The names and addresses of parents should not be given to the researcher without the consent of the parents.
7. The local School Administrator reserves the right to withdraw from participation in a research project involving the school community with or without cause.

**HEALTH AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES****POLICY:**

In all matters pertaining to health, the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Savannah will adhere to guidelines based upon sound medical evidence and issued by appropriate federal, state and local authorities.

**GUIDELINES:****1. Administrative Procedure for Catholic Schools**

- A. Steps to be taken by the administrator in the event that a student is known to be infected with HTLV-III (i.e., has a positive HTLV-III blood test, AIDS-related complex or AIDS).

Step #1: Notify the pastor, Superintendent of Schools

Step #2: Set up a consultation with a team composed of the child's parents/guardian, family physician, public health department personnel, and a Catholic Schools Office staff member.

- a. to make decisions regarding the type of educational and health care that is appropriate for the child. Risks and benefits to the child and to others in the setting must be considered.
- b. to establish procedures to periodically monitor and evaluate the child's condition. A mechanism for the sharing of information between the child's physician and the school authorities is needed so that any significant change in the child's medical status can be

**HEALTH AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES****GUIDELINES (CONTINUED):**

addressed. (In addition, if the school experiences an outbreak of a communicable disease that could be threatening to a child infected with HTLV-III, e.g., chickenpox, measles, the child should be temporarily excluded by the principal, pending consultation with the child's physician.) Evaluation to assess the continued need for exclusion should be performed regularly.

Step #3: Only those with a need-to-know circumstance should be apprised by direct person-to-person contact of the child's condition. Such individuals may include: school nurse, child's teacher(s). Persons involved in the education of HTLV-III infected children should respect the child's right to privacy, including maintaining confidential records.

It is not necessary to notify parents of other school children regarding the HTLV-III status of any school child.

- B. Steps to be taken by the school administration in the event that a staff member is known to be infected with HTLV-III (i.e., has a positive HTLV-III blood test, AIDS-related complex or AIDS).

Step #1: Notify the pastor, Superintendent of Schools

Step #2: Consult with the employee's physician, Catholic Schools Office member, local public health department to determine if there is potential risk of transmission from the employee to others in the school setting and to establish procedures and a mechanism for on-going monitoring of the employee's condition and school placement. Decisions regarding employees will be made on a case-by-case basis.

**HEALTH AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES****GUIDELINES (CONTINUED):**

Step #3: Adequate care must be taken to protect the confidentiality and the right to privacy of the school employee.

Step #4: An employee infected with the HTLV-III virus is entitled to paid sick leave and/or leave without pay in accordance with the diocesan contract. Questions regarding insurance coverage for employees should be referred to Christian Brothers employee benefits director.

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**II. Responsibility of the student or employee**

In the event that a student or employee is believed to have a serious communicable disease, the principal should be promptly informed of the diagnosis and kept informed about the progress of treatment by the family of the student or by the employee.

**III. Responsibility of the school**

A. The school may require any student or employee who has been told that he or she has a serious communicable disease to have a definitive medical diagnosis.

B. The school will keep in strict confidence all information it receives from any source regarding students or employees who have a serious communicable disease, subject to the requirement of law.

C. The school will undertake an educational effort to inform the other students, teachers, and parents about serious communicable disease in general and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome in particular.

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND  
DIOCESAN SCHOOLS****POLICY:**

Reasonable and responsible efforts shall be made to obtain government aid for programs that will benefit students who attend Catholic schools.

**GUIDELINES:**

1. Office personnel responsible for obtaining government aid for programs that will benefit students who attend Catholic schools should:
  - a. Know the law.
  - b. Know what the courts say.
  - c. Know major guidelines for all programs.
  - d. Know how services are delivered.
  - e. Know how United States Office of Education aid is distributed.
  - f. Know forms of government aid.
  - g. Know how government programs work.
  - h. Know procedures for assuring participation.
  
2. Office personnel responsible for obtaining government aid for programs that will benefit students who attend Catholic schools should:
  - a. Establish regular lines of communication with local public schools (systems) and state program coordinators.
  - b. Take the initiative with the state and the local public schools (systems).
  - c. Evaluate and monitor all programs.
  - d. Know where to obtain assistance.
  - e. Know how to appeal for assistance.
  - f. Focus energy wisely. Determine priorities carefully and focus on programs offering the largest return in benefits to students.

**RELATIONS WITH LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES**

**POLICY:**

The school shall comply with the minimum requirements of the local, state and national Emergency Management Agencies, fire, health and police regulations while keeping in mind the rights of students and parents.

**RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND SCHOOLS**

**POLICY:**

The schools shall cooperate, as far as possible, with public agencies that are working for the betterment of the community. All activities shall promote the welfare of the students and not hinder their education.

**GUIDELINES:**

School administrators must be aware of the importance of the relationship each school has to the local neighborhood community it serves and relies upon for sustenance and should take the necessary steps to maintain a relationship of open communication.

**DIOCESAN PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION**

**POLICY:**

The Diocesan Principals' Association will provide unity among the elementary school principals by fostering articulation and communication, by serving in an advisory capacity to the Superintendent and by supporting the educational endeavors of the diocese.



