



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

Policies and Procedures Manual

5.00 ADMINISTRATION

	Page
5.01 Administrator	4
5.02 Arkansas Laws Pertaining to Private Education	4
5.09.2 Arkansas Non-Public School Accrediting Association (ANSAA)	5
5.42 Arrival/Departure Procedures	14
5.16 Athletic Programs	6
5.17 Before and After School and Summer Child Care Programs	7
5.47.2 Budget	18
5.44.1 Bus Driver Certification	16
5.44 Buses	16
5.44.3 Bus Passengers	16
5.44.4 Bus Safety	17
5.44.2 Bus Safety Equipment	16
5.05 Calendar	4
5.39 Child Abuse Investigations	14
5.44.5 Child Safety Alarms	17
5.40 Collections and Fundraising	14
5.21.1 Communicable Diseases	9
5.48 Complaints	18
5.22 Confidential Records	10
5.30.4 Crisis and Response Plan	12
5.08 Curriculum and Textbooks	5
5.03 <i>Diocesan Manual of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools</i>	4
5.26 Discontinuance of Schools	10
5.35 Drug-Free and Smoke-Free Workplace	13
5.20.3 Employee Personnel File	8
5.06 Faculty Handbook	4
5.43 Field Trip and Off-Campus Activities	14
5.43.1 Field Trip Purpose and Procedures	14

5.47	Finances	17
5.47.3	Financial Reporting	18
5.30.1	Fire Drills	12
5.28	Flag Regulations	11
5.04	Foundational Documents	4
5.21	Health	9
5.46	Internet, Electronic Mail and Social Media Policy	17
5.30.3	Intruder Drills	12
5.32	Licensed Child Care Facilities	13
5.14	Local Consultative School Board	6
5.34	Loitering	13
5.09.1	National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)	5
5.37	Non-Custodial Parents	14
5.25	Opening of Schools	10
5.47.1	Operating Account	17
5.43.2	Overnight Field Trips	15
5.38	Parent Sex Offenders	14
5.15	Parent-Teacher Organization	6
5.19	Per Student Assessment	7
5.10	Principals' In-Service	5
5.43.3	Private Passenger Vehicles	16
5.09	Professional Organizations	5
5.20.4	Record Retention	9
5.30	Safety	11
5.20	School Records	7
5.18	School Reports to the Office of Catholic Schools	7
5.45	School Zone Wireless Telephone Use	17
5.21.2	Scoliosis Screening	9
5.41	Solicitors	14
5.11	Staff Development	5
5.31	Student Accident/Injuries	13
5.13	Student Attendance	6
5.20.1	Student Health Records	7
5.07	Student/Parent Handbook	5
5.20.2	Student Permanent Records	8
5.29	Student Supervision	11
5.21.4	Students with Medically Complex Conditions	9

5.00 ADMINISTRATION

5.12	Teacher Code of Ethics	6
5.30.2	Tornado Drills	12
5.23	Transfer Students	10
5.33	Trespassing	13
5.21.3	Vision and Hearing Screening	9
5.36	Visitors/Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s)	13
5.27	Withdrawal of Religious Staff from a School	10
5.24	Withdrawal of Students	10

5.01 ADMINISTRATOR

As the school's spiritual leader under the direction of the pastor, the principal must be able to maintain and strengthen the school's Catholic identity, practice, culture, and faith formation of students and staff.

The principal will ensure that all policies and procedures of the *Diocesan Manual of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools* are followed.

5.02 ARKANSAS LAWS PERTAINING TO PRIVATE EDUCATION

All schools shall abide by the Arkansas laws pertaining to private education. The laws can be found on the Arkansas Non-Public School Accrediting Association (ANSAA) website.

5.03 DIOCESAN MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The Diocesan Manual of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools will govern all parochial and Diocesan schools in the Diocese of Little Rock.

- Copies of the policy manual are available through the Diocese of Little Rock Catholic Schools Office website.
- Pastors, principals, teachers, and school boards will be familiar with the sections pertaining to their areas of responsibility.
- Sections of the manual will be used for staff development throughout the school year.

5.04 FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

Each school shall have a Foundational Document for their school. The Foundational Document includes the following statements:

- Mission
- Philosophy
- Vision
- Profile of a Graduate at Graduation

5.05 CALENDAR

The Office of Catholic Schools provides a school calendar which includes the required number of days established by the Arkansas Department of Education and Arkansas Non-Public Schools Accrediting Association (ANSAA). Any changes to a school's calendar must be approved by the superintendent.

5.06 FACULTY HANDBOOK

All schools shall have a handbook for the faculty and staff containing the policies and procedures that pertain to them. The faculty and staff must sign a form to indicate that they have received, read, and agree to abide by the policies contained in the school's faculty handbook.

5.07 STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

All schools shall have a handbook which contains the school's policies for students and parents. Diocesan policy supersedes the local school handbook.

Students and parents/guardians must sign a form to indicate that they have received, read, and agree to abide by the policies contained in the school's student/parent handbook.

5.08 CURRICULUM AND TEXTBOOKS

All elementary schools in the Diocese of Little Rock will utilize the *In Spirit and Truth* curriculum guide using textbooks approved by the Office of Catholic Schools.

High schools will follow the Arkansas Department of Education's or the Arkansas Non-Public School Accrediting Association graduation course requirements.

All religion books used in the Catholic schools must be included in the Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website.

5.09 PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Schools are encouraged to join professional organizations and subscribe to professional journals.

5.09.1 National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)

It is highly recommended by the Office of Catholic Schools that the schools in the Diocese have a membership with NCEA.

5.09.2 Arkansas Non-Public School Accrediting Association (ANSAA)

The Office of Catholic Schools requires that the schools in the Diocese have an accredited or associate membership with ANSAA.

5.10 PRINCIPALS' IN-SERVICE

The Office of Catholic Schools will provide support to the school administrators.

- All principals are required to attend the principals' retreat prior to the beginning of the school year, the Annual Catholic Schools Professional Day, and a mid-year in-service conducted by the Office of Catholic Schools.
- The Office of Catholic Schools will keep the principals informed of current professional information.

5.11 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- All new employees must attend an orientation.
- School administrators will schedule and offer staff development for their employees as needed and designated by the teacher's contract and Diocesan policy.

- All teachers will participate in the Annual Catholic Schools Professional Day provided by the Office of Catholic Schools.
- It is the employee's responsibility to submit his/her hours of professional development to the principal. The principal will keep a copy of the record in the employees personnel file or in the FACTS information system.

5.12 TEACHER CODE OF ETHICS

All teachers holding a current Arkansas teacher's license are required to view the Code of Ethics PowerPoint presentation found on the Arkansas Department of Education website.

5.13 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Students must attend school and conform to the attendance policies established by the school. When students arrive late or depart before the close of the school day, they will report to the school office where a written record is to be kept including date, time, and reason for being tardy or departing early. Accurate records of student attendance must be kept and retained permanently.

5.14 LOCAL CONSULTATIVE SCHOOL BOARD

Each parochial and Diocesan school in the Diocese of Little Rock will have a consultative school board in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the *Diocesan Manual of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools*.

5.15 PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The Office of Catholic Schools recommends that each parochial and Diocesan school establish a parent-teacher organization. This organization will function in accordance with the following Diocesan regulations:

- Membership in the parent-teacher organization will consist of the pastor, principal, teachers, and parents and/or guardians of the students.
- Each organization will follow the constitution and bylaws based on guidelines furnished by the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Program needs will be determined based on the needs of the school as outlined by the principal, school board, and long-range plans. The principal and/or pastor have final approval of all programs and fundraising.

5.16 ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

Any athletic program or athletic support group must have approval of the pastor and be under the direct supervision of the principal.

- A qualified person will be engaged to direct the athletic program.
- All adults (volunteers and employees) working with the students in the athletic program must complete the *Diocesan Safe Environment* training and complete a background check.
- The Diocesan Parent Permission Form must be completed and signed by a parent and/or guardian before a student is allowed to participate in competitive sports.

- A yearly physical examination or written statement from a licensed health care provider will be required before a student is allowed to participate in competitive sports.
- Adequate and safe equipment will be available and used for athletic activities.
- Competitive athletic activities on the secondary level will be conducted by a qualified coach and will conform to the regulations of the Arkansas Activities Association.
- Any elementary or secondary school with a cheerleading program must have a qualified person to supervise. All cheerleading programs must follow the rules and regulations from the National Cheerleading Association.
- In accordance with the fiscal responsibility mandated by Canon Law, booster clubs and other school organizations will practice good stewardship in the reporting and expenditures of funds.

Schools may have other requirements for students to be allowed to participate in athletic programs and for parent(s) and/or guardian(s) to work with the students.

5.17 BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL AND SUMMER CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

The Office of Catholic Schools requires that all before and after school and summer child care programs be licensed and registered with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education at the Department of Human Services.

5.18 SCHOOL REPORTS TO THE OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The principal is responsible for providing all information and reports that are required to the Office of Catholic Schools on or before September 15th of each school year including:

- NCEA Standard School Survey Form
- Annual Diocesan Report Forms
- School Budget
- School Endowment Report

5.19 PER STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Each Catholic school in the Diocese of Little Rock shall remit to the Diocesan Office of Finance the per student assessment for all students that is established annually by the Office of Catholic Schools in consultation with the Diocesan Board of Education.

5.20 SCHOOL RECORDS

Each school shall maintain records essential to effective school administration. These records will be available to the superintendent upon request.

5.20.1 Student Health Records

Schools are required to keep health records of immunizations for each student. Immunization information may be kept on the Arkansas Immunization Health Record available from the Office of Catholic Schools or by entering the information into the FACTS student information system. The health records will transfer with the student if he/she transfers to another school.

5.20.2 Student Permanent Records

Schools are to maintain a cumulative permanent record for each student, including attendance, grades, standardized test results, and years that they attended the school. These records must be kept in a fireproof storage unit and never destroyed.

Official school documents are like sacramental records in that they are historical documents. Therefore they must accurately reflect the name and identity of the alumnus/alumna during the time in which they were enrolled at and graduated from the school. If after graduation an alumnus/alumna changes their legal name (for whatever reason), requests new versions of their official school documents, and presents legal documentation of the name change, then the official school documents are to be re-issued in the following format: "Original Name, a.k.a. New Legal Name." This will satisfy the need to connect the new name with the name appearing on the student records produced during the time that the student was enrolled in the school.

5.20.3 Employee Personnel File

A personnel file for each employee will be kept in the school office. The file will include:

- Application
- Resume
- Reference documentation
- Job description
- Years of service (include all places where employee has worked)
- Signed and dated evaluations/assessments and growth plans for current and past years
- Education verification (teaching licensure, college transcripts, etc.)
- Contract or Summary of Employment
- Documentation that Safe Environment Training and background check has been completed
- Copy of state employee withholding tax form
- Copy of federal employee withholding tax form
- Copy of insurance enrollment forms
- Catechist certification (if applicable)
- Record of in-service hours
- Deficiency removal plan (if applicable)
- Employee emergency contact form
- Employee change of benefit form (completed when person leaves)

Items to be kept in a separate file on each employee (if applicable):

- I-9 form
- Investigative records: discrimination complaint information, legal case data, accusations of policy/legal violation
- Security clearance investigation records: background investigation information, personal credit history, personal criminal or arrest records
- Workers' compensation forms and documents
- Medical records: physician records of examination, including drug screening and anything listed in HIPAA guidelines
- Timesheets for non-exempt employees

5.20.4 Record Retention

The record retention guidelines from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) will be used in determining the length of time for retaining specific records. If questions arise regarding record related issues contact the Office of Catholic Schools.

5.21 HEALTH

5.21.1 Communicable Diseases

Should a faculty member or student be suspected or confirmed of having a communicable disease as defined in the Arkansas Department of Health Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Reportable Disease, it should immediately be reported to the Arkansas Department of Health. Designated school personnel will notify other parents and/or guardians and faculty only if necessary to contain the disease.

5.21.2 Scoliosis Screening

All schools will conduct an annual scoliosis screening program in accordance with regulations promulgated by the State Board of Health. Screeners should be licensed physicians or individuals trained by a certified scoliosis instructor. (Ark. Code Ann. §20-15-802)

Girls in the sixth grade and boys and girls in the eighth grade shall receive a scoliosis screening each year.

Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) must notify the school in writing if they do not wish for their child/ren to be screened.

5.21.3 Vision and Hearing Screening

All schools are to conduct an annual vision and hearing screening program for students. Qualified volunteers may be used to conduct this annual program. It is recommended that students in grades kindergarten, first, third, fifth, and seventh and all new students be screened for vision and hearing problems. The results of the screening are to be recorded on the student's health record. Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) are to be notified in writing if further evaluation is needed by a physician.

5.21.4 Students with Medically Complex Conditions

Schools accepting students with a medically complex condition, defined as “a health condition that can put the child in danger of death during the school day or that requires close monitoring,” will work with the family of the student and the health care professional to devise a plan of support.

This plan should include medications, medical supplies, and alternate foods, if necessary, to meet the student's needs. This individual health care plan must be developed, signed in collaboration with the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and a health care professional, acceptable to the school, and within the resources of the school to provide. The plan shall be kept on file and updated annually.

5.22 CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS

A student's records are confidential and will be open only to professional staff, the student if he/she has attained the age of eighteen (18), or the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) at a time mutually agreed upon with the principal.

- Both custodial and non-custodial parents may inspect their child's school records in the presence of the principal or designee, unless there is a court order or decree presented restraining a parent from such contact.
- Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) may sign a release to have student records forwarded to another school.
- Upon request, parent(s) and/or guardian(s) may be given a copy of the student's records to carry to another school.
- High school graduates' completed scholastic records will be sent to their designated colleges.

5.23 TRANSFER STUDENTS

- Permanent record/transcripts and immunization records are required for admission of transfer students. If records have not been received within thirty (30) days after accepting a transfer student, the school may dismiss the student.
- Students accepted are on probation, both academically and socially.
- Students transferring to secondary schools and participating in sports must follow the guidelines set forth by the Arkansas Activities Association (AAA).
- Permanent records and high school transcripts may be withheld by the principal in the event a student has not completed the withdrawal process and cleared financial accounts.
- Schools will forward a student's educational records to other educational institutions that have requested records, provided all financial accounts have been cleared and the withdrawal process has been completed. Each school should have a policy regarding collection of unpaid fees and tuition in its student handbook.

5.24 WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

All schools, public and private, must notify the Department of Finance and Administration when a student fourteen (14) years of age or older is no longer in school. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-22)

5.25 OPENING OF SCHOOLS

An elementary or secondary school, may be opened only with the expressed written permission of the Bishop of Little Rock.

- The discussion of opening a school or grade may be initiated on a parish or a Diocesan level.
- When initiated on a parish level, the request must be made in writing to the superintendent of schools, who will submit it to the Bishop along with recommendations.
- Preliminary studies will be conducted before any request is submitted.
- The decision to open will be announced no later than January of the current school year.

5.26 DISCONTINUANCE OF SCHOOLS

An elementary or secondary school, may be discontinued only with the expressed permission of the Bishop of Little Rock.

- The discussion of discontinuing a school or grade level may be initiated on a parish or Diocesan level.
- When initiated on a parish level, the request must be made in writing to the superintendent of schools, who will submit it to the Bishop along with recommendations.
- Preliminary studies will be conducted before any request is submitted.
- The decision to discontinue a grade or a school will be announced no later than February of the current school year unless there are extenuating circumstances.

5.27 WITHDRAWAL OF RELIGIOUS STAFF FROM A SCHOOL

When a religious community finds it necessary to withdraw from a Diocesan or parish school or from a community-owned school, they will make this decision known to the Bishop and the superintendent of schools.

- The announcement will be considered official only when it comes from the religious superior of the community.
- The religious superior shall notify the pastor and the school board at least one year prior to such withdrawal.
- Before withdrawing from the school, the religious community will cooperate with the pastor and school board to prepare for transfer of leadership of the school.

5.28 FLAG REGULATIONS

It shall be the duty of the school authorities of every school, public or private, in the state to procure a suitable United States flag, flag staff, and the necessary appliances thereto, and to request that such flag be displayed with the proper courtesy upon, near or in the school buildings during the hours of session and at such other times as the said school authorities may direct. (Ark. Code Ann. §6-16-106)

5.29 STUDENT SUPERVISION

The principal will educate the staff about the responsibility of supervising the students both within and outside the classroom. The fact that supervision is both mental (the person has to be paying attention to the students) and physical (the person is bodily present) should be stressed.

Rules and procedures should be in place for students to follow in the absence of the supervising staff.

5.30 SAFETY

Proper measures will be taken to ensure the maximum protection of the personnel and students against all types of injuries which could occur in the school or on any part of the school property.

- First-aid supplies will be available in the school.
- Janitorial and other hazardous supplies must be stored in suitable areas.
- Regular checks for fire hazards will be made and any threats should be removed.

- Fire extinguishers and other means of fire control will be accessible and kept in working order.
- All exits will be noted with illuminated exit signs and exit doors will be equipped with crash bars.
- Evacuation plans are to be posted in each room near exit doors.
- Schools need to have all personnel and parent(s) and/or guardian(s) complete a form which includes emergency medical care information.
- Schools should establish a means of documenting, investigating, and reviewing accidents and injuries to help correct safety hazards and evaluate current safety practices and improve them, if necessary.
- Schools that serve lunches must have a current Food Establishment Permit from the Arkansas Department of Health.
- All doors to the school building are locked and every entrance will be carefully monitored.
- Classroom doors will be locked when children are present in the classroom.

5.30.1 Fire Drills

According to state law, all schools are to conduct one fire drill each month. (Ark. Code Ann. §6-10-110) The results of the fire drills are to be recorded and a copy of the results must be forwarded to the Office of Catholic Schools at the end of each school year. Preschool, summer, and after care programs must conduct a monthly fire drill.

5.30.2 Tornado Drills

Each school will conduct at least two tornado drills during the school year. Safe shelter areas should be designated on the ground floor and away from windows, if possible. The results of the drills are to be recorded and included in the fire drill record that is forwarded to the Office of Catholic Schools. Preschool programs must conduct a monthly tornado drill.

5.30.3 Intruder Drills

Each school will conduct at least two intruder drills during the school year. Safe shelter areas should be designated and a procedure for accurate accounting of students in place.

5.30.4 Crisis and Response Plan

Each school will develop a crisis and response plan for emergencies that might arise, including but not limited to fire, earthquake, tornado, intruder, abduction, and gas leak. Procedures for these emergencies should be reviewed and practiced on a regular basis.

In the event of a crisis, the principal will inform the Office of Catholic Schools and/or the Diocesan Chancellor for Administrative Affairs.

5.31 STUDENT ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

Schools should establish a means to provide for basic first aid for students and staff who are injured during school hours.

All student accidents or injuries must be documented and reported to the parent(s) and/or guardian(s). Documentation must be kept on file. When communicating with the parent(s) and/or guardian(s), the schools are not to admit liability or make promises regarding payment of any medical bills.

If warranted, emergency personnel will be contacted. If a child is transported to a hospital or other medical facility and a parent and/or guardian cannot be reached, a member of the school staff must accompany the child until a parent and/or guardian arrives.

5.32 LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITIES

All licensed child care facilities are required to file a copy of the child care facility's floor plan with local offices of emergency management or inter-jurisdictional offices of emergency management. (Act 1159)

5.33 TRESPASSING

Persons disturbing private schools by their conduct or trespassing on school grounds during recess or while school is in session are guilty of a misdemeanor. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-21-606)

5.34 LOITERING

Strangers are not permitted to loiter in or near a school building. A law enforcement officer should be called if a person persists after being asked to leave. A person commits the offense of loitering if he/she lingers, remains, or prowls in or near a school building not having any reason or permission from anyone authorized to grant the same. (Ark. Code Ann. § 5-71-213, 6-21-607 and 6-21-606) Persons loitering on or near private school grounds during school hours or at any school-sponsored activities after regular school hours without any lawful purpose are guilty of a misdemeanor.

5.35 DRUG-FREE AND SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE

All school buildings and campuses are declared drug-free and smoke-free (which includes vaping and electronic cigarettes). Appropriate action will be taken against anyone who violates this policy.

5.36 VISITORS/PARENT(S) AND/OR GUARDIAN(S)

All visitors including parent(s) and/or guardian(s) are to sign in at the school office when entering the building for any purpose and sign out upon departure. Any visitor or parent and/or guardian wishing to observe a classroom must have approval from the principal prior to arriving at school for the visit.

5.37 NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

- It is required that the custodial parent provides the school with an official, updated copy of the court-ordered documents outlining child custody and visitation agreement.
- Non-custodial parents are not to use the school as a meeting place to visit with their child(ren). The school will follow the rights for the non-custodial parent(s) that are outlined in the court order.
- If a school has on record a court order indicating that one parent has limited visitation rights or no visitation rights, and such parent makes application to volunteer in the school, the principal need not accept the volunteer services of that parent. If the principal determines that such parent is volunteering in order to increase contact with the child(ren), the principal should notify the custodial parent and have them settle the issue.
- The superintendent will assist principals and teachers as needed with child custody disputes.

5.38 PARENT SEX OFFENDERS

Refer to the Diocesan Sex Offender Policy which can be found at:

<https://www.dolr.org/sites/default/files/documents/safe-environment-registered-sex-offenders-policy.pdf>

5.39 CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS

Law enforcement officials shall be allowed access to public and private school records during the course of a child abuse investigation. School officials cannot deny them access to a student's records. (Ark. Code Ann. §12-12-508)

5.40 COLLECTIONS AND FUNDRAISING

Collections and fundraising will be presented to the school board and must be authorized by the pastor and/or principal.

5.41 SOLICITORS

No one is allowed in the school building or on the school property to solicit or request signatures for a petition unless authorized by the pastor and/or principal.

5.42 ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Schools should develop and implement a policy for safe arrival and departure procedures, including when students are supervised. These procedures should be evaluated and improved as needed.

5.43 FIELD TRIP AND OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

5.43.1 Field Trip Purpose and Procedures

- The principal is responsible for the coordination of all activities of the school, including student activities outside the school building or school day. If delegated, it should be clearly stated who is responsible for the event.

- The principal is responsible for establishing clearly defined procedures for collection and use of field trip funds. All funds must be deposited in the parish/school account.
 - The principal must approve any school-sponsored activities. These activities must have a clear purpose, be carefully planned, and be well supervised by certified staff. For such activities, all the areas of responsibility should be clearly defined.
 - The principal must ensure that adequate supervision is provided by at least one certified faculty member for all school-sponsored activities and field trips. In elementary schools, a ratio of not less than one adult for each group of 5 to 8 children should be arranged. The guideline is, the younger the students the greater the need for supervision.
 - A field trip must have the enrichment of the curriculum as its core purpose and must be carefully planned as an extension of the classroom experience.
 - The principal, as the responsible school administrator, must follow the established transportation policy, have drivers complete the Field Trip Driver Information Sheet, and keep these documents on file in the school office.
 - Permission slips should be retained for one year after the trip. If a chartered bus is used for transportation, principals must keep a copy of the signed contract on file in the school office.
 - Verbal permission to travel on a field trip is not permitted. Permission must be written on the field trip permission form required and approved by the Diocese. Completed permission slips received by fax or scanned email document are acceptable.
 - The principal always reserves the right to exclude a student from participation in a field trip.
 - The only children allowed to attend a field trip are those for which the field trip is planned.
 - Further procedures to be observed when sponsoring field trips are available from the Office of Catholic Schools.
- All policies regarding Safe Environment, including background checks, Medical Release Form and Laity Code of Conduct, apply to attending adults.

The following forms must be retained in the school office:

- Field Trip Request Form
- Driver Information Form
- Original Parent/Guardian Liability Waiver and Consent Form
- Original Volunteer Medical Release Form

Copies of the following forms to be taken on the field trip include:

- Parent/Guardian Liability Waiver and Consent Form
- Volunteer Medical Release Form
- Incident Investigation Report Form

5.43.2 Overnight Field Trips

Overnight field trips are highly discouraged. Requests for exceptions must have approval from the pastor and be submitted to the Diocesan superintendent. Overnight trips must meet guidelines from Catholic Mutual Youth Trips involving overnight stay. Contact the Office of Catholic Schools for approval prior to planning an overnight trip.

5.43.3 Private Passenger Vehicles

The following requirements must be met for all field trips and other school-sponsored events involving vehicles that are privately-owned and driven:

- The driver must be at least 21 years old.
- The driver must have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no physical disability that could in any way impair their ability to drive the vehicle safely.
- The vehicle must have a valid and current registration and valid and current license plate.
- The vehicle must be insured by the driver at the minimum limits required by Arkansas Law. The diocese recommends \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per occurrence.
- The Driver Liability Form must be signed by any adult that will be driving and a copy of proof of insurance and driver's license will be provided to the school.
- Students must wear seat belts at all times.
- Students under 6 years of age and/or 60 pounds must be strapped into an appropriate child safety restraint.
- Teachers should not be drivers for field trips.
- Drivers must complete the Safe Environment Drivers Training Module.
- Maximum number of consecutive miles driven will not exceed 250 miles per driver without at least a 30 minute break.
- Daily maximum miles driven will not exceed 500 miles per vehicle.

5.44 BUSES

Prior to a school purchasing a bus, the principal shall consult with the Diocese of Little Rock concerning insurance.

5.44.1 Bus Driver Certification

A driver or operator of a school bus, either privately or publically owned, is required to pass a series of tests to determine physical fitness and driving ability. In addition, all school bus drivers will receive 24 hours of pre-in-service training and 3 hours of annual training in accordance with the regulations established by the Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation. (Ark. Code Ann. §6-19-108)

5.44.2 Bus Safety Equipment

All buses operated by public or private schools must meet certain safety standards, including installation of a flashing white strobe light, a crossing gate, and appropriate mirrors. (Ark. Code Ann. §6-19-116 and 6-19-117)

5.44.3 Bus Passengers

All passengers are required to be seated while the school bus is in operation. (Ark. Code Ann. §6-19-119)

5.44.4 Bus Safety

- It is a Class B misdemeanor for anyone over the age of 18 to enter a school bus with criminal intent, disrupt the driver, or refuse to leave the bus. (Act-247)
- It is a Class A felony to possess a deadly weapon and seize control of a bus operated by a public or private school. (Ark. Code Ann. §5-11-107)
- It is against the law to possess a firearm on the property of any public or private school, on a school bus, or at a designated school bus stop. If a parent knows that a minor has possession of a firearm while at a public or private school-sponsored sporting event, the parent can be charged with a misdemeanor. (Ark. Code Ann. § 5-73-119)

5.44.5 Child Safety Alarms

All agencies or child care facilities licensed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) that transport children must have a child safety alarm device installed on vehicles designed or used to transport more than seven passengers and one driver. (Act 1979/SB 465)

5.45 SCHOOL ZONE WIRELESS TELEPHONE USE

A driver of a motor vehicle shall not use a handheld wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle when passing a school building or school zone during school hours when children are present and outside the building, except for emergency purposes. (Ark. Code Ann. §27-51-1609)

5.46 INTERNET, ELECTRONIC MAIL, AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

All schools will establish a policy for the use of the Internet, electronic mail, and social media for employees and students.

- Employees are required to sign the acceptable use form for employees.
- Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) are required to sign the acceptable use permission form.
- Students are required to sign the acceptable use form for students.

5.47 FINANCES**5.47.1 Operating Account**

- School financial accounts should be kept separate from church finances so a full accounting can be determined on the cost of operating the school.
- A school, including all organizations that use the school's tax ID number, must maintain only one operating checking account.
- All schools must have a sound checks and balances process.
- Schools will utilize a software program with a chart of accounts to record all income and expenses. The program should allow the budgeted and actual year to date amounts for each line item to be reported for comparison on the monthly financial statement.
- Separate accounting for any activity can be maintained by creating a sub-account of the main operating account in the school's financial program.

- Arkansas state law, requires that an entity must maintain a separate checking account for bingo and raffle activity. (Ark. Code Ann.§ 23-114-501)
- Capital campaign contributions, endowments, or other restricted gifts should be deposited into account separate from the operating account. Accounts for this purpose are available through the Diocesan Office of Finance which oversees the Parish Deposit and Loan Fund. If local accounts are used, adequate controls must be established for withdrawals from such accounts and all donor restrictions must be followed.
- The pastor must be a signatory on all school checking and investment accounts. At least one alternate signatory should be established and approved by the pastor. The alternate signatory should not have responsibility for preparing the checks or reconciling the accounts.
- The use of check signing machine or signature stamps is prohibited.

5.47.2 Budget

- Preparation of budgets should begin in January. In August, the budget should be reviewed and modified based on the current enrollment.
- The school board assists the principal in preparing the school budget and recommends tuition rates, fundraising, and parish subsidy.
- The parish subsidy request is presented to the pastor and the Parish Finance Council for approval.
- Final approval of the budget resides with the pastor.
- All schools will submit a budget to the Office of Catholic Schools with the annual reports in September. The budget should be balanced using realistic income and expense figures.
- In budgeting for scholarships, a third-party company will be used to assess student scholarship applications.

5.47.3 Financial Reporting

- A monthly financial report is to be presented at each school board meeting.
- A yearly financial report summarizing revenue and expenses is required by the Diocese and is part of the annual Parish Financial Report to the Diocesan Office of Finance. This report covers the fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending each June 30 and is due each year by September 1.

5.48 COMPLAINTS

Any person feeling aggrieved concerning any matter connected with the school will contact the individual involved before discussing it with other patrons. School board members should not attempt to solve a problem, but should refer the aggrieved person to the appropriate person and contact the principal.

- If a person has a complaint about a teacher, the individual will go first to the teacher to seek a solution to the problem.
- If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the person will contact the principal for an appointment.
- If the problem is still not resolved, the person will contact the pastor to discuss the matter.
- If no solution is found to the problem, the matter will be referred to the superintendent.