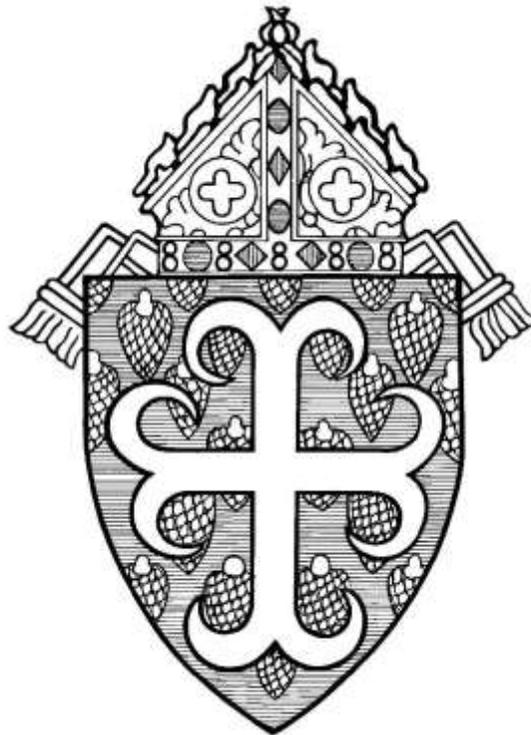


DIOCESE OF PORTLAND



Student Handbook

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Mission Statement	1
Vision	1
ADMISSION	1
School Admission Policy	1
Elementary School Admission	1
High School Admission	2
International Students.....	2
Scholastic Aptitude	3
Non-Catholic Applicants.....	3
Students with Disabilities.....	3
Notice of Non-Discrimination.....	4
Financial Support	4
Relations with Public Schools.....	4
Age of Admission.....	4
Admission Records	5
Immunization of Students	5
Grade Openings.....	5
Class Size	6
Child Custody.....	6
ATTENDANCE.....	6
Daily Attendance.....	6
Register of Attendance	6
Monitoring Attendance	6
Provisions for Home Instruction	7
Tardiness	7
Releasing Students During The School Day	7
Releasing Students for Vacation	7

School Discipline	7
Corporal Punishment.....	8
Suspension.....	8
Expulsion.....	8
PROGRESS	9
Assessment of Student Progress.....	9
Reporting to Parents	9
Teacher-Parent Meetings.....	10
Promotion and Retention.....	10
Graduation	10
Elementary School	10
Secondary School.....	11
Religion 4-Years	11
Graduation Dates.....	11
RECORDS	11
Student Records.....	11
Health Records	12
Access to Student Records	12
Privacy and Security of Student Records.....	12
Transfer/Withdrawal Records	13
Non-Payment of Tuition.....	13
ACTIVITIES.....	14
Religious Activities.....	14
Social Events, Extracurricular and Co-curricular Activities.....	14
Student Dress.....	14
STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	15
Relations with Law Enforcement.....	15
Questioning and Searches of Students	15
Research and Surveys.....	16

Student Drug and Alcohol Use..... 16
Weapons, Violence and School Safety 17
Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students 18
Bullying..... 19
Student Computer and Internet Use 19
Student Use of Cell Phones and Electronic Equipment 23
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE..... 24
 Purpose 24
 Procedure..... 24

INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

Maine Catholic Schools evangelize students by nourishing faith, providing academic excellence, community and service in a nurturing environment.

Vision

Maine Catholic School administrators and teachers partner with parents, parishioners and community members to provide students with opportunities to become faith filled Christians, creative and critical thinkers, life-long learners and confident contributors to church and society.

ADMISSION

School Admission Policy

The admission policy for each Maine Catholic School should be determined by the Pastor, Principal and school consultative board consistent with the educational policies as contained in the Maine Catholic Schools Administrative Handbook and should be disseminated to prospective students and their parents and should be on file at the Office of Maine Catholic Schools.

Elementary School Admission

In general, students applying to Catholic elementary schools shall, if qualified, be accepted according to the following criteria, applied in sequence:

- A. Catholic students from the parish cluster sponsoring the school;
- B. Siblings of students currently enrolled at the school;
- C. Catholic students from other parish clusters in the Diocese of Portland;
- D. Catholic transfer students from parishes outside the Diocese of Portland;
- F. Non-Catholic students.

While admission criteria may vary from school to school depending upon the objectives of the school, its resources and the type of community served, Maine Catholic Schools shall adhere to the following criteria:

1. The applicant and parents should understand, accept, and be willing to support the mission and goals of the school. Parents are encouraged to explore the school, the

curriculum and program to see if it best meets their expectations for their child (ren).

An objective screening and/or interview process may be applied at every grade level. The same standards of acceptance must be applied to each applicant.

2. All students must participate in religion class.
3. All students must attend liturgical and Para liturgical services which are a part of the curriculum.
4. The applicant and parents should be willing to participate in programs of service sponsored by the school.
5. The school strives to meet the academic, physical, and community needs of the student.
6. The family agrees to financially support the school and parish.
7. The tuition status of students transferring from other Catholic schools will be evaluated by the Principal and Pastor.
8. Each school should have a recruitment program and accept as many students as possible.

Each school should schedule a well-publicized registration period for new students.

High School Admission

St. Dominic Academy has an established application program which includes:

- a pre-admission interview,
- a scheduled placement test,
- a review of the applicant's academic record and
- a recommendation from the applicant's current Principal, Teacher and/or Pastor.

International Students

The registration of international students requires completion of forms from the Immigration and Naturalization Service such as:

- F-1 Student Visa (nonimmigrant student)
- I-94 Arrival Departure Record
- I-20 Non Immigrant F-1 Student Status
- I-538 Extension of Stay, School Transfer, Permission to Accept or Continue Employment.

Such forms should be completed in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent of Maine Catholic Schools.

Scholastic Aptitude

Scholastic ability should not be the sole determinant of admission. The school shall make every reasonable effort to provide a program suited to the needs of the students accepted.

If it is the school's policy to enroll students with above average ability, or with learning disabilities, the policy should be clearly stated in the school handbook. Ability should be determined by academic records, readiness tests, standardized test results, and high school placement examinations.

Non-Catholic Applicants

Students of other religious beliefs should be admitted whenever possible. Whether they are Catholic or non-Catholic, applicants and their parents should understand and accept the nature and purpose of the Catholic school as set forth in the Mission and Vision Statement of Maine Catholic Schools. In the case of non-Catholic candidates, admission should be dependent, at least in part, upon their agreement, as well as that of their parents, to attend religion classes and other religious activities.

Students with Disabilities

Students with a disability will not be denied admission to Maine Catholic Schools on the basis of their disability within the limits of state and federal law, provided the student meets the school's admission and eligibility requirements. Reasonable accommodations for a child with disabilities will be made depending on that child's needs, including but not limited to: relocation of classrooms to the accessible floor, library services, computer hook-ups, hot lunch programs, and other services.

Students with physical disabilities who are enrolled in a school of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland and who are eligible to participate in federally assisted programs and activities will be provided the opportunity to participate in these programs and activities at one of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland designated sites. Such sites will meet or exceed the standards of accessibility for persons with disabilities. These accessibility features will conform to the applicable standards of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (Rev. 4/1/88) (UFAs) or such other standards that provide for equivalent access specifically approved by Region I, OCR, and United States Department of Education.

A student with a disability who is eligible to participate in a federally assisted program and who attends a school within the Maine Catholic School system shall not be denied access to these programs. Parental and guardian concerns related to this access and/or programs or activities, which surface and which are not resolved by the school, may be referred to the Superintendent of Schools of the Diocese of Portland who will hear the concern and offer a resolution.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Maine Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

Financial Support

Assuring that the youth of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland have available affordable and accessible Catholic School education is of utmost importance to the mission of the Church. Therefore, guidelines have been established regarding the funding of Maine Catholic Schools.

The school's policy on tuition and/or financial assistance for students in need should be clearly stated in the school handbook and recruiting literature. Priority consideration will be given to students whose parents actively support the Parish cluster.

Students whose tuition is not current by the end of the first semester will be denied admission for the second semester unless other tuition payment arrangements have been made with the Pastor/Principal. A Pastor/Principal, who has made a decision to allow a student to continue his/her studies in the second semester, regardless of any outstanding tuition payment(s) due by the parent at year-end, shall allow the student to participate in the graduation exercises.

Each school should have, as part of its admissions materials for transfer of Catholic school students, a form, which states there is no outstanding financial obligation due to the sending school. If there is such an obligation, the student will be denied admission until the financial obligation is resolved.

Relations with Public Schools

Maine Catholic Schools share with the local public schools the common mission of providing the best possible educational opportunities for all children. Acknowledging this common responsibility, local leadership should meet and communicate on a regular basis and collaborate by sharing information, exchanging best practices, offering mutual support, and maintaining a positive environment to foster ongoing relationships.

Upon request, the Principal should provide a list of new students to public school authorities.

Age of Admission

The Maine Catholic Schools follows the provisions of the General Laws of Maine, 20-A M.R.S. § 5201(2) which establishes the minimum age for student enrollment in a school administrative

unit is as follows:

- A. A person who will be at least 5 years old on October 15th of the school year may enroll in school.
- B. A person who will be at least 4 years of age on October 15th of the school year may enroll in a public preschool program prior to kindergarten if it is offered.

Admission Records

The parent or guardian of a student entering school for the first time must submit his/her birth record, baptismal record, and all immunization records. A student transferring from another school will provide his/her last report record and facilitate the transfer of all records from the school the student formerly attended.

Immunization of Students

All students who enroll in a school operated by Maine Catholic Schools are required by Maine law to present a certificate of immunization or evidence of immunization or immunity against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chicken pox).

Non-immunized students shall not be permitted to attend school or school activities unless one of the following conditions is met:

- A. The parents/guardians provide to the school written assurance that the child will be immunized within 90 days of enrolling in school or his/her first attendance in classes, whichever date is earlier. This option is available only once to each student during their school career; or
- B. The parents/guardians provide a physician's written statement each year that immunization against one or more diseases may be medically inadvisable (as defined by law/regulation); or
- C. The parents/guardians state in writing each year that immunization is contrary to their sincere religious belief or for philosophical reasons.

The Superintendent shall exclude any non-immunized student when there is a clear danger to the health of others as provided by law.

Grade Openings

Each school should have a waiting list of applicants with corresponding dates of application. Students should be admitted from this list on a priority basis according to the guidelines of the school admission policy. It is important that the last school which the student attended, be contacted before final acceptance.

Class Size

Enrollment may be limited to a maximum of (30) thirty students in a classroom at the discretion of the Principal after consultation with the Pastor and Superintendent. Careful consideration will be given to the instructional and learning needs of the students.

The number of currently enrolled students who may be retained in a particular grade should be taken into consideration before new applicants are admitted to that grade.

Child Custody

Child custody issues will be addressed by the school in compliance with interim and final custody ruling issued by a court of competent jurisdiction. Copies of such legal documents must be on file in the school. When legal advice is required, the Office of Maine Catholic Schools will be consulted.

ATTENDANCE

Daily Attendance

Regular attendance is expected.

Each Principal is responsible for the regular attendance of students. A careful check should be made on the reason for each absence or tardiness.

Frequent or prolonged absence must be reported to the attendance officer of the public school district and/or the Department of Health and Human Services.

Register of Attendance

The Principal is responsible for maintaining an attendance record for each student according to the form and procedure required by state law. In addition, a record of each student's attendance should be entered on his/her permanent record each year.

Monitoring Attendance

Responsibility for compliance with mandatory attendance law rests with the parents/legal guardians. A student who has been absent from school should present a written statement providing the date, the reason for absence, and the signature of a parent or guardian. Such statements should be kept on file for one year or longer if, in the Principal's judgment, continued need for such records is anticipated. When a student fails to produce the required excuse, or when there is reason to question the validity of the excuse, the Principal should investigate the situation. In some cases conferences or referral to outside entities may be helpful.

The admission procedure for a student returning to school after a communicable disease should be in accordance with the regulations of the local Board of Health.

Provisions for Home Instruction

A pupil unable to attend school for health reasons is eligible for home instruction provided through the local public school district Board of Education.

A student who begins home instruction is legally transferred from the Catholic school to the public school system and is marked as such in the Attendance Records with notation and reason. Upon completion of home instruction, the student is returned to the Catholic school and marked as re-entering in the Attendance Records.

Tardiness

A student is tardy if he/she arrives after the time fixed by the school policy for the beginning of the session.

Releasing Students during the School Day

A student should not be released from school during the school day without the written request or consent of the parent or guardian. Students should be released only to parents/guardians or to the person authorized by them.

A student who is ill should not be sent home, but rather a parent/guardian or authorized person should be called to pick up the student. At no time should a student be sent home during school hours unless it is certain someone is at home to care for him/her. Each school is expected to have an emergency information form on file for each student.

Dental and medical appointments shall be arranged outside of school time. Such appointments during the school day shall be permitted only by way of exception and when no other arrangements can be made.

Releasing Students for Vacation

Parents are discouraged from taking their children out of school for a family vacation.

School Discipline

Each school shall have in place a discipline policy that is clearly stated in the school handbook. Discipline in the schools of the Diocese should focus on assisting children to develop an understanding of self and others as being made in the image of God.

Evidence of successful discipline policy exists in a school community when the students, teachers, administrators, and parent/legal guardians work cooperatively towards the attainment of the goals and objectives of that particular school community.

Basic rules of conduct and courtesy should be published in the school faculty and student handbooks. This will help all concerned know what is expected of them in terms of behavior to be avoided as well as behavior to which students and faculty should aspire.

Adequate and proper supervision of students must be maintained at all times.

Withholding rightfully earned academic recognition such as a diploma should not be employed as a disciplinary measure.

Corporal Punishment

The use of corporal punishment in any form is prohibited in Maine Catholic Schools. This includes not only the use of physical force on a student, but also verbal abuse and/or ostracism. All school personnel must exercise Pastoral care in the disciplining of a student, and must follow carefully articulated discipline procedures.

While this policy is intended to preserve the health and safety of the children, it is also most important for the protection of teachers and administrators from legal/professional liability.

Suspension

Suspension is defined as a temporary dismissal of a student from the school for no more than 10 consecutive days. Suspension shall be within the jurisdiction of the school Principal. It is used only after the school personnel have made reasonable efforts to assist the student in adjusting to the social and academic requirements of the school environment.

A conference with the student, the parents/guardians, and the Principal or his/her representative should precede any suspension. A written record of the reasons for the suspension, the date, important information regarding conferences, and the process for reentry should be kept on file in the school. The Pastor should be informed of each suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion, a most serious matter, is the permanent dismissal of a student from the school. The penalty of expulsion shall be imposed only when the student presents a danger to the moral or physical wellbeing of others or their property, or is guilty of substantial and open disregard for school authority and/or the educational process. The Principal should invoke this rarely and only as a last resort. Expulsion should be determined only after consultation with the Superintendent of Schools and the Pastor.

The fact that a student presents serious problems in the school is not in itself sufficient reason for

expulsion. The Principal should use every means available to discover the cause of the problem and should exhaust appropriate or available remedies; for example, referral to a guidance clinic, physician, or parish priest. Parents should be informed of the problem and be involved in decisions regarding referrals.

The dates, agenda, and conclusions of the student/teacher/parent conferences should be logged. Prior to expulsion, the student and his/her parents must be granted a hearing by the Principal and Pastor. If expulsion is determined, the Principal should notify the parents or guardian of the reasons prior to final resolution. The Superintendent of Maine Catholic Schools must be notified in writing of the action.

PROGRESS

Assessment of Student Progress

To assess student progress, a variety of means should be employed. These should take into consideration the student's ability, degree of motivation, and learning style in order to assist in determining the student's potential, strengths, limitations, and level of achievement.

Assessment procedures include: standardized tests, teacher-made examinations, questionnaires, checklists, direct observations, self-evaluations, portfolios and other methods of performance assessment. When student performance appears to indicate the need for an individual psychological, neurological and/or physical examination, a joint conference with Principal, teacher and parent/guardian shall be arranged. If further measures are indicated, the parent/guardian shall be referred to the proper persons or agencies. The Principal, after consultation with the Superintendent of the Maine Catholic Schools may require the testing as a condition for continued enrollment of the student.

Grading is the most widely used method of reporting student progress. Teachers should use specific data from a number of assessment procedures in establishing a grade.

The Principal should be responsible for the continuous assessment of each student's work, for the consistent meaning of grades given, and for the communication of the meaning of the grades to students and parents/guardians.

Reporting to Parents

Written reports, including information on the student's academic achievement, behavior, and attendance, should be issued to parents at least *four times* a year. The scores of individual students or schools shall not be released to the press, without the approval of the parents and the Office of Maine Catholic Schools, respectively. The Superintendent of Maine Catholic Schools must approve all forms of report cards.

In order to assure that separated and/or divorced parents of a child enrolled in a Maine Catholic

School are informed of the student's progress, and afforded the opportunity to participate in school activities, if desired, the following procedures will be implemented:

Unless a student's file contains a court order or decree to the contrary, in cases of divorced and/or separated parents, both parents will be given the opportunity to be listed on the school roster of students and families. The roster may include the names, addresses and telephone numbers of both parents.

Unless a student's file contains a court order or decree to the contrary, in cases of divorced and/or separated parents, the non-custodial or non-residential parent will be given the opportunity to request academic reports and other pertinent information, which in the discretion of the school administrator is deemed feasible. This information, if requested, may be mailed to the non-custodial or non-residential parent.

Teacher-Parent Meetings

It is recommended that teacher/parent conferences be held shortly after the completion of the first three school quarters. At least one teacher-parent conference must be conducted during the school year. These conferences should be made optional to the parents, to provide them with an opportunity to discuss the student's progress over the previous quarter with the teacher. This conference also provides the teacher with an opportunity to elaborate on the student's strengths and weaknesses and areas for focus and development. The teacher also should comment on the student's in-class conduct and effort. Teacher / parent meetings may be arranged at any time if deemed necessary by the Teacher or the Parent / Legal Guardian.

Promotion and Retention

All promotions, regular or special, and retention should be decided upon by the Principal and the teacher in consultation with the parents/legal guardians. Such decisions should be based on a total evaluation of a student's growth in all areas of development. Although the Principal should always act in consultation with a student's teachers and parents/legal guardian, the final responsibility for a student's promotion or retention rests with the parents.

A student may not be retained more than twice during the elementary grades (K-8).

Graduation

Elementary School

Graduation from elementary school is a promotion to the next grade. It should be governed by the same criteria as established for the promotion into other grades.

Graduation from elementary school may be marked by a simple, dignified exercise that

recognizes the unique value of the Christian education just completed.

The official Diocesan certificate should be presented to each student at the graduation exercise.

Participation in the graduation ceremony is a matter unrelated to the granting of a certificate and/or the furnishing of academic transcript or health records to another school. Students may be excluded from such a ceremony for a very serious breach of conduct or responsibility. Such exclusion does not excuse the school from awarding an earned certificate and meeting other administrative responsibilities to the students.

Secondary School

Maine Catholic Secondary Schools provide the prescribed course of study required by the Maine Education and School Statutes, Title 20-A, Sub chapter III, sections 4721-4729.

Religion 4-Years

A transfer student from the public school is not required to complete the full four units in religion. The graduation requirements may be modified to reflect any approved method of crediting religion.

Graduation Dates

Graduation exercises should not take place earlier than the dates indicated on the approved school calendar without the specific written permission of the Superintendent of Maine Catholic Schools.

RECORDS

Student Records

The Principal is the legal custodian of all permanent records, and is responsible for their preparation, maintenance, privacy, transcription, and dissemination. It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that all records are kept in a secure place in accordance with state regulations. Records must be stored in fireproof cabinets. No records may ever be left outside of the secure place, unattended, or taken from the school building.

Permanent records include the academic record and attendance record, identifying data, test results, and immunization data for Grades 1-12. Pre-school records should include identifying data and attendance.

In general, honors and awards may be recorded on permanent records, but disciplinary actions should not be recorded to minimize the risk of improper disclosure, academic records of students

should be kept separate from disciplinary and psychological records.

If, for an important reason, it is necessary to correct or change a permanent record, the correction must be dated and initialed.

When a Maine Catholic School closes, student records should be preserved in the following manner:

- Parish school records should be kept with parish records
- Diocesan school records should be kept at the Catholic School Office
- Private Catholic School records should be kept by the religious congregation responsible for the school

Health Records

Each student's health records shall be maintained in the school office in accordance with state and local regulations. These records shall be the responsibility of the school nurse or other authorized personnel. When a student graduates or transfers to another school, the health records, with parental authorization, will be sent to the receiving school.

Access to Student Records

Parents and legal guardians have the right to inspect any and all material that is part of the child's permanent record. Barring court orders to the contrary, either parent, whether or not he/she has custody of the child, has access to records, including grades.

The financial records pertaining to a student are the private business of the person who "signed" the tuition contract. They are not to be included as "records" that are subject to view by opposing parties in a divorce agreement.

Schools may require from parents/legal guardians a prior and written request when they wish to examine the child's permanent record. At the time of inspection, the school administrator, or qualified delegate, should be present.

Privacy and Security of Student Records

Principals must insist on the accuracy of the student record information pertaining to custody, court orders, and releases, and maintain a current file of legal documents pertaining to appropriate students. Tag such student records and maintain these records in the student's file.

Confidentiality of student records must be ensured. Principals are to remind teachers that student records are legal documents, and that discussion of them must always be considered a professional matter.

Schools may not release copies of student records without the written consent of a parent/legal

guardian, to any individual, agency, or organization other than to a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to a judicial order in which instance the school shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian/or student (if he/she has reached the age of maturity) of the order in advance of compliance. A Principal receiving a subpoena for school records should contact the Superintendent of Maine Catholic Schools.

The names and addresses of students and/or their parents/guardians shall not be released to salespersons, commercial organizations, or to any other unauthorized person or agency.

Transfer/Withdrawal Records

When a student transfers to another school, a notation of the transfer, with the reason for the transfer should be made in the school register and permanent record card, which shall be retained in the school.

After receiving a parental request, the Principal should mail, to the new Principal, a copy of the complete transcript of the student's grades, test scores, and health record as soon as possible. The Principal should contact the Principal of the new school to supply further information that might be needed.

Other significant data, e.g. individual psychological testing reports, shall be released only upon request and with the written permission of the parent/guardian.

When students withdraw permanently from school, that is, he/she is not transferring to another school; a notation with the reason for withdrawal should be made in the school register.

A transfer record is completed for every student who leaves the school, and is mailed to his/her new school.

Non-Payment of Tuition

Student records, report cards, certificates and diplomas may not be withheld as a disciplinary measure for non-payment of tuition, since a student's achievement entitles him/her to this recognition. A high school diploma may be withheld only if academic requirements necessary for graduation have not been satisfactorily completed.

If tuition payments have consistently been disregarded by parents who appear to be able to pay or who have not sought remission of all or part of the tuition, the Pastor, in consultation with the Principal and Superintendent of Maine Catholic School, may request the parents to withdraw the student from the school.

The recovery of unpaid tuition from families whose children no longer attend the school may be pursued only in such a manner as will reflect an objective spirit of justice. Methods which run the risk of adverse publicity that would result in a bad Pastoral image for the school, parish, or the diocese must be avoided.

ACTIVITIES

Religious Activities

Each school should provide activities designed to foster sound religious attitudes and practices in students. Such activities should be suited to the students' level of understanding and interests.

The activities should include liturgical and *para-liturgical* celebrations. Students should be encouraged to participate actively within the liturgy and to fulfill the responsibilities of acolytes, lectors, musicians, etc. During Lent and Advent, the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be celebrated. Opportunities for retreats and days of recollection are encouraged. They should be assisted to understand that service in behalf of the poor and needy is an essential component of the living of the Christian life.

Social Events, Extracurricular and Co-curricular Activities

Social events, extracurricular activities, and co-curricular activities contribute significantly to the full development of students' personalities. They should be carefully planned and sufficiently varied to fulfill this purpose. Overnight trips for elementary school students are prohibited. Overnight trips for secondary school students require the permission of the Superintendent of Maine Catholic Schools. Social events, extracurricular activities, and co-curricular activities should be adequately supervised, adjusted to the level of maturity of the students, limited so as not to conflict with non-school activities, and maintained at a reasonable expense. Representatives of the school staff should be present at any school-sponsored activity. Additional supervision should be provided by adults who are experienced in dealing with students and who will take an active part in the supervision. A sufficient number of police officers should be retained when it is deemed necessary for safety reasons.

Parents should be fully informed as to the time and place of events, the rules governing them, and the limits of the school's supervision and liability.

The expectations of students' behavior at school-sponsored events should be clearly stated and publicized. Students will be held responsible for their behavior.

Student Dress

Each school should establish standards for student dress. These standards should promote the development of proper values, social acceptability, cleanliness, and good health. The Principal shall develop such standards in consultation with the school consultative board, faculty, parents, Pastor and students.

STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Relations with Law Enforcement

Maine Catholic Schools recognizes that a cooperative relationship with law enforcement authorities is desirable for the protection of students and staff, maintaining a safe school environment, and safeguarding school property.

School administrators and staff shall have the primary responsibility for maintaining proper order in the schools and for disciplining students for violations of policies and school rules. However, the Superintendent/administration are authorized to seek the assistance of law enforcement authorities when they believe there is a substantial threat to the welfare and safety of the schools, students and/or staff. The Superintendent/administration shall also inform law enforcement authorities when they have reason to suspect that a student or staff member - may have violated a local, state or federal law.

Law enforcement authorities are strongly discouraged from using the schools as venue to arrest and/or interrogate students for activities not related to or affecting the schools. The Superintendent/administration retains the authority to deny law enforcement access to students for non-school related investigations.

Questioning and Searches of Students

Students, their personal property, and their vehicles may be searched upon reasonable suspicion that they possess any items or substances which are prohibited by law, policy and/or school rules, or which interfere with the operations, discipline or general welfare of the school. School administrators may also search groups of students or the entire student body without individualized suspicion.

Student use of all school storage facilities, including but not limited to lockers, desks, and parking lots, is a privilege granted by the school. All storage facilities are school property and remain under the control, custody, and supervision of the school. Students have no expectation of privacy in school storage facilities or for any items placed in such storage facilities. School administrators have the authority to inspect and search storage facilities and their contents on a random basis, with or without reasonable suspicion, and without notice or consent.

If a search produces evidence that a student has violated or is violating the law, policy and/or school rules, such evidence may be seized and impounded by school administrators and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken. Evidence may be forwarded to law enforcement authorities as required by law or as deemed appropriate by school administrators.

A student who refuses to comply with a search directive may be subject to disciplinary action, including the disciplinary consequences for the suspected violation.

Research and Surveys

Research projects, surveys, and pictures of a personal or family nature, involving students, must be authorized by the Superintendent of Maine Catholic Schools. Parents must be informed, in writing, regarding the surveys and they must give their written consent prior to student participation.

Student Drug and Alcohol Use

In order to promote the highest possible standards of learning, as well as the physical, social and emotional well-being of students, this policy is designed to: aid students in abstaining from the unlawful use of alcohol and drugs; provide for early intervention when use is detected; and, provide disciplinary action when necessary. Compliance with this policy is mandatory.

Any school staff member who has reason to suspect that a student has violated this policy is expected to report the incident to an appropriate administrator immediately.

A. Prevention

The Maine Catholic Schools will provide students with information and activities focused on abstaining from the use of alcohol and drugs. Such information and activities will address the legal, social and health consequences of drug and alcohol use and will provide information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illicit drugs and alcohol. The Maine Catholic Schools will work in partnership with students, parents/guardians and local law enforcement officials to eliminate these risks for students.

B. Rules and Sanctions

Students are prohibited from consuming, possessing, furnishing, selling, receiving, buying, manufacturing or being under the influence of prohibited substances before, during and after school hours, at school, in any school building, on any school premises, in any school-owned vehicle or in any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities, off school property at any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function (such as a field trip or athletic event) where students are under the jurisdiction of the school unit, or at any time or place if the conduct directly interferes with the operation, discipline or welfare of the schools.

The term “prohibited substance” shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Alcohol;

2. Scheduled drugs (as defined in 17-A MRSA § 1101);
3. Controlled substances (as defined in the federal Controlled Substances Act, 21 USC § 812);
4. Any performance-enhancing substance listed on the Maine Department of Health and Human Services' banned substances list and any other substance which is illegal in Maine or the use of which is illegal for minors;
5. Prescription drugs not prescribed for the student;
6. Any substance which can affect or change a student's mental, physical or behavior pattern, including but not limited to volatile materials such as glue, paint or aerosols (when possessed for the purpose of inhalation);
7. Paraphernalia – implements used for distribution or consumption of a prohibited substance; or
8. Any look-alike drug or substance that is described as or is purported to be a prohibited substance defined in this section.

Any violation of the terms of this policy shall constitute sufficient grounds for student discipline, including suspension or expulsion from school, at the appropriate discretion of the administration.

Weapons, Violence and School Safety

Students are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct on school property, while in attendance at school or at any other school-sponsored activity, or at any time or place that such conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline or general welfare of the school:

- A. Possession and/or use of articles commonly used or designed to inflict bodily harm or any facsimile thereof and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person. Examples of such articles include but are not limited to firearms, BB guns, pellet guns, any other kind of gun, ammunition, explosives, cross-bows, brass knuckles, switchblades, knives, chains, clubs, Kung Fu stars and nun chucks;
- B. Use of any object, although not necessarily designed to be a weapon, to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person. Examples of such objects include but are not limited to bats, belts, picks, pencils, compasses, articles capable of ignition (e.g., matches, lighters), files, tools of any sort and replicas of weapons (including toys);
- C. Violent, threatening or menacing behavior, including but not limited to fighting, assault and/or battery, taking hostages, threats to commit violence against persons

or property (e.g., verbal or written death threats, threats of bodily harm, bomb threats), stalking, or blocking access to school property or facilities;

- D. Verbal or written statements (including those made on or through a computer or other electronic device) which threaten, intimidate, or harass others, which tend to incite violence and/or disrupt the school program, blackmail, extortion, or demands for money or property;
- E. Willful and malicious damage to school or personal property;
- F. Stealing or attempting to steal school or personal property;
- G. Lewd, indecent or obscene acts or expressions of any kind;
- H. Use of alcohol, illegal drugs or and tobacco;
- I. Violations of state or federal laws; and
- J. Any other conduct that may be harmful to persons or property.

Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students

Harassment of students because of race, color, sex, religion, ancestry or national origin, or disability is prohibited. Such conduct is a violation of Maine Catholic Schools' policy and may constitute illegal discrimination under state and federal laws.

Harassment includes but is not limited to verbal abuse based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry or national origin or disability. Harassment that rises to the level of physical assault, battery and/or abuse is also addressed elsewhere in this handbook including in the School Discipline and Weapons, Violence and School Safety sections.

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or pressure to engage in sexual activity, physical contact of a sexual nature, gestures, comments or other physical, written or verbal conduct that is gender-based that interferes with a student's education. School employees, fellow students, volunteers and visitors to the school and other persons with whom students may interact in order to pursue school activities are required to refrain from such conduct.

Harassment/sexual harassment of students by other students is considered grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. All complaints of harassment shall be investigated.

Bullying

Maine Catholic Schools strive to provide environments that are conducive to the highest levels of student learning and achievement as well as providing opportunities for on-going personal and moral development. Because bullying interferes with these aims, it will not be tolerated in the school community.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to, a written, oral or electronic expression or physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof directed at a student or students that:

- Physically harms a student and/or damages a student's property; places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm and/or damage to his/her property; and/or disrupts the instructional program or orderly operation of the school; or
- Is so severe that it creates a hostile educational environment for the student who is bullied and/or interferes with the student's academic performance or ability to meaningfully participate in school activities.

Students are prohibited from engaging in behavior that constitutes bullying while on school grounds and while at all school sponsored activities. In addition, students are prohibited from engaging in this behavior at other times and while using electronic communications when those actions have the effect of interfering with the ability of a student to meaningfully access their education at school.

Any bullying or suspected bullying should be reported to school personnel. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of bullying are prohibited. School staff shall investigate and respond to all allegations of bullying and, if bullying is confirmed, appropriate consequences will be imposed

Student Computer and Internet Use

[Note: for the purposes of this policy, the term "computer" is used to refer to any device that is issued to or used by students including tablets, laptops, etc.]

Maine Catholic Schools' computers, network and Internet access are provided to support the educational mission of the schools. These rules apply to school computers and computers issued directly to students, whether in use at school or off school premises.

Compliance with these rules is mandatory. Students who violate the rules may, after being given an opportunity to respond to an alleged violation, have their computer privileges limited, suspended or revoked. The building administrator shall have the final authority to decide whether a student's computer privileges will be altered, based on the circumstances of the particular case. Such violations may also result in disciplinary action, referral to law enforcement and/or legal action.

Maine Catholic Schools' computers remain under the control, custody and supervision of the school at all times. The school may monitor all computer and Internet activity by students. Students have no expectation of privacy in their use of school devices, whether or not they are used on or off school property.

All students are responsible for their actions and activities involving school computers, networks and Internet services and for their computer files, passwords and accounts. These rules provide general guidance concerning the use of the schools' computers and examples of prohibited uses. The rules do not attempt to describe every possible prohibited activity by students. Students, parents and school staff who have questions about whether a particular activity is prohibited are encouraged to contact a building administrator. These rules apply to all school computers wherever used, and all uses of school servers, Internet access and networks regardless of how they are accessed.

A. Acceptable Use

1. The schools' computers, network and Internet services are provided for educational purposes and research consistent with the schools' educational mission, curriculum and instructional goals.
2. Students must comply with all policies, school rules and expectations concerning student conduct and communications when using school computers, whether on or off school property.
3. Students must also comply with all specific instructions from school staff and volunteers when using the school's computers.

B. Prohibited Uses

Unacceptable uses of computers by students include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Accessing or Communicating Inappropriate Materials – Students may not access, submit, post, publish, forward, download, scan or display defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, bullying/cyberbullying and/or illegal materials or messages.
2. Illegal Activities – Students may not use computers, network and Internet services for any illegal activity or in violation of any policy, procedure or school rules. Maine Catholic Schools assume no responsibility for illegal activities of students while using school computers.
3. Violating Copyrights or Software Licenses – Students may not copy, download or share any type of copyrighted materials (including music or films) without the

owner's permission; or copy or download software without the express authorization of the Principal or designee. Unauthorized copying of software is illegal and may subject the copier to substantial civil and criminal penalties. The school assumes no responsibility for copyright or licensing violations by students.

4. Plagiarism – Students may not represent as their own work any materials obtained on the Internet (such as term papers, articles, music, etc). When Internet sources are used in student work, the author, publisher and web site must be identified.
5. Use for Non-School-Related Purposes - Using computers, network and Internet services of the Maine Catholic Schools for any personal reasons not connected with the educational program or school assignments is prohibited.
6. Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access – Students may not share passwords; use other users' passwords; access or use other users' accounts; or attempt to circumvent network security systems.
7. Malicious Use/Vandalism-Students may not engage in any malicious use, disruption or harm to the school unit's computers, network and Internet services, including but not limited to hacking activities and creation/uploading of computer viruses.
8. Avoiding School Filters – Students may not attempt to or use any software, utilities or other means to access Internet sites or content blocked by the school filters.
9. Unauthorized Access to Blogs/Social Networking Sites, Etc. – Students may not use blogs, social networking sites, etc. in a manner that would be in violation of any school policy or rule.

C. Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages

The student and his/her parents/guardians are responsible for compensating the Maine Catholic Schools for any losses, costs or damages incurred for violations of policy or school rules while the student is using school computers, including the cost of investigating such violations. Maine Catholic Schools assume no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or costs incurred by a student while using school computers.

D. Student Security

A student is not allowed to reveal his/her full name, address, telephone number, social security number, photograph or other personal information on the Internet while using a school computer without prior permission from a teacher. Students should never agree to meet people they have contacted through the Internet without parental permission. Students should inform their teacher if they access information or messages that are dangerous, inappropriate or make them uncomfortable in any way.

E. System Security

The security system of the schools' computers, network and Internet services is a high priority. Any student who identifies a security problem must notify his/her teacher or building administrator immediately. The student shall not demonstrate the problem to others or access unauthorized material.

F. Additional Rules for Computers Issued to Students

1. Computers are loaned to students as an educational tool and may only be used for purposes specifically authorized by school staff.
2. Parents/guardians are required to attend an informational meeting before a student is allowed to take the computer home.
3. Students and their families are responsible for the proper care of school-issued computers at all times, whether on or off school property, including costs associated with repairing or replacing the computer. Maine Catholic Schools offer a protection program for parents/guardians to cover replacement costs and/or repair costs for damages not covered by the computer warranty. Families that choose not to participate in the protection program should be aware that they are responsible for any costs associated with loss, theft or damage to a computer issued to their child.
4. If a computer is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the school principal immediately. If a computer is stolen, a report should be made to the local police and the building administrator immediately.
5. These rules concerning computer and Internet use apply to the use of the computer at any time or place, on or off school property. Students are responsible for obeying any additional rules concerning the care of the computer issued by school staff.
6. Violation of the rules governing the use of the computer, or any careless use of a computer, may result in a student's computer being confiscated and/or a student only being allowed to use the computer under the direct supervision of school staff. The student will also be subject to disciplinary action for any violations of the rules.
7. Parents/guardians will be informed of their child's login password. Parents/guardians are responsible for supervising their child's use of the laptop and Internet access when in use at home.
8. The computer may only be used by the student to whom it is assigned.
9. Computers must be returned in acceptable working order at the end of the year or whenever requested by school staff.

Student Use of Cell Phones and Electronic Equipment

1. Students are prohibited from using privately-owned electronic devices, including but not limited to cellular telephones, Blackberries, i Phones, handheld computers, MP3 players and electronic games during classes, study halls, assemblies and other school activities.
 - a. During classes and school activities, all such devices must be turned off.
 - b. The only exception to this rule is when a teacher specifically authorizes students to use such a personal electronic device for a specific purpose (such as entering an assignment in a PDA).
2. Students may use electronic devices, except during instructional and class time. Cellular telephones must be kept on “vibrate” mode to avoid disrupting others.
3. Students may use electronic devices on field trips and during extracurricular activities only if authorized by the staff member in charge.
4. The use of cameras in any type of electronic device is strictly prohibited in locker rooms, restrooms and classrooms.
 - a. In other locations where students are allowed to use electronic devices, students are required to obtain permission before taking a photograph or video of any individual. Students must also obtain permission from any individual appearing in a photograph or video prior to posting on any social networking site or other Internet site such as YouTube.
5. Any use of cellular telephones and other electronic devices that violates any policy/procedure of the Maine Catholic Schools or any school rule is strictly prohibited. In addition, accessing, viewing, posting, forwarding, downloading or displaying any materials that are defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit or suggestive (“sexting”), threatening, discriminatory, harassing and/or illegal is prohibited.
6. Student cellular telephones and other electronic devices may be subject to search if there is reasonable suspicion that a student is violating applicable policies/procedures and/or school rules.
7. Students violating these rules will be subject to discipline, which may include:
 - a. Not being allowed to bring electronic devices to school;

- b. Sanctions ranging from detention to expulsion from school depending upon the nature of the offense and the student's disciplinary record.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Purpose

The purpose of the grievance procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible level, equitable solutions to problems that arise from time to time in the school setting. These proceedings shall be kept as informal and confidential as may be appropriate at any step of the procedure. The timetable specified in this procedure is intended as a guide and may be adjusted as appropriate for the circumstances, with the goal being to make the process as expeditious as possible.

All documents, written communications, and records dealing with a grievance shall be filed in a confidential grievance file in the Principal's office and shall not be kept in any student file of the grievant.

If the grievance is not written or lodged within thirty (30) days after the grievant knew, or should have known, of the condition which led to the grievance, said grievance shall be null and void.

Procedure

Step 1:
Teacher/Parent

Any parent or person connected with the school and not covered by another grievance procedure may bring a serious complaint to the attention of the teacher. The first step is an informal one. The parent/grievant and the teacher shall attempt to resolve the grievance at this step.

Step 2:
Principal/Parent

If the parent/grievant is not satisfied with the results of the Step 1 Procedure, he/she may bring a serious complaint to the attention of the Principal. The second step is an informal one. The parent/grievant and the Principal shall attempt to resolve the grievance at this step.

Step 3:
Principal/Parent/Teacher

If the parent/grievant is not satisfied with the results of the Step 2 Procedure, he/she may proceed to Step three. The parent/grievant shall prepare a written statement, setting forth in detail, the basis for the complaint. The Principal shall arrange, within fifteen (15) days, a formal meeting with all parties, at which time another effort will be made to equitable resolution of the grievance.

The parent/grievant, the teacher and the Principal shall discuss and attempt to resolve the complaint at this step. At this time, both parties may request that the Superintendent of Schools provide a conciliator who might work with both parties to resolve the grievance.

The Principal shall keep a detailed record of the discussion and the action agreed upon. One copy shall be given to the grievant and one copy shall be filed in the school files.

If the issue is resolved, no further action is required. If the issue is still unresolved, and the grievant wishes, the school Principal shall notify the Pastor and submit to the Pastor, a copy of all records pertaining to the grievance.

Step 4:

Pastor/Principal/Teacher/Parent and Student

The Pastor shall then arrange a meeting with the person filing the grievance within two (2) calendar weeks. At the same time, the Pastor shall invite to this meeting, all other concerned parties.

The Pastor shall keep a detailed record of the meetings. One copy of this record shall be given to the grievant; one copy shall be retained in the local school file.

Ten (10) days after the completion of the meeting, the Pastor shall notify the grievant, in writing, his recommendation.

At this time, both parties may request that the Superintendent of Schools provide a conciliator who might work with both parties to resolve the grievance.

Step 5:

Superintendent/Pastor/Principal/Teacher/Parent and Student

Should the meeting with the Pastor fail to resolve the issue, the grievant may appeal to the Superintendent of Schools.

If the grievant wishes to appeal to the Superintendent, the appeal must be in writing. The appeal must be accompanied by all records pertaining to the grievance; 1) the original statement; 2) the record of the formal meeting with the Principal; 3) the record of the meeting with the Pastor; and 4) any other information pertinent to the case.

Within thirty (30) days of receipt of all the information, the Superintendent will set up a meeting. All parties connected with the grievance shall be invited to the meeting.

Within ten (10) days after the completion of the meeting, the Superintendent shall notify all parties in writing of his/her decision.

If the grievant believes that he/she has not been given fair due process with the above procedure, he/she may present his/her case to the Diocesan Office of Due Process.