

ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI
OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
POLICY MANUAL FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
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Dear School Leader,

Leadership is essential to the successful Catholic school. As a leader of your school, it is vital that you possess a knowledge of the policies, procedures, laws, and regulations that affect Catholic school education in the Archdiocese of Miami. This document, the Policy Manual for School Administrators, is meant to provide you with information necessary for your success. I strongly encourage you to read the information in this manual, and reference these policies in your daily work.

The Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) is committed to supporting you in your vocation to Catholic school leadership. Please feel free to contact us at any time with questions, concerns, and suggestions.

As you read these policies, you should note that many of the policies reference external forms, guidelines, and websites. In the electronic version of this Manual, you can access these resources by holding down the “Control” key and clicking on the appropriate link. We do make an effort to update our policies with frequency, so I encourage you to reference the electronic manual via the [Archdiocesan e-Library](#) when possible to ensure that you are utilizing the most recent policies.

In addition, outside links and documents are generally underlined throughout the policy manual. **Bold text** is used for highlighted topics or themes. *Italicized text* is used to emphasize particularly pertinent sections of policy.

Finally, the policies make several references to “parents”. Please note that the label of “parents” is synonymous with any legally-defined guardian of a child.

Thank you for your invaluable dedication to Catholic school education. May God continue to bless us in our unified mission and ministry!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Rigg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "R".

Jim Rigg, Ph.D.
Secretary of Education
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Miami

Prayer for Courageous Leadership

Heavenly Father,

You called me to the vocation of leadership.
Strengthen me as I seek
to make decisions for the good of my community.

Grant me wisdom
to carefully discern each decision
and make the choices that help to build your kingdom.

Grant me the compassion
to see how my decisions impact
each person under my care.

Grant me the grace
to make certain that my decisions
best fulfill your plan for my community.

Grant me the strength
to hold fast to my decisions
in the face of resistance and unpopularity.

Grant me the courage
To be a leader
To love my community
To act with faith
To be the presence of Christ
To make each decision reflective of your perfect love.
Thank you for the gift of leadership.

Amen

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100.00 GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

101.00 Leadership

101.01 Archbishop

The Archbishop, as the Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Miami, exercises authority in accord with Canon Law within the Archdiocese. The Archbishop bears ultimate responsibility for the presence and quality of Catholic education.

101.02 Superintendent of Catholic Schools

The Superintendent of Catholic Schools (“Superintendent”) is appointed by the Archbishop and is the chief administrative officer of the Catholic schools and the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS).

101.03 Office of Catholic Schools (OCS)

The Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) is charged with providing leadership, direction, and support to the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese. Through the ministry of Catholic school education, students are provided with a personal experience of Jesus in their lives and provided with an academic education that prepares them to be good Christians and good citizens.

The OCS works in coordination with local pastors, local school councils/boards, and other offices of the Archdiocesan pastoral center. The OCS is led by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

102.00 Governance

102.01 Canonical Authority

All Catholic schools must have a canonical leader appointed by the Archbishop of Miami. These appointed leaders have the duty to see that the spirit and teachings of the Catholic Church are clearly and accurately presented. Appointed leaders may be the following:

- The Pastor of a parish school
- The Archbishop of Miami
- Public Juridic Persons (Religious or lay congregations)

A Catholic school’s identity and mission is constituted by authority of the Archbishop of Miami and may not be delegated by Canon Law.

102.02 Parish Elementary Schools

Parish elementary schools (“elementary schools”) are institutions in which the **pastor** serves as the local canonical authority. The pastor is charged with ensuring that school authentically teaches and reflects the Catholic faith. The pastor provides a necessary bridge between the parish and school (as the school is a ministry of the parish). He works in collaboration with the OCS.

The **Superintendent** serves as the Archbishop’s delegate to promote a collective vision of Catholic education, and ensure that ADOM policies, procedures, and initiatives are faithfully implemented by the school. The Superintendent appoints the OCS staff to provide expertise and necessary for the Catholic schools. The pastor and Superintendent work in partnership to hire, evaluate, and support the principal (see policy [806.00](#)).

All parish schools should operate a local **School Advisory Council (SAC)**. This council serves as an advisory organization to the pastor and principal on the effectiveness, viability, and policies of the school. Particular focus of each council should be placed on school strategic planning, student recruitment, fundraising, and budgeting. Council members must be drawn from a variety of school and parish stakeholders. In operating SAC’s, schools must follow the [SAC Guidelines Template](#) provided by the OCS.

102.03 Independent Elementary Schools

Independent (or non-parochial) Elementary Schools are Catholic schools recognized by the Archbishop, but owned and governed by a religious congregation or Lay Association of the Faithful (LAF). The sponsoring religious congregation or LAF defines the school’s form of governance, secures and evaluates the leadership, and assumes all financial liability for the school. The Archbishop retains the canonical responsibility of oversight of the school’s Catholic identity and religious instruction. The OCS provides support and advice for the school leadership as necessary and appropriate.

102.04 Pre-Kindergarten Programs

Parishes and schools may provide Pre-Kindergarten programs for young children who are not yet old enough for Kindergarten. Parishes that also have an elementary school must operate the Pre-Kindergarten as part of the elementary program. Parishes without an elementary school may operate a Pre-Kindergarten under the auspices of the local parish and with the permission of the Superintendent. The OCS provides oversight and support of such Pre-Kindergarten programs, working with the local pastor, Pre-Kindergarten director, and principal (when applicable).

Pre-Kindergarten programs must adhere to all licensure or registration requirements of the state and Florida Catholic Conference (see [103.03](#)).

102.05 Archdiocesan Secondary Schools

Archdiocesan Secondary Schools are ministries of the Archdiocese of Miami. The **Archbishop** serves as the canonical administrator of the school. The Archbishop approves the appointment of the principal and/or president (where applicable). The OCS exercises the authority of the Archbishop in providing direct oversight, support, and accountability for the school.

Archdiocesan Secondary Schools are governed through a defined **Board of Trustees** comprised of officers appointed by the Archbishop.

Each Archdiocesan Secondary School shall operate a **Board of Directors** (“Board”) in which the Board of Trustees delegates some of its authority to the Board. The Board of Trustees shall appoint members of the Board. The specific authority and powers of the board must be defined in the board bylaws, which require approval of the Board of Trustees. Particular focus of each board should be placed on school strategic planning, student recruitment, policy formation, institutional advancement, and budgeting.

102.06 Independent Secondary Schools

Independent Secondary Schools are Catholic schools recognized by the Archbishop, but owned and governed by a religious congregation or Lay Association of the Faithful (LAF). The sponsoring religious congregation or LAF defines the school’s form of governance, secures and evaluates the leadership, and assumes all financial liability for the school. The Archbishop retains the canonical responsibility of oversight of the school’s Catholic identity and religious instruction. The OCS provides support and advice for the school leadership as necessary and appropriate.

102.07 Principals Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS)

The Principals Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS) is established to offer advisement to the Superintendent on the strategic initiatives and policies of the OCS and the Catholic schools. The Superintendent defines specific bylaws for the PACS, names all PACS members, and defines membership terms. The bylaws may be modified by the Superintendent as needed to meet changing needs.

The PACS may also support a number of committees (both standing and *ad hoc*) to focus on specific issues or projects.

102.08 Parishes That Do Not Sponsor Schools

Pastors (or parish administrators) of parishes which do not operate schools shall work with the OCS to actively market Catholic school education in their parish. Encouragement should be given to parents to seek out a Catholic school in the Archdiocese.

103.00 Compliance and Accreditation

103.01 Compliance

Schools must adhere to any and all applicable Archdiocesan policies and procedures, as well as applicable state, and federal laws and regulations to the extent such laws do not conflict with Catholic teaching or Canon Law.

103.02 Accreditation

Schools must achieve and maintain accreditation through an agency designated by the OCS. All schools are expected to participate in the requirements of the designated accreditation system, including ongoing improvement, transparent reporting, and accreditation team visits.

Elementary schools are accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference (FCC). Secondary Schools are accredited by Cognia. Pre-Kindergarten programs, including those that do not operate under a K-8 program, must be accredited through the FCC.

103.03 Pre-Kindergarten Licensure

Schools and parishes that provide a Pre-Kindergarten program must comply with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) or local licensing authority's requirements to register the program and receive a religious exemption or license, as applicable.

103.04 National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools

The schools of the Archdiocese of Miami employ the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) as a guide and an assessment tool for school effectiveness and sustainability. Based on best practices and the teachings of the Catholic Church, the NSBECS also provide criteria for meeting accreditation

requirements in both elementary and secondary schools in the areas of Mission and Catholic identity, Governance and Leadership, Academic Excellence, and Operational Vitality.

104.00 Changes in School Governance

104.01 Opening of Catholic Schools

In order to open a Catholic school, an entity must meet the following criteria:

- 1.) Operate an educational institution within the geographic boundaries of the Archdiocese of Miami
- 2.) Receive formal recognition by the Archbishop of Miami through a process defined by the OCS
- 3.) Be governed by an established canonical entity, as defined in [102.01](#)

104.02 Closure or Consolidation of Archdiocesan Schools

Archdiocesan schools may not close or consolidate with another school without the involvement of the Superintendent and the approval of the Archbishop. In all cases of closure or consolidation, extensive study and consultation must take place with the school/parish leadership, local stakeholders, and the OCS. If a local school authority believes that a school should close or consolidate (at the end of the school year or mid-year), the OCS must be contacted so that study and consultation may begin. Communication with local stakeholders about the potential closure or consolidation should not occur until authorized by the Superintendent.

Once the Archbishop has approved a school closure or consolidation, the OCS shall work closely with the school to manage the closure in a smooth and peaceable manner. The school should be officially closed or consolidated on July 1st of a given year unless otherwise approved by the Archbishop.

104.03 Changes in School Programming

Changes in school programming should be made in the best interests of the school's mission, service to the students, and long-term viability. Changes of particular significance should emerge from a comprehensive planning and consultation process, and require the approval of the Superintendent, who will involve other necessary parties as appropriate. These changes include:

- 1.) Adding grades not currently served by the school
- 2.) Eliminating grades currently served by the school
- 3.) Adding or eliminating Pre-Kindergarten programs

100.00 GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

- 4.) Adopting an alternate instructional model (e.g. Montessori model) in some or all grades
- 5.) Adding or eliminating a virtual instructional program that includes students not in regular attendance at the school
- 6.) Extended year programs (beyond the school Master Calendar)
- 7.) Changes in the physical address of the school
- 8.) Changes to the official name of the school

Changes of less significance do not require Superintendent approval, although consultation with the Superintendent is advised.

105.00 Mission, Vision, Strategic Planning

105.01 Mission of Catholic Education

The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese reflect the mission of the universal Catholic Church to evangelize all peoples (Mt 28:19-20). Catholic schools provide high-quality academic programs in communities of care and compassion. The faith lives of each student are nurtured as they grow in knowledge, service, and love of Jesus Christ.

105.02 School Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Statement of Beliefs

Each school shall formulate a written expression of its mission within the context of the Church's universal mission of Catholic education. Each school must also formulate a Vision Statement that conveys its ideal state in the future. The Mission and Vision Statements must be supported by a defined Statement of Beliefs that represent the core values of the school.

These "Foundational Statements" must be included in all handbooks published by the school, reviewed on at least an annual basis. The school Mission Statement should be visibly posted in the main office, every classroom, and other areas throughout the school.

105.03 Local Strategic Plans

Each Archdiocesan school must formulate and implement a local strategic plan that provides specific goals and initiatives in the areas of the National Standards and Benchmarks of Effective Catholic Schools (NSBECS):

- 1.) Mission and Catholic Identity
- 2.) Governance and Leadership
- 3.) Academic Excellence
- 4.) Operational Vitality (including Marketing and Enrollment)

Plans should emerge from data collected on the local, regional, and Archdiocesan levels, and reflect meaningful engagement with school stakeholders. Strategic plans should be reviewed and revised (as necessary) on at least an annual basis. The local school advisory council (elementary schools) or Board (Secondary Schools) should be directly involved in reviewing and revising the school's strategic plan.

200.00 MISSION AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

201.00 Catholic Identity

201.01 School Catholic Identity

The Catholic Identity of each school must remain the top priority in the school’s planning and operations. The school’s Foundational Statements (see [105.02](#)), handbooks, promotional materials, and communications should make frequent reference to the school’s mission and Catholic identity.

Visual evidence of the faith should be displayed prominently in classrooms and other main areas of the building (e.g. school office, cafeteria, etc.). Each classroom should include a crucifix and a specific display of religious artwork (often in a designated “prayer corner”).

202.00 Religious Activities

202.01 Participation

Schools shall provide regular opportunities for students to participate in prayer, sacraments, service projects, and other religious activities. These opportunities should reflect the school’s Catholic identity, religious charism (if applicable), local culture, and teachings of the Church. All liturgies and religious activities must conform to the norms of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and any norms/policies set forth by the Archdiocese. The school’s Catholic Identity should be reflective of the unique culture(s) represented in the school and sensitive to current events (and how they are informed by Church teachings).

202.02 Sacraments

When possible, an all-school Mass should be celebrated *at least weekly* at Catholic elementary schools and *at least monthly* for Catholic secondary schools (although weekly is still recommended if feasible). Principals should actively work with the parish’s priest(s), local priests, and the OCS to secure celebrants for Masses. All-school Masses should include every student in the school, with the possible exception of Pre-Kindergarten students.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation should be offered by schools *at least twice annually*, to coincide with the seasons of Advent and Lent. Reconciliation may be coordinated with the school’s parish or surrounding parishes.

200.00 MISSION AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Each school shall provide for a process in which non-Catholics or Catholics who have missed traditional sacramental ages can receive the Sacraments of baptism, first communion, and confirmation (i.e. OCIA). This process shall follow guidelines set forth by the Office of Catechesis. If no such process is currently in place, principals shall work with the Office of Catechesis and local pastor (if elementary) to develop such a process.

202.03 Prayer

Prayer shall be integrated throughout the school day, and during co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Each school day must begin with prayer. Schools should utilize a variety of forms of prayer (e.g. rote, spontaneous, student-led, etc.).

202.04 Student Retreats

Each school shall provide an age-appropriate annual retreat for all students in the school. Retreats are generally offered by grade level. Retreats must be religious in nature, with the goal of providing students with religious formation and renewal.

202.05 Campus Ministry (Secondary Schools)

Each Secondary School must employ a Director of Campus Ministry who will coordinate religious activities, retreats, liturgies, and sacramental opportunities. The Director of Campus Ministry shall work closely with surrounding parishes to encourage students to regularly attend weekend Masses and participate in parish life. Directors of Campus Ministry must be active, practicing Catholics with a commitment to the Church and the ministry of Catholic education.

203.00 Catechesis in the Broader Community

203.01 Catechesis of Parents

Schools should utilize every opportunity to catechize parents. Events in which groups of parents are present (e.g. parent meetings, athletics and arts events, etc.) should begin in prayer. School communications should inform parents of religious events and lessons whenever possible. Parents should be encouraged to attend school liturgies and religious events, as deemed appropriate.

203.02 Parish Relations

School administrators and teachers should strongly encourage students to regularly attend Mass at their home parish or place of worship (for non-Catholics). Students should be encouraged to actively participate in parish life through volunteer service, leadership opportunities, etc. Principals should maintain positive relationships with the pastors of applicable parishes.

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301.00 Student/Parent Handbook

Each school shall publish a handbook for students and parents that emanates from the school's Catholic mission and includes goals, policies, regulations, and standard procedures. Handbooks should clearly reference the school's Foundational Statements (see [105.00](#)). In developing local policies, each school must first reference policies of the Archdiocese of Miami, state regulations and requirements set forth by accrediting agencies. *Local handbooks must not contradict policies set forth by the Archdiocese.* Additionally, all schools must include annually-updated Verbatim Policies issued by the Archdiocese of Miami. Changes to existing policies in the published handbook should generally be communicated to parents in writing.

Schools that operate Pre-Kindergarten programs must also provide a PreK-specific addendum to their Student/Parent handbook, in alignment with accreditation standards (see [103.02](#)). This addendum shall set forth policies specific to the operations and instruction of the Pre-Kindergarten program.

Each school's student/parent handbook shall be provided to each family at the start of the school year. Parents should sign a Handbook Acknowledgement Form (see [Appendix F](#)) indicating that they have received the handbook and will adhere to the policies therein. This form should be kept on file in the school office and referenced as needed. Elementary and Secondary Schools must submit a copy of their current Student/Parent Handbook to the OCS no later than the first day of classes for the school year.

302.00 School Admissions

302.01 Admissions Policy

Schools must have a written statement of the school's admissions policy. This policy should be publicized annually and be referenced on the school's website and in the local Student/Parent Handbook. The admissions policies of the school should be consistent with the mission, goals, and objectives of the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese and the specific school.

Policy [1002.00](#) contains specific guidelines regarding the recruitment process of students.

302.02 Non-Discrimination

Archdiocesan schools 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 in these schools in accordance with applicable local, state and federal anti-discrimination statutes to the extent that such anti-discrimination statutes do not conflict with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Schools may admit students who are not Catholic provided that these students will not displace Catholic students and that both students and parents clearly understand that participation in Catholic religious instruction and school activities, related to the Catholic identity of the school, are required.

302.03 School Age of Admissions

The elementary schools of the Archdiocese follow the guidelines of the Florida Catholic Conference regarding the age of admission to pre-k, kindergarten, and first grade.

- PreK 3: Must be 3 years old on or before September 1
- PreK 4: Must be 4 years old on or before September 1
- Kindergarten: Must be 5 years old on or before September 1
- First Grade: Must be 6 years old on or before September 1

Exceptions may not be made to this policy.

302.04 Secondary School Admissions

All students seeking admissions to grade nine in an Archdiocesan Secondary School must participate in the Secondary School Placement Test (HSPT) published by the Scholastic Testing Service. The test is ordinarily administered on the first Saturday in December with make-up administration the following Saturday. Admission notification for all Secondary Schools should be provided to families on a specific date approved by the Office of Catholic Schools.

For ninth grade, with consideration given to performance on the admission test and other standards established by the local school, priority admission consideration shall be generally granted as follows:

- Catholic students who are siblings of current Catholic enrollees at the school, or who are children of current employees at the high school
- Catholic students who seek admission from a Catholic Elementary School (within or outside of the Archdiocese)

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- Students who are children or siblings of alumni from the school and do not fall into the categories above
- Other Catholic students who are registered in a Catholic parish
- Other Catholic students
- Other students

Secondary Schools may define their own criteria for admissions to their school, provided that it conforms to the order of consideration outlined above. However, such admissions criteria should consider each applicant holistically and be based upon a variety of key data such as grades, HSPT scores, elementary standardized test scores, recommendations, etc. High schools must also circulate the Pastor Recommendation Form established by the OCS as a requirement for admissions of Catholic students.

Depending on space available, a limited number of applications for students in grades 10-12 wish to transfer into an Archdiocesan Secondary School may be considered. Procedures and prerequisites for transfer of students beyond grade nine are determined locally.

302.05 Admissions on Probationary Basis

Principals may admit some students on a probationary basis based upon their prior academic or behavioral history. In doing so, principals should utilize the Agreement for Probationary Admissions Form found in [Appendix B](#). Schools should not use Probationary Admissions for students with defined special needs if the probationary status directly relates to a specific diagnosis (instead schools should either decline admissions or put together a specific intervention plan; see [511.00](#)).

302.06 Undocumented Students

Archdiocesan schools may not inquire into immigration status when considering applications for admission. Students are allowed to enroll in Archdiocesan schools regardless of their immigration status. The Archdiocese of Miami is authorized to issue I-20 certificates for those students who seek to obtain an F-1 Visa as a foreign student. The I-20 can be processed by the Office of Catholic Schools where appropriate. The school handbook explicitly advises parents that enrollment in and/or graduation from school does not confer legal status in the country.

302.07 Enrollment of Students with Identified Needs

Schools do not discriminate against students with disabilities. While some schools may or may not provide special education, all schools will provide minor adjustments necessary to accommodate students with disabilities. Admission decisions will be made on a case-by-case

basis and will take into account each school's ability to meet the child's diagnosed special learning needs and the school's available resources (see [511.00](#)).

302.08 Enrollment of Students with Particular Circumstances

At times, families with particular circumstances may seek to enroll their children at a Catholic school. Such situations may include (but not be limited to) families that are homeless, refugee families, families involved in significant custodial or legal disputes, or families with unique circumstances or challenges that warrant further review and consideration. In such cases, the principal should contact the Superintendent (or delegate) for further guidance.

302.09 Transfers and Withdrawals

Each school must formulate a policy to guide the transfer of students from the school. Parents should be made aware of any financial obligations to the school prior to a transfer or withdrawal (see [1104.02](#)).

303.00 Attendance

303.01 Attendance Requirement

Regular attendance in school is necessary in order to increase the probability of success for all students. Florida laws addressing compulsory attendance are specified in [Statute 1003.21](#). Students are expected to be present and engaged in all instructional days. Schools should carefully track student absences and take action in cases of excessive absence (see [303.04](#) and [303.07](#)).

Students should be counted as present and attending if they are present and engaged in school-provided educational activities which constitute a portion of the instructional program for not less than 3.5 hours of the school day.

303.02 Attendance Record

Schools shall take attendance for each student every day. Attendance must be maintained in a yearly register (which could be archived in the Student Information System and/or the cumulative folder) which shows the absence or attendance of each student enrolled for each school day of the year. These records must be retained for a minimum of five years.

303.03 Class Attendance

Students shall be counted as present and attending if they are physically present in class for at least half of the instructional period, are excused by the teacher for a class-related activity or are required by a school administrator to engage in other approved school-related activity.

Attendance shall be taken at the start of every class. Any absent student should be promptly reported to the office. Schools should immediately investigate student absences that were not already reported by parents (see [303.04](#)).

303.04 Absences

Each school must establish a system whereby Parents can report student absences. Parents bear responsibility for reporting a student absence when the student is not at school. When a child is absent and the Parent has not reported the absence, the school must contact the Parent as soon as possible on the day of absence.

Students shall be considered absent when they miss more than 3.5 hours of the school day (or 50% of time for part-day Pre-Kindergarten programs). Upon returning to school following absence, the school shall require a **written explanation**, submitted in electronic or hard-copy form, to be presented to the school's attendance officer (or equivalent). Based on the explanation provided, the attendance officer should determine if the absence is to be recorded as excused or non-excused (see [303.06](#)).

A **note from a licensed medical or psychological practitioner** is required for any absence that is three or more days in duration and related to an illness, injury, or hospitalization. This note must be submitted in hard copy (written) form and include the name and contact information of the medical practitioner. The note should include specific clearance for the child to safely return to school. It is preferred that such notes not be provided by practitioners who are immediate family members of the student.

303.05 Long-Term Absences Due to Medical Concerns

Students may also be out of school for longer durations due to a medical concern (e.g. prolonged illness or injury). In such instances, the school should define a specific **distance learning plan**, utilizing technology when possible. This plan should be clearly communicated to the family in writing, including a specific date for anticipated return to in-person learning. The parents should sign the written plan agreeing to fulfill the plan's expectations. Assuming the parents agree to the plan, the affected student shall be marked as **"Present-Medical"** during the long-term absence.

It is recommended that a student transition to the Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy (CAVA) (thus withdrawing from the current school) in the following situations:

- 1.) The absence will last longer than a full quarter of the school year
- 2.) The absence will last several weeks without a known/defined date of return
- 3.) The family will not agree to, or cooperate with, the schools' proposed distance learning plan

303.06 Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

Absences should be designated as Excused or Unexcused. Generally, students are allowed to make up missed work when an absence is Excused, whereas work cannot be made up for absences that are Unexcused. The differing criteria (see below) for Excused vs. Unexcused absences must be clearly communicated to parents in the local Student/Parent Handbook.

Student tardies and early releases should also be designated as Excused or Unexcused (see [303.08](#)).

Generally accepted excuses for absence, tardiness or early release:

- Illness of the student
- A confirmed family emergency
- A confirmed court appearance
- Participation in an approved school-sponsored activity (requires written permission from the principal)
- Death in the immediate family
- Internal or external suspension from school
- Consultation/interview with civil authorities
- Other documented student absences that are beyond the control of the student or parent(s) as determined and approved by the building principal.

Generally accepted non-excused absence, tardiness or early release:

- Vacation
- Babysitting/care for younger siblings
- Personal services
- Non-school events (e.g. athletics, arts, etc.)

303.07 Chronic Absences (Unexcused)

Students who accumulate *10 or more unexcused absences per semester* shall be referred to the principal. The principal (or delegate) shall meet with the parents to define a specific **Attendance Plan** to improve attendance. This plan may incorporate, at the principal's discretion, specific steps to make up missed content, including additional assignments,

Saturday School, Summer School, etc. Parents should be informed that continued absenteeism could be grounds for administrative withdrawal. Parents whose children are on state scholarships should also be informed that chronic absenteeism may result in loss of their scholarship.

Should the student continue to accumulate unexcused absences after this meeting, the principal should contact the Superintendent (or delegate) to discuss and define next steps.

If a student is absent for 3 or more days and the school has been unable to reach the student's parents and other emergency contacts, the principal should contact the Superintendent (or delegate).

303.08 Tardiness

Each school is responsible for keeping an accurate written record of the number of times a student is tardy to school. The school is also responsible for making provisions for notifying the parents of those students who are tardy.

In cases of excessive tardies, the principal (or delegate) shall meet with the parents to define a specific plan to improve punctual arrival at school. This plan may incorporate, at the principal's discretion, specific steps to make up missed content, including additional assignments, Saturday School, Summer School, etc.

Schools should not charge fees to families for tardies.

303.09 Releasing Students (End of Day)

To ensure the safety of students at release time, schools must develop a written policy and implementing procedures concerning the orderly dismissal of students at the end of the school day, any/all extracurricular activities, and any extended day program(s). The written procedures should, at a minimum, require that students are appropriately monitored by designated school employee(s) until all students leave the school campus.

Parents should provide the school with a list of individuals who are approved for picking up their child. Schools shall carefully monitor student pickup to ensure that children are being picked up by approved individuals only.

Parents may also provide written authorization for students to walk home from school who meet the following criteria:

- 1.) The student lives within one mile of the school;

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- 2.) The student is either 10 years or older in age OR is being accompanied by an older sibling who is 10 years or older in age; AND
- 3.) The principal determines that conditions are safe for walking (based upon weather, traffic patterns, etc.)

At the secondary level, students who have a valid Driver's License may be permitted to drive to/from school. Parents should provide the school with permission for the child to transport him/herself away from school via their own car.

303.10 Releasing Student (During the Day)

Local school authorities are responsible for formulating and promulgating a policy regarding the release of students during the school day. Students shall not be permitted to leave school during school hours without the written consent of their Parents. Students must be signed out of the office by an individual approved by the Parent (including students who are normally approved to walk home), and the departure should be noted in the student's attendance record. Older students who drive to/from school may leave without a parent sign-out, provided that the parent has submitted written permission for the student to leave at the designated date/time.

Students who attend school for less than 3.5 hours (or 50% of the day for part-time Pre-Kindergarten programs) shall be considered absent for the full day ([see 303.04](#)).

304.00 Attendance Under Special Circumstances

304.01 Child Custody Situations

Schools will not take sides in parental timesharing arrangements. See, Parental Custody Agreements and Court Proceedings policy in the Verbatim Policies.

Schools should have the current legal documents from parents on legal custody of the child. Should such documents not be submitted, or a conflict arises that is not specifically addressed in such documents, principals should contact the Superintendent for assistance. (see [309.02](#)).

School personnel may receive subpoenas to testify in custody-related court proceedings and/or provide documents for such proceedings. School personnel are not permitted to participate in such cases without permission from the Superintendent. Should such subpoenas be received, the principal should promptly contact the Superintendent for further instructions.

304.02 Other Circumstances

For other unusual circumstances, principals should contact their pastor (if elementary) and the Superintendent to discuss and formulate a plan.

305.00 Student Code of Conduct

305.01 Policy

The principal is responsible for developing and promulgating a clearly defined and written Student Code of Conduct (or “discipline code”) with appropriate consequences for dealing with inappropriate behavior. This Code of Conduct must adhere to relevant Archdiocesan policies and civil laws. The Code of Communication should further be reflective of the school’s Catholic Identity, mission statement, and Code of Professional Communication (see [901.01](#)). This Student Code of Conduct should be published in the Student/Parent Handbook and updated as needed.

Generally, principals and teachers should seek to prevent student misbehavior through setting clear expectations, nurturing a positive school culture, and engaging in frequent and positive communication with parents. Many discipline issues can be prevented by taking such steps.

305.02 Administration of Disciplinary Consequences

Discipline can be defined as experiences provided by professional educators to increase the probability that students will act morally and responsibly in order to ensure a safe environment, and accomplish their spiritual, academic and social goals and develop holistically, having been created in the image and likeness of God.

*Effective discipline in the school is **educational in nature** and generally:*

- supports the implementation of the vision, mission and goals of the school
- is grounded in the Student Code of Conduct and other policies of the school
- ensures a safe environment
- increases the probability that students will act morally and responsibly
- increases the probability that students will develop productive decision-making skills
- maximizes productive use of instructional time
- highlights positive behavior expectations (vs. focusing solely on negative behavior)
- increases the probability that effective learning will occur

A guide to disciplinary decision making is provided in the Matrix of Infractions, Supports, and Consequences developed and distributed by the OCS. For serious or chronic behavior infractions, principals may wish to place students in grades 1-12 on a defined Student Behavior Agreement (see [Appendix C](#)). Serious infractions may also result in Suspension or Administrative Withdrawal (see [306.00](#) and [307.01](#)).

Student Behavior Agreements should generally not be used for students in PreK and Kindergarten. In such cases, chronic behavior concerns should be addressed developmentally vs. punitively. In such circumstances, behavior evaluations and other strategies should be utilized in lieu of ongoing behavioral consequences for the student.

As a general rule, **teachers** are expected to assume responsibility for classroom discipline as well as student deportment in common areas on the school campus. Students involved in serious offenses should be **referred to the principal** or the appropriate mid-level administrator.

It is expected that **parents** shall be informed of serious and ongoing behavior issues involving their child. Should formal steps be needed to address concerns (e.g. Behavior Plan, required evaluation, probation, etc.), it is expected that school administrators meet with parents *in person* to discuss the situation and formulate a mutually-agreed-upon plan to address the behavior. Emails should generally not be used when conveying significant behavior concerns (although they can be used for documented follow-up after parent conferences have occurred).

305.03 Corporal Punishment

No student shall be disciplined corporally or corrected with abusive or demeaning language.

305.04 Dress Code/Uniform

All schools must define and utilize a dress code and/or student uniform. The principal is responsible for the establishment, promulgation, and enforcement of the uniform policy/dress code for all students. The socioeconomic needs of the school families should be considered in devising this policy.

The principal may designate infrequent “dress-down” days for students. The principal must develop and promulgate policies for appropriate attire during dress-down days.

305.05 Harassment & Bullying

Local parish/school authorities shall adopt a written policy which prohibits harassment or bullying. The written policy must define “bullying” and/or “harassing” behavior that is prohibited by the policy and include a non-retaliation provision. The policy must also include how complaints can be reported, how complaints will be handled (including investigation), and the possible disciplinary responses for substantiated complaints. The policy should reflect the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese of Miami (see [313.00](#)). In collecting information about bullying allegations, schools should utilize the Bullying Complaint Report Form template promulgated by the OCS (see [Appendix D](#)).

305.06 Threats of Violence

Threats of Violence can be defined as verbal or written comments, including electronic messages, pictures or posts on social media, that threaten serious bodily harm to another student, him/herself, a member of the faculty/ staff, or the destruction of property or whose behavior otherwise demonstrates they may pose a threat to the safety of the school. Principals should distinguish between Threats of Violence (as defined above) and general comments that do not suggest specific or imminent bodily harm, utilizing a defined “Treat Assessment Protocol” when available.

Principals shall report Threats of Violence to the Superintendent (or delegate) to seek counsel before proceeding with further action. Depending upon the severity and circumstances of the threat, disciplinary action may be taken, including (but not limited to):

1. Immediate suspension or administrative withdrawal from the school;
2. Contact with the local law enforcement agency and/or the Department of Children and Families (DCF);
3. Treatment or consultation by a psychologist or psychiatrist at the parents’ expense and/or by the school counselor, both of whom may be asked to submit a written evaluation; and/or
4. If allowed to return to school, the child may be placed on probation with an indication that, should a similar threat occur, the child will be administratively withdrawn.

This policy applies whether such threats or misconduct were made intentionally, unintentionally, or with or without ill will. Such misconduct may also violate Florida law and may subject the student to criminal proceedings. At all times, the school will cooperate with law enforcement investigations and maintains the discretion to contact law enforcement at any time.

Students and parents should immediately report any threats of violence or other concerning behavior that may suggest an individual intends to commit an act of violence.

305.07 Hazing

Hazing is defined as an instance in which a person knowingly requires the performance of any act by a student or other person in a school for the purpose of induction or admission into any group, organization or society associated with the school where the act is not sanctioned or authorized by the school, and the act can result in bodily harm and/or public humiliation.

Hazing is not tolerated in Catholic schools, and should be explicitly listed as a violation of the Student Code of Conduct in all promulgated policies. If any school administrators, teachers, support staff, and/or volunteer coaches observes hazing at a Catholic school, they shall report it to the principal.

305.08 False Accusations

Anyone (students, parents, employees, etc.) who purposefully acts to damage the good reputation of another has committed a serious moral wrong. False and malicious complaints of harassment whether sexual, verbal, physical, visual, electronic, or written (as opposed to complaints which, even if erroneous, are made in good faith) will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including administrative withdrawal.

305.09 Discipline Review Committee

Schools may establish a school Discipline Review Committee (or similarly-named group) at the discretion of the principal. The purpose of the Discipline Review Committee is to review significant cases of student misbehavior, particularly those that result in a suspension or administrative withdrawal (see following sections). This committee should be made up of qualified administrators and/or teachers appointed by the principal, and may not include students, parents (who are not administrators/teachers), or volunteers. Members of the committee must recuse themselves if a direct family member is involved in a disciplinary matter under review by the Discipline Review Committee.

The Discipline Review Committee reviews the specifics of each case and may choose to speak to the affected student and/or their family. The committee then makes a recommendation to the principal for final decision. Final decisions regarding student discipline are the purview of the principal (or delegated mid-level administrator) and not the Discipline Review Committee. The Discipline Review Committee shall not act as a forum to hear appeals for alternative disciplinary outcomes.

306.00 Suspension of Students for Disciplinary Reasons

The principal shall formulate a policy regarding the suspension of students. This policy must be published in the Student/Parent Handbook and referenced in the Student Code of Conduct. The policy must indicate the reasons for which a student may be suspended, and whether work may be completed for credit during the duration of the suspension. In general, suspensions should be reserved for serious or chronic behavior infractions.

Principals should generally obtain permission from the Superintendent (or delegate) and the local pastor (for elementary schools) prior to finalizing any suspension.

This policy should also include procedures to ensure that the imposition of suspension is fair and consistent. Such procedures should include:

- 1.) An investigation of the alleged misconduct by a qualified school employee
- 2.) A request for permission to suspend the student from the Superintendent (or delegate) and pastor (if elementary)
- 3.) An in-person conference between the parents and the principal, as well as other designated and appropriate personnel, to discuss the proposed or actual suspension. This conference may include time for the student/parent to present any evidence to refute the allegations
- 4.) Written notice to parents citing the misconduct and the length of the of the proposed or actual suspension (typically provided after the in-person conference described in #3)

Suspensions may occur *in school* or *out of school* at the discretion of the principal. Students who serve in-school suspensions must be monitored by a qualified staff member at all times. Suspensions should always involve counseling with appropriate professionals and assigned activities to stimulate productive reflection on the situation as well as responsible decision making by all students involved.

Students are not permitted to participate in school-sponsored extra and co-curricular activities (including athletics) during the duration of their suspension.

Principals must contact the Superintendent (or delegate) for suspensions longer than one day in duration.

307.00 Administrative Withdrawal

307.01 Administrative Withdrawal for Disciplinary Reasons

The principal shall formulate a policy regarding the administrative withdrawal of students for disciplinary reasons (for withdrawal for academic reasons, see [510.00](#)). This policy must be published in the Student/Parent Handbook and referenced in the Student Code of Conduct. The policy must indicate the reasons for which a student may be administratively withdrawn.

Any student may be administratively withdrawn for serious or chronic violations of the Student Code of Conduct that include, but are not limited to: physical, verbal, or sexual threats; substance abuse; possession of weapons or illegal drugs; chronic or serious bullying; serious and chronic lack of respect for school authorities; serious damage to school or student property; theft; or physical harm to student/staff.

Principals should obtain permission from the Superintendent (or delegate) and the local Pastor (for elementary schools) prior to finalizing any administrative withdrawal.

Principals may consider suspension as an alternative to administrative withdrawal for infractions that occur within the last month of the school year. In some cases, it may be better to suspend the student for the remainder of the school year and allow him/her to complete and submit work from home.

Administrative withdrawal of a student does not necessarily impact the registration of any siblings in the school.

In enacting an administrative withdrawal, principals must follow the steps outlined in policy [307.02](#). Students may no longer participate in any school-sponsored extra or co-curricular activities once withdrawn.

307.02 Procedures to be Followed in Cases of Administrative Withdrawal

In cases where a student is administratively withdrawn for disciplinary reasons, these procedures should generally be followed:

- a.) The advice or assessment of a psychologist, physician, social worker, counselor, or other appropriate person may be sought (at the discretion of the principal).
- b.) The principal must obtain permission from the Superintendent (or delegate) and Pastor (if elementary) for the administrative withdrawal. If an issue is urgent and a principal does not have time to obtain such permission, he/she may temporarily suspend the student pending necessary permissions from the Superintendent and Pastor.
- c.) A face-to-face conference should generally be held between the principal, other appropriate school staff, and the Parents. The student may attend at the discretion of the principal. *Attorneys, parent-advocates, or other parties invited by the Parents may not attend.*

- d.) Parents should generally be given the opportunity to voluntarily withdrawal from the school before the student is expelled. If Parents accept this opportunity, principals must obtain written request from the Parent for the withdrawal (parents are generally given 24 hours to submit such a request). If the Parent refuses to voluntarily withdrawal the child or is unresponsive in submitting a written request, the school may proceed with an administrative withdrawal.
- e.) Principals may consider suspension as an alternative to administrative withdrawal for infractions that occur within the last month of the school year. In some cases, it may be better to suspend the student for the remainder of the school year and allow him/her to complete and submit work from home.
- f.) Students may no longer participate in any school-sponsored extra or co-curricular activities once expelled.
- g.) Administrative withdrawals are considered final. There is no formal appeal process in the Archdiocese of Miami.

307.03 Administrative withdrawal of Students Based Upon the Conduct of Parents

Students may be administratively withdrawn due to the conduct of their Parent. Parents and students are expected to comply with school rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of school officials, whether it be at school events, on or off school campus, or on social media or other public forum. These expectations should be enumerated in a Parent Covenant Agreement (see the sample Covenant Agreement in [Appendix G](#)). An administrative withdrawal may take place if the school determines at its discretion that the parent or student partnership with the school is irretrievably broken. Such action should be seen as a last resort and only after steps have been taken to attempt to remediate the situation. Additionally, the principal must contact the Superintendent (or delegate) and local Pastor (if elementary) prior to finalizing and communicating the withdrawal.

307.04 Administrative withdrawal of Students Based Upon Financial Delinquency

Students may be administratively withdrawn if their Parent fails to fulfill their financial/tuition obligations to the school. Before withdrawal occurs, the principal (or designee) should generally attempt to formulate a payment plan with the family. The principal (or designee) should attempt to be sensitive to the unique circumstances of the family, while ensuring that the family is able to fulfill their financial obligations. It is recommended that the principal establish “Exclusion Days” in which families are told that they may not send their child to school unless a plan for tuition payment is formulated or followed. Such days should be announced ahead of time so that the family and teachers can make appropriate plans.

Parents experiencing personal bankruptcy may be prevented from paying owed tuition as a result of bankruptcy proceedings. In these cases, principals should contact the Superintendent before pursuing an administrative withdrawal.

308.00 Saturday School

Saturday School is defined as mandatory attendance for designated students based upon violations of the Student Code of Conduct and/or the need to complete missing academic assignments. Extra-Curricular Activities are not considered Saturday School. Schools that utilize Saturday School must formulate, promulgate, and implement an appropriate policy that outlines how and when Saturday School is conducted. During Saturday School, students must be monitored at all times by a qualified and approved staff member. Students attending Saturday School must not participate in activities that are dangerous, place others at risk, or endanger school facilities. Records must be kept regarding a student's attendance at Saturday School.

Students may also be required to report during scheduled school breaks or holidays.

309.00 Student Records

309.01 Policy

All Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Miami are required to maintain two separate records for each student in attendance:

- 1.) A **Student Permanent Record** (see policy [309.03](#) below)
- 2.) A **Student Temporary Record** (see policy [309.04](#) below)

All records must be available in the school at all times. If hard-copy, records should be kept in a locked and restricted area and stored in fireproof containers. If digital, records must be amply protected through passwords and other measures, and regularly backed up.

309.02 Confidentiality and Access of Records

Student records (permanent and temporary) are confidential. Authorized school personnel may access records to facilitate in the instruction, guidance, and educational progress of each student.

In accordance with [Florida Statute 61.13\(3\)](#), the school will make school records and in-person conferences available to both parents unless a court order specifically revokes this right, in which case it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the court order to

the school. It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of the address(es) where the student's records should be sent.

Should records be subpoenaed by the court, student records may be presented. Should a subpoena specify other school records/files, then those records must be presented. Principals should contact the Superintendent (or delegate) when receiving such subpoenas prior to releasing any records or files.

309.03 Student Permanent Records

The following, which meets the requirement of the [Florida Administrative Codes, 6A-1.0955 Education Records of Pupils and Adult Students](#), should be included in the permanent record of each student:

- Student's full legal name
- Original birth certificate or certified copy verifying date of birth
- Current (or last known) address of the student
- Names and addresses of at least one of the student's parents
- Name and location of all schools attended from Kindergarten to present grade
- Number of days present and absent, date enrolled, date withdrawn (Attendance record)
- Official school transcript, including courses taken and record of achievement, such as grades, units, or certification of competence
- Standardized test scores
- Date of graduation or date of program completion
- Authenticated sacramental record
- Home Language Form

309.04 Student Temporary Record

The following, which meets the requirement of the [Florida Administrative Codes, 6A-1.0955 Education Records of Pupils and Adult Students](#), may be included in the Temporary Record of each student:

- Health information
- Emergency information
- Accident and illness reports
- Family background data
- Disciplinary records
- Student Individualized Learning Plans (ILP) or Accommodations Plans
- Educational and career plans
- Honors and activities

- Work experience reports
- Correspondence from community agencies or private professionals
- Driver education certificate or copy of the student's Driver's License
- Written agreements of corrections, deletions or expunctions as a result of meetings to amend educational records

Each school should create policies to ensure accuracy of information maintained and provide for periodic review and elimination of information, no longer useful.

309.05 Retention of Student Records

Student **Permanent Records** must be retained as per the guidelines in [Appendix A](#). Designated records must be retained permanently.

Student **Temporary Records** should be retained as per the guidelines in [Appendix A](#). Any document not listed in this Appendix shall be secured until five years after the students' anticipated graduation/promotion from the current school. They may then be shredded and discarded.

309.06 Transfer of Permanent Records

When an elementary or Secondary School student transfers to another school, a duplicate of the student's Permanent Record File shall be sent to the school that the student is entering. A duplicate copy may also be given to the Parents upon written request. Before any records are transferred, authorized written permission from the Parent must be provided (from the Parent or the school requesting the transfer). The school may charge the actual cost of copies of education records. No Parent or eligible student must be denied a requested copy of education records due to the inability to pay the cost of such copying.

Schools may delay transfer of records for families with outstanding financial obligations to the school.

309.07 Records for Closing Schools

Pursuant to Florida law, all records of closing schools should be forwarded to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

309.08 Admission of Students without Records

In general, students shall not be admitted to a Catholic elementary or Secondary School as a transfer student unless a record of accomplished work in schools previously attended is

300.00 STUDENTS

presented (with the exception of students entering Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten). If an investigation should reveal records are being withheld for a valid reason, the principal may seek permission from the Superintendent to enroll the student.

Should a student wish to enroll without records, schools should encourage parents to obtain records before enrollment takes place. If records are not available, an educational history must be compiled in cooperation with the Parents and the student. Based upon the information received, the student must be placed at the grade level best suited to his/her achievement. The principal may, if deemed desirable, require the student to be tested to help in the determination of grade level. The final decision as to placement must be made by the principal.

309.09 Birth Certificates

[Florida State Law 1003.21](#) requires submission of a valid birth certificate for admission to school. Alternative forms of identification are permissible if a birth certificate is unavailable (as referenced in the statute).

When a certified copy of the birth certificate is provided, the school must promptly make a copy of the certified copy for the Student Permanent Record and return the original certified copy to the person enrolling the child.

310.00 Specific Records

310.01 Emergency Information

Current emergency information must be collected for each student and maintained in each student's Temporary Record. This information constitutes pertinent data which is useful when the student experiences an emergency illness or accident while at school. Furthermore, it includes authorization to the school to act in emergencies when the parent cannot be reached. Copies or summaries of this information may be provided to authorized personnel.

The Student/Parent Handbook must include a request that parents notify the school whenever there is a change in contact information that would prevent the school from reaching them in a time of emergency.

310.02 Pickup Authorization

Each school must maintain a current list of individuals who are authorized to pick up students from school (including extra-curricular activities and any extended-day program). Such authorization must be placed in each student's Temporary Record, and may be copied and provided to authorized school personnel. Students may only be permitted to be picked up by authorized individuals. Designated students may be released to walk home under certain conditions (see [303.09](#)). For secondary school, students with valid Driver's Licenses may be permitted to drive from school. However, parental permission is required for students who are walking or driving home if the student is leaving before the regular dismissal time (see [303.10](#)).

310.03 Health Records

Schools must require and maintain student health records as part of each student's Temporary Record in accordance with the Florida Department of Health and in compliance with [Florida Statute 1003.22](#). All directives issued annually by the Florida Department of Health concerning immunizations and other health matters must also be implemented (see [311.00](#)).

This record should include any instances of student injuries that occur on school campus via a Student Accident Form (see [312.01](#)).

Prior to the student's first attendance day, each student must present a School Entry Health Examination Form (Form 3040) based upon an examination performed within one (1) year prior to enrollment, as well as a valid and current Florida Certification of Immunization (Form 680).

Current Health Records (including a current Immunization Form) should generally be submitted before the first day of classes. In cases in which Health Records are not up-to-date, or an Immunization Form is not submitted, principals may, at their discretion, allow for up to 30 days for the family to provide any/all updates. Should a family not meet this deadline, the principal should contact the Superintendent (or delegate) to determine additional responses, which may include administrative withdrawal.

311.00 Student Health Requirements

311.01 Immunizations

Immunizations shall be required for all communicable diseases as determined by the rules of the Florida Department of Health. These requirements are mandated by state law and students may be kept from attending classes or dismissed from school for non-compliance

(see [310.03](#)). *No religious exemptions shall be given.* Only medical exemptions are only considered with authorized documentation (DH 680, Part A and B).

Medical exemptions are considered on an individual basis and only with the submission of FLDOH Form 680 (Part A and B). This form *must* include a signature from a medical doctor licensed in the state of Florida. Medical exemptions may be *temporary* or *permanent*:

- **Temporary Exemption Requests** are typically utilized when a student is midway through a vaccination regime. When receiving Temporary Exemption Requests, school officials should review the request form and ensure that a definite expiration date of the request is listed. If so, school officials may approve the request. However, parents should be notified that, should an outbreak occur of a disease in which the student is not vaccinated, the student may be required to remain home for the duration of the incubation period of the disease. Schools should contact the Superintendent if the family submits a second Exemption Request with a later expiration date or if they have any questions or additional concerns.
- **Permanent Exemption Requests** are reviewed on an individual basis. Such exemptions must be based upon actual, identified, and legitimate health-related needs, approved by a licensed medical practitioner. When receiving a Permanent Exemption Request, principals must contact the Superintendent (or delegate) before finalizing or communicating any decision. If medical exemption is allowed, parents must be notified that, should an outbreak occur of a disease in which the student is not vaccinated, the student may be required to remain home for the duration of the incubation period of the disease.

Elementary Schools Only: The immunization Annual Report of Compliance (Form 684) is required from schools each year. These forms are sent to individual schools by the county health departments and are usually due back to the local health department by October 1.

311.02 Medical Examinations

It is recommended that at various grade levels students be:

- Screened for visual and hearing acuity
- Observed for signs of deviation from normal health and behavior patterns.

Students must be screened for scoliosis in grade six. It is further recommended that schools require periodic updating of student health examinations. For example, students entering grades four and seven (regardless of date of original admission) might be required to present an updated health examination form.

312.00 Medical Treatment of Students

312.01 Student Illnesses and Accidents

When a student becomes ill or is injured at school, the principal (or designee) must take appropriate, immediate action, including contact with the parents via the student's Emergency Information (see [310.01](#)). Schools must develop procedures for notifying the parent(s) in times of emergency. Such procedures must include notifying approved persons who have been approved by the parent to be contacted if the parent is not available.

If the illness or accident is an emergency, the principal (or designee) shall immediately contact 911 and then the parent. An approved authority from the school must accompany the student to the hospital if a parent (or other person approved by the parent) is not available to do so. *Principals must contact the Superintendent any time 911 is called and/or a student is transported to the hospital.*

The school generally document all injuries on school property through a [Report of Accident or Injury Form \(See Appendix E\)](#). This form should generally be sent home promptly, on the same day in which the injury or accident occurred. Such records should be retained in the student's in the student's Health Record (see policy [310.03](#)).

312.02 Communicable Diseases

School staff must take all necessary action to maintain a school environment that is clean, safe, and kept free of communicable diseases. Students who are diagnosed with a communicable disease may be asked to leave school and remain at home at the discretion of the principal (or designee). Certain Communicable Diseases are required by Florida State Law to be reported to the local health department (see these [Reporting Guidelines](#)).

The Archdiocese shall develop and publish specific policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Archdiocesan Schools may not close for excessive student and/or staff absences without the permission of the Superintendent.

312.03 Administration of Prescriptions and Regular Medical Treatment

Schools may administer prescriptions to students, as well as regular medical treatment for health conditions, at the discretion of the principal. Parents must provide documentation from a licensed medical practitioner on the type, dosage, and frequency of the prescription or treatment. It is recommended that all prescriptions be kept in a secured, central area of the school (rather than retained by the individual student or their teacher). The principal must

ensure that appropriate, approved school personnel are properly trained in administering the prescription or medical treatment.

Schools have a right to refuse administration or prescriptions or other regular medical treatment if it is determined to be overly invasive or difficult. Principals should contact the Superintendent before finalizing and communicating any such determination.

312.04 Allergies

Parents must notify the school in writing of any diagnosed allergies. For serious allergies, the principal (or designee) must meet with the parent to develop a written set of procedures, as well as an Accommodations Plan (see [511.03](#)), to ensure a safe environment for the child. School personnel may administer epinephrine auto-injectors (“epi-pens”) with the approval of the Parent, approval and proper authorization from the principal, and training.

313.00 Safe Environment Policies

313.01 Mandated Reporting

All persons *must*, by law, report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). It is the responsibility of DCF personnel to investigate allegations of abuse or neglect, and school employees shall fully cooperate with such investigations (see [313.02](#)).

School employees must immediately notify their principal when cases of child abuse or neglect are suspected. Once DCF has been contacted, the principal should notify the Safe Environment Director for the Archdiocese and pastor (if elementary).

If an allegation of child abuse or neglect is made against a school/parish employee or volunteer, the principal must also contact the Superintendent to formulate a plan. In most cases, allegations of child abuse or neglect will result in the immediate suspension of the employee or volunteer until the investigation is complete.

In addition, the principal shall notify the Superintendent in situations where Safe Environment issues may result in widespread community attention/scandal, media attention, or other particularly challenging circumstances.

313.02 Cooperation with Legal Authorities

Principals and other school employees shall cooperate with any local, state, or federal investigators or law enforcement officers that contact the school to investigate child abuse/neglect allegations or any other student-related criminal activity. Investigators and law enforcement officers must present proper identification prior to obtaining any information from the school and identify themselves to the school principal or designate upon contact with the school.

Whenever an investigator or law enforcement officer comes onto school property with the appropriate legal authority to request records and information, that person will be provided with access to these records. Appropriate legal authority involves a court subpoena specifying the documents and information to be reviewed. Principals should contact the Superintendent when presented with such a subpoena.

If an investigator or law enforcement official asks to interview a student, the principal should ask if he/she and/or another authorized school official (e.g. counselor, assistant principal, etc.) may be present for the interview. If permission is not granted, the interview may still proceed.

If an investigator or law enforcement is investigating an allegation not known or reported by the school, the principal shall inform the Safe Environment Director of the Archdiocese.

School officials should ask the investigator or law enforcement official whether the parents of any child involved in an investigation should be contacted by the school. Such contact should only be made if approved/recommended by the investigator or law enforcement official.

313.03 Safe Environment Coordinator

Each school must designate an employee to serve as the local Safe Environment Coordinator. This individual is charged with assuring that school/parish employees and volunteers are in compliance with Archdiocesan Safe Environment policies, including the tracking of Safe Environment requirements for new and returning employees/volunteers, arranging for Virtus training, promulgating information requested by Archdiocese, etc. The principal remains chiefly responsible for ensuring the implementation of Safe Environment policies at the school.

313.04 Safe Environment Requirements for School Employees

Employees of all Catholic schools are required to follow the Archdiocesan policy Creating and Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children and Vulnerable Adults (commonly called

the **Archdiocesan Safe Environment Policies**). This policy requires the following of all school personnel:

New hires must complete the following:

- A fingerprint screening and clearance through the Florida Background Screening Clearinghouse (must be completed *before* the first day of work)
- Initial training through the Virtus program (must be completed within 45 days of hire)
- Signing of the Employee Pledge to Promote Safe Environment (typically signed as part of the employee's initial orientation)

All employees are required to participate in monthly **Virtus Bulletins** on an ongoing basis.

Failure to comply with any/all requirements may result in disciplinary action against the employee, up to and including termination of employment. It is recommended that principals perform a basic internet search of all prospective employees prior to hire.

As a means of preventing sexual abuse within a classroom or office, the doors of all classrooms and offices should have windows and these should not be covered with objects. School employees should generally avoid meeting with students one-on-one. If such a meeting is necessary, it should occur in a freely-accessible area (such as a school hallway) or in a room with an open door and clear line-of-sight to a hallway or other such open area.

Because there is always potential of misinterpretation of physical contact with children, teachers should be cautious in such contact with their students. Even when a hug is initiated by the child, the teacher should generally transfer the child to his or her side for a side hug (see [903.03](#)).

Faculty may only communicate with students consistent with the Digital Communication Policy of the Archdiocese of Miami (see [902.01](#)).

313.05 Safe Environment Requirements for Adult Volunteers

Individuals seeking to volunteer with children in a Catholic school must follow the Archdiocesan policy Creating and Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children and Vulnerable Adults (commonly called the **Archdiocesan Safe Environment Policies**).

Volunteers must fulfill specific Safe Environment requirements if they are:

1. Volunteering at a school in which children are present; and
2. Have access or regular contact with children

New volunteers who meet the criteria above must complete the following:

- Receive approval for service by the principal (or designee)
- An FBI/FDLE fingerprint check through a designated fingerprinting site (must be completed *before* the first day of volunteering)
- Initial training through the Virtus program (must be completed within 45 days of agreeing to volunteer)
- Signing of the Volunteer Pledge to Promote Safe Environment (typically signed as part of the employee's initial orientation)
- Participation in monthly Virtus bulletins (as applicable)

When approving volunteers, school officials should consider whether they possess the appropriate skills involved in working with children. Principals have the sole discretion to remove a volunteer from service at Catholic schools (see [701.06](#)).

Under general circumstances, volunteers should not work with children unless they are in the presence of a school/parish employee. Infrequent exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the principal for certain volunteer roles (e.g. coach-volunteers). Principals are expected to exercise discretion in making such determinations.

Volunteers must not be given access to confidential student information, such health records, grades, parental contact information, etc. Volunteers shall not be utilized to grade student assignments or administer tests (including standardized assessments).

313.06 Third Party Employees

Third Party Employees refer to individuals employed by an outside company or agency (including public school districts) who are approved for specific work with the school. Such employees may include (but are not limited to) roles such as cleaning services, catering, IT support, third-party therapists, education service providers, etc.

Third Party Employees are required to follow the Archdiocesan policy Creating and Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children and Vulnerable Adults. Specific Safe Environment requirements apply if the individual:

1. Is working at a school in which children are present; and
2. Has access or regular contact with children

Individuals who meet the criteria above must fulfill the following requirements:

- Be employed by a company or other agency (such as the local public school district) approved for work by the principal and/or Archdiocese.

- A fingerprint screening and clearance through the Florida Background Screening Clearinghouse (must be completed *before* the first day of work)
- Initial training through the Virtus program (must be completed within 45 days of agreeing to volunteer)
- Signing of the Volunteer Pledge to Promote Safe Environment (typically signed as part of the employee's initial orientation)
- Participation in monthly Virtus bulletins
- Have been vetted through the state Disqualification List

313.07 Safe Environment Requirements for Volunteers Under the Age of 18

Volunteers under the age of 18 may not have unsupervised access to children. They must be immediately supervised by an employee or volunteer who fulfills the requirements set forth in policies [313.04](#) and [313.05](#). In addition, all initial volunteers must participate in an FBI/FDLE check and sign a Volunteer Pledge to Promote Safe Environment.

When approving volunteers, school officials should consider whether they possess the appropriate skills involved in working with children. Principals have the sole discretion to remove volunteers from service at Catholic schools (see [701.06](#)). Volunteers must not be given access to confidential student information, such health records, grades, parental contact information, etc. Volunteers must not be utilized to grade student assignments or administer tests (including standardized assessments).

313.08 Teaching Touching Safety

Each school must offer annual courses on Teaching Touching Safety for all students, as defined by the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office. Parents should be given an opportunity to opt their child out of these courses. Careful records of dates and attendees of these courses shall be kept by each school.

400.00 SAFETY AND SECURITY

401.00 Safety and Security Operations

401.01 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)

Each school must develop and promulgate policies to support a safe and secure school. These policies should be housed within a local Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) which addresses the specific needs of students, employees, and visitors based on local realities (buildings, facilities, campus, neighborhood, etc.). The plan must be updated annually and maintained electronically and in hard copy at the school site and in the OCS.

As part of the local EOP, each school should form an **Emergency Operations Team** that includes key individuals that should be involved in managing any local emergency. This team should include the principal, pastor (if applicable) and at least 3 additional key staff members. One of the members of the Emergency Operations Team must be a “backup” for the principal to manage an emergency should the principal not be available or on site.

The Emergency Operations Team should frequently review the EOP. The current EOP must be submitted to the OCS annually by a specified date.

The EOP should be designed to address the five critical areas of preparedness identified by multiple federal agencies: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response and Recovery. The updated plan outlining the implementation of these preparedness principles should be discussed with local law enforcement officials who should also receive a copy of the plan with the local Site Plan provided by the Office of Building and Property of the Archdiocese. The plan should include two major sections: *The Basic Plan* and *Threat-Specific Policies*. The Basic Plan should include the following sections:

- Organizational procedures and assigned responsibilities
- Physical Security and Campus Access
- Communication
- The Operational Plan
- The Plan for Student release and family reunification
- Recovery initiatives

For situations that merit a cancellation or adjustment to the school day, see [603.00](#).

401.02 Emergency Communications

In keeping with the Incident Reporting Policy of the Archdiocese, if an emergency occurs at a school, the principal should contact 911 and then the Superintendent (or delegate). Situations that require immediate contact with the Superintendent include (but are not limited to):

- Significant health emergencies involving a student, employee, or volunteer
- Any time a student, employee, or volunteer is injured and transported to a hospital from school
- Building fires, gas leaks, major flooding, or other significant facility issues
- Threats against the safety of the school
- Intruders on the school campus or immediate neighborhood that necessitate a full or partial lockdown (i.e. a Code Red or Code Yellow, see [402.04](#))
- Inquiries from the secular media and/or media showing up on campus

If the Superintendent is not available, the principal should contact the Associate Superintendent of Schools.

Principals may also be asked to contact other offices of the Archdiocese. For example, for issues involving media, principals will likely be asked to contact the Office of Communications.

Principals and other school officials should never speak to the media or agree to an interview without permission from the Superintendent. Principals must contact Superintendent immediately if there is an occurrence which might be covered by the media. In such cases, the Superintendent (or delegate) can advise the school as to appropriate responses and be prepared to answer inquiries which might arise.

401.03 Campus Safety and Security

The school building(s) and properties must comply with the requirements of the Florida Building Code, the State Department of Health, and the policies of the Archdiocese of Miami. The building(s) and properties must be regularly inspected by local personnel to ensure that they are safe and in good repair.

External doors and external fencing gates must be locked at all times during the school day (locked doors are *recommended* for Secondary Schools). Doors and gates must only be opened by qualified school employees. Doors and gates should be propped open only for brief periods of time, and under the direct supervision of a qualified employee.

400.00 SAFETY AND SECURITY

Each school must have a security camera monitoring the designated main entrance. Schools should consult with local law enforcement regarding the regular monitoring of security on the school's campus.

Cameras are permitted in classrooms, but audio recording should be deactivated. Likewise, parents should be informed in writing of the presence of cameras in classrooms for security purposes. Cameras should not be installed in bathrooms, locker rooms, or similar areas.

401.04 School Visitors

“Visitors” include all non-employees and non-students of the school/parish (including regular volunteers). Visitors to the school during school hours must approach the designated main entrance and be processed by an appropriate and qualified employee through the school's security camera system. If a visitor is cleared, he/she must proceed directly to the main office and record their name, time of entry, and purpose of visiting. Visitors should receive a Visitor's Badge. Any visitor in the school building found without a Visitor's Badge must be immediately escorted to the main office.

Students shall never open external doors or gates for visitors. If students are used to help with student dropoff or pickup, they should be directly monitored by a qualified school employee at all times.

School personnel are empowered to ask visitors to leave at any time if their presence jeopardizes student safety or is otherwise disruptive to the educational environment of the school. If a visitor refuses to leave, school personnel should contact local law enforcement.

401.05 Inspection of School Property

School properties are regularly inspected by the local health and fire departments/districts, in compliance with applicable local or Florida state law. School employees shall fully cooperate with all inspections, and must work to remediate any violations. Local employees shall regularly inspect school property to ensure that it complies with legal requirements.

401.06 Firearms

Firearms are not permitted on the property of Catholic schools, with the exception of licensed and identified law enforcement personnel. This policy includes school employees as well as third-party security officials who are not also licensed and identified law enforcement.

401.07 Bloodborne Pathogens

Each school of the Archdiocese should develop an Exposure Control Plan which is kept on file in the school office. This plan should include a program to train school staff in universal precautions that prevent the spread of blood borne pathogens for any individual that may be at risk of exposure. OSHA provides guidelines that may be helpful in developing this plan. The plan should include annual training for all school personnel.

Catholic schools must instruct students and teachers in the practice of universal precautions regarding body fluids. School personnel use universal precautions in handling wounds, blood, and any bodily fluid.

401.08 Student Accident Insurance

The Archdiocese purchases insurance which generally covers the students in all Archdiocesan owned schools during the times that the students are involved in school-sponsored activities or are traveling to or from a school-sponsored activity. The cost is built into the cost of property and liability insurance.

402.00 Safety Drills

402.01 Compliance

Catholic schools are required to comply with applicable state law in regards to conducting regular safety drills. Each school must submit an annual report of Safety Drills to the OCS. A Safety Drill Log must be kept by the principal. This log shall be submitted to the OCS at the end of the school year (on a date specified by the Superintendent or delegate).

The school must publish Safety Drill procedures within its local Teacher/Staff Handbook and ensure that all school employees receive proper training on Safety Drill procedures. The policies below offer further information about each specific form of Safety Drill.

402.02 Fire Drills

Fire Drills must be conducted each school year in compliance with Florida law. The principals must record the dates of each Fire drill in the Safety Drill Log in his/her office. All drills require the participation of the local fire department/district.

Elementary Schools must conduct Fire drills at least one time per month in which the school is open for regular classes. The first Fire drill must occur in the first 10 days of the school

year. *Secondary Schools* must conduct at least four Fire drills, one of which must be in the first 10 days of school. Additional Fire drills may be conducted at the discretion of the principal.

402.03 Tornado Drills

Schools should complete at least one Tornado drill per school year. The date of the Tornado drill should be recorded in the Safety Drill Log and stored in the Principal's Office.

402.04 Law Enforcement Drills

Schools must conduct Law Enforcement drills (sometimes called "Lockdown drills" or "Intruder drills") in compliance with state law. Law Enforcement Drills *must* include the participation of the local law enforcement agency (principals should contact the local agency prior to a Law Enforcement Drill). The dates of each Law Enforcement Drill must be recorded in the Safety Drill Log and stored in the Principal's Office.

Elementary Schools must conduct at least six Law Enforcement drills, one of which must be in the first 10 days of the school year. *Secondary Schools* must conduct at least six Law Enforcement drills, one of which must be in the first 10 days of school. Additional Law Enforcement drills may be conducted at the discretion of the principal.

Specific Law Enforcement drill procedures should be developed in collaboration with local law enforcement and should generally reflect two types of situations:

1. Code Yellow: Incidents occurring in the area around the school but unrelated to the school campus. Code Yellow procedures generally involve prohibiting anyone from leaving or entering the campus, but still allowing movement inside the campus.
2. Code Red: Incidents involving the direct safety of the school, such as intruders, shootings, bomb threats, etc. Code Red procedures generally involve locking all internal and external doors, prohibiting anyone from leaving or entering the campus, and instructing students and personnel to shelter in place.

Schools should incorporate both types of procedures into Law Enforcement drills.

500.00 THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

501.00 Instructional Framework

501.01 Program Design

The school's instructional program must be founded upon and reflect the universal educational mission of the Catholic Church and the school's Foundational Statements (see [105.00](#)). The principal is responsible for the organization of instruction within the school in accordance with Archdiocesan educational policies and accreditation standards.

501.02 Class Size

The principal is responsible for determining the size of each class and the student/teacher ratio. The educational needs of the students and the overall instructional quality of the class must be considered when determining class size.

For *PreK3 classes (or younger)*, class size must typically not exceed 15 students, with a maximum student/staff ratio of 8 to 1 (which may include an Instructional Assistant). For *PreK4 classes*, class size must typically not exceed 20 students, with a maximum student/staff ratio of 10 to 1 (which may include an Instructional Assistant). For *Kindergarten classes*, class size must typically not exceed 25 students, with a maximum student/staff ratio of 15 to 1 (which may include an assistant). Class sizes in *grades 1-5* must typically not exceed 30 students, and class sizes in *grades 6-12* must typically not exceed 35 students. Special exceptions to class sizes may be made by the Superintendent upon request.

Required Maximum Class Sizes

GRADE	MAX. ENROLLMENT	MIN. STUDENT/STAFF
PREK3 (or younger)*	15	8:1
PREK4*	20	10:1
KINDERGARTEN	25	15:1
1-5	30	30:1
GRADES 6-12	35	35:1

* = It is strongly recommended that Pre-Kindergarten classes (of any size) be supervised by both a teacher and an Instructional Assistant (see [809.05](#)). In situations in which only one teacher is assigned to a Pre-Kindergarten class (without an Assistant) a second, paid employee should be present during times of whole-class travel to/from the classroom,

outdoor activities, restroom breaks, lunch, and other situations that could increase student's vulnerability, following FCC standards for abuse prevention.

501.03 Combined Grades (Elementary Schools)

In elementary schools, principals may opt to combine grades together into a single class, provided that class sizes do not exceed maximums described in [501.02](#). In such cases, the principal should consider the class size, the instructional and developmental needs of the students, and the capabilities of the assigned teacher(s). Grades may only be combined after consultation with the Superintendent (or delegate) and local Pastor (if elementary). Note that this policy relates to combining grades for most/all of the school day (vs. for individual subjects, such as "leveled" mathematics; see [501.04](#)).

Combining grades is not recommended in most circumstances, particularly for Pre-Kindergarten through 2nd grade.

501.04 Departmentalization (Elementary Schools)

Certain grades/classes may be departmentalized, in which students receive instruction from different teachers for some/all of the core subject areas (religion, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). Departmentalization may involve combining students of various grades based upon ability levels, particularly in the subject of mathematics.

Departmentalization may occur at the discretion of the principal, and in consultation with the Pastor and School Advisory Council. Departmentalization is particularly recommended for middle school grades in which students are preparing for eventual matriculation to departmentalized Secondary Schools.

501.05 Single-Sex Classes

Principals of co-educational elementary and secondary schools may opt to enroll students of only one sex within a particular class or grade. Such decisions must be made in consideration of the spiritual, academic, and social needs of the students, as well as the school's strategic plan. Principals must receive authorization of the Superintendent and Pastor (if elementary) before implementing such a model.

501.06 Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK)

Elementary schools may participate in the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK) at the discretion of the principal, and with the permission of the Superintendent and Pastor. Schools must follow all applicable VPK requirements, including but not limited to those that pertain to tuition, religious instruction, and other provisions.

[Florida Division of Early Learning Website \(VPK\)](#)

501.07 School Readiness Program

Elementary schools may participate in the School Readiness Program (for Pre-Kindergarten) at the discretion of the principal, and with the permission of the Superintendent and Pastor. Schools must adhere to all applicable School Readiness requirements, included but not limited to eligibility criteria, documentation, curriculum standards, and reporting.

[Florida Early Learning Website \(School Readiness\)](#)

501.08 Dual Language Immersion Programs

Schools may provide dual language immersion instruction, in which significant portions of core subject instruction are provided in a language other than English. Principals must receive permission from the Superintendent and Pastor (if elementary) before offering dual language immersion instruction.

501.09 Middle School Dual Enrollment

The Archdiocese of Miami offers dual enrollment courses for current middle school students (grades 6-8) through the Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy (CAVA). Students in Archdiocesan elementary schools who seek to receive credit at Archdiocesan Secondary Schools must be enrolled in a Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy (CAVA) program. The elementary principal shall determine which students are enrolled in dual enrollment courses based off of various student measures, such as grades, Terra Nova scores, attendance and behavior records, etc. The OCS may further require a standardized assessment to be used for dual enrollment admissions, and these scores may be used as another factor for approval by the elementary principal in dual enrollment classes.

Instruction may be provided in three ways:

- 1.) Students may receive instruction directly from the Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy (CAVA).
- 2.) Students may receive instruction from a local teacher at the school who meets the qualifications for teaching the dual enrollment subject. For example, an instructor for the subject of Secondary School algebra must have a state certification in math that includes grade 9. Local instructors utilize the curriculum of the Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy (CAVA) and must participate in midyear and end-of-year assessments.

3.) Students may receive instruction from a qualified local teacher (as in #2, above).

Students do not utilize the Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy (CAVA) curriculum, but still must participate in midyear and end-of-year assessments.

The Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy (CAVA) may charge fees associated with each option, with approval of the Superintendent.

Any student who receives a passing grade in a dual enrollment course shall receive credit at *both* the elementary school and any Archdiocesan Secondary School. *Secondary Schools may not accept dual credit for students who have not participated in the dual enrollment program of the Archdiocese.* If a principal feels that an exception should be made to this policy (such as for students moving from out of state), he/she should contact the Associate Superintendent of Schools.

Dual enrollment classes will not count towards high school Grade Point Averages (see [509.07](#)).

501.10 College/University Dual Credit (Secondary Schools)

Archdiocesan Secondary Schools may form partnerships with colleges and universities to enable current students to participate in Dual Credit courses for college credit. Principals should ensure that such partnerships are established in writing, with clearly stated expectations for the school, the college, and any/all participating students.

Dual Enrollment programs must be approved by the Superintendent. In most circumstances, Dual Enrollment programs should be established through St. Thomas University (the university of the Archdiocese of Miami).

501.11 Failing Classes – Elementary Schools

Elementary schools shall define a specific policy for addressing students who receive a failing semester grade (a 59% or lower) in a class in grades 3-8. This policy should outline specific steps for how the grade shall be remediated, including such strategies as summer school, the Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy (CAVA), specific tutoring, etc. Special consideration should be given to failing in a core subject area (religion, language arts/reading, mathematics, science, social studies) vs. special area subjects (e.g. art, music, physical education, etc.).

When students are in danger of failing a class, school personnel *must* directly contact parents prior to the finalization of the grade. Schools should strive to develop a specific intervention/remediation plan to assist the student in raising his/her grade. Schools should significantly consider any identified or suspected special needs in this plan, and appropriate accommodations or modifications should be provided in such cases (see [511.00](#)).

In cases where students have received, or are likely to receive, a failing grade in two or more core subjects, principals should contact the Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning to discuss and define a plan. *Students shall not be retained in the same grade due to failing classes without the permission of the Superintendent (see [503.06](#)).* The Superintendent's approval is also needed for administrative withdrawal due to academic issues (see [510.00](#)).

501.12 Failing Classes – Secondary Schools

Secondary schools shall define a specific policy for addressing students who receive a failing semester grade (a 59% or lower. This policy should outline specific steps for how the grade shall be remediated, including such strategies as Credit Recovery or summer school (see [501.12](#)), the Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy (CAVA), specific tutoring, etc. Special consideration should be given to failing in a class that is required for graduation (see [503.03](#)).

When students are in danger of failing a class, school personnel *must* directly contact parents prior to the finalization of the grade. Schools should strive to develop a specific intervention/remediation plan to assist the student in raising his/her grade. Schools should significantly consider any identified or suspected special needs in this plan, and appropriate accommodations or modifications should be provided in such cases (see [511.00](#)).

Students shall not be retained in the same grade due to failing classes without the permission of the Superintendent (see [503.06](#)). The Superintendent's approval is also needed for administrative withdrawal due to academic issues (see [510.00](#)).

For students who participate in inter-scholastic athletic programs, FHSAA requirements must be followed with regard to grade replacement and/or substitution.

501.13 Summer Session – Secondary Schools

Secondary schools may offer courses for enrichment or remediation at the discretion of the principal. Such classes may be offered by the local school or through the ADOM Virtual Catholic School. *Core subjects (theology, mathematics, English, science, and social studies) cannot be offered for summer enrichment, but may be offered for remediation.* Costs associated with summer courses are the responsibility of the student and his or her family. No financial assistance is provided for these courses. Time requirements for summer coursework will be established by the OCS based on guidelines set forth by Cognia.

501.14 Placement Tests – Secondary Schools

At the discretion of the principal, secondary schools may implement a local Placement Test in cases when additional data is needed in order to properly place students in applicable courses. Such Placement Tests must be administered *after* the student has been admitted to the school, and Placement Test results shall not affect enrollment post-admission. Schools should be discerning regarding how/whether Placement Tests are administered. Whenever possible, data collected during admissions (e.g. HSPT, middle school grades, etc.) should be leveraged to make admissions decisions instead of a Placement Test.

502.00 Curriculum

502.01 Curriculum Standards (Secular Standards)

Each school must implement a comprehensive curriculum that is characterized by systematic planning, articulation, and assessment. Cross-curricular integration is encouraged. Catholic schools must follow the curriculum standards and guides issued/designated by the OCS. Classroom teachers should have copies of their grade level and subject area curricula available in their classrooms and use them for developing lesson plans.

As indicated in [Canon 806](#), the academic programs of Catholic schools must be as good as or better than surrounding public schools. Principals must assess student learning to verify that this requirement is met.

502.02 Religion/Theology Courses

All elementary and secondary schools must offer a full year of religion/theology class for every grade level in the school. All students must attend religion/theology courses, regardless of their own faith identity. No more than one day of religion class time per week may be used for liturgies, prayer services, and similar events.

Elementary schools shall utilize religion curriculum standards defined by the OCS.

Catholic secondary schools shall design, select, and implement curricula in Theology and Religion that are consistent and in conformity with the [Doctrinal elements of Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of Secondary School Age](#) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in a consistent course of studies (by grade) as approved by the Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Miami.

502.03 Family Life Education

The Archdiocese requires that all elementary schools have a **Family Life Program**. Schools will utilize a Family Life program approved by the OCS and/or the Office of Catechesis.

The school will respect the special role of the family in this area. The Archdiocese encourages principals to dedicate a meeting, or part of a meeting, with the parents each year to discuss the Family Life Program. At this meeting, they should i) emphasize the role of the parents, ii) invite them to review the materials to be used in the course, iii) invite them to speak with those who will be teaching the program, iv) encourage them to discuss each of these topics at home with their children both before and after they are discussed in class, and v) inform them of their right to request exemptions if they feel strongly about dealing with these issues solely in the home.

If a family asks in writing, after serious consideration and discussion, that their children be exempted from classes which deal directly with sexual education, the administration should respect their request.

Schools must also offer annual classes in Teaching Touching Safety to all students (see [313.08](#)).

503.00 Promotion and Graduation

503.01 Policy Formulation

Each school must formulate and promulgate a written policy outlining its requirements for promotion and graduation. This policy must be included in the Student/Parent Handbook.

503.02 Elementary Promotion

Students in elementary schools are promoted to the next grade in accordance with the stated policies and curriculum of the school. *Promotion* relates to students matriculating to the next year of Pre-Kindergarten, or advancing to kindergarten through 9th grade. *Graduation* is not used in reference to advancing grades at the elementary level.

Students may not be promoted unless they have successfully completed the curricular and behavioral expectations of the school. Curricular expectations must reflect the required time allotments of the Archdiocese (see [602.02](#)). Schools must promptly address situations in which students receive (or are likely to receive) a failing grade in one or more core subject areas (see [501.10](#)).

Schools must not exclude a student from promotion due to outstanding financial obligations to the school, although the school can retain any Certificate of Completion until the financial obligations have been satisfied.

503.03 Secondary Promotion and Graduation

Students in secondary schools are promoted or graduate in accordance with the stated policies and curriculum of the school and the Archdiocese of Miami. *Promotion* refers to students matriculating to grades 10-12. *Graduation* refers to student advancement beyond 12th grade.

In order for a student to receive a diploma from an Archdiocesan Secondary School, the student must satisfactorily complete the prescribed course and credit requirements as well as requirements for retreats and community service learning. The minimum academic requirements are as follows:

Subject	Credit
Theology	4
English	4
Mathematics	4
Science (with laboratory)	3
Social Studies	3
World Language (consecutive)	2
Physical Education	1
Creative/Performing Arts	1
Electives/Other (minimum)	2
TOTAL	24

Additional requirements include:

- Theology classes must conform to the USCCB Doctrinal Elements (see [502.02](#))
- A theology class must be taken each year.
- Math classes must include Algebra and Geometry
- One science class must be Biology 1 (typically taken in the freshman year)
- Social Studies classes must include World History (1 credit), U.S. History (1 credit), U.S. Government (.5 credit), and Economics (.5 credit)
- Physical Education should include Health

Students who participate in dual enrollment as middle school students may receive credit for Secondary School (see policy [501.08](#)).

Schools must promptly address situations in which students receive (or are likely to receive) a failing grade in one or more core classes required for graduation (see [501.11](#)).

Schools must not exclude a student from promotion or graduation due to outstanding financial obligations to the school, although schools may ask students not to participate in graduation ceremonies (see [503.05](#)).

503.04 Elementary Promotion Ceremonies

Elementary schools may wish to recognize students who are advancing to the next grade, particularly those who are being promoted from 8th grade. Such events should be simple, and generally should be in conjunction with a school Mass. Promotion events shall not be labeled as “graduations”, nor may “diplomas” be distributed as part of the ceremony (schools may opt instead to provide “Certificates of Completion”). Eighth grade promotion ceremonies must be held no sooner than one week prior to the end of classes for the school. Students must meet the academic and attendance requirements of the school in order to be promoted.

Schools must use an OCS-designated vendor for the printing of certificates for 8th grade students. The OCS shall determine the specific format of diplomas, including any/all signatories.

503.05 Secondary School Commencement Exercises

The principal of each secondary school is responsible for planning the school’s Commencement Exercises based upon policies disseminated by the OCS. Commencement Exercises are provided for students who have successfully completed the course and attendance requirements of the Archdiocese of Miami (see [303.01](#) and [503.03](#)). A diploma confirms the fulfillment of these requirements and is provided to each graduating student. Commencement Exercises must incorporate the school’s Catholic identity through the inclusion of special prayers, readings, etc.

Schools must use an OCS-designated vendor for the printing of diplomas. The OCS shall determine the specific format of diplomas, including any/all signatories.

Catholic Secondary Schools should also conduct a Baccalaureate Mass for the graduating class. The Baccalaureate Mass and Commencement Exercises should be planned as separate events. Graduate attendance at both events shall be required.

Lead administrators and faculty should be present for both the Commencement ceremony and the Baccalaureate Mass.

503.06 Student Retention Out of Sequence

Each school must formulate and promulgate policies that stipulate whether/how students may be retained in their current grade for an additional year. Such policies must meet the attendance and academic requirements of the Archdiocese (see [303.01](#), [501.10](#), and [501.11](#)), and consider the unique academic, behavioral, and social needs of the student. The identification of any special needs should be particularly considered. If a child is not to be promoted to the next grade, the parents should be advised of this possibility in writing before January 31st. Exceptions to this practice may be made with the permission of the Superintendent.

Retention out of sequence should generally be utilized on a sparing basis, and typically only for younger students (Kindergarten and younger). If a student in grades 1-12 does not meet the requirements for promotion, schools should consider reasonable strategies to help the child meet the requirements (e.g. summer school, CAVA classes, etc.). If such strategies are not reasonable or sufficient, the principal should contact the superintendent (or delegate) to discuss the situation. Retention of students in grades 1-12 may only occur with the permission of the superintendent (or delegate). In most cases, students in grades 1-12 who are unable to be promoted will not be readmitted to the school for the next school year.

503.07 Student Advancement Out of Sequence

Each school must formulate and promulgate policies that stipulate whether/how students may be advanced beyond the next grade out of sequence (i.e. “skipping grades”). Such policies must consider the unique academic, behavioral, and social needs of the student. The permission of the Superintendent (or delegate) is required for advancement out of sequence. Advancement out of sequence is generally not recommended, as schools are encouraged to meet the needs of advanced students through differentiation and enrichment in their regular class. Students may not be advanced out of sequence without the permission of the parent.

504.00 Instructional Resources

504.01 Instructional Resources

All schools must use instructional materials and texts that are consistent with the school’s Catholic mission and the objectives of the Archdiocesan Curriculum Standards. The use of

instructional materials (including digital resources) must comply with applicable copyright laws (see [504.02](#)).

All religion basal textbooks must be approved by the USCCB ([see the USCCB Religion Text Conformity List](#)).

504.02 Copyright

The Federal Copyright Law makes it illegal to duplicate copyrighted materials without the expressed authorization of the holder of the copyright, except for certain exempt purposes. This law applies to unauthorized use or duplication of print and digital resources including (but not limited to) software, audio-visual materials, music, videotapes/DVDs, web pages, digital photographs/videos, and digital files.

504.03 Technology and Digital Resources

Schools are encouraged to utilize the latest instructional technology to benefit student learning. Each school must develop a local [Technology Plan](#) that details how technology is purchased, maintained, upgraded, and leveraged to support instruction. No software or technological materials may be used unless licensed in accordance with manufacturer and provider requirements (see [504.02](#)).

504.04 Digital Safety & Security

Schools must provide appropriate protection to ensure that school technology is as protected as possible from internet piracy, viruses/Malware, physical damage, and theft. Systems must be implemented to ensure that school technology is not used to access (intentionally or unintentionally) digital content that is inappropriate for children.

Schools shall formulate a policy to prevent and respond to cyber-bullying, as part of their general bullying policy (see [305.05](#)).

Smart Glasses (and similar devices) are prohibited for use at schools without the permission of the principal.

Schools that receive E-Rate funding must comply with the [Children's Internet Protection Act](#).

504.05 Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence refers to systems that simulate human decision-making processes without direct human intervention. These systems include chatbots, machine learning algorithms, and automated tools. Generative Artificial Intelligence refers to technology that creates content including text, images, video, and computer code by identifying patterns in large quantities and training data, and then creating original material that has similar characteristics. These AI tools have great potential but also have potential risks and ethical implications.

Before using AI, students should engage in three steps with their school: (1) Consultation. Students should always consult with their teacher prior to using any AI tool to determine if the task, assignment, or assessment can be completed with AI assistance. (2) Documentation. If granted permission to use a Generative AI tool, students must document their interaction with it by cutting and pasting the conversation into a separate document that can be shared with their teacher. (3) Citation. Where its use is permissible, students must cite the use of the Gen AI tool.

AI tools may not replace a student's work and students should be mindful to engage in ethical practices when using AI, carefully consider the validity of any AI generated content, and ensure their work product reflects their original thought and understanding. The presentation of AI generated content without a teacher's approval will be considered academic dishonesty and will result in disciplinary consequences.

Each school shall implement its own AI policy that conforms, but does not supersede, the policy above as well as any policy in the Archdiocesan Verbatim Policies.

504.06 Student Use of Technology Policy

Each school must develop and implement a Use of Technology Policy (see the Verbatim Policies), which should be included in the Student/Parent Handbook. Parents and older students (grades 6-12) should indicate their willingness to follow the Technology Policy through a Handbook Acknowledgement Form (see [301.00](#) and [Appendix F](#)), Student Code of Conduct (see [305.00](#)), and/or a separate Use of Technology Form.

Students and employees shall be informed that emails are not considered a confidential means of correspondence and may be accessed by designated school personnel, as per the Digital Communications Policy of the Archdiocese of Miami (see [902.00](#)).

505.00 Extended Day Programs

500.00 THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

An Extended Day Program is a program for students that takes place outside of instructional hours and serves students whose parents are unable to drop off or pick up their child at the designated start and/or end of the school day. Unlike extra-curricular activities, Extended Day programs do not focus on a specific athletic, artistic, or academic activity.

Schools may offer an Extended Day Program that provides supervision for students before and/or after the instructional school day, and on school holidays/breaks, at the discretion of the principal. Extended Day programs are particularly recommended for schools that serve large numbers of single/working Parents. Only students enrolled in the school are eligible to participate in this program.

Extended Day Programs may be offered through an approved third-party provider or directly by the school. In either circumstance, Extended Day employees and volunteers must comply with the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese (see [313.00](#)). Extended Day programs must utilize a defined program/curriculum that provides for constant supervision, enriching activities, and time for students to complete homework. Students must only be signed in/out of Extended Day programs by an adult listed as a parent or emergency contact. Extended Day Programs must keep an accurate accounting of times, dates, and responsible parties in which students were signed in or out (see [303.07](#)).

If the school utilizes a third-party provider for Extended Day, the identity and contract terms of the provider must be approved by Office of the Chancellor. The school is still responsible to ensure a safe and positive environment if utilizing a third-party provider (see [1107.00](#)).

506.00 Out-of-Class Policies

506.01 Policy

All assignments that are to be completed outside of class time must have a clear instructional or religious purpose. They must be in keeping with the age and development of the student and the mission and goals of the school.

506.02 Homework Assignments

Homework must reinforce student learning and utilized instructional objectives. Teachers must consider the age and ability levels of students when assigning homework. Specific time limitations may be determined by the principal.

506.03 Make-Up Work

Each school must formulate a policy describing the circumstances in which work may be completed for credit due to student absence. The Make-Up Work policy may vary by subject and grade. This policy must be published in the local Student/Parent Handbook.

As per policy [303.06](#), students are generally permitted to submit make-up work for credit for Excused Absences, while missing work due to Unexcused Absences is generally not made up for credit.

507.00 Field Trips

507.01 Policy

Principals may approve, when appropriate, Field Trips for students that involve experiences away from the school/parish campus. Field Trips are considered school-sponsored events in which the school is responsible for student supervision and safety. In approving Field Trips, principals must abide by the following:

- The principal must formulate and implement local policies to define how and when Field Trips must be proposed and approved. Principals may be required to seek additional approval from the Superintendent (or delegate).
- Field trips must have a clear educational or religious purpose.
- Each Field Trip must have a designated **Moderator**. The Moderator must be a school employee who is most responsible for the trip's purpose/content.
- Schools must collect signed Parental Consent Form for each student who is attending each Field Trip. Copies of each student's Parental Consent Form must be taken on the Field Trip by the Moderator.
- At least one adult must attend a Field Trip for every 10 students (elementary level) or 20 students (Secondary School level). Each Field Trip must have at least two adult-chaperones, which should generally include the Moderator. All adult-chaperones are required to comply with the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese (see [313.00](#)). All adult-chaperones must have working cell phones with them at all times and must share cell phone information with the Field Trip Moderator. Adult chaperones may not be below the age of 21.
- If students attending field trips have any medications that would normally be administered during the time of the trip, or are used in emergency situations (e.g. asthma inhalers) the Moderator must bring these medications and supervise their administration.

- During the Field Trip, the students are the responsibility of the school. Students must be vigilantly supervised during the course of the Field Trip.
- Buses are the preferred form of transport for any Field Trip. All adult-chaperones must accompany students on buses, and each bus must have at least one adult-chaperone. Employees are not permitted to transport students in private vehicles or 15-passenger vans. Pre-Kindergarten students must be transported by their parents.
- Principals should reserve the right to deny any student from attending a Field Trip based upon documented behavioral concerns or similar legitimate bases.
- Elementary schools may not participate in overnight Field Trips without the permission of the Superintendent.

507.02 Overnight Field Trips

Overnight Field Trips should be rare, particularly at the elementary level. Elementary principals must receive permission from the Superintendent for overnight Field Trips. Secondary Principals must receive permission from the Moderator of Athletics (for athletics-related trips) or Associate Superintendent of Schools (for non-athletic trips) for overnight Field Trips.

Overnight Field Trips must be planned extremely carefully. Particular consideration should be given to the safety and supervision of students after hours. Students should be housed in a hotel or similar accommodation. Moderators should establish and communicate a specific curfew for students to remain in their rooms, and provide for the vigilant monitoring of students throughout the night.

Additional requirements include:

- Once room doors are shut, they should remain closed for the entire curfew period.
- Adults may not share a room with a student who is not a direct relative.
- In hotels or similar buildings, students may not have their own room.

508.00 Assessment of Student Performance

508.01 Required Standardized Testing Program

All elementary schools must administer the Terra Nova test, the standardized testing program of the Archdiocese. These tests must be administered to grades 2-8 during a testing window designated by the OCS. Elementary schools must also administer the iReady Assessment to

students in grades K-8 in reading and mathematics. The iReady Assessment is typically administered three times per year, based upon a schedule defined by the OCS.

All secondary schools must administer the Pre-ACT, PSAT, and ACT assessments to applicable grades. Assessments should be administered based upon a schedule defined by the OCS.

Schools shall administer the Assessment of Religious Knowledge (ARK) to students in grades 2-12 during days designated by the OCS.

Standardized testing results should be considered a key source of student achievement and growth data. Results should be carefully considered in defining school strategic goals, accreditation priorities, etc. However, standardized test scores must not be the only factor when determining whether to advance a student to the next grade. Standardized test scores likewise must not be used as the primary factor in assessing teacher performance.

508.02 Standardized Testing Controls

Following published testing controls is vital in maintaining the integrity of the testing process and ultimate results. In administering standardized tests, school officials must carefully read and follow the published testing procedures. Printed testing materials must be collected by the principal (or designated Assessment Coordinator) immediately after administration and locked in a secure location. Standardized tests must be administered only by licensed educators employed by the school.

508.03 Local Assessments

Each school shall formulate and utilize a local assessment program designed to generate data on student learning. This assessment program must include multiple assessment methods that are tied to the school's curriculum and provide for a variety of forms of data. The school must modify and accommodate the assessment program for students with ILP's or Accommodations Plans, according to the specifications of each plan, and as allowed by the assessment publisher.

Each school must develop and implement a policy regarding the use of assessment results for instruction, intervention, guidance, grade-promotions decisions, and evaluation. Each school must develop and implement a policy that clearly defines how assessment results will be communicated to students and parents. These policies should be published in the Student/Parent Handbook of the school.

508.04 Publishing Test Scores

Individual student test scores (whether from standardized or local assessments) are considered confidential and must not be published publicly. Class, grade, and school-level assessment results may be published at the discretion of the principal for the purposes of displaying the impact of the school's academic program. Scores must not be published for the purposes of providing comparisons between Catholic schools (see [1001.02](#)).

509.00 Reporting Student Progress

509.01 Student Information System

All schools are required to utilize the PowerSchool Student Information System (SIS) for the purposes of reporting student progress, scheduling, and other administrative tasks.

509.02 Report Cards

Schools must regularly distribute Report Cards to apprise Parents of student performance in all academic subjects. Report Cards shall be distributed at the end of every grading period. Interim Progress Reports shall be distributed midway through every grading period. A grade must be assigned in all subjects offered. Exceptions may be made for students on ILP's or Accommodations Plans, according to the criteria indicated in the plan.

Archdiocesan elementary schools must utilize the Archdiocese of Miami Elementary Report Card templates to report grades. Secondary schools shall develop their own form for reporting academic progress.

509.03 Grading Scale for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Schools shall utilize a standards-based reporting system for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten that is defined by the OCS. It is recommended that schools utilize portfolio assessments to measure student academic and social growth.

Students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten do not receive a percentage grade. The student will be evaluated on a performance scale with 4 as the exceeding expectations level and 1 as emerging skills level. The scale is:

- 4 Proficient in meeting grade level standards
- 3 Progressing in meeting grade level standards
- 2 Development in meeting grade level standards
- 1 Emerging in the development of grade level standards

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Effort and Conduct scores are also utilized on the Kindergarten report card using the following scale:

- 4 Exemplary
- 3 Consistent
- 2 Inconsistent
- 1 Needs Support

509.04 Grading Scale for Grades 1-2

Grades in grades 1-2 are determined using the following scale:

- E Excellent Progress
- G Good Progress
- S Satisfactory Progress
- N Needs Improvement
- U Unsatisfactory Progress

Numerical (percentage) grades should not be recorded on progress reports or report cards.

Effort and Conduct should be measured by:

- 4 Exemplary
- 3 Consistent
- 2 Inconsistent
- 1 Needs Support

It is expected that teachers be in frequent communication with the parents of students who are receiving, or may receive, Unsatisfactory or Needs Improvement grades on report cards. Such proactive communication is essential to support student success.

509.05 Grading Scale for Grades 3-8

Percentage-based grades are used for grades 3-8 based upon the following scale:

- A 100-90
- B 89-80
- C 79-70
- D 69-60
- F 59 or lower*

* = Percentages under 50% may be used for individual assignments. However, no percentage under 50% may be reported on any Report Card.

Effort and Conduct should be measured by:

- 4 Exemplary
- 3 Consistent
- 2 Inconsistent
- 1 Needs Support

It is expected that teachers be in frequent communication with students (and their parents) who are failing a subject in order to help the student achieve a passing grade. Failing grades should not be listed on Report Cards without prior communication with the student and his/her parents (see [501.11](#)).

509.06 Grading Scale for Grades 9-12

Percentage-based grades are used for grades 9-12 based upon the following scale:

- A 100-90
- B 89-80
- C 79-70
- D 69-60
- F 59 or lower*

* = Percentages under 50% may be used for individual assignments. However, no percentage under 50% may be reported on any Report Card.

It is expected that teachers be in frequent communication with students (and their parents) who are failing a subject in order to help the student achieve a passing grade. Failing grades should not be listed on Report Cards without prior communication with the student and his/her parents ([see 501.11](#)).

509.07 Grade Point Average (Grades 9-12)

Secondary schools should calculate Grade Point Average (GPA) for all students based upon a weighted 4.0 scale. Each letter grade shall correspond to the following point values:

- A: 4.0
- B: 3.0
- C: 2.0
- D: 1.0
- F: 0.0

Honors courses may receive an additional weight of 1.0 and Advanced Placement (AP) and College Dual Credit courses may receive additional weights of 2.0 based upon guidance from the OCS. Grades in all courses (core and electives) shall count towards GPA unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent.

Although Middle School dual enrollment courses should be posted on the high school transcript, they shall *not* count towards GPA, regardless of the middle school in which the course was taken (e.g. Archdiocesan, public, etc.).

Secondary schools shall determine locally whether summer enrichment courses will count towards student GPA.

509.08 Elementary School Honor Roll

Elementary schools may opt to recognize students with high grades through naming them to the Honor Roll. Students are named to the Honor Roll on a quarterly basis. Only students in middle school (grades 6-8 or 5-8) are eligible to be listed on Honor Roll.

Schools shall use the following criteria to determine Honor Roll:

- *Principal's List*: 95–100% (or equivalent) in all core and non-core subjects; Conduct and Effort scores of 3 or 4 in all subjects.
- *First Honors*: 90–100% (or equivalent) in all core and non-core subjects; Conduct and Effort scores of 3 or 4 in all subjects.
- *Second Honors*: 85–100% (or equivalent) in all core and non-core subjects; Conduct and Effort scores of 3 or 4 in all subjects.

509.09 Secondary School Honor Roll

Secondary schools may opt to recognize students with high grades through naming them to the Honor Roll. Students are named to the Honor Roll on a quarterly basis. Principals shall devise the specific levels of the Honor Roll and the criteria for each level. Principals should endeavor to communicate Honor Roll recipients to any/all Catholic elementary schools from which the students graduated.

510.00 Withdrawal of Students for Academic Reasons

510.01 Process

A school may ask a student to voluntarily withdraw for academic reasons if the school is unable to reasonably meet the student's academic/instructional needs, given its available resources. If such a request is made, the following conditions should generally have been fulfilled:

1. The school has first placed the student in an intervention plan that includes additional support, as appropriate and feasible by the school. Specific academic goals must be identified in this plan.

- a. *If a student has a diagnosed special need and has an ILP or Accommodations Plan*, the principal (or designee) should consult with the school's ESE Coordinator/Counselor (where present). The principal (or designee) may also wish to consult with local public school district personnel or the student's private medical practitioner to ensure that the special need diagnosis and IEP are up-to-date and reflective of the student's current needs. Revisions of the ILP or Accommodations Plan must take place as part of formulating the intervention plan (see [511.02](#)).
 - b. *If a student has not been diagnosed with a special need and/or has no ILP, but a special need is suspected*, principals should consider initiating the formulation of an ILP or Accommodations Plan, as per the process outlined in [511.02](#).
2. The school has met with the Parents to discuss the intervention plan and provided written evidence of student performance.
 3. The intervention plan has not succeeded in achieving the academic goals in a reasonable amount of time.
 4. The principal has requested and received permission from the Superintendent (or delegate).
 5. The school has provided documented evidence to the parents that the plan has not succeeded, and have communicated to the family that the school is unable to serve the child's needs.
 6. The parent is given the opportunity to voluntarily withdraw the student from the school.
 7. The school agrees to cooperate with any receiving school in providing academic and attendance records.

If the family refuses to voluntarily withdraw, the principal should contact the Superintendent.

511.00 Inclusion

511.01 Policy

In reflection of our unified Catholic mission, Catholic schools must strive to provide an education that is inclusive of a diversity of student learning styles and needs, with consideration of the available resources of the school. Schools are encouraged to develop specialized programs for students with defined learning/behavioral needs, students that are advanced, and students who are learning English as a New Language (ESOL). The OCS is able to provide specific services and support to schools to assist with inclusive education.

511.02 Individualized Learning Plans (ILP's)

Schools should formulate and implement an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) for students who have been diagnosed with defined learning/behavior needs that require educational accommodations/interventions. Schools should use the Individualized Learning Plan Template when constructing an ILP. ILP's shall outline the precise nature of the special need(s) and all strategies, accommodations, and interventions that are to be implemented. Recognizing that parents are the primary educators of their children, reasonable effort should be made by the school to involve parents in the drafting of the ILP document. ILP's require the affirmation of both the student's parent as well as school officials.

ILP's are generally established following the creation of an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) by a local public school districts or assessment through a licensed private medical or psychological practitioner. IEP's are not written by the Catholic school.

A practitioner's statement is not sufficient to establish an ILP in the absence of a formal assessment.

School personnel shall not attempt to diagnose students with any learning/behavioral need. *If a school official suspects that a student may have a defined learning/behavioral need, he/she should speak with the principal (or designee). The principal (or designee) may seek the parent's cooperation in taking steps to diagnose a need, working with the local ESE Director or Counselor (when available).*

If a student is enrolled for the first time with an existing IEP or ILP from another school, the principal (or designee) must meet with the parents to discuss the IEP/ILP, and formulate a new, local ILP or Accommodations Plan.

ILP's represent the school's commitment to provide services and/or accommodations for the student. Catholic schools are not legally obligated to implement all services recommended on an IEP. ILP's must be reviewed, modified (where necessary), and re-signed by the school and Parent on at least an annual basis. The principal (or designee) must ensure that ILP goals, strategies, accommodations, and interventions are shared with all relevant school personnel, and that relevant school personnel receive appropriate training and support in implementing the ILP. ILP's and any related documentation (e.g. IEP's, assessment results) should be considered confidential and only accessed by qualified and relevant employees (see [309.02](#)).

511.03 Accommodations Plans

In some cases, students with certain diagnoses and/or physical impairments may be placed on an Accommodations Plan. Accommodations Plans do not require the formulation of an IEP by a public school district or medical/psychological practitioner, but may follow the creation of a 504 Plan. A statement from a medical/psychological practitioner is not sufficient to

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establish an Accommodations Plan in the absence of an assessment or existing 504 Plan. Schools should use the [Accommodations Plan Template](#) when constructing an Accommodation Plan. Accommodations Plans must be reviewed at least annually with the school and the student's Parent.

Accommodations Plans and any related documentation (e.g. IEP's, assessment results) should be considered confidential and only accessed by qualified and relevant employees (see [309.02](#)).

511.04 Inclusion Staff

Schools are encouraged to employ specialists who support children with identified needs (such as ESE Coordinators, see [808.07](#)), to the degree that such staff is needed and allowable in the school's budget. Schools may also allow practitioners from public school districts and private practices to visit the school to conduct evaluations and provide services. Such visitors must have the authorization of the principal (or delegate) and must satisfy the Safe Environment requirements for third parties (see [313.06](#)).

600.00 SCHEDULING THE SCHOOL YEAR/DAY

601.00 School Year

601.01 OCS Master Calendar

The OCS publishes an annual Master Calendar which all schools must follow. Modifications to this calendar at the local level may only occur with the permission of the Superintendent.

601.02 The School Calendar

Each school shall formulate and promulgate an annual School Calendar that conforms to the OCS Master Calendar. This calendar may include an OCS-determined number of “locally-determined holidays” that may be scheduled at the discretion of the principal. The scheduling of locally-determined holidays should reflect sensitivity to the needs of the population being served by the school, as well as the school’s Catholic mission. School calendars must be provided to the Superintendent and to the local law enforcement agency and fire department/district.

601.03 Required Instructional Days and Hours

School calendars must reflect at least 180 full instructional days in which students are required to attend. These days *do not* include Staff Professional Development Days or parent-teacher conference days. Schools may not exceed 190 instructional days without the permission of the Superintendent.

In addition to 180 days, schools must meet or exceed the following instructional hours, which do not include non-instructional activities (such as lunch, recess, scheduled bathroom breaks, etc.):

- Kindergarten: 540 Instructional Hours
- Grades 1-3: 780 Instructional Hours
- Grades 4-12: 900 Instructional Hours

A full day of school for grades K-8 must reflect at least 7 hours in duration. A half-day of school (grades PreK and K) must reflect at least 3.5 hours in duration.

Pre-Kindergarten programs must adhere to state licensure requirements in scheduling their school day and year.

601.04 Early Release Days

The OCS Master Calendar may specify occasional Early Release Days in which school is dismissed early. On these days, schools must provide quality professional development for teachers/staff and/or engage in planning meetings. School must be in session for at least four hours on early dismissal days if lunch is not offered. If lunch is offered, the school incorporate appropriate time for lunch in addition to the scheduled four hours.

601.05 Staff Professional Development Days

The OCS Master Calendar may incorporate periodic Staff Professional Development Days. On these days, principals must provide for quality professional development for teachers and other staff. Schools may be required to participate in system-wide or regional professional development programs organized by the OCS.

601.06 Holidays & Breaks

The OCS Master Calendar specifies specific days to be designated for holidays and extended breaks (e.g. Christmas Break, Easter Break). School may not be in session on these dates. These dates must be incorporated into local school calendars and communicated to families.

Schools may not require student attendance on weekends for instructional purposes without the permission of the Superintendent (with the exception of Saturday School, see [308.00](#)). Extended Day programs may operate on days when school is not in session at the discretion of the principal (see [505.00](#)).

Principals may require designated school employees to report to work when school is not open. In doing so, principal must abide by all Archdiocesan personnel policies, as well as applicable local, state, and federal laws.

601.07 Summer Break

The specific dates for Summer Break are defined on the OCS Master Calendar and must be incorporated into local school calendars. School offices must remain open regularly during Summer Break based upon a schedule set by the principal. This schedule must be communicated with school stakeholders, referenced on the school's website and voicemail, and provided to the Superintendent (or delegate). School officials must regularly monitor school voicemail and email while school is closed during the summer, and respond to requests by current/prospective parents on a timely basis.

Principals may require designated school employees to report to work during Summer Break, as defined by the employee’s employment terms. In doing so, principal shall follow all Archdiocesan personnel policies, as well as applicable local, state, and federal laws.

Select activities and extra-curricular activities may occur during Summer Break at the discretion of the principal and in reflection of Archdiocesan policies and guidelines. Secondary schools may offer remedial courses during Summer Break (see [501.12](#)).

602.00 School Day

602.01 Pre-Kindergarten School Day

Pre-Kindergarten classes may be full or part-day at the discretion of the principal. Pre-Kindergarten classes must be offered at least two days per week (full or part-day). *Part-Day Pre-Kindergarten classes* must be offered for at least 3.5 hours per day.

Pre-Kindergarten instruction, by its nature, is cross-curricular and project-based, supporting learning through integrated and meaningful experiences. Key content areas should include (but may not be limited to) religion, language arts/literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies, in reflection of Archdiocesan instructional standards and instructional time requirements (see [502.00](#) and [601.03](#)). Such content areas should be intentionally embedded within the daily schedule and planned experiences in ways aligned with how young children learn best: through active engagement, exploration, and hands-on learning.

602.02 Time Allocations, Grades K-8

The minutes outlined below are the *minimum weekly minutes* required in each area. Note that the minutes below, when applied to a five-day week, do not meet the total required time for full school days; as such, individual schools may add additional minutes (in addition to the times below) in areas aligned to their local-level goals.

Schools may opt to use the STREAM Minutes below as an alternative to the standard instructional minutes, with the permission of the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.

	K to 2	3 to 5	6 to 8
Religion	150	200	225
Reading/Language Arts	680	580	450
Math	250	225	225

Science	150	200	225
Social Studies	150	200	225
Physical Education	60	80	90
World Language	30	40	90
Technology (Integrated – See below)	30	40	90
Fine or Performing Arts	60	80	90

A full day of instruction must include at least 7 hours for grades K-8 (including such activities as morning prayer, lunch, recess, etc.).

Important Notes on the Chart Above:

- Religion, Language Arts, and Mathematics must be offered during every full school day, unless the school uses an alternate schedule approved by the Superintendent (e.g. block scheduling).
- Schools must dedicate time to Fine or Performing Arts. The specific form of Arts is specified by the local principal any may include such activities as visual art, music, theater, dance, etc. Schools may add additional Special Area subjects at the discretion of the principal.
- A daily recess period of at least 20 minutes is required for grades K-5, and strongly encouraged for grades 6-8. Recess does not count towards Physical Education minutes, although schools may utilize Physical Education time for recess. Physical Education must include structured, educational activities aligned with the PE curriculum standards.
- Technology should be integrated throughout all subjects, although principals may opt for a specific technology/computer class if the schedule permits.
- A school Mass must be celebrated weekly. This Mass may be counted for one class of Religion (for a maximum of 60 minutes) at the discretion of the principal.
- Language arts grades shall encompass areas such as grammar, writing, phonics, spelling, and vocabulary. Reading grades shall include areas such as general reading skills, comprehension, etc. Language arts and reading must be directed towards learning the English language.
- In grades K-2, a weekly Library time may be counted towards the reading time allocation if students are actively involved in reading (independent reading or being read to by a teacher). No more than 30 minutes per week may be allocated in this way.
- STREAM instruction may be counted towards the minutes for Science, Mathematics, and/or Religion. To do this, principals must discuss their specific approach with the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning and receive permission. Schools may also opt to use the alternate STREAM Minutes below with the permission of the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.
- World Language classes should generally be Spanish unless otherwise decided by the principal. If the school includes high numbers of students who speak Spanish as a first

language, the principal should consider leveling Spanish classes (native vs. non-native speakers), utilizing technology when possible to differentiate instruction.

OPTIONAL Elementary STREAM Weekly Instructional Minutes

These minutes be used with permission from the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning. Note that most of the above bullet points still apply.

	K to 2	3 to 5	6 to 8
Science	150	200	225
Technology Literacy/Application	90	90	135
Religion	180	180	225
Fine Arts	90	90	90
Mathematics	250	250	225
Language Arts	680	580	450
Social Studies	150	200	225
Physical Ed/Physical Activity	180	165	135
World Languages	30	45	90
Total Minutes	1800	1800	1800

602.03 Time Allocations, Grades 9-12

A full day of instruction must include at least 7 hours of school per day. Schools must meet the required minimal instructional hours set forth by the OCS (see [601.03](#)).

Secondary schools shall design and implement the scheduling structure that best suits the needs of their students (e.g. traditional, modified block scheduling, etc.). Individual periods should be no shorter than 40 minutes in length. In designing the daily/weekly schedule, schools must carefully consider the graduation requirements of the Archdiocese of Miami, which reflect the requirements of the state of Florida (see policy [503.03](#)).

Secondary School students must regularly participate in Masses and other Sacramental opportunities, as outlined in [202.00](#).

602.04 Daily Schedule

The principal (or designee) is responsible for developing the daily schedule for students and faculty members. A copy of the daily schedule must be available in each classroom and on file in the school office and/or PowerSchool scheduler.

602.05 Intrusions on the School Day

Activities (including announcements) which intrude excessively upon the instructional program of the school are discouraged during school hours. School staff must strive to balance intrusions so that no single class is continually shortened or missed.

603.00 School Closings

603.01 Closures for Emergency Conditions

When emergency conditions have been declared by the local county, such as severe weather conditions (hurricane, tornadoes, flood), schools may be closed or dismissed early. Schools may not be closed or dismiss early without the permission of the Superintendent. In extreme circumstances, the Archbishop and/or Superintendent may close some/all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. *Catholic schools follow the directives of the Archdiocese and not their local counties/public school districts in determining closures or early dismissals.*

The Archbishop and Superintendent may determine an alternate date for individual schools and/or the entire school system to reopen.

603.02 Closures Non-Emergency Conditions

Principals must have permission from the Superintendent and Pastor (if elementary) in order to close school outside of emergency conditions. Such situations might include (but are not limited to): Excessive student or staff absences, extreme heat or cold, building or mechanical malfunctions, etc. This policy does not include scheduled “floating holidays”, which are incorporated into the school’s local calendar (see [601.02](#)).

603.03 School Closure Procedures

Principals must develop a local plan to be followed in the event of an unexpected school closure. This plan should include how students, families, staff, and other necessary parties are be informed of the school’s closure. Principals should utilize any/all available methods to communicate to parents, such as emails, social media, website statements, robocalls, alerting the local media, etc.

700 STUDENT ACTIVITIES

701.00 Philosophy and Structure

701.01 Definition

Student Activities refer to all co-curricular and extra-curricular activities officially sponsored by the school. These include (but are not limited to): athletics, student organizations, arts programs (e.g. drama, band, etc.), publications, social activities (e.g. dances), clubs, etc. Field trips are not considered Student Activities, as they are meant to enhance instructional content (see [507.00](#)).

701.02 Catholic Mission and Student Activities

All Student Activities must be reflective of the Catholic mission of the school and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Activity sponsors, participants, and attendees must reflect and uphold these values, regardless of their personal religious affiliation.

701.03 Scheduling of Activities

In scheduling of activities, principals should be mindful of the school's academic calendar and prominent events within the parish (if elementary). Efforts should be taken to avoid scheduling activities during important religious or family events. For example, schools should avoid scheduling activities on Sunday mornings so that students may participate in Mass.

701.04 Responsibility for Student Activities

The principal is responsible for the coordination of all Student Activities. When this responsibility is delegated by the principal, it must be clearly stated to whom the task is delegated. In such cases, the principal retains ultimate responsibility for Student Activities.

701.05 Moderator of Student Activities

Official recognition must be given to a Student Activity only if it operates under the supervision of a school employee approved by the principal of the school in accordance with the stated policies of the school. This employee is designated as the Moderator. If the Moderator is a teacher, the supervision of an activity must not infringe upon the teacher's regular instructional duties. In some cases, the principal may appoint multiple Moderators, provided that the delineation of duties is made clear.

Athletics must be Moderated by an appointed Athletic Director (see [705.06](#)).

701.06 Supervision of Student Activities and Volunteers

Student Activities must be properly supervised by at least one employed school staff member at all times, in accordance with the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese (see [313.00](#)). This includes all gatherings, practices, and rehearsals for Student Activities. The Moderator (see [701.05](#)) serves as the primary supervisor of their designated Student Activity, although some supervision may be delegated by the Moderator to other employees.

Any volunteers shall work under the supervision of the Moderator. Under general circumstances, volunteers should not work with children unless they are in the presence of a school/parish employee. Infrequent exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the principal for certain volunteer roles (e.g. coach-volunteers). Principals are expected to exercise discretion in making such determination.

Volunteers must adhere to the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese (see [313.00](#)). The principal (or designee) may ask any volunteer to discontinue their service based upon any factor that is not discriminatory.

701.07 National/Regional Student Organizations

A chapter and/or branch of a national or regional student organization (e.g. Boy Scouts, National Honor Society, etc.) within a given school must not be granted official recognition unless organization has been approved by the principal. Such organizations must be properly vetted by the principal (or designee) to ensure that their philosophy and practices are consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church.

701.08 Management of Funds for Student Activities

The principal is responsible for establishing clearly defined procedures to be used by student organizations for the management of their funds. All funds must be deposited in the school account.

701.09 Student Transportation for Activities

Schools should ask parents to provide transportation for their own children to off-site events affiliated with student activities (including athletic competitions). However, the principal may approve bus transportation for students at his/her discretion. If using buses, each bus must include at least one paid staff member (including paid coaches).

Schools may not use fifteen passenger vans for transportation of students. Employees are not permitted to transport students (who are not their immediate relatives) in private vehicles.

702.00 Arts Programs

702.01 Establishment of Arts Programs

Wherever possible, Catholic schools must provide opportunities for students to participate in such extra-curricular activities as art, drama, music, etc. The number of rehearsals during school hours for plays and entertainments must be strictly limited. Drama and music programs must be pre-approved by the principal (or designee) prior to auditions/rehearsals to ensure that the production is reflective of the school's Catholic mission. The school should formulate and publish eligibility policies for student participation in arts programs.

703.00 Publications

703.01 Authorization

All school newspapers, yearbooks, magazines, published materials, web pages, official social media sites, and media presentations and their content must be in accord with the mission, vision, and goals of the Catholic school (see [901.00](#)).

703.02 Moderator of Publications

The principal is ultimately responsible for the content of all school publications. The designated Moderator of the publication must monitor and edit all content.

704.00 Social Activities

704.01 Definition and Supervision

Social Activities are defined as a school-sponsored program for students outside of everyday instruction for the purposes of socializing, playing games, non-liturgical celebrations, team building and/or other activities as defined.

All school-sponsored Social Activities require the approval of the principal (or designee). All social activities must be in accord with the mission, vision, and goals of the Catholic school and the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese (see [313.00](#)). For such activities,

student behavior expectations and staff/volunteer roles must be clearly defined by the Moderator and approved by the principal (or designee).

704.02 Dances

All school dances must require the approval of the principal (or designee). Dances must have at least one administrator present as well as one additional employee. Additional staff/volunteers are recommended to ensure proper supervision of students at a school-sponsored dance. Students must be immediately corrected to ensure that conduct is reflective of the school's Catholic Identity. Music selections should be pre-screened for appropriate content and approved by the Moderator. Student dances must not be conducted for students younger than sixth grade without the permission of the Superintendent (with the exception of dances that involve direct Parent participation, e.g. a "Father-Daughter Dance").

Dances shall be held on the property of the school/parish. Exceptions may be made by permission of the Superintendent (or delegate).

705.00 Athletics

705.01 Purpose of Athletics

The purpose of youth athletic programs in Catholic schools is to foster physical, mental, and spiritual development of children. As such, the emphasis must be placed on the growth of these areas rather than competition. The principal and school staff must vigorously monitor athletic programs to ensure that they are reflective of the school's Catholic Identity.

705.02 Definitions & Oversight

School Athletic Programs refer to programs in defined sports that are operated by the school, be they inter-scholastic, intermural, or recreational. Only students enrolled in the school may participate in School Athletic Programs. The local principal is ultimately responsible for all School Athletic Programs. Although the principal may delegate day-to-day management of School Athletic Programs to a local Athletic Director (see [705.06](#)), he/she retains ultimate responsibility of the program.

705.03 Catholic Athletic League (CAL)

The Archdiocese of Miami sponsors and operates the **Catholic Athletic League (CAL)**. Catholic elementary and secondary schools in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties must affiliate with the CAL unless otherwise decided by the Superintendent. The CAL shall

identify all sports that may be offered at Catholic schools, define specific athletic schedules, and charge appropriate fees from schools and/or student-athletes.

The CAL is governed by a defined set of bylaws approved by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall appoint a **Moderator** who shall carry out the regular management of the CAL.

- The Moderator may, with the permission of the Superintendent, appoint Commissioners (aligned with secondary vs. elementary, each county, and/or specific sports) to assist him/her with the management of specific Athletic Conferences.
- The Superintendent further appoints an **Oversight Board** to provide particular advice to the Moderator on the policies and operations of elementary athletic programs. The Members of the Oversight Board must be approved by the Superintendent and should generally include elementary school principals and Athletic Directors.

The OCS may promulgate an Athletic Handbook of policies to further guide athletic activities. Schools must follow these policies. Such policies may augment, but not contradict, the policies found in this document.

The CAL bylaws shall specify prerequisites for and requirements for initial and continuing participation in sports programs of the Archdiocese for all students, coaches, athletic directors and volunteers. General expectations and responsibilities of parents shall also be detailed in these documents, and should be reflected in local Student/Parent Handbooks.

The CAL shall be supported by an annual **budget** developed by the Moderator with input from the Oversight Board (at the elementary level). Finances shall be managed by the OCS. Revisions to the Oversight Board bylaws and/or budget must be submitted to the Superintendent for ultimate approval. Such changes are generally recommended by March of each academic year.

Athletic activities shall not occur before 12:00 (noon) on Sundays unless specifically approved by the Superintendent (see [701.03](#)).

705.04 Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) – Secondary Schools

Catholic secondary schools must maintain membership in the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) and to subscribe to all applicable rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the association and the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Secondary schools may only sponsor teams that are sanctioned by the FHSAA unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent.

705.05 Inter-School (Combined) Athletic Programs

Schools may partner with other Catholic schools to combine School Athletic Programs and/or certain teams. Such arrangements must be mutually agreed upon by each principal prior to the start of the appropriate athletic season and approved by the CAL Moderator. Students from all partner schools must be eligible to try out for the team(s).

705.06 Athletic Director

Each school must appoint a school employee to serve as the school's Athletic Director. The Athletic Director provides for the day-to-day supervision of the School Athletic Program, including oversight of coaches, communication with the league, organization of sports facilities, communications with students/parents, etc. The Athletic Director may have additional duties at the school (such as teaching) at the discretion of the principal.

705.07 Coaches

The school's Athletic Director is responsible for identifying and supervising coaches for all teams. Elementary coaches shall be volunteers unless they are employed at the school in a separate role (e.g. a teacher). Secondary School coaches may be paid or unpaid at the discretion of the principal. All coaches must comply with the Safe Environment Policies of the Archdiocese (see [313.00](#)).

Coaches who are not otherwise employed by the school and who receive no compensation or a *de minimis* stipend must annually sign a Volunteer Coaching Agreement. Principals (or delegate) should contact the Office of Human Resources to determine the specific *de minimis* classification.

The Athletic Director must provide an orientation to all coaches, assuring that they are aware of the school's religious mission and the purpose of Catholic athletic programs (see [705.01](#)). This orientation should also include training on all pertinent school, league, and Archdiocesan policies.

Coaches must participate in the Play Like a Champion program (see [705.08](#)). At the secondary level, all head coaches must be CPR/AED certified and take required courses through the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

705.08 Play Like a Champion Today (PLACT)

All schools are required to participate in the Play Like a Champion Today (PLACT) program. This program includes regular training for Athletic Directors, coaches, parents,

teachers, and students in designated grades (regardless of their participation in a School Athletic Program). The CAL Moderator shall provide overall coordination of PLACT, including regular communications about trainings and expectations to principal and Athletic Directors.

Athletic Directors shall receive annual trainings in PLACT from the CAL Moderator. Coaches and parents of student-athletes shall participate in PLACT training at least once and before any direct participation in athletics. Students shall participate in PLACT training based upon a timeline defined by the OCS.

705.09 Eligibility

The CAL shall define specific policies related to student eligibility for participation in athletics. These policies must be documented in the local Student/Parent Handbook. Eligibility policies should reflect that a student's classroom studies and conduct are of higher priority than participation in athletics, and that poor grades, conduct, or attendance can impact eligibility.

Questions and concerns about eligibility must be first addressed to the coach, Athletic Director, and/or relevant teacher. Parents must sign an athletics registration form prior to the start of each season in which they are participating. This form must ask the Parent to disclose any existing medical conditions, emergency contact information, etc., and provide a pre-participation physical completed by the child's physician indicating it is safe for the child to participate.

705.10 Conduct

The school shall define a specific expected Code of Conduct for student athletes, which should reflect the overall Catholic mission of the Archdiocese of Miami and the policies of the CAL. Each school shall publish this Code of Conduct in their local Student/Parent Handbook. The Code of Conduct requires students, coaches, volunteers, staff, and spectators to maintain professional and Christian behavior. The Code of Conduct shall stress that the purpose of athletic activities is to develop the individual student-athlete (see [705.01](#)). The school must formulate and publish a specific set of consequences that may result if the Code of Conduct is not followed. The Athletic Director and coaches must be vigilant in monitoring practices and games to assure that the Code of Conduct is followed.

Significant conduct-related incidents that occur at games must be immediately reported to the CAL Moderator (or Associate Superintendent of Schools if the CAL Moderator is not available). Such incidents shall include (but not be limited to) the following actions when committed by *any participant in an athletic event (e.g. athletes, coaches, spectators, officials,*

etc.): Physical fights, use of racists/antisemitic/bias-related comments, ejection by officials, physical or verbal threats, presence or use of weapons, sexual activity, hospitalization, significant other life safety issues, etc. If media makes inquiries about any conduct-related issues, they should be referred to the Archdiocesan Director of Communications and the CAL Moderator should be subsequently alerted.

All home games should begin with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance or National Anthem.

705.11 Name, Image, and Likeness (Secondary Schools):

No employees or agents of Catholic schools, including coaches and administrators, are authorized to involve themselves with student NIL, or in contract offers or negotiations with any agents or other third parties offering any monetary compensation to students and/or parents. Parents shall be specifically advised by each high school that students and parents should seek independent professional counsel in communications and negotiations with any agents or other third parties offering compensation and/or services to students related in any way to their athletic abilities.

Students are prohibited from making any reference to any school of the Archdiocese of Miami when engaging in any commercial activity. For example, students may not wear a team jersey or otherwise display an Archdiocesan school's name, mascot, or logo while engaged in any activity not specifically authorized by the Archdiocese of Miami. Likewise, a student may not wear the apparel or display the logo, insignia, or identifying mark of any commercial partner during any school-based team activity. The names, mascots, and logos of Archdiocese of Miami schools have legal protections and their unauthorized use by a student or by a parent/guardian will constitute a serious violation of school policy and may have additional legal repercussions.

800.00 PERSONNEL

801.00 Policy Manuals

801.01 Archdiocese of Miami Employee Handbook

The Archdiocese of Miami Employee Handbook provides overall policies for all individuals employed by the Archdiocese, including those who work in Catholic schools. As such, employees must receive, acknowledge, and follow these policies, in addition to the policies in this section and any/all policies found within the local Faculty/Staff Handbook.

No policy in this handbook supersedes any policy or procedure within the Archdiocese of Miami Employee Handbook, although the Archdiocese of Miami Employee Handbook does contain additional policies not listed here (particularly as they relate to non-school personnel).

801.02 Faculty/Staff Handbooks

Each school is responsible for the development, communication, and implementation of a local **Faculty/Staff handbook**. This handbook should contain important employee policies that relate to the school. Policies in local Faculty/Staff Handbooks may not supersede policies found in the Archdiocese of Miami Employee Handbook or this document (see [801.01](#)). Principals should regularly provide updates and reminders about important policies from the Faculty/Staff Handbook.

Principals must submit a copy of their current Faculty/Staff Handbook to the Superintendent by the first day in which teachers report for professional duties each year.

801.03 Legal Issues

Principals may become involved in personnel issues that are of a legal nature or require legal counsel. Such issues include (but are not limited to) instances in which the principal receives formal legal documentation (such as a subpoena). In such instances, principals must contact the Superintendent before taking any other action. The Superintendent will involve Archdiocesan Legal Counsel and/or other offices of the Archdiocese as warranted. *Principals and other school employees should not contact Legal Counsel without first speaking to the Superintendent.*

802.00 Employee Personnel Files

802.01 Confidentiality

Principals shall maintain a personnel file for each school employee. Files must be kept in a secured location in the office of the principal. Each personnel file is confidential and must be available only to the employee and to appropriate supervisory personnel. No information is to be released without the authorization of the principal, pastor, or Archdiocese.

802.02 Records

It is the responsibility of each school employee to ensure that their personnel file is up-to-date. Each personnel file must include documents which have been or are intended to be used in hiring, promotion, transfer, compensation and/or discipline of discharge the employee. The Personnel File Checklist, distributed by the OCS, contains a complete list of documents that can be placed in personnel files. Such documents include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Current job description
- Application for employment
- Current employment agreement, employment letter, and/or other employment paperwork
- Employment History Records for all prior employers
- Three Application Reference Check Forms
- Results of processed fingerprint clearance
- Current bloodborne pathogens training
- Documentation of Virtus training workshop and updates
- Signed statement for both the Archdiocesan and school handbooks
- Signed Standards of Ethical Conduct Form
- Signed Pledge to Promote a Safe Environment Form
- Annual evaluations
- Classroom observation forms* (may be stored electronically if in a secured and restricted database with appropriate backups)
- Official transcript of credits with degree posted*
- Copy of the most recent teaching certificate*
- Catechetical certification*
- Professional development goals and updates*
- Documentation of continuing education including MIP* (may be stored electronically in RegisterMe Live)
- Completed PMP*
- BEC-PASS/Educator Discipline Record*
- Results of Professional Practices Search*
- Results of FLDOE Disqualification Search

I-9's and benefits-related paperwork should be kept in a separate file (typically in the office of the local Bookkeeper or Business Manager)

* = Only required for principals and other Education Personnel

802.03 Retention and Transfer of Personnel Records

Personnel records are generally retained for seven years following the departure of the employee, unless otherwise specified by the Superintendent or Office of Human Resources. See [Appendix A](#) for more information.

Personnel records are not transferred when an employee moves between Archdiocesan entities. The current Personnel Record shall be retained by the entity in which the employee is leaving, and a new Personnel Record shall be started at the new entity location.

802.04 Reports of Employee Accidents, Injuries, and Illnesses

Schools must keep on file reports of accidents or injuries incurred by school employees while engaged in their duties (including field trips, school-sponsored after-hours activities, etc.). If/when such circumstances arise, the school must contact the Office of Human Resources to evaluate reporting obligations under Workers Compensation and formulate an appropriate accommodations plan for the employee, as appropriate.

803.00 Compensation

803.01 Employee Pay

For lay employees, schools must utilize the [OCS Salary Scale](#) in determining pay for the principal, teachers, and other Education Personnel (see [808.11](#)). Pay for other employees shall be defined utilizing the guidelines distributed by the Archdiocesan Office of Human Resources.

For employees who are vowed religious or priests, salaries shall be determined by the Office of Chancellor, in accordance with any agreement signed with the sponsoring religious order.

803.02 Benefits

The Archdiocesan Office of Human Resources is charged with managing the benefits plan for all employees of the Archdiocese (including employees of Catholic schools). This office

shall formulate and communicate eligibility requirements and the specific components of each benefit.

804.00 Employee Attendance & Absences

804.01 Attendance and Time Records

The Archdiocese utilizes the Paylocity system to maintain records of employee attendance. Employees must submit absence requests into Paylocity for approval (see [804.02](#)). Non-exempt (hourly) employees shall clock in/out using the Paylocity system.

804.02 Approval of Absences

School employees are expected to report on time for each scheduled workday associated with their position.

Approval of all school employee absences (of all forms and durations) is at the discretion of the designated supervisor, with due consideration of local and Archdiocesan personnel policies and the local school calendar/schedule. Supervisors must exercise appropriate vigilance and sensitivity in approving absences. Absence requests shall be submitted, reviewed, and approved through the Paylocity system (see [804.01](#)).

804.03 Holidays, Breaks, and Vacation

The principal shall distribute a schedule of dates and hours in which employees are expected to work. Full-time school employees are expected to work on any day in which student instruction takes place.

Teachers, mid-level administrators, and other Education Personnel are provided with vacation days on designated days in the school calendar, such as Christmas Break and Easter Break. Principals are provided with 4 weeks of vacation time in addition to scheduled school holidays and breaks.

All other school employees are provided with Vacation Time, as designated by policy V-C of the Archdiocese of Miami Personnel Handbook.

804.04 Sick Days

All school employees are entitled to paid Sick Days each year.

800.00 PERSONNEL

- *Sick Days are not Vacation Days.* Sick Days should only be used on days in which the employee, or an immediate family member, is ill, undergoing a medical procedure, attending medical appointments, or a similar reason. Supervisors have the right to inquire about the nature of Sick Days, particularly if they suspect that an employee may be using Sick Days for Vacation/Personal reasons.
- Teachers, principals, mid-level administrators, and other designated Educational Personnel receive seven paid Sick Days each year. All other school employees (exempt and non-exempt) should follow policy V-B in the Archdiocese of Miami Personnel Handbook.
- Sick Days must be recorded in the employee's Time Record.
- Employees who utilize 3 or more consecutive sick days must provide a note from a medical or psychological practitioner indicating that the employee is healthy and may return to work. Supervisors may require that such a practitioner's note be produced for Sick Days of lesser duration as well.
- Unused Sick Days may be carried over into consecutive years, but shall not exceed more than 20 days.
- Sick Days are not transferable from one employee to another.

804.05 Personal Days

Teachers, principals, mid-level administrators, and other designated Educational Personnel receive three Personal Days per year. Unused Personal Days do not accumulate over multiple years. Other staff do not receive Personal Days.

Personal Days should not be taken during the first two weeks or last two weeks of the school year. Generally speaking, employees should avoid taking personal days that are consecutive to longer school breaks (e.g. Christmas, Easter Break).

804.06 Other Absences

School employees may be absent for other reasons, including (but not limited to): Family and medical leave (FMLA), maternity/paternity leave, leaves of absence, military duty, jury duty, etc. Principals and other supervisors should follow the policies outlined in Section V of the Archdiocese of Miami Personnel Handbook in reviewing, approving, and managing such absences. Careful records of such absences should be maintained in each employee's Personnel File, as well as any related documentation (e.g. verification of Jury Duty).

805.00 Employee Hiring – General Policies

805.01 Policy

Consistent with its mission, the Archdiocese of Miami is committed to staffing its schools with appropriately qualified people who value Catholic education and who perform their respective jobs with excellence. Hiring policies that relate to specific roles (e.g. principal, Education Personnel, etc.) can be found in the sections below.

805.02 Non-Discrimination

A school must not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, genetic information, or age, or any other legally protected characteristic. While the Archdiocese is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for all, it reserves the right to make employment decisions consistent with Catholic teaching, religious preferences, and other religious tenets or needs, criteria and/or policy.

805.03 Hiring of Non-Citizens

Under federal law, all new employees must produce original documentation establishing their identity and right to work in the United States. They must also complete USCIS Form I-9, swearing that they have a right to work in the United States. Documentation must be produced within three (3) business days of hire. (Both [Form I-9](#) and [E-Verify](#)).

The Archdiocese is unable to sponsor international employees for the purposes of employment.

805.04 Conflicts of Interest

All school employees are required to annually sign and submit the Disclosure Regarding Conflict of Interest Form, as outlined in the Conflict of Interest Policy of the Archdiocese of Miami. This asks employees to clearly indicate whether existing conflicts of interest, be they direct or indirect, exist between the employee and the school. Employees should clearly list cases where such conflicts exist. This form shall be signed by each employee and maintained in the employee's Personnel File.

When possible and practical, schools should generally avoid assigning children of teachers to the class(es) in which the teacher instructs. In cases where such an assignment must be made, principals shall work with the teacher/parent to ensure that there is clear definition and division of when the teacher/parent is interacting with the school as an employee vs. a parent. Teachers who are also parents must reflect professional communication at all times (in both roles), consistent with the employee standards of the Archdiocese and the Parent Covenant Agreement.

806.00 Principals

806.01 Role of Principal

All Catholic elementary and secondary schools must have an appointed principal. The principal serves as the executive director of the school program. The principal's leadership gives life to concepts, goals, policies and theories. The principal develops and implements a strategic vision, sets the tone, creates the atmosphere, and nourishes the spirit, enabling the faith dimensions of the school to flourish. The belief the principal has in shared responsibility, respect for the individual, commitment to open and honest communication, the importance of support and encouragement, and her/his own faith life, brings to the daily operation of the school that uniqueness that enables it to be a truly Catholic school.

At the elementary level, the Principal is supervised by the local pastor and the Superintendent (see [102.02](#)). At the secondary level, the Superintendent is the sole supervisor of the principal (see [102.05](#)).

806.02 Qualifications

Any person appointed to serve as principal in a Catholic elementary or secondary school must meet the following requirements:

- Be a practicing Catholic in full communion with the Church
- Possess a Master's Degree in Education from an accredited college/university
- Possess (or be actively working towards) a current Florida Certification in Educational Leadership.
- Provide evidence of three years of successful teaching experience and/or leadership in a school setting
- Hold (or be working towards) a Catechetical Certificate from the Archdiocese of Miami
- Meet all Archdiocesan Safe Environment requirements (see [313.00](#))
- Successfully participate in and be officially appointed through the Archdiocesan principal search process (see [806.04](#)).

Principals who do not possess a current Florida Certification in Educational Leadership shall be placed on a three-year Certification Plan. Should the timelines outlined in the plan not be followed, the principal may be subject to employment action, up to and including termination or non-renewal.

806.03 Required Meetings and Events

Catholic school principals must attend all required meetings and events of the OCS, including (but not limited to): Principals' Meetings, Council Meetings, the annual Principals' Retreat, and any trainings or meetings associated with the school accreditation process. Principals must always be in attendance at meetings of the local Board or SAC. Elementary principals must also attend any meetings and events required by the pastor.

All principals who are new to the Archdiocese must attend (or have already attended) New Principals' Meetings.

806.04 Appointment of Principals

All elementary and secondary principals shall be hired through the process defined by the Superintendent. This process requires that all positions be posted on the Archdiocesan Human Resources website, and any interested candidate first submit a cover letter and resumé to the OCS. The OCS will screen all candidates for basic qualifications and provide a "Permission to Interview" clearance. *No principal candidate may be interviewed unless a Permission to Interview clearance has been provided.*

For **elementary schools**, the Superintendent (or delegate) shall assist the pastor in forming a search committee, vetting candidates, and conducting interviews. The search committee recommends and finalist (or finalists) to the pastor, who then makes the final decision of who may be hired.

For **secondary schools**, the Superintendent (or delegate) shall form a local search committee to vet candidates and conduct interviews. This committee should include representation from the school's Board. The search committee recommends any finalist (or finalists) to the Superintendent. The Superintendent then makes a recommendation for the final hire to the Archbishop. The Archbishop formally selects and appoints principals of Archdiocesan secondary schools.

806.05 Principal Employment Agreements and Letters

All principals must sign an annual employment agreement or letter generated by the OCS. To be valid, contracts and employment letters must be signed by all official parties. Elementary principal agreements/letters are signed by the principal, pastor, and Superintendent. The principal and Superintendent sign employment agreements/letters at the secondary level. Employment agreements/letters must last no longer than the duration of a single school year.

806.06 Compensation for Principals

Principal pay shall be determined by utilizing the OCS Salary Scale (see [808.11](#)), adjusting the pay to reflect a 12-month year, and adding an Administrator's Stipend determined by the OCS. Principals may not be paid any additional stipend without permission from the Superintendent.

806.07 Principal Appraisals

The Superintendent shall define a specific process for the regular performance appraisal of principals. All principals must participate in an appraisal, which can be tailored to the performance or experience level of the principal (at the discretion of the Superintendent). Copies of performance appraisals shall be kept in the personnel file of the principal (see [802.02](#)).

806.08 Principal Dismissal During the Agreement/Letter Period

The Superintendent's approval is required for all dismissals, who will consult with the Office of Human Resources and/or Legal Counsel as warranted. Should the principal be dismissed, the Superintendent shall work with the pastor (if elementary) and other local officials to communicate the decision and formulate a plan for the leadership of the school.

The decision not to offer a principal an agreements/letter for the next school year is not considered a dismissal (see [806.08](#)).

806.09 Non-Offer of Letter/Agreement

The Superintendent's approval is required for all instances in which a principal will not be offered an agreement/letter for the coming year due to performance-related or other concerns. The Superintendent will consult with the Office of Human Resources and/or Legal Counsel as warranted.

806.10 Suspension

Principals may be suspended from duties, with or without pay, as a disciplinary measure, pending the investigation of allegations made against the principal or in other situations where such suspension is determined to be in the best interests of the school. Principals shall not be suspended without the approval of the Superintendent, who will consult with the Office of Human Resources and/or Legal Counsel as warranted. Should the principal be suspended, the Superintendent shall work with the pastor (if elementary) and other local officials to communicate the decision and formulate a plan for the interim leadership of the school.

806.11 Resignation

Principals who resign during the period specified by their Employment Agreement are subject to ineligibility for future re-hire in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Miami. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent.

806.12 Principal Transfers

Principals who wish to transfer to another school must first obtain the permission of the Superintendent. Principals may not submit applications or be interviewed for other principal positions without the Superintendent's permission.

807.00 Catholic School Presidents

807.01 Appointment of Presidents

The Archbishop may establish president positions at any/all Catholic secondary schools at his discretion. In such circumstances, the Superintendent shall define a specific search and appointment process for the president. The Superintendent (or delegate) shall form a local search committee to vet candidates and conduct interviews. This committee should include representation from the local Board. The search committee recommends any finalist (or finalists) to the Superintendent. The Superintendent then makes a recommendation for the final hire to the Archbishop. The Archbishop formally selects and appoints presidents of Archdiocesan secondary schools.

807.02 Qualifications of Presidents

All presidents must be practicing Catholics in good standing with the Church. Other qualifications of presidents must be set by the Superintendent.

807.03 Employment Agreement/Letter

Presidents shall sign an annual employment agreement or letter generated by the OCS. To be valid, employment agreements must include the signatures of the president, superintendent, and any other listed parties. The principal and Superintendent sign agreements/letters at the secondary level. Employment agreements/letters must last no longer than the duration of a single school year.

807.04 Compensation for Presidents

Principal pay shall be determined by the Office of Catholic Schools in accord with Archdiocesan policies.

807.05 Appraisal of Presidents

Presidents shall receive a regular performance appraisal regularly according to a process defined by the Superintendent.

807.06 Resignation, Suspension, and Dismissal of Presidents

Presidents shall follow the commiserate policies for principals regarding resignation, suspension, and dismissal (see [806.00](#)).

808.00 Education Personnel (e.g. Teachers)

808.01 Definition

For the purposes of this manual, Education Personnel includes all education-related employees directly employed by the school. This includes such employees as teachers, counselors, ESE Coordinators, early education directors, librarians, assistant principals and other mid-level administrators, and others. This term does not include the principal (as this role is covered in section [806.00](#)). Other support staff roles (e.g. assistants, office staff, etc.) are not considered Educational Personnel and are covered in section [809.00](#). Temporary employees, such as substitute teachers, are also not included in this category.

808.02 Qualifications of Education Personnel

All Education Personnel must meet the following qualifications:

- Possess a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college/university
- Possess a current, valid Florida Educator certificate in their assigned area (see [808.03](#)). Exceptions may be made for Educational Personnel who are actively working on earning their certificate. In such cases, the employee must sign a written Certification Plan that conveys specific expectations and timelines associated with obtaining their certificate. Permission from the OCS *must* be granted in order to hire Educational Personnel who are not certificated.
- Possess, or be working towards, a Catechetical Certificate from the Archdiocese of Miami (see [808.04](#))
- Meet all Safe Environment Policies of the Archdiocese (see [313.00](#))
- Understand, support, and model the mission of Catholic education

- Teachers of religion/theology must be practicing Catholics in good standing with the Church

Additional qualifications are required for specific positions, as outlined in subsequent policies in this chapter.

On rare occasions, schools may hire Pre-Kindergarten teachers who do not have a Bachelor's degree but do have an Associate's (or AA) degree. Such cases must be approved by the Superintendent (or delegate), and the Pre-Kindergarten teacher must be placed on a three-year plan to obtain a Bachelor's degree.

808.03 State Certification

Each employee categorized as Education Personnel must possess a current, valid Florida Educator certificate in their assigned area. Principals may hire Educational Personnel who are not certified if they receive permission from the Superintendent (or delegate), and if there is a written and agreed-upon Certification Plan for the teacher to obtain certification within a three-year period.

Secondary school teachers, elementary "Special Area" teachers, and teachers in departmentalized elementary programs (such as most middle schools) shall be considered "out of area" if they teach more than one class period outside of their subject area of certification. In such cases, principals must receive permission from the Superintendent (or delegate) and put together a three-year certification plan.

Should a teacher be hired for a subject in which no state certification exists, the principal shall work with the Superintendent to identify an appropriate equivalent. For example, a journalism teacher may be required to obtain a certificate in English, as there is no specific state certification for journalism.

It is the responsibility of each employee to monitor the status of the state certificate and ensure that it is appropriately renewed. Each school should designate a **Certification Coordinator** to assist the principal in tracking the certification status of each employee and relaying questions and needs to the OCS. Individual employees should not contact the OCS for certification needs.

808.04 Catechetical Certification

Education Personnel (full and part-time, all subject areas) are required to possess or work towards a Catechetical Certificate from the Archdiocese of Miami. The Archdiocesan Office of Catechesis shall define the specific qualifications and process for obtaining an initial

certificate and ongoing renewal. Education Personnel who hold a catechetical certificate from another diocese and wish to be employed as a teacher by the Archdiocese of Miami should contact the Office of Catechesis.

Education Personnel are given three years to obtain their initial Catechetical Certification. Education Personnel must renew their certification every five years. Education Personnel who fail to obtain their certificate in this time, or who allow their certificate to expire, may be subject to disciplinary or other employment action, as defined by the OCS.

808.05 Midlevel Administrators (e.g. Assistant Principals, Vice-Principals, etc.)

Principals may employ Midlevel Administrators to assist in the administration and supervision of the school. In general, Midlevel Administrators serve in roles that are education-focused, include supervisory duties (students and/or personnel), and require a high degree of decision making and responsibility. Types of Midlevel Administrators include Assistant Principals at the elementary level and such roles as Vice-Principal, Dean of Students, and Dean of Faculty at the secondary level. The specific titles and responsibilities of each Midlevel Administrator may vary, based upon the needs of the school, budget, focus of the principal, etc.

In addition to the qualifications outlined in [808.02](#), Midlevel Administrators must have a master's degree in education and possess (or be working towards) valid Florida Education Leadership certification. This certification is required in order to be paid in a certification lane on the salary scale.

Compensation for Midlevel Administrators is determined by using the OCS Salary Scale (see [808.11](#)), adjusting the pay for additional days as warranted, and adding an administrative stipend defined by the OCS. Administrators who do not meet the qualifications for Midlevel Administrators must be called by an alternative title and are not eligible for the designated administrative stipend. Midlevel Administrators sign a specific employment agreements designated for their role.

Elementary Schools over 250 students are encouraged to employ an Assistant Principal who is at least part-time, and schools over 500 students are encouraged to employ a full-time Assistant Principal. Very large elementary schools may employ multiple Assistant Principals.

Secondary Schools must employ at least one Vice-Principal. Midlevel Administrators shall only be hired with the approval of the Superintendent (or delegate) and through a process defined by the OCS.

808.06 School Counselors

In addition to the qualifications outlined in policies [808.02](#), School Counselors must have a master's degree and hold valid Florida Educator certification in School Counseling or have a valid Florida license in the area of mental health such as a Clinical Social Worker, Mental Health Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapy, Clinical Psychologist, or other similar area.

808.07 ESE Coordinators

Each school should strive to appoint an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Coordinator. The ESE Coordinator shall lead and coordinate programs related to serving students with identified special needs, students who are academically advanced, and general practices that promote inclusion and differentiation (see [511.00](#)). In addition to the qualifications outlined in policies [808.02](#), ESE Coordinators should possess a master's degree in education with an emphasis on special education or a related field.

808.08 Elementary Religion Teachers

All elementary religion teachers must be practicing Catholics in full communion with the Church. Schools should verify that the teacher is registered at a parish and attending Mass regularly prior to hire and on an annual basis.

If a teacher is employed at least half time (teaching more than 3.5 hours per day) and over 80% of his/her schedule consists of religion instruction, ONE of the following requirements must also be met:

- The teacher must possess a Bachelor's degree in theology from a university recognized by the USCCB; or
- The teacher must possess a Certificate in theology from a university or program approved by the Office of Catechesis; or
- The teacher must be a priest, vowed religious, or permanent deacon approved by the Archdiocese of Miami

808.09 Secondary School Theology Teachers

Theology teachers in secondary schools must be practicing Catholics in full communion with the Church. Theology teachers must hold a master's degree in Theology, Religious Studies, or similar area from a USCCB-approved institution. In rare cases, schools may hire a Theology Teacher who only possesses a Bachelor's Degree in theology (or related field) if a plan is developed for the teacher to receive a master's in theology (or related field) within a three-year period. This plan must be approved by the Associate Superintendent of Schools in the OCS.

Theology teachers must also apply for and submit their academic transcripts for review to the Office of Catechesis for evaluation toward Catechetical Certification (see [808.04](#)).

Schools should verify that the teacher is registered at a parish and attending Mass regularly prior to hire and on an annual basis.

Former priests, vowed religious, deacons, or seminarians may not be hired as theology teachers without the permission of the Archbishop.

808.10 Hiring of Education Personnel

Posting the Position and Soliciting Candidates:

Principals and other local hiring officials must post any open or anticipated positions on the Archdiocesan website. Positions may only be posted if they are included in an approved budget or have received special approval by the Superintendent and pastor (if elementary).

All individuals seeking to be hired as Education Personnel must complete and submit the Employment Application for Schools established by the OCS. *Education personnel may not be hired without submitting an Employment Application.* In addition to the application, candidates must submit official transcripts, evidence of valid professional certification/license, and three letters of reference.

Screening and Interviewing Candidates:

Local officials should review candidate information as it is received. Ideally, hiring officials should select at least 3 viable candidates per open position for interview. Before interviewing any candidate, hiring officials *must* receive a Permission to Interview from the Coordinator for Certification in the OCS and the Office of Human Resources. *No candidate may be interviewed without permission from both offices.*

It is highly recommended that hiring officials include other qualified staff members when interviewing candidates. Hiring officials should develop and utilize a pre-established set of questions directed at providing a clear understanding of each candidate's background, expertise, motivations, and passions. Special attention should be given into understanding the candidate's knowledge and support of the Catholic mission of the school.

If a candidate is currently employed at another Catholic school in the Archdiocese, the principal *must* contact the current principal of the other school to make him/her aware of the candidate's interest before the candidate is interviewed. Principals may not hire any candidate who is already working under an agreement/letter at another Catholic school of the Archdiocese, or who has signed an agreement/letter in anticipation of the next school year, without the permission of the Superintendent (see [808.14](#)).

Hiring Candidates:

All references must be checked prior to any job offer. Principals must complete the Employment History Verification Form with all previous employers prior to hire. Applicable state employment screenings must also be performed prior to hire.

Principals bear ultimate responsibility for all hires at their school, even for positions that do not report directly to the principal. Once a finalist has been identified, the principal must contact the Coordinator of Certification in the OCS to define salary and generate an employment letter or agreement. The Coordinator will also assist in defining the status of the candidate's Catechetical Certification.

The job may formally be offered once hiring documentation has been provided to the principal by the Coordinator for Certification. The principal should not announce any hire until hiring documentation has been signed.

808.11 Employment Agreements and Letters for Education Personnel

All Education Personnel are required to sign an Employment Agreement or Letter.

Employment Agreements are used for Education Personnel who meet ALL of the following criteria:

1. Possess a valid Florida certificate in the area in which they are teaching (note that temporary certificates do not meet this requirement);
2. Possess a valid Catechetical Certificate from the Archdiocese; AND
3. Have been employed for at least one year at their current school.

Employment Letters are used for Educational Personnel who do not meet these requirements, including those that are in their first year of employment at their current school, or do not meet additional requirements specified for the role (e.g. High School Theology Teachers, as per [808.09](#)). It is expected that Employment Letters are a temporary measure, and that employees signing Employment Letters have developed and are following a plan to obtain their full qualifications.

The OCS shall release a template for Employment Agreements and Letters. The OCS shall directly generate Employment Agreements and Letters for principals and all Educational

Personnel entering (or within) their first school year at their current school. All other Employment Agreements and Letters are generated locally utilizing the OCS templates. *Schools may only modify designated portions of the Employment Agreements and Letters templates (such as name, salary amount, etc.) and no other areas.*

Employment Agreements and Letters utilize salaries defined by the **OCS Salary Scale** (see policy [808.12](#)).

There is no tenure in Archdiocesan Catholic schools. Employment Agreements and Letters must last no longer than the duration of a single school year. Those holding Employment Agreements and Letters are obligated to fulfill the terms of the contract regarding service and time. A person who has signed a Employment Agreements and Letters may not negotiate for another position for the same period of employment.

Principals may decide not to offer a Employment Agreements and Letters to a teacher for the following school year. In such cases, the principal must first contact the Superintendent or designee (see [808.18](#)).

For *elementary schools*, Employment Agreements are signed by the employee, principal, and pastor. The employee and principal only sign Employment Letters. For *secondary schools*, Employment Agreements are signed by the employee, principal, and Superintendent. The employee and principal only sign Employment Letters. Employment Agreements and Letters are not valid until all signatures are included.

808.12 Pay of Education Personnel

Salaries for Educational Personnel shall be determined by the OCS Salary Scale developed and published by the OCS. Schools should endeavor to pay Education Personnel at 100% of the scale. While schools are permitted to pay under 100% of the scale, all Education Personnel must be paid at the same level (i.e. if the school is paying employees at 90% of the scale, *all* Education Personnel must be paid at this level).

Schools are not permitted to pay salaries above the OCS Salary Scale. Schools that wish to pay lower than 85% of the scale should seek permission from the Superintendent.

The OCS Salary Scale shall be considered a confidential document. Principals and other qualified administrators may reference the salary scale in one-on-one conversations with teachers, but may not be distributed in electronic or hard-copy form.

Only experience in P-12 schools shall be counted for the purposes of the OCS Salary Scale. Teaching experience in other countries shall not count toward Salary Scale steps. Pre-

Kindergarten experience must relate to established, education-focused programs, typically attached to an elementary school (vs. a stand-alone daycare program). The OCS shall make final decisions as to whether prior educator experience counts for the purposes of the Salary Scale.

Pay must be processed through the payroll system of the school, with appropriate taxes withheld.

808.13 Educator Stipends

Schools are permitted to add stipends to educator compensation for legitimate additional duties that meet the following criteria:

1. Reflect duties outside the general job description/responsibilities of the educator; and
2. Require significant additional time (outside of the normal schedule) and/or responsibility for the educator.

Stipends shall be explicitly listed in an Addendum to the educator's employment agreement. Schools must use the Addendum template distributed by the OCS. The Addendum must include a clear description of the additional duties, the stipend amount, and the signatures of both the educator and the principal. The Addendum should be attached to the educator's agreement and placed in the educator's personnel file. *Stipends shall not be paid without a complete and signed Addendum.*

Such an Addendum must be used for all stipends, even for those that are approved after the school year begins (i.e. an Addendum may be added to an employment agreement at any time during the school year). Note that the Superintendent and pastor (if elementary) must sign this addendum for stipends provided to the principal.

Stipend pay shall be determined based upon the Stipend Framework (elementary or secondary) defined by the Office of Catholic Schools. Schools may not pay outside of the ranges in this framework without the permission of the Superintendent. Any educators who were previously awarded stipends above the framework shall have their stipend amounts frozen until such time as stipend ranges in the Stipend Framework meet or exceed the educator's current stipend amount.

Principals shall determine the most appropriate pay schedule for stipends. Such a schedule should depend upon the timing of when the stipend-related duties are performed, but shall not be paid before the duties begin. Stipends can be paid throughout the year, on a prorated basis, for duties that occur throughout the school year (e.g. Certification Coordinator, Safe Environment Coordinator, etc.). Stipends related to more seasonal responsibilities (e.g. coaching, other extra-curriculars, etc.) should be paid in either a single lump sum at the end

of the season, or at the midway point and end of the season. Stipends are to be only issued on payroll, using the Paylocity code SUPP (supplemental pay). Stipends should be paid as part of the employee's regular paycheck (i.e. not as a separate check).

Employees who are not exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (e.g., paid by the hour) are not eligible for stipends for additional responsibilities within the workday.

808.14 Transfers of Education Personnel

Education Personnel may not transfer to other Catholic schools during the employment period. Should Education Personnel wish to transfer to another school within the Archdiocese at the end of the academic year, the employee must give written notice of intent to the principal prior to signing an employment letter/agreement at their new school.

If a principal is contacted by an employee who is currently employed at another Catholic school in the Archdiocese as part of a job search, the principal *must* contact the current principal of the other school to make him/her aware of the candidate's interest. Principals may not hire any candidate who is already working under an employment letter/agreement at another Catholic school of the Archdiocese, or who has signed an employment letter/agreement in anticipation of the next school year, without the permission of the Superintendent.

When an employee transfers to another Archdiocesan school, the hiring principal should contact the Fingerprinting Office to obtain copies of clearance. Transcripts, and other documents should be sent to the receiving school, while copies are kept in the files of the school the employee is leaving. The principal should indicate the school to which the originals are being sent on the copies and should then sign and date the copies. Personnel folders are unique to employment at the entity and may not be photocopied and sent to the new school. The employee must also be transferred in the Paylocity system.

808.15 Teacher Observations

Supervision and coaching serve critical roles in the process of a teacher's professional growth. The principal should prioritize the continuous development of all teachers in instruction, classroom management, evaluation, faith formation, and interaction with students and parents.

Principals and other qualified administrators shall use the **ADOM Teacher Observation Tool** in performing teacher observations. This form includes versions for teachers in early education, elementary schools, and secondary schools. The observation process involves at least 2-3 observations per year of at least 20-30 minutes in length using the provided tool.

The observation process culminates with a Summative Evaluation at the end of the school year (see [808.16](#)). Administrators must access and submit the observation tool through the platform designated by the OCS (currently GoogleForms) or complete/submit an Observation Log. Copies of the observation forms must be maintained in digital or hard copy form (see [Appendix A](#)).

At the elementary level, observations are typically conducted by the Principal and/or Assistant Principal(s). At the secondary level, observations are typically conducted by the Principal, Vice-Principal(s) (and other midlevel administrators), and/or Department Chairs. In order to conduct observations, administrators must:

1. Possess a valid state Certificate in Educational Leadership; OR
2. Possess a Master's Degree (in any field) and a Clinical Educator Certificate.

The Archdiocese does not utilize a formal observation process for Education Personnel who are not teachers (e.g. Counselors, Midlevel Administrators, etc.). However, it is expected that regular formative feedback is provided to such employees, and these employees must still participate in an annual Summative Evaluation (see [808.14](#)).

808.16 Summative Evaluations of Education Personnel

All Education Personnel shall receive an annual Summative Evaluation based upon the tool defined by the OCS. Evaluations should incorporate the holistic performance of the employee, including and especially any teacher observations (see [808.15](#)). Evaluations should be the basis for defining specific goals for the coming school year. Evaluations may be generated by the principal or other qualified administrators, but the principal must review and approve all evaluations.

Evaluations must be signed by both the employee and his/her supervisor. An employee's signature does not necessarily indicate agreement to the evaluation as written but denotes that the administrator discussed the evaluation with the employee. Should an employee refuse to sign the evaluation, a reliable witness may be called upon to document the employee's refusal to sign.

Evaluations must be printed and placed in each employee's personnel file. Administrators must be also submitted through the platform provided by the OCS.

808.17 Dismissal During the Employment Period

The Superintendent's approval is necessary for all dismissals, who will consult with the Office of Human Resources and/or Legal Counsel as warranted. Elementary principals must

also obtain the approval of the pastor. These approvals must be obtained before any decision is finalized or communicated.

The decision to not re-hire and employee is not considered a dismissal (see [808.18](#)).

808.18 Non-Offer of Agreement/Letter

Principals must obtain permission from the Superintendent for all instances in which Education Personnel will not be offered an employment letter/agreement for the coming year due to performance-related or other concerns. Elementary principals must also obtain the approval of the pastor. The Superintendent will consult with the Office of Human Resources and/or Legal Counsel as warranted.

808.19 Suspension

Education Personnel may be suspended from duties, with or without pay, as a disciplinary measure, pending the investigation of allegations made against the employee or in other situations where such suspension is determined to be in the best interests of the school. Generally, employees will not be suspended without the approval of the Office of Human Resources and pastor (if elementary).

808.20 Resignation

Education Personnel who resign during the period specified in their Employment Agreement/Letter are subject to ineligibility for future re-hire in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Miami. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent.

808.21 Separation Forms

When Education Personnel leave a school (for any reason), a **Separation Form** must be completed and signed by the departing employee in the presence of the principal and a witness. If an employee refuses to sign the Separation Form, a note should be made on the form to indicate the employee's refusal to sign. The note should be dated and signed by the principal and the witness. The original completed and signed copy of the Separation Form must be sent to the OCS and the Office of Human Resources immediately upon separation, and include ancillary documents such as a letter of resignation or notice of termination of employment.

808.22 Professional Development

Education Personnel shall take advantage of opportunities to collaborate professionally with other educators both within and outside the Catholic school system.

The official school calendar should include specific opportunities for professional development (see [601.05](#)). Teachers are expected to increase proficiency in their fields by additional university studies, professional reading, and participation in workshops. They are likewise expected to keep current their knowledge of educational trends, new approaches to pedagogy, and allied issues. Finally, and most importantly, all educators in a Catholic school are expected to enrich and develop their understanding of the Catholic teaching.

808.23 New Teacher Orientation Program

The principal must provide an Orientation Program to acquaint Education Personnel who are new to the school with the Catholic Identity, mission, and objectives, Archdiocesan Safe Environment Policies, administrative procedures, and personnel policies of the school. The OCS may also provide required orientations for new Education Personnel.

808.24 Professional Mentoring Program (PMP)

The OCS coordinates a Professional Mentoring Program (PMP) to assist teachers in obtaining their state certificate. Through this program, a teacher demonstrates mastery of a certain number of competencies considered essential if a person is to fulfill the role of teacher in a school.

Schools participating in the PMP program must assign a **Mentor Teacher** to the participating teacher. This Mentor must have successfully completed clinical education training.

After the teacher has attained a Temporary Teaching Certificate from the State, the school will enroll the teacher and send the registration, copy of the Temporary Certificate and copy of the SOE to the Office of Catholic Schools. All four parts of the General Knowledge test must be passed, and a proof of passage must be sent to the Office of Catholic Schools.

808.25 Master In-Service Program (MIP)

The OCS coordinates a Master In-Service Program (MIP) whereby teachers holding a Florida Professional Certificate can earn points by participating in workshops, conferences, school self-studies, or similar learning opportunities. The OCS typically utilizes the RegisterMe Live (RML) portal for registration of workshops and tracking of professional development points.

808.26 Tutoring

Tutoring services refer to individuals providing specific academic support or remediation in return for pay or other material compensation. This differs from academic supports that are provided voluntarily (i.e. without pay).

Teachers (and other Education Personnel) may provide private tutoring services so long as the following requirements are met: (1) Tutoring services may not interfere with the teacher's duties to the school and/or the teacher's job responsibilities; (2) Tutoring services are expressly understood to be outside the scope of teacher's work at school and that understanding is explicitly communicated to each tutored student's Parent; (3) Tutoring services are not provided on school property or otherwise advertised on the school campus; (4) Tutoring services are neither provided nor offered to teacher's current students; (5) Tutoring services do not in any way conflict with the mission and/or teachings of the Roman Catholic Church; and (6) Tutoring does not take place in a private area, such as the tutor's personal residence.

Except as noted in this Handbook, the schools do not sponsor, oversee, or otherwise provide private tutoring services. Parents who engage school staff member for the provision of tutoring services do so at their own risk and expense and are hereby advised that such services are outside the scope of the staff member's employment with the school.

809.00 Support Staff

809.01 Definition

The designation of "Support Staff" applies to all school employees not already referred to in preceding sections of this policy (e.g. principals, presidents, and Education Personnel). Such staff members include (but are not limited to): Instructional assistants, office staff, maintenance/custodial staff, food service staff, bookkeepers/business managers, marketing directors, development directors, paid coaches (who do not have instructional/administrative duties), etc. Support staff members may be exempt or non-exempt.

809.02 Duties, Qualifications, and Supervision of Staff Members

The local principal shall define the specific duties of each support staff position. In doing so, the principal should consider the overall needs of the school as well as the annual budget.

All support staff members must meet the following qualifications:

- Meet the basic qualifications of the job, as defined by the principal (or designee).

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- Understand, support, and model the Catholic mission of the school.
- Fulfill and maintain the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese of Miami (see [313.00](#))

Additional qualifications may be set for specific roles, depending upon their duties. Some qualifications are set by the Archdiocese (see later policies in this section)

The principal is ultimately responsible for the hiring and supervision of staff members, even if day-to-day supervision is delegated to another local supervisor. The principal shall be responsible for providing support staff with an orientation program which should include the school's philosophy and operational procedures. Requirements must be met as outlined in the policies and procedures of the school, including assignment of tasks, compliance with safe environment procedures, and issues of confidentiality.

809.03 Hiring of Support Staff

Schools must post all open support staff positions on the Archdiocesan website. Principals (or their delegate) should screen applicants to ensure that they meet the qualifications of the job, would work well as part of the community, and understand and support the Catholic mission of the school. References must be checked for candidates prior to a job offer.

Schools must contact the Office of Human Resources before offering a job to any support staff member. The Office of Human Resources will check whether the candidate has been employed elsewhere in the Archdiocese, and whether there are any potential issues with him/her continuing employment.

809.04 Offer Letters for Support Staff

When hired, support staff members shall sign an Offer Letter that outlines their role, pay, and other terms of their job. Schools must use the Offer Letter Template developed by the Office of Human Resources. This document is also signed by the supervisor of the support staff member.

809.05 Instructional Assistants

Schools may employ instructional assistants (sometimes called "aides") to assist teachers with the instruction and management of students. Instructional assistants are particularly common in early education and in support of students with defined learning/behavioral needs. Instructional assistants must possess skills and dispositions for working with children, in addition to the qualifications outlined in [809.02](#).

Instructional assistants serve under the supervision of their assigned teacher(s). Principals and teachers should strive to utilize instructional assistants in tasks that directly benefit student learning, such as supporting small-group instruction, assisting with individual student needs, etc. Lower-level “busy work” (e.g. cleaning tables, preparing materials, etc.) should be generally minimized and delegated to other staff or volunteers when possible. Principals should ensure that instructional assistants are provided with regular training to develop their skills in supervising, communicating with, and instructing children.

At the same time, principals and teachers should remember that instructional assistants are not fully-qualified teachers, and may not engage in activities that require a formal teaching credential. Such activities include (but are not limited to): Lesson planning, grading, administering standardized assessments, developing ILP’s, leading parent conferences, etc.

Instructional assistants and similar staff are sometimes hired by local school districts, vendors, or individual parents. In such cases, these individuals are not considered direct employees of the school, although they are still required to fulfill applicable policies of the Archdiocese (see [313.06](#) and [511.04](#)).

809.06 Bookkeepers:

All schools shall employ a Bookkeeper, Business Manager, Finance Director, or equivalent. Such personnel must possess a Bachelor’s degree, preferably in business, finance, or a related field. Bookkeepers (or equivalent) must also participate in a special screening through the Office of Human Resources prior to hire.

In elementary schools, Bookkeepers are often shared with the affiliated parish. As an alternative to a locally-staffed Bookkeeper, schools may opt to receive bookkeeping services from the Finance Department of the Archdiocese (see [1102.01](#)).

809.07 Development Directors

Schools may opt to employ a Development (or Advancement) Director whose primary responsibility is to organize and coordinate fundraising activities of the school. Schools must consult with the Archdiocesan Director of Development prior to the hire of any Development Director.

809.08 Shared Support Staff

Some support staff members may be shared with the sponsoring parish (at the elementary level) and/or other Catholic schools of the Archdiocese. In such instances, principals shall work with the Office of Human Resources to develop an employment document to clarify

such issues as pay, benefits, etc. Duties and schedules between locations should be clearly defined and agreed upon by all parties.

809.09 Evaluation of Support Staff

Support staff members should receive an annual evaluation, typically in the spring or early summer of the school year. Principals and other supervisors must use the evaluation process and forms developed by the Office of Human Resources.

For support staff members that are shared (see [809.08](#)), supervisors should either issue separate evaluations or collaborate on a single evaluation.

809.10 Disciplinary Action of Support Staff

Support staff members are employed on an “at-will” basis which means that either the Archdiocese or employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, without or without notice, and for any reason that is not discriminatory. This “at-will” employment relationship may not be modified by oral statements of others.

For instances in which disciplinary action (e.g. suspension, dismissal, etc.) is warranted, schools shall follow the processes set forth in the Archdiocese of Miami Employee Handbook (see [801.01](#)).

810.00 Substitute Teachers

810.01 Definition

Substitute teachers are defined as temporary instructors employed by the school to provide instruction and supervision while regular members of the faculty are absent. Substitute teachers are typically employed for brief periods of time (1-3 days), but may also be employed for longer periods for such situations as teacher maternity/paternity leave or FMLA leave.

Some schools may wish to employ teachers as part of their regular staff to serve as substitutes. In such instances, these teachers are not temporary and should be considered as part of the faculty. Principals should follow the policies for Education Personnel (see [808.00](#) above) when working with these teachers.

810.02 Qualifications of Substitute Teachers

Substitute teachers must meet the following qualifications:

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- An ability to relate to children and provide basic instructional and supervisory tasks.
- An ability to understand and support the culture and expectations of the school.
- An understanding and support of the Catholic mission of the school.
- Fulfillment of the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese (see [313.00](#)).

Ideal candidates possess at least an Associates in Arts Degree (or equivalent) and have prior experience as a teacher.

In some instances, principals may choose to redeploy existing faculty or staff to serve as substitute teachers. This approach is not preferred, as it impacts the employee's regular duties. In doing so, principals should generally only utilize employees who have some form of educational training (e.g. other teachers, assistants, the parish DRE, etc.). *Volunteers may not be used as substitute teachers.*

810.03 Hire and Pay of Substitute Teachers

The principal (or designee) must make every reasonable effort to obtain a qualified substitute teacher whenever a regular teacher is absent. Prospective substitute teachers must complete an Archdiocesan Employment Application and submit it to every school in which they wish to work. Principals (or designee) should review applications and perform a basic interview of all substitute teacher candidates prior to their initial service to ensure that they are a good fit for the school.

The principal (or designee) is tasked with contacting substitute teachers when needed. The school must determine the rate of pay for the substitute using guidelines provided by the OCS, and all pay must be assigned through the school's payroll system. Substitute teachers are paid on a daily rate, unless serving for more than a period of 20 consecutive school days (or four weeks) in the same classroom. For service over 20 consecutive days in duration, substitute teachers may be paid on a salaried basis. Principals should contact the Office of Human Resources in such situations to determine appropriate pay, benefits eligibility, and other issues.

811.00 Student Teachers

Schools may participate in student teacher (or teacher residency) programs with local universities. The terms of the student teacher's involvement shall be clearly listed in a written document. Such terms must clearly spell out any/all specific duties, including participation in faculty meetings, professional development sessions, and other school events. This document

must be approved by the Superintendent (or delegate). Student teachers must adhere to the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese of Miami (see [313.06](#)).

812.00 Third-Party Employees

Schools may have employees of outside organizations (e.g. vendors, public school districts, etc.) working within their school, even on a regular basis. In such cases, the school shall work with the employer of the individual to determine the specific terms of work, schedule, and other factors. If the school has concerns about the performance or qualifications of a third-party employee, the principal (or delegate) should discuss this with the individual's employer.

Third-party employees must adhere to the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese of Miami (see [313.06](#)).

900.00 COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

901.00 Communication Standards

901.01 Code of Professional Communication

Each school must develop and promulgate a *Code of Professional Communication* (sometimes called a “Code of Christian Communication”) that guides all communications between stakeholders in the school community. This code should be referenced in local policy handbooks and include the following principles:

- a) All communication should be reflective of the Catholic mission of the school.
- b) All members of the school community must be treated with respect and dignity.
- c) When conflicts arise, communications must be directed towards seeking a constructive solution to the conflict.
- d) Concerns and questions should be addressed first at the lowest, most appropriate level. If the concern or question is not resolved, it must be taken to the next level of communication/authority.

It is recommended that all employees, Parents, and (when appropriate) students sign an agreement indicating their willingness to follow the Code of Professional Communication. For parents, this could be included with the general Student/Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form (see [301.00](#) and [Appendix F](#)).

Parents shall be required to sign a Parent Covenant Agreement on an annual basis (see the sample in [Appendix G](#)). Copies of signed covenants should be kept on file at the school.

901.02 Professional Communications Standards - Employees

Employees are considered to be representatives of their school. As such, all school employees must, at all times, reflect professionalism and Christian behavior in their communications with students, Parents, other employees, and members of the general community. This standard relates to all forms of communication, including verbal, non-verbal, written, and electronic.

902.00 Digital Communications

902.01 Digital Communications Policy

Employees and volunteers must follow the Digital Communications Policy developed by the Archdiocese of Miami. This policy should be distributed to all employees and volunteers, and schools should offer frequent trainings and reminders of this policy. This policy includes

directives on such matters as texting, emails, social media, voicemail, and other matters. The policies found in this manual are meant to supplement and clarify (vs. replace) the Archdiocesan Digital Communications Policy.

903.00 Communication with Students

903.01 General Principles

Each school must develop and promulgate a list of professional guidelines for employees when interacting with students. These guidelines must reflect Archdiocesan Safe Environment Policies (see [313.00](#)) as well as the Digital Communications Policies (see [902.01](#)).

School personnel may speak with students regarding school-related matters without the prior authorization or presence of parents, as deemed appropriate by the school administration.

903.02 Appropriate Topics

School employees must exercise care in discussing personal or potentially controversial topics with students. In such cases, the employee should consider the school's Catholic mission as well as the age level of the student. Employees must not discuss inappropriate topics with students, or convey personal opinions that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

903.03 Physical Contact with Students

Employees should exercise great care in hugging or otherwise physically interacting with students. Employees must not meet one-on-one with students unless the meeting takes place in a setting where both the employee and student are readily visible (such as a hallway or a classroom with an open door). As per [305.03](#), employees shall not engage in corporal punishment when disciplining students.

Employees shall not allow students (who are not immediate relatives) to visit them at home or at locations/events not related to school activities without the permission of the principal. Employees should exercise great care when communicating with students outside of school hours and away from school sponsored events (including electronic and phone communications, as per the [Archdiocesan Digital Communications Policy](#)).

903.04 Photos and Videos of Students

School employees should generally avoid taking pictures of students with personal cell phones or cameras. Photos with school-owned devices are permissible for official reasons, and if the permission of the Parent has been granted through signing the Handbook Release Form.

904.00 Professional Contact with Parents

904.01 Communication Guidelines

Each school's Code of Professional Communication (see [901.01](#)) must provide specific guidelines for employees when interacting with parents. Teachers are expected to maintain frequent communications with parents regarding the performance of their child. Principals should frequently communicate with all families regarding important announcements, upcoming events, and other important information. A regular electronic Newsletter (or similar "e-blast") to parents from the school is recommended to apprise parents of important school updates and events.

904.02 Appropriate Topics

When communicating with parents, employees must refrain from discussing the performance of other employees. Employees must discuss only the performance/behavior of other students if that student's behavior relates directly to the performance/behavior of the parent's child. *Employees should not discuss the specific academic performance, disciplinary consequences, and other confidential topics with individuals who are not the student's parent, authorized school or Archdiocesan employee, or other similarly approved party (e.g. Archdiocesan Legal Counsel, DCF investigators, etc.).*

Employees should exercise great care in discussing personal or potentially controversial topics with parents. Employees must avoid discussing inappropriate topics with parents, or conveying personal opinions that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

904.03 Physical Contact with Parents

Employees should exercise great care in hugging or otherwise physically interacting with parents. Employees should request that an administrator be present when discussing sensitive topics with parents.

904.04 Contact Away from School

Employees should not allow parents (who are not immediate family members) to visit them at home or at locations/events not related to school activities without the permission of the principal. Employees should exercise great care when communicating with parents outside of school hours and away from extra-curricular events (including electronic and phone communications), as well as electronic and social media interactions.

904.05 Electronic Communications and Social Media

Employees shall exercise extreme care when interacting with parents through social media; it is highly recommended that employees not engage in such communication. Employees should be aware that electronic communications and social media can affect their employment status if used inappropriately with parents.

904.06 Photos and Videos of Parents

School employees should avoid taking pictures of parents without their permission.

905.00 Parent/Community Organizations

905.01 Family and School Associations

Schools (particularly at the elementary level) are encouraged to establish Family and School Associations (FSA's) for the purposes of building community and generating support. Schools must develop and implement a set of bylaws for the FSA that describe the purpose of the FSA and how it functions. Bylaws, including any changes/amendments, require the approval of the principal.

Unlike School Boards/Councils (see [102.00](#)), FSA's do not discuss matters that relate to school policies. FSA's shall never discuss individual parent concerns or personnel issues. FSA's may be disbanded by the principal and/or pastor (if elementary).

All FSA funds must be housed within the school/parish accounts. Any/all fundraising and spending requires approval of the principal (or designee).

905.02 Athletic Booster Clubs

Schools may, at the discretion of the principal, establish Booster Clubs for the purposes of generating support for athletic activities within the school. All Booster Clubs must exist

under the authority of the school. Booster Club funds must be housed within the school/parish accounts, and fundraising and spending must require approval of the principal (or designee). Similar Booster Clubs may be established to support the arts in schools, at the discretion of the principal.

906.00 Community Relations

906.01 Media Contact

Schools may be periodically contacted by media sources (newspaper, broadcast news, internet, etc.) regarding stories of interest. In such instances, principals shall immediately contact the Superintendent and Archdiocesan Director of Communications. Such contact must occur before the school agrees to any interview or the recording of photos or videos on the school campus.

Media representatives may only be on the campus of schools with the permission of the principal, pastor, Superintendent, or Director of Communications. Media representatives do have the right to stand/broadcast from a public area, such as a street outside the school.

If schools wish to issue a **Media Release**, the principal must obtain permission from the Superintendent before such a release is distributed.

906.02 Interactions with Elected Officials

Schools may be contacted by elected officials who wish to visit the school. Such visits may occur for a variety of reasons. If contacted by such an elected official, principals should contact the Superintendent (or delegate). The Superintendent's permission must be given before the elected official is approved to visit the school.

Principals are encouraged to invite local elected officials to important and noteworthy events.

Schools must follow any policies promulgated by the Archdiocese and/or the Florida Catholic Conference regarding welcoming candidates or political officials to their campus. Principals should provide careful and professional instructions to elected officials when they visit their school. Officials should be made aware that the Catholic school (including any public speech made on school property) should not be used to promote a specific party, platform, or campaign.

1000.00 MARKETING & RECRUITMENT

1001.00 Marketing

1001.01 School Marketing Plans

Each principal, working with their staff and school board or SAC, should initiate and implement a strategic marketing and recruitment plan on behalf of their school. School marketing plans must reflect the Catholic mission of the school. Each school marketing plan should include specific marketing strategies as well as associated timelines and responsible parties.

The marketing plan must be directed towards the following goals:

- a) Recruiting new students to the school
- b) Retaining current students
- c) Building “good will”, recognition, and positive public relations among other stakeholders and the broader community (particularly within the local parish, if elementary)

In all marketing, school/parish leaders, staff, and volunteers shall refrain from defaming or speaking negatively about other Catholic schools, school/parish leaders and staff, and the Archdiocese of Miami. School/parish leaders should seek out opportunities to speak favorably about Catholic education (as a common mission) when possible.

1001.02 Use of School Data in Marketing Plans

Schools shall refrain from publishing or otherwise communicating specific data related to other Catholic schools in all marketing efforts. This includes (but is not limited to) comparative standardized assessment data, enrollment data, and demographic data. Schools may publish their own data and compare this data against Archdiocesan-level school data as well as reliable comparisons to non-Catholic competitors.

1001.03 School Website

Each school should design and maintain an attractive, high quality website. Each website must include easily visible links for prospective families who are interested in learning more or enrolling. The school’s admissions criteria must be posted on the website. The website should be updated regularly.

1001.04 School Social Media

Schools should establish and maintain a consistent and positive presence on appropriate social media platforms (chosen by the principal). Social media identities should be managed by a staff member or trusted volunteer with oversight by the principal (or administrator-delegate). School officials should monitor any responses to social media posts to ensure that they do not reflect negatively upon the school. For more policies related to general communications, see section [900.00](#) (particularly [902.01](#)).

1002.00 Student Recruitment

1002.01 Policy

Catholic schools should actively and constantly seek out potential new students for their school. Schools must have a defined and published Admissions Policy that sets forth the specific criteria for admissions (see [302.00](#)).

1002.02 Recruitment in Elementary Schools

Elementary schools must follow the admissions policies of the Archdiocese of Miami (see [302.00](#)). In seeking out new students, elementary schools shall generally focus on the groups below, listed in priority order:

- Catholic students who are siblings of current Catholic enrollees at the school, or who are children of current school employees
- Catholic students who are registered (or attend) the sponsoring parish, but who are not in attendance at the school
- Catholic students who are registered (or attend) other Catholic parishes (including those that do not sponsor a school)
- Other Catholic students
- Students in the local neighborhood or parish boundaries that do not attend a Catholic church (and who may not be Catholic)
- Other students

Elementary schools must refrain from directly contacting families from other Catholic elementary schools for the purposes of recruitment. Such contact includes phone calls, e-mails, direct mail marketing campaigns, etc. Should a school be contacted by a family that is enrolled in another Catholic school, the principal must contact the principal of the family's school of origin and inform him/her that such contact has taken place. This communication should occur before the family is permitted to enroll in the school.

Families who are transferring between Catholic elementary schools must meet any/all financial obligations with their school of origin before being allowed to attend a new Catholic school.

1002.03 Secondary School Recruitment – Elementary Requirements

Elementary schools shall prioritize Catholic Secondary Schools (Archdiocesan and independent) as the preferred locations for graduating students. In doing so, elementary school *must follow* the following practices:

- Allow Catholic Secondary Schools to distribute promotional materials and/or visit the school campus for the purposes of recruitment. Elementary principals retain the right to decline on-site events if they are overly disruptive to the school’s instructional schedule, provided that all Catholic Secondary Schools are treated equally in such decisions.
- Actively promote Catholic Secondary School Open House dates, the Secondary School Placement Test date, and other important dates.
- Promote Catholic Secondary Schools as the preferred location for graduates. Schools may make exceptions for individual students if the student would likely not meet the academic or behavioral requirements for admissions, and/or if the student possesses an identified need that would likely not be supported at any Catholic Secondary School.

Elementary schools *must not*:

- Allow non-Catholic Secondary Schools (e.g. public schools, charter schools, non-Catholic private schools) to distribute materials and/or visit the school campus for promotional purposes.
- Facilitate the placement testing of public/charter schools on the local Catholic elementary school site.
- Favor a specific Catholic Secondary School in communications or access to students.
- Speak negatively about or otherwise disparage any Catholic Secondary School.

1002.04 Recruitment for Secondary Schools

Catholic Secondary Schools must follow the Admissions Policies of the Archdiocese of Miami (see [302.00](#)). Emphasis should be placed on the recruitment of incoming ninth graders. In seeking out new students, Catholic Secondary Schools shall generally focus on the groups below, in priority order:

- Catholic students who are siblings of current Catholic enrollees at the school, or who are children of current school employees

- Catholic students who seek admission from a Catholic Elementary School (within or outside of the Archdiocese)
- Students who are children or siblings of alumni from the school and do not fall into the categories above
- Other Catholic students who are registered in a Catholic parish
- Other Catholic students
- Other students

In general, Catholic Secondary Schools should seek to admit all students matriculating from Catholic elementary schools. However, should a student from a Catholic elementary school be denied admission, the principal of the Secondary School must contact the elementary principal before the family is informed.

Secondary School recruitment personnel must work with Catholic elementary principals to get access to student records, distribute promotional materials to elementary school families, and/or organize promotional events at elementary school sites. Elementary principals retain the right to decline on-site events if they are overly disruptive to the school's instructional schedule, provided that all Catholic Secondary Schools are treated equally in such decisions (see [1002.03](#)).

In all marketing/recruitment activities, personnel from Secondary Schools must refrain from defaming or speaking negatively about other Catholic schools, school/parish leaders, and staff.

Catholic Secondary Schools must refrain from directly contacting families from other Catholic Secondary Schools for the purposes of recruitment. Such contact includes phone calls, e-mails, direct mail marketing campaigns, etc. Should a school be contacted by a family that is enrolled in another Catholic school, the principal must contact the principal of the family's school of origin and inform him/her that such contact has taken place. This communication should occur before the family is permitted to enroll in the school.

Families who are transferring between Catholic Secondary Schools must meet any/all financial obligations with their school of origin before being allowed to attend a new Catholic school.

Catholic secondary schools may not recruit students solely based upon athletic performance. Scholarships and other financial incentives cannot be tied to the athletic performance of any student.

1100.00 FINANCIAL POLICIES

1101.00 Archdiocese of Miami Financial Policies and Procedures

1101.01 Written Financial Administration Policies and Procedures

Catholic schools must follow the Financial Administration Policies and Procedures set forth by the Archdiocesan Finance Department and the OCS. No policy in this handbook supersedes any policy or procedure within the Financial Administration Policies and Procedures, although these policies and procedures do contain additional policies not listed here (including policies related to banking, loans, payroll systems, endowments, etc.).

1101.02 Financial Reviews

The Archdiocese of Miami has developed a list of specified “Agreed-Upon-Procedures” to be performed by an independent certified public accounting firm selected by the Archdiocese. The objective of this limited external review is to assist each school and the Archdiocese in monitoring the financial condition of the school as well as adherence to Archdiocesan policies and best practices. Schools must participate in this process every three years, when there is a change of leadership (pastor or principal), and/or at the request of the Chancellor or Superintendent. Applying these procedures does not constitute an audit as defined under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles; therefore, the firm will not express an opinion. They will however submit a report listing the procedures performed and their findings.

Schools receiving in excess of \$250,000 per year in Family Empowerment Scholarships (see [1104.03](#)) must participate in an annual external financial review.

1102.00 Financial Governance

1102.01 Governance and Administration

As defined by [Canon Law](#), the Archbishop of Miami acts as the ultimate steward of all “temporal goods” (i.e. finances, facilities, and other material resources) of the Archdiocese. The Archbishop delegates the stewardship of the temporal goods of each elementary school to the local pastor. The Archbishop delegates stewardship of temporal goods to the principal at the secondary level. The OCS assists the pastor and principal with the responsible implementation of oversight over temporal goods.

Each school shall employ a local Business Manager (see [809.06](#)) to provide regular management of the school’s finances. Such individuals may be also be employed by the

parish and/or other parishes or schools. As an alternative to a locally-staffed Business Manager, schools may opt to receive bookkeeping services from the Finance Department of the Archdiocese.

1102.02 Parish Finance Council – Elementary Schools

[Canon Law 537](#) of the 1983 Code of Canon Law requires that each parish have a Finance Committee (or Finance Council). The purpose of this Council must be to provide insight, advisement, and support on matters of temporal affairs to the pastor and parish/school staff. This Council must comprise of persons with special training, expertise, or perspective on the temporal affairs of the parish. As Catholic elementary schools often represent significant financial commitments on the part of sponsoring parishes, special effort should be made to include persons who are knowledgeable about school finance/operations. It is recommended that the school principal be an *ex officio* member of the Finance Council.

1102.03 Finance Committee of the School Board

In addition to a Parish Finance Council (see [1102.02](#)), elementary schools may opt to establish a Finance Committee of the School Advisory Council (see [102.02](#)) to provide advisement on such matters as budget creation/performance, fundraising/development, tuition, and general finance policies. The principal should be considered as an *ex officio* member of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee should interact with the Parish Finance Council (and may contain some of the same members).

Secondary schools shall establish a Finance Committee as part of their School Board (see [102.05](#)) to provide advisement on such matters as budget creation/performance, fundraising/development, tuition, and general finance policies. The principal shall be considered an *ex officio* member of the Finance Committee.

1103.00 Budgeting

1103.01 Budgeting Process

Each school must prepare and utilize an annual budget tied to a July 1 fiscal year. Budgets are prepared based upon materials and templates distributed by the OCS and/or Archdiocesan Finance Office, including the annual Teacher Salary Scale (see [808.11](#)).

Budget process for elementary schools: Once developed by the school administration, school budgets should be proposed and recommended by the local Finance Committee of the School Advisory Council and/or the Finance Council of the parish (see [1102.02](#) and [1102.03](#)). The

budget must be discussed in at least two meetings of one/both of these groups, and minutes must be kept of those meetings. Pastors must also approve the budget for parish schools. Once the budget has been reviewed locally, a final budget should be prepared and submitted to the OCS.

Budget process for secondary schools: Once developed by the school administration, the budget should be discussed by the School Board of Directors and the Finance Committee of the School Board (see [1102.03](#)). Budgets of Secondary Schools are reviewed and approved at an annual meeting of the school's Board of Trustees. This meeting shall be established by the Superintendent and held during the second semester of the preceding school year in which the budget will be implemented.

The OCS and other Archdiocesan offices may request budgetary updates at any time.

1104.00 Tuition, Scholarships, Financial Aid

1104.01 Tuition

Each school shall set its own rate of tuition. In setting tuition, schools should carefully consider the short and long-term financial needs of the school (including the actual per-pupil cost of education) as well as the financial capabilities of the school population. Schools should also carefully consider tuition caps set forth in Florida Scholarship Programs (see [1104.03](#)).

Annual tuition rates for the coming year are set ahead of student registration (typically 6-8 months ahead of the start of the school year). At the *elementary level*, principals must seek input on tuition rates from the local Parish Finance Council and/Finance Committee of the School Advisory Council (see [1102.02](#) and [1102.03](#)). Tuition rates must be approved by the pastor.

At the *secondary level*, principals shall seek input on tuition from the School Board and/or the Finance Committee of the School Board (see [1102.03](#)). Tuition rates must be approved by the Superintendent.

As part of the tuition setting process, schools should contact the Cost per Student. This cost should be communicating in the Tuition Agreement (See [1104.02](#)).

1104.02 Tuition Collection

Catholic schools shall use FACTS tuition management for the collection and tracking of tuition payments.

Each school must develop a local policy related to tuition payments. This policy should be listed in the local Student/Parent handbook, and reminders about tuition payments should be provided at the start of each school year. In addition, each family should sign an annual **Tuition Agreement** indicating that they will faithfully pay tuition based upon defined schedule. Schools shall use the Tuition Agreement Template distributed by the OCS.

Families that are delinquent in paying tuition should be contacted by the principal (or delegate) to formulate a plan for payment. Failure to respond or fulfill the payment plan may be grounds for administrative withdrawal or other measures (see [307.04](#)).

Schools shall not accept a child who owes outstanding tuition at another Archdiocesan Catholic school.

1104.03 Florida Scholarship Programs

The Superintendent shall designate which Florida Scholarship Programs will be accepted by Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. Schools must participate in scholarship programs selected by the Superintendent. In doing so, schools must follow the policies associated with each scholarship program from the state, Archdiocese, and scholarship granting organization (e.g. Step Up for Students). Scholarships are a vital way to enable access to Catholic schools for many families.

Principals should strive to allocate some/all revenue from scholarship programs associated with exceptional learners (e.g. Family Empowerment Scholarship – Unique Needs) to specific services and resources to assist the student with his/her education.

Schools may not discriminate in admissions or tuition rates based upon scholarship eligibility.

1104.04 Financial Aid

A school may provide financial aid to a family unable to meet the tuition amount set by the school. To receive financial aid, families should first apply to receive a Florida Scholarship Program (see [1104.03](#)). Families may then apply for financial assistance from the school through FACTS Grant & Aid. Such aid must always be based solely upon the demonstrated need of the family and not be given considering the academic or athletic abilities of the child.

It should be clear to the family that the child is not receiving a “scholarship” as an inducement to the child to attend the school but is receiving assistance based upon identified financial needs.

1105.00 Fundraising and Development

1105.01 Definitions

For the purposes of these policies, the terms “Fundraising” and “Development” are used synonymously and defined as any efforts to secure funding from individual donors, foundations, grant sources, or other parties for the purposes of financially benefitting the school, its students, or official school-sponsored organizations (e.g. Boy Scouts, National Junior Honor Society, etc.).

1105.02 Development and Advancement Plan

Each school shall design and implement a Development and Advancement Plan for the school’s fundraising efforts. This plan must be directed towards generating additional funds for the school through donors, foundations, and other grant sources. The Development and Advancement Plan must be approved by the principal and pastor (if elementary) and should consider the school’s ongoing funding needs and long-term strategic plans. This plan should be discussed regularly with the Finance Committee of the School Board/Advisory Council (or Development Committee, if present) and/or Parish Finance Council (if elementary).

1105.03 Fundraising for the School

All fundraising activities for the school must be approved by the principal (or designee) in accordance with the local Fundraising Plan, applicable local and Archdiocesan policies, and the mission and teachings of the Catholic Church. The principal (or designee) must carefully monitor the timing and effectiveness of all fundraising activities to assure that efforts are as successful as possible, and do not conflict or overly tax donors and school stakeholders.

*For **school/parish raffles**, principal must contact the Archdiocesan Director of Development prior to finalizing or communicating any raffle efforts.*

1105.04 Capital Campaigns

Capital Campaigns are defined as significant fundraising efforts that target specific programs or projects, and extend over a period of time. Schools wishing to conduct a Capital Campaign must first request permission from the Superintendent to conduct a Feasibility Study. The

Superintendent will work with the Archdiocesan Development Department as warranted. Once this study is completed, the Superintendent's review and permission is required before the start of any additional campaign-related activity (e.g. silent phase, public rollout, etc.).

Elementary Capital Campaigns that include the sponsoring parish require additional approval from the Chancellor/COO of the Archdiocese.

1105.05 Fundraising for Other Church Organizations

All fundraising efforts sponsored, endorsed, and/or promoted by a Catholic school for another Church Organization (i.e. an organization listed in the Official Catholic Directory/Kennedy Directory) must be approved by the principal in accordance with local and Archdiocesan policies.

1105.06 Fundraising for Outside Organizations

All fundraising efforts sponsored, endorsed, and/or promoted by a Catholic school for outside organizations must be approved by the principal prior to the start of the fundraising effort. The local school's Fundraising Plan and the mission and teachings of the Catholic Church must be considered in making such a decision. Such efforts must be directed at only approved non-profit (501(c)(3)) organizations, and should not include organizations that have fundamental conflicts with the mission of the Catholic Church. Schools must not raise money for for-profit organizations without the permission of the Superintendent.

1105.07 Private Fundraising Efforts

Private fundraising efforts can be defined as fundraising activities not officially sponsored by the Catholic school, but instead conducted by a private individual or group on behalf of an outside non-profit (501(c)(3)) organization. All such fundraising efforts conducted by school employees, Parents, students, volunteers, or other stakeholders must be pre-approved by the local principal in accordance with local and Archdiocesan policies. The mission and purpose of the outside organization must be consistent with the mission and teachings of the Catholic Church.

1106.00 Solicitation by Outside Groups

1106.01 Procedure

The local parish/school authorities have the right to determine solicitation within the school. The local parish/school authorities must select organizations that conform with the mission and teachings of the Catholic Church, and fit the mission and philosophy of the school. The

local parish/school authorities must determine the manner in which the solicitation may take place.

1106.02 Responsibility

Only those persons authorized by the local parish/school authorities must be brought into a Catholic school as a promoter, participant, leader, or director of student activities. The presence, topic, or affiliations of such individuals must not be problematic for the school's Catholic mission. Individuals who have direct contact with children must fulfill the Safe Environment requirements of the Archdiocese (see [313.00](#)).

1107.00 Third Party Contracts

1107.01 Screening and Approval

Schools may engage the services of a third-party contractor for educational or non-educational purposes. In all cases, the principal (or designee) must screen the backgrounds of all potential vendors. Principals must approve all contracted vendors working with the school. Contracts with third parties *must* be approved by the Chancellor's Office of the Archdiocese prior to being signed by any school/parish party. Schools must use the Vendor Agreement Template developed by the Chancellor's Office, unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent or Chancellor.

Third-party contractors must disclose any known and established Conflicts of Interest to the school administration prior to finalizing any agreement.

Individuals employed through third-party organizations (including individuals who are self-employed) are not considered employees of the Archdiocese or school/parish. However, such employees are required to fulfill the Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese and other requirements (see [313.06](#)).

APPENDICES

Appendix A: EDUCATIONAL RECORD RETENTION POLICY

This document is meant to assist school administrators in the storage of hard-copy and digital files. This list is not inclusive of all records. For more information, see the [Archdiocese of Miami Record Retention policy](#). Policies [309.00](#) and [802.00](#) contain reference to records retention. As with all school policies, any exceptions, must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

For all types of records required to be retained by these policies, the following is the policy for safeguarding those records:

- All hard-copy records will be retained in a safe and secure place with either or both the entity authoring the document or the recipient of the document as the usual custodian.
- All records will be kept on the premises of the school or, if space constraints make on-site storage impractical, in a separate location that permits ready access.
- Records are not to be stored in the home of an employee or other person, nor in a separate location that makes access to the records impractical.
- Digital records should be stored in an appropriate device (e.g. hard drive, thumb drive etc.) on the campus of the school in a locked and fire-proof area. Digital records may not be taken from the campus of the school. Schools must ensure appropriate backups and protections are in place for digital files.

This document also indicates how records should be stored (e.g. hard copy, digital, etc.).

EMPLOYEE RECORDS (see [802.00](#))

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION	FORMAT
Attendance Records	7 years after termination	Hard copy or digital
Background Check Results	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
Disability records (group disability and insurance policy records)	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
Employment Letters and Agreements (signed)	Permanent	Hard copy. May digitize 3 years following termination.
Offer letters (non-contracted staff)	Permanent	Hard copy. May digitize 3 years following termination.
Intent to Return Forms	1 full school year after distribution	Hard copy or digital
Teacher observations	3 years after termination	Hard copy or digital
Performance evaluations (signed)	3 years after termination	Hard copy. May digitize 1 year after termination.
Acknowledgment of blood borne Pathogens	3 years after termination	Hard copy or digital
Acknowledgement of Faculty/Staff Handbook Form	3 years after termination	Hard copy or digital
Annual health certificate	3 years after termination	Hard copy or digital

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Employee injury and accident records; medical leave documentation	7 years after termination	Hard copy or digital
Employee salary history	7 years after termination	Hard copy or digital
Continuing education verification, professional development certificates	3 years after termination	Hard copy or digital
I-9 Form	3 years from hire date or 1 year after termination (whichever is later)	Hard copy
Fingerprint clearances	5 years after clearance	Hard copy or digital
Safe Environment Test Results	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
Separation Forms	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
W-4 Forms	4 years after date tax becomes due or paid, whichever is later	Hard copy or digital

STUDENT RECORDS (see [309.00](#))

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION	FORMAT
Abuse/Neglect records	Permanent	Hard copy. May digitize 3 years following withdrawal
Accident/Emergency reports	5 years after date of report	Hard copy or digital
Acknowledgement of Student/Parent Handbook	3 years	Hard copy or digital
Administration and authorization of medicine	7 years	Hard copy or digital
Daily class attendance records	3 school years	Hard copy or digital
Discipline records (Major offense)	3 school years	Hard copy or digital
Emergency notification records	Until obsolete or superseded	Hard copy or digital
Expulsion (Administrative withdrawal) records	5 school years after final disposition	Hard copy or digital
Fieldtrip permission form/release of Liability	2 years from date of trip	Hard copy or digital
Attendance history	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
Cumulative grades and classes	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
Date of graduation	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
Personally identifiable information	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
Schools previously attended	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
Family background information	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
Standardized test scores	Permanent	Hard copy or digital
Conference report regarding retention	3 years after withdrawal	Hard copy or digital
Health care cards	3 years after withdrawal	Hard copy or digital

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Honors and activities	3 years after withdrawal	Hard copy or digital
Immunization records	3 years after withdrawal	Hard copy or digital
Parent concerns and complaints (major)	3 years after withdrawal	Hard copy or digital

OTHER RECORDS

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION	FORMAT
Emergency drills	File with OCS at end of year	Hard copy or digital
Field trip checklist	2 years from date of trip	Hard copy or digital

Each person whose job description includes the custody and/or maintenance of the above records is responsible for the ongoing process of identifying records which have met the required retention period and overseeing their destruction. Destruction of hard copy financial, personnel-related (student or employee) or employee health information will be accomplished only by document shredding. Each person responsible for the destruction of records should be trained appropriately in the destruction methods used. Entries must be made in the Records Destruction Log (separate document) whenever records are destroyed.

LITIGATION HOLDS

When litigation is pending or threatened against the Archdiocese or its employees, the law imposes a duty upon the Archdiocese to preserve all documents and records that pertain to the issues. A litigation hold directive must be issued to the legal custodians of those records and it is the responsibility of the custodian to preserve all records subject to a litigation hold.

A litigation hold directive overrides this document retention policy, as well as any records retention schedules that may have otherwise called for the transfer, disposal or destruction of relevant records, until the hold has been cleared.

No employee who has received a litigation hold directive may alter or delete an electronic record that falls within the scope of that hold. Those employees are also required to provide access to or copies of any electronic records that they have downloaded and saved or moved to some other storage device.

Voicemail messages have the same status as paper files in litigation-related cases. Therefore, voicemail messages fall under the same procedures as paper or electronic records as it relates to a litigation hold.

Appendix B: AGREEMENT FOR PROBATIONARY ADMISSION

This document is meant to be used when admitting a student on probationary status. School officials should customize this form, inserting text in the “bracketed” areas.

[INSERT SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

The student has been placed on probationary status at [SCHOOL NAME]. This agreement outlines the school’s general expectations agreed upon by the student and parents.

Student: _____ Grade: _____

The student agrees to:

- Carefully review and abide by the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the school.
- Cooperate with teachers in order to increase the likelihood of academic success.
- Participate in and respect the traditions and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Demonstrate respect for self and others.
- Promptly report person or persons who attempt to prevent the student from following the rules of the school.
- Other: _____

The parents/guardians agree to:

- Support the school in its efforts to provide services for the student.
- Support the student in his/her efforts to cooperate with, respect and abide by the rules of the school.
- Promptly report any “issue of concern” that may prevent the student from abiding by this agreement.
- Review school policies as outlined in the school handbook with the student to ensure that he or she fully understands expectations.
- Other: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: STUDENT BEHAVIOR AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

This template is meant to be used when placing a student on a Student Behavior Agreement. Such agreements should only be used for students who have demonstrated serious and/or chronic behavior issues. It is meant to be presented in an in-person discussion with the student and his/her parents/guardians. This template should be customized using the bracketed areas below.

[SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

Student Behavior Agreement

Your student is being placed on a behavioral agreement after significant [and/or frequent] violations of the student Code of Conduct at [school name]. This agreement has been created to better assist your student and provide [him/her] with the expectations required to stay in attendance. If at any point, the student or [his/her] family are unable to fulfill the terms of this agreement, further action will be taken, up to and including administrative withdrawal.

School Year: [insert]

Student: [insert]

Expectations:

1. [include numerical list]

We enjoy having your family at [school name] and are confident that you will fulfill the terms set forth in this agreement. By signing this document, both the student and parent agree to be in compliance of the expectations stated.

Sincerely,

[principal name/signature]

Student Signature

Parent Signature(s)

Date of Signatures:

Appendix D: BULLYING COMPLAINT REPORT FORM

This form may be used by parents when submitting an allegation of bullying. This report may be submitted to the local school/parish authority and/or the Office of Catholic Schools. See [305.05](#) for more information.

[SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

BULLYING COMPLAINT REPORT FORM

Name of Student: _____ Grade: _____
Today's Date: _____ Name(s) of Accused: _____
School: _____ Date of Incident: _____
Personal Phone/Cell Number: _____

Specify in detail your complaint below. Please describe the incident, participants, background to the incident, and any attempt you've made to resolve the problem. Please include relevant dates, times and places. (Attach a separate sheet if necessary.)

Indicate if there are other individuals who could provide more information regarding this complaint including witnesses or participants:

Indicate in your opinion how this problem might be resolved. Please be as specific as possible.

I certify that the above information is correct and that the events are accurately depicted to the best of my knowledge.

Name of Complainant

Signature of Complainant

Date

Appendix E: REPORT OF ACCIDENT OR INJURY FORM
REPORT OF ACCIDENT OR INJURY

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ DOB: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Phone No. _____

Address: _____

Date of Accident: _____ Time: _____ a.m. or p.m. (circle)

Detailed description of the accident (attach other pages as needed):

Specific location of accident:

Description of injury:

Was treatment administered and by whom? Describe treatment.

Describe the activity at the time of the accident:

Supervisor of the Activity: _____ Was supervisor a witness to the accident? _____

List the name and contact information for any witness to the accident (attach separate pages as needed): _____

Was a parent/guardian notified? _____ By whom? _____
If not, why? _____

Was Emergency Medical Service or 911 called? _____

Print name and title of staff member filing report: _____

Signature of staff member filing report: _____

Appendix F: STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORMS
(Elementary on page one, Secondary on page two)

(Insert) Elementary School Name
Parent-Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I, as Parent or Legal Guardian, acknowledge that I have read the entire contents of the Parent-Student Handbook and understand the consequences of any violations of the rules and policies of the school.

I agree to cooperate with the school in the interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook. I also understand that the school has the ultimate authority over the administration of the school and the interpretation of the school's rules and policies. Moreover, I further understand that all of the school's policies whether written or verbal are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school with or without notice.

I also hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms of the **RELEASES** outlined in the School-Sponsored Events Policy, the Participation in School Athletics or Organizations Policy, and the Use of Photos Policy.

(Print Parent/Legal Guardian Name)

(Date)

(Signature Parent/Legal Guardian)

(Print Student Name)

(Grade)

(Insert) High School Name
Parent-Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I, as Parent or Legal Guardian, acknowledge that I have read the entire contents of the Parent-Student Handbook and understand the consequences of any violations of the rules and policies of the school.

I agree to cooperate with the school in the interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook. I also understand that the school has the ultimate authority over the administration of the school and the interpretation of the school's rules and policies. Moreover, I further understand that all of the school's policies whether written or verbal are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school with or without notice.

I also hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms of the **RELEASES** outlined in the School-Sponsored Events Policy, the Participation in School Athletics or Organizations Policy, and the Use of Photos Policy.

(Print Parent/Legal Guardian Name)

(Date)

(Signature Parent/Legal Guardian)

(Print Student Name)

(Grade)

(Signature Student)

(Date)

Appendix G: PARENT COVENANT AGREEMENT SAMPLE

[SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

[SCHOOL YEAR]

We are blessed to have your family as part of [SCHOOL NAME] and are humbled by your trust in us. As a parent or guardian, you have an essential and irreplaceable role in the education of your child. **Catholic education works best** when parents and educators work together in a relationship of open communication, trust, and mutual respect. **We need you** as an essential partner to support your child while partnering with us in a Catholic community of faith. Building this community of faith is a primary mission of our school requiring a cooperative and supportive relationship with all members of its community including students and parents.

As such, this **Parent Covenant** has been developed to communicate our expectations as to how you can best partner with us in a manner reflective of our Catholic mission.

PLEASE INITIAL EACH OF THE STATEMENTS BELOW:

As a Parent or Guardian, I affirm that will:

- ___ Understand and support the Catholic mission of [SCHOOL NAME]
- ___ Read, support, and follow school policies and procedures, embracing my role in promoting a harmonious school environment.
- ___ Ensure that my child arrives on time to school every day unless there is a real emergency.
- ___ Communicate and treat all others in the school community (students, teachers, staff, other parents) with respect, professionalism, and Christian care.
- ___ Address questions and concerns at the lowest possible level, escalating to the next level when necessary.
- ___ Assume positive intentions when addressing any concerns, working through concerns in a manner that is professional and solution-oriented.
- ___ Refrain from unnecessary and negative gossip, including participation in harmful texts, chats, and social media interactions.

I understand that the school views the education of its students as a partnership between the parents and the school and that parents are required to comply with these expectations. I further understand that all enrollment and disenrollment decisions remain at all times at the discretion of the school. In addition, the school has the right to administratively withdraw a student if it determines at its discretion that the parent or student partnership is irretrievably broken.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

APPENDICES

Printed Name

Signature of Parent/Guardian #2 (if applicable)

Date

Printed Name

LIST NAMES OF ALL ENROLLED STUDENTS BELOW (WITH GRADE):