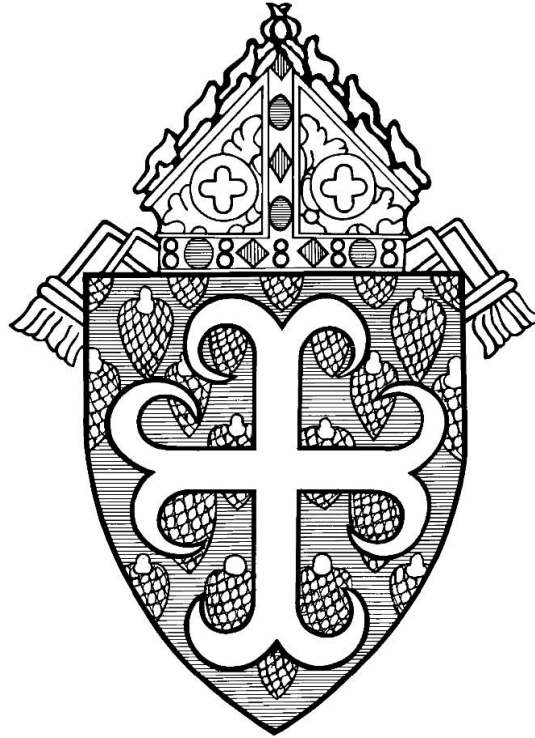


# DIOCESE OF PORTLAND



## Student Handbook

Revised August 28, 2023

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Mission Statement***

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

### ***Vision***

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

## **ADMISSION**

### ***School Admission Policy***

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

### ***Elementary School Admission***

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

1. Catholic students from the parish cluster sponsoring the school,
2. Siblings of students currently enrolled at the school,
3. Catholic students from other parish clusters in the Diocese of Portland,
4. Catholic transfer students from parishes outside the Diocese of Portland,
5. Children of alumni of Catholic schools,
6. Non-Catholic students.

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

- A. The applicant and parents should understand, accept, and be willing to support the mission and goals of the school. Parents are encouraged to explore the school, the curriculum, and program to see if it best meets their expectations for their child(ren).

- B. An objective screening and/or interview process may be applied at every grade level. The same standards of acceptance must be applied to each applicant.
- C. All students must participate in religion class.
- D. All students must attend liturgical and paraliturgical services which are a part of the curriculum.
- E. The applicant and parents should be willing to participate in programs of service sponsored by the school.
- F. The school strives to meet the academic, physical, and community needs of the student.
- G. The family agrees to financially support the school and parish.
- H. The tuition status of students transferring from other Catholic schools will be evaluated by the Principal and Pastor.
- I. Each school should have a recruitment program and accept as many students as possible.

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

### ***High School Admission***

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

- A. Pre-admission interview,
- B. Scheduled placement test,
- C. Review of the applicant's academic record, and
- D. Recommendation from the applicant's current Principal, Teacher and/or Pastor.

### ***Requirements***

At the time of registration, all new students seeking admission are evaluated based on current standardized test scores and report cards.

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

Requirements include:

- A. Verification of active parish affiliation/stewardship
  - Use of weekly envelopes or automatic deposit
- B. Health records
- C. Immunization records

- All students entering the school must have current immunizations, unless qualified for an exemption allowed by state law.
  - Documentation required for immunizations or exemption must be presented prior to acceptance.
- D. Birth certificate (original)
- E. Baptismal certificate (Catholic applicants only)
- F. Report cards
- G. Standardized test results
- H. Record of IEP or 504 Plan (must be presented at the time the application is submitted)
- I. Students applying for admission in Grades 1-8 must present a copy of the current report card and standardized test results.
- These will be reviewed to determine whether the program at the school will meet the educational needs of the students.
  - An interview with the student is part of the admission process.
- J. Testing in some academic areas may be held for new incoming students in Grades K-8.
- K. All new students will be given a trial period of not less than one semester in which to prove themselves both socially and academically.
- If during this trial period there are any problems, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at the school. The recommendation and decision of the school is final.

### ***International Students***

The registration of international students requires completion of forms from U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. Such forms should be completed in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent of Maine Catholic Schools.

### ***Scholastic Aptitude***

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

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

### ***Non-Catholic Applicants***

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

### ***Students with Disabilities***

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

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

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

### ***Notice of Non-Discrimination***

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



### ***Financial Support***

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

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

### ***Relations with Public Schools***

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

The school will file a certificate of attendance with the superintendent of each student's school administrative unit of residence, signed by school officials, showing the name, residence and attendance of the student (20-A M.R.S. §5001-A(3)(A)(2)).

### ***Age of Admission***

Maine Catholic Schools follow the provisions of the General Laws of Maine, which establish the minimum age for student enrollment in Kindergarten as at least 5 years old on October 15<sup>th</sup> of the school year (20-A M.R.S. § 5201(2)). Full acceptance may be contingent on displayed readiness on a Kindergarten entrance test.

Any program for children under 5 years of age that is located in a private school is required to be licensed as a Child Care Facility (22 M.R.S. §8301-A(A-1)(B)). All schools offer PreK programs for 4-year-olds and some schools also offer programs for 3-year-olds.

### ***Immunization of Students***

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

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

- A. The parents/guardians provide to the school written assurance that the child will be immunized within 90 days of enrolling in school or his/her first attendance in classes, whichever date is earlier. This option is available only once to each student during their school career; or

- B. The parents/guardians provide a physician's written statement each year that immunization against one or more diseases may be medically inadvisable (as defined by law/regulation); or
- C. For students with an IEP and exemption in place prior to September 1, 2021, the parents/guardians state in writing each year that immunization is contrary to their sincere religious belief or for philosophical reasons.

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

### ***Grade Openings***

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

### ***Class Size***

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

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

### ***Child Custody***

Child custody issues will be addressed by the school in compliance with interim and final custody ruling issued by a court of competent jurisdiction. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. When legal advice is required, the Office of Maine Catholic Schools will be consulted.

Be advised that if a teacher, staff member, or principal is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parent will need to pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.).

## **ATTENDANCE**

### ***Daily Attendance***

Regular attendance is expected. Responsibility for compliance with the state compulsory attendance law rests with the parents/legal guardians. The school will maintain an attendance record for each student according to the form and procedure required by state law and a record of

each student's attendance will be entered on his/her permanent record each year.

### ***Absence***

When a student is absent from school, a parent must call the office by 10:00 AM each day of the absence. If the office does not receive a call, a parent will be contacted. This policy is for the protection of the students. A student is considered absent if that student is present for less than 50% of his or her instructional day.

A planned absence must have prior approval from the Principal. A student who will be or has been absent from school or tardy should present a written statement providing the date, the reason for absence, and the signature of a parent or guardian. Such statements should be kept on file for one year or longer if, in the Principal's judgment, continued need for such records is anticipated. When a student fails to produce the required excuse, or when there is reason to question the validity of the excuse, the Principal should investigate the situation. In some cases, conferences or referral to outside entities may be helpful.

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

### ***Illness***

If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or shows symptoms, current CDC guidelines for [isolation](#) must be followed. If a student has been exposed to COVID-19, CDC guidelines for [exposure](#) must be followed.

If the student does not have COVID-19 but has another illness, he/she must stay home until symptoms have improved (including no fever or fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours) and provide the negative COVID-19 test result. Schools may be able to accept home tests if the patient and collection date can be verified. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever will not be allowed to return to school the next day.

### ***Homework Due to Vacations/Planned Absences***

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility.

Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. No assignment will be given in anticipation of the vacation. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

### ***Homework Policy Due to Illness***

When a student is absent for three or more days, a parent may call the school office to make arrangements to pick up homework assignments. Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school.

Students will be allowed one day to make up work for each day of absence due to illness. For example, a student who was absent three days should be given three school days to complete the missed work.

Arrangements for regular classroom tests missed because of an absence are to be made with the individual teachers. These tests must be taken within one week of the original test date. Due to the educational advantage of returning graded tests to students in a timely manner, some missed tests may not be made up.

### ***Tardiness***

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

### ***Releasing Students during the School Day***

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

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

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

Students needing medical appointments during school hours require a written note from the parent. Parents are required to sign out their child. If the child returns to school during the same school day, he/she must be signed back into school in the office.

### ***Releasing Students after School***

Maine Catholic Schools cannot be responsible for the safety of students once they leave school property. Maine Catholic Schools encourages families to arrange to have students picked up after school by an adult rather than allow them to walk home or to an afterschool activity. The school must be notified of all persons other than a student's parents/guardians who are authorized to transport them from school and must have written permission for students to leave school grounds unaccompanied by an adult.

### ***Chronic Absenteeism***

The State of Maine considers a student chronically absent if total excused and unexcused absences equal 10% or more of the days enrolled. Excessive absences may be cause for a student

to be retained in the current grade for another year or may require other interventions by school administration.

### ***Truancy***

A student is truant according to Maine law if:

- A. 6 years of age to completion of Grade 6: has the equivalent of 7 full days of unexcused absences or 5 consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year.
- B. End of grade 6 to age 17: has the equivalent of 10 full days of unexcused absences or 7 consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year (20-A M.R.S. §§ 5001-A, 5051-A).

If a student becomes truant, the school will develop an intervention plan.

### ***School Discipline***

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Detention***

Detention may be issued for a breach of classroom and/or school rules. Parents are provided with written notification of the detention. The day, date, and time of the detention are at the discretion of the Principal. Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, tutoring, ballgames, etc.

### ***Corporal Punishment***

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

carefully articulated discipline procedures.

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

### ***Suspension***

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

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

Students who are given an in-school suspension will be required to report to school each day and work with a substitute teacher paid for by the suspended student's parents. Students who receive an out-of-school suspension will not be allowed on campus during the time of their suspension. Students must complete all class work and tests from the days of suspension but failing grades will be recorded for this work.

### ***Expulsion***

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

The fact that a student presents serious problems in the school is not in itself sufficient reason for expulsion. The Principal should use every means available to discover the cause of the problem and should exhaust appropriate or available remedies; for example, referral to a guidance clinic, physician, or parish priest. Parents should be informed of the problem and be involved in decisions regarding referrals.

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

Students who have been expelled will not be allowed to return to the school for any reason

without prior permission from the Principal.

Students whose parents have violated the Parents as Partners agreement in this handbook may also be excluded from the school.

## **PROGRESS**

### ***Homework***

Formal home-study is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed. Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences.

Schools are encouraged to assign amounts of homework appropriate to the student's age and grade level, and, when possible, to schedule homework, tests, quizzes, and projects to allow students to have time for relaxation during weekends and school breaks. If a problem arises, the teacher should be contacted.

### ***Assessment of Student Progress***

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

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

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

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

### ***Reporting to Parents***

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

must approve all forms of report cards.

In order to assure that separated and/or divorced parents of a child enrolled in a Maine Catholic School are informed of the student's progress, and afforded the opportunity to participate in school activities, if desired, the following procedures will be implemented:

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

Maine Catholic Schools adhere to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in regard to privacy of student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. The school reserves the right to charge processing and shipping fees for copies of records.

### ***Teacher-Parent Meetings***

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

### ***Promotion and Retention***

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

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

## **GRADUATION**

### ***Elementary School***

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



Graduation from elementary school may be marked by a simple, dignified exercise that recognizes the unique value of the Christian education just completed.

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

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

### ***Religion 4-Years***

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

### ***Graduation Dates***

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

## **RECORDS**

### ***Student Records***

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

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

In general, honors and awards may be recorded on permanent records, but disciplinary actions should not be recorded to minimize the risk of improper disclosure. Academic records of students should be kept separate from disciplinary and psychological records.

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

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

manner:

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

### ***Health Records***

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

### ***Access to Student Records***

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

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

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

### ***Privacy and Security of Student Records***

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

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

Schools may not release copies of student records without the written consent of a parent/legal guardian, to any individual, agency, or organization other than to a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to a judicial order in which instance the school shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian/or student (if he/she has reached the age of maturity) of the order in advance of compliance. A Principal receiving a subpoena for school records should contact the Superintendent of Maine Catholic Schools.

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

### ***Transfer/Withdrawal Records***

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Non-Payment of Tuition***

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

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

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

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

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

If school is closed due to weather or a public health concern, parents/guardians will still be responsible for payment of tuition. The education of each student will continue with virtual/remote/e-learning. Teachers will continue to plan standards-based lessons and evaluate student work. Report cards will be distributed at the end of each grading period. If a parent/guardian cannot make the regular tuition payment, the principal or designated staff member should be notified as soon as possible to create a payment plan.

## **ACTIVITIES**

### ***Religious Activities***

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

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

### ***Social Events, Extracurricular and Co-curricular Activities***

Social events, extracurricular activities, and co-curricular activities contribute significantly to the full development of students' personalities. They should be carefully planned and sufficiently varied to fulfill this purpose.

Overnight trips for elementary school students are prohibited. Overnight trips for secondary school students require the permission of the Superintendent of Maine Catholic Schools. Social events, extracurricular activities, and co-curricular activities should be adequately supervised, adjusted to the level of maturity of the students, limited so as not to conflict with non-school activities, and maintained at a reasonable expense.

Representatives of the school staff should be present at any school-sponsored activity. Additional supervision should be provided by adults who are experienced in dealing with students and who will take an active part in the supervision. A sufficient number of police officers should be retained when it is deemed necessary for safety reasons.

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

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

### ***Student Dress***

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

## **STUDENT AND PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### ***Students with Serious Allergies***

Maine Catholic Schools recognizes that at any given time there may be students in our schools who have serious allergies. While the Maine Catholic Schools cannot provide a totally allergen-free environment, it takes reasonable steps to work with staff, students and their parents/guardians to minimize the risks of severe allergic reactions at school. Staff will be trained annually in the care of students with allergies.

Schools in the Maine Catholic Schools system have in place appropriate procedures to address student allergies. These procedures may vary from school to school, since middle and high school students can be expected to take more responsibility for managing their allergies than students in the elementary grades. In the event of an allergic reaction, the student's individual physician orders will be followed.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities to Provide:

- A. Physician documentation of the allergy,
- B. Signed medication permission forms or allergy plan to administer medication Epi-pens or other allergy medications,
- C. Information about student's allergy,
- D. Emergency contact information, and
- E. Physician contact information.

### ***Medication Administration***

If medication administration is required during the school day, a written request from the parent and a written order from a licensed health care provider are required for each medication. These must be submitted at least annually and when there are changes to the prescription. The medication must be in its original, properly labeled container. The first dose of a new medication should be taken at home.

School staff must be trained by a registered professional nurse or licensed physician in order to administer medication, with a training review and update annually.

A registered professional nurse must be responsible for overseeing medication and may clarify or decide to not allow administration if there are any issues, and will notify the student's parent/guardian, health care provider and principal. If the nurse is not available, the parent/guardian will be contacted.

A school nurse or trained school staff can administer an epinephrine autoinjector specifically prescribed to a student with an individualized health plan. A current collaborative practice agreement with a licensed physician can authorize the school nurse to administer an epinephrine autoinjector in good faith to any student experiencing anaphylaxis during school or a school-sponsored activity, and to designate trained staff to administer an epinephrine autoinjector when the nurse is not present.

Requirements for a student to be approved to possess and self-administer emergency medication of an inhaled asthma medication, an epinephrine auto-injector, or medications related to the care of insulin dependent diabetes:

- A. Written approval from student's health care provider for self-administration,
- B. Student has an Individualized Health Care Plan and Emergency Plan,
- C. Written permission from parent/guardian, and
- D. The student demonstrates ability to the school nurse to self-administer the medication.

A student may carry and self-apply FDA-approved, over the counter (OTC), topical sunscreen in oil, lotion, cream, gel, butter, paste, ointment or stick form (not aerosol or spray) in its original, labeled packaging. School staff are not required to apply sunscreen to students. A student who is unable to physically apply sunscreen may request assistance, if permitted by a parent/guardian and authorized by the school.

### ***Concussion Management Protocol***

Prior to participating in any school athletic activity, all students will be provided information including:

- A. The risk of concussion and other head injuries and the dangers associated with continuing to participate when a concussion or other head injury is suspected,
- B. The signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with concussion and other head injuries,
- C. The school's protocols for removal of the student from the activity when the student is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury, evaluation, medical clearance, and graduated school reentry protocols.

The student and his/her parent/guardian must sign a statement acknowledging that they received and read this information before the student is allowed to participate in any school athletic activity.

School personnel trained in the signs, symptoms and behaviors related to concussion or other head injury, will act in accordance with this policy when that person recognizes that a student may be exhibiting such signs, symptoms and/or behaviors:

- A. Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during school or a school athletic activity must be removed from the activity immediately and evaluated by qualified school personnel.
- B. Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury is prohibited from further participation in any school activities until he/she is evaluated by the school nurse or other school personnel trained in such evaluation, such as an athletic trainer who is able to determine if referral to a licensed health care provider is necessary.
- C. The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of the referral to a licensed health care provider for a medical evaluation for possible concussion or brain injury before the student is allowed to begin the graduated school reentry and/or graduated return to play protocol, and then full participation in learning, recess, physical education, and any school activities.
- D. No student is permitted to return to the activity or to participate in any other school activity on the day of the suspected concussion.
- E. If referral to a licensed health care provider is necessary, the student will require written medical clearance from a licensed health care provider qualified and trained in concussion management. The student is also required to complete the graduated return to school protocol.
- F. School personnel should be alert to cognitive and academic issues that may be experienced by a student who has suffered a concussion or other head injury, including but not limited to difficulty with concentration, organization, long-and-short term memory, and sensitivity to bright lights and sounds.
- G. School personnel shall accommodate a graduated school reentry protocol for return to full participation in all academic activities as appropriate, based on the recommendation of the student's concussion trained health care provider and appropriate designated school personnel (e.g., school nurse).
- H. No student is permitted to return to full participation in extra-curricular school activities until fully returned to his/her academic program.
- I. If at any time during the gradual return to school process the student exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors of concussion, the student must be removed from the activity for that day and follow the graduated school reentry protocol.

Once a referral to a health care provider has been made by the school nurse, athletic trainer, or other health services personnel, the student must receive written clearance from a health care provider licensed to diagnose a concussion who is trained in the treatment and management of concussions. The medical clearance allows a student to begin the graduated school reentry protocol.

## ***Restraint and Seclusion***

This policy, notice of which will be provided to parents/guardians of all students on an annual basis, addresses appropriate use of restraint and seclusion.

Physical restraint: a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a student to move the arms, legs, or head freely and includes physically moving a student who has not moved voluntarily.

Seclusion: The involuntary isolation or confinement of a student alone in a room or clearly defined area from which the student does not feel free to go or is physically denied exit.

Physical restraint and seclusion, as defined herein, may be used as an emergency intervention only if:

- A. The behavior of a student poses an imminent danger of serious physical injury to the student or another person,
- B. Less restrictive interventions would be ineffective in stopping imminent danger of serious physical injury to the student or another person,
- C. The physical restraint or seclusion is continuously monitored and ends immediately upon the cessation of imminent danger of serious physical injury to the student or another person, and
- D. The least amount of force necessary is used to protect the student or another person from imminent danger of serious physical injury.

Unlawful physical restraint includes:

- A. Mechanical restraint (does not include prescribed equipment used to provide greater freedom of movement or vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle),
- B. Chemical restraint (does not include student prescriptions from a qualified health professional),
- C. Physical restraint that uses pain to control, is life-threatening, restricts breathing or restricts blood flow to the brain, or
- D. Physical restraint or seclusion that is contraindicated based on Title 34-B, §3003 (rights of clients receiving mental health services) or §15002 (children's mental health care program) or the student's documented plan for disability, health care needs or medical or psychiatric condition.

Physical restraint does not include any of the following:

- A. Physical escort: the temporary, voluntary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back to induce a student to walk to a safe location.



- B. Physical prompt: a teaching technique that involves voluntary physical contact with the student and that enables the student to learn or model the physical movement necessary for the development of the desired competency.
- C. Physical contact: when the purpose of the intervention is to comfort a student and the student voluntarily accepts the contact.
- D. Protective physical interventions: used when a student's actions would be harmful to themselves or others, and involve physical contacts that serve to deflect, block, or redirect the student's action or disengage from a student's inappropriate grip, but from which the student could move freely away.

“Seclusion” does not include a timeout. "Timeout" means an intervention where a student requests or complies with an adult request for a break.

### Training Requirements

- A. All school staff and contracted providers shall receive an annual overview of this policy/procedure.
- B. Maine Catholic Schools will ensure that there are a sufficient number of administrators/designees and other staff who maintain certification in a restraint and seclusion training program approved by the Maine Department of Education. A list of certified staff shall be updated annually and maintained in the Superintendent's Office, in each school office and in the school unit's Emergency Management Plan.

### Parent/Legal Guardian Complaint Procedure

A parent/legal guardian who has a complaint concerning the implementation of this policy must submit it in writing to the Superintendent as soon as possible. The Superintendent/designee shall investigate the complaint and provide written findings to the parent/legal guardian within twenty (20) business days, if practicable. A parent/legal guardian who is dissatisfied with the result of the local complaint process may file a complaint with the Maine Department of Education. The Department of Education will review the results of the local complaint process and may initiate its own investigation at its sole discretion.

### ***Relations with Law Enforcement***

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

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

authorities when they have reason to suspect that a student or staff member may have violated a local, state or federal law.

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

### ***Questioning and Searches of Students***

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

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

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

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

### ***Surveillance Cameras***

Maine Catholic Schools recognize that attempting to maintain the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors to our school is implemented with a multifaceted approach. To the extent that modern technology provides tools to maintain safety and security, the use of video surveillance cameras may be in place in the school and on school property. Cameras will not be permitted in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

### ***Research and Surveys***

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

### ***Smoking and Vaping***

Smoking and vaping of any type is not allowed on campus. This includes the use of e-cigarettes. Cigars, cigarettes, pipes, tobacco of any type, marijuana, e-cigarettes, or vapors are not permitted on campus. E-cigarettes are forbidden on school property.

### ***Student Drug and Alcohol Use***

In order to promote the highest possible standards of learning, as well as the physical, social and emotional well-being of students, this policy is designed to: aid students in abstaining from the unlawful use of alcohol and drugs; provide for early intervention when use is detected; and provide disciplinary action when necessary. Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Any school staff member who has reason to suspect that a student has violated this policy is expected to report the incident to an appropriate administrator immediately.

#### **A. Prevention**

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

#### **B. Rules and Sanctions**

Students are prohibited from consuming, possessing, furnishing, selling, receiving, buying, manufacturing or being under the influence of prohibited substances before, during and after school hours, at school, in any school building, on any school premises, in any school-owned vehicle or in any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities, off school property at any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function (such as a field trip or athletic event) where students are under the jurisdiction of the school unit, or at any time or place if the conduct directly interferes with the operation, discipline or welfare of the schools. The term “prohibited substance” shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Alcohol,
2. Scheduled drugs (as defined in 17-A MRSA § 1101),
3. Controlled substances (as defined in the federal Controlled Substances Act (21 USC § 812),
4. Any performance-enhancing substance listed on the Maine Department of Health and Human Services’ banned substances list and any other substance which is illegal in Maine or the use of which is illegal for minors,
5. Prescription drugs not prescribed for the student,

6. Any substance which can affect or change a student's mental, physical or behavior pattern, including but not limited to volatile materials such as glue, paint or aerosols (when possessed for the purpose of inhalation),
7. Paraphernalia – implements used for distribution or consumption of a prohibited substance, or
8. Any look-alike drug or substance that is described as or is purported to be a prohibited substance defined in this section.

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

### ***Weapons, Violence and School Safety***

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

- A. Possession and/or use of articles commonly used or designed to inflict bodily harm or any facsimile thereof and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce, or harass another person. Examples of such articles include but are not limited to firearms, BB guns, pellet guns, any other kind of gun, ammunition, explosives, crossbows, brass knuckles, switchblades, knives, chains, clubs, throwing stars, and nunchucks,
- B. Use of any object, although not necessarily designed to be a weapon, to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce, or harass another person. Examples of such objects include but are not limited to bats, belts, picks, pencils, compasses, articles capable of ignition (e.g., matches, lighters), files, tools of any sort and replicas of weapons (including toys),
- C. Violent, threatening, or menacing behavior, including but not limited to fighting, assault and/or battery, taking hostages, threats to commit violence against persons or property (e.g., verbal or written death threats, threats of bodily harm, bomb threats), stalking, or blocking access to school property or facilities,
- D. Verbal or written statements (including those made on or through a computer or other electronic device) which threaten, intimidate, or harass others, which tend to incite violence and/or disrupt the school program, blackmail, extortion, or demands for money or property,
- E. Willful and malicious damage to school or personal property,
- F. Stealing or attempting to steal school or personal property,
- G. Lewd, indecent, or obscene acts or expressions of any kind,
- H. Use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco,
- I. Violations of state or federal laws, and

- J. Any other conduct that may be harmful to persons or property.

### ***Bomb Threats***

Maine Catholic Schools recognizes that bomb threats are a significant concern to our schools. Whether real and carried out or intended as a prank or for some other purpose, a bomb threat represents a potential danger to the safety and welfare of students and staff and to the integrity of school property. Bomb threats disrupt the instructional program and learning environment and also place significant demands on school financial resources and public safety services. These effects occur even when such threats prove to be false. Any bomb threat will be regarded as an extremely serious matter and treated accordingly. The Superintendent in consultation with school administration will react promptly and appropriately to information concerning bomb threats and to initiate or recommend suitable disciplinary action.

### ***Bullying***

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

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

- A. Physically harms a student and/or damages a student's property, places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm and/or damage to his/her property, and/or disrupts the instructional program or orderly operation of the school, or
- B. Is so severe that it creates a hostile educational environment for the student who is bullied and/or interferes with the student's academic performance or ability to meaningfully participate in school activities.
- C. "Bullying" includes cyberbullying. "Cyberbullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device, including, but not limited to, a computer, telephone, cellular telephone, text messaging device and personal digital assistant.

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

Any bullying or suspected bullying should be reported to school personnel. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of bullying are prohibited. School staff

shall investigate and respond to all allegations of bullying and, if bullying is confirmed, appropriate consequences will be imposed.

### ***Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students***

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

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

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

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

### ***Hazing***

Hazing of any type will not be tolerated. Actions of hazing may result in suspension and/or expulsion.

### ***Cheating***

Cheating of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. A student athlete or student involved in extra-curricular activities who is involved in cheating will also be unable to participate in sports/extra-curricular competition.

### ***Gifts***

Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. This gesture only creates hurt feelings among other students.

Invitations for slumber parties or birthday parties should be sent to the homes of students via the U.S. Mail unless an invitation is being given to every student in the entire grade.

### ***Telephone***

A school telephone can only be used in case of emergency with permission from school staff. Forgotten homework, athletic equipment, etc. do not constitute emergencies. Students should NEVER use the teacher's cell phone to make a telephone call.

### ***School Safety***

Maine Catholic Schools attempt to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (including in jest or online) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The Principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

In the event that the school suspects danger to a student or the school community, the school reserves the right to call the police.

### ***School Property***

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, computer, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full cost of repairs and labor or replacement. Textbooks used by the student must have a proper book cover. No writing in textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts.

### ***Off-Campus Conduct***

School administration reserves the right to discipline students for off-campus behavior during the school day that is not in line with behavior expectations of its students. This off-campus behavior includes, but is not limited to, cyber-bullying.

### ***Online Instruction Behavior Guidelines***

In the event that instruction should be online, students should:

- A. Be respectful of the teacher and other students,
- B. Use their correct names,
- C. Be seated in a chair or at a desk – not in bed,
- D. Not use cell phones during instruction,
- E. Be dressed appropriately – no pajamas,
- F. Understand that the session will be recorded,
- G. Never share the log-in information,

- H. Not be eating during instruction,
- I. Pets should not be in the learning session, and
- J. Due to confidentiality guidelines, only the student enrolled in the class should be present in the session.

Students involved in inappropriate online behavior may be separated from the session and not allowed to return until a conference has been held with the student and the parent/guardian.

### ***Student Computer and Internet Use***

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

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

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

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

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

#### **A. Acceptable Use**

1. The schools’ computers, network and Internet services are provided for educational purposes and research consistent with the schools’ educational mission, curriculum, and instructional goals.



2. Students must comply with all policies, school rules and expectations concerning student conduct and communications when using school computers, whether on or off school property.
3. Students must also comply with all specific instructions from school staff and volunteers when using the school's computers.

## B. Prohibited Uses

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

1. Accessing or Communicating Inappropriate Materials – Students may not access, submit, post, publish, forward, download, scan or display defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, bullying/cyberbullying and/or illegal materials or messages.
2. Illegal Activities – Students may not use computers, network, and Internet services for any illegal activity or in violation of any policy, procedure, or school rules. Maine Catholic Schools assume no responsibility for illegal activities of students while using school computers.
3. Violating Copyrights or Software Licenses – Students may not copy, download or share any type of copyrighted materials (including music or films) without the owner's permission, or copy or download software without the express authorization of the Principal or designee. Unauthorized copying of software is illegal and may subject the copier to substantial civil and criminal penalties. The school assumes no responsibility for copyright or licensing violations by students.
4. Plagiarism – Students may not represent as their own work any materials obtained on the Internet (such as term papers, articles, music, etc.). When Internet sources are used in student work, the author, publisher, and web site must be identified. Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications such as ChatGPT can only be used if approved by the teacher for an assignment.
5. Use for Non-School-Related Purposes - Using computers, network, and Internet services of the Maine Catholic Schools for any personal reasons not connected with the educational program or school assignments is prohibited.
6. Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access – Students may not share passwords, use other users' passwords, access or use other users' accounts, or attempt to circumvent network security systems.
7. Malicious Use/Vandalism-Students may not engage in any malicious use, disruption or harm to the school unit's computers, network, and Internet services, including but not limited to hacking activities and creation/uploading of computer viruses.
8. Avoiding School Filters – Students may not attempt to use any software, utilities, or other means to access Internet sites or content blocked by the school filters.
9. Unauthorized Access to Blogs/Social Networking Sites, Etc. – Students may not use blogs, social networking sites, etc., in a manner that would be in violation of any school policy or rule.

C. Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages

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

D. Student Security

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

E. System Security

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

F. Additional Rules for Computers Issued to Students

Computers are loaned to students as an educational tool and may only be used for purposes specifically authorized by school staff.

1. Parents/guardians are required to attend an informational meeting before a student is allowed to take the computer home.
2. Students and their families are responsible for the proper care of school-issued computers at all times, whether on or off school property, including costs associated with repairing or replacing the computer. Maine Catholic Schools offer a protection program for parents/guardians to cover replacement costs and/or repair costs for damages not covered by the computer warranty. Families that choose not to participate in the protection program should be aware that they are responsible for any costs associated with loss, theft or damage to a computer issued to their child.
3. If a computer is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the school principal immediately. If a computer is stolen, a report should be made to the local police and the building administrator immediately.
4. These rules concerning computer and Internet use apply to the use of the computer at any time or place, on or off school property. Students are responsible for obeying any additional rules concerning the care of the computer issued by school staff.
5. Violation of the rules governing the use of the computer, or any careless use of a computer, may result in a student's computer being confiscated and/or a student only being allowed to use the computer under the direct supervision of school staff. The student will also be subject to disciplinary action for any violations of the rules.

6. Parents/guardians will be informed of their child's login password. Parents/guardians are responsible for supervising their child's use of the laptop and Internet access when in use at home.
7. The computer may only be used by the student to whom it is assigned.
8. Computers must be returned in acceptable working order at the end of the year or whenever requested by school staff.

### ***Student Use of Cell Phones and Electronic Equipment***

Students are prohibited from using privately-owned electronic devices, including but not limited to cellular telephones, Blackberries, iPhones, handheld computers, MP3 players and electronic games during classes, study halls, assemblies, and other school activities. The electronic device of any student not following this policy will be taken away and sent to the office. Items taken away from students will be returned to the parent/guardian. The administration reserves the right to search the contents of a confiscated device.

- A. During classes and school activities, all such devices must be turned off.
- B. The only exception to this rule is when a teacher specifically authorizes students to use such a personal electronic device for a specific purpose (such as entering an assignment in a PDA). If a teacher plans a lesson with student cell phones, the principal should be notified that cell phones will be used for academic purposes on a particular day/period. Teacher lesson plans should also include cell phone assisted instruction. Students who do not possess a cell phone during such lessons will not be academically penalized.
- C. Students should at no time be involved in texting during the course of the school day.
- D. Students may use electronic devices on field trips and during extracurricular activities only if authorized by the staff member in charge.
- E. The use of cameras in any type of electronic device is strictly prohibited in locker rooms, restrooms, and classrooms.
- F. In other locations where students are allowed to use electronic devices, students are required to obtain permission before taking a photograph or video of any individual. Students must also obtain permission from any individual appearing in a photograph or video prior to posting on any social networking site or other Internet site such as YouTube.
- G. Any use of cellular telephones and other electronic devices that violates any policy/procedure of the Maine Catholic Schools or any school rule is strictly prohibited. In addition, accessing, viewing, posting, forwarding, downloading, or displaying any materials that are defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit or suggestive ("sexting"), threatening, discriminatory, harassing and/or illegal is prohibited. Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion. In accordance with the law, the local police department will be notified.

- H. Student cellular telephones and other electronic devices may be subject to search if there is reasonable suspicion that a student is violating applicable policies/procedures and/or school rules.
- I. Students violating these rules will be subject to discipline, which may include:
  - 1. Not being allowed to bring electronic devices to school.
  - 2. Sanctions ranging from detention to expulsion from school depending upon the nature of the offense and the student's disciplinary record.

The school is not responsible for loss or damage to any items brought to school by a student. This includes, but is not limited to, all electronic devices.

### ***E-Reader Acceptable Use Policy***

E-book readers, such as Amazon's Kindle, Barnes & Noble's Nook, and Apple's iPad, may be used in school in accordance with the following policy. A student who violates any portion of the e-Reader Acceptable Use Policy may immediately lose the privilege to use their e-reader at school for a length of time commensurate with the nature of the violation.

- A. All e-readers must be registered with the school IT Specialist and accompanied by the Acceptable Use Agreement Form signed both by the parents and the student.
- B. E-readers are to be used only for the reading of school approved material (books, etc.) and not for other purposes such as communication, entertainment, music, gaming, etc.
- C. All material on the e-reader must comply with the spirit and policies of Maine Catholic Schools. Please refer to the Parent-Student Handbook for more details.
- D. All e-readers must have cellular and network capabilities disabled (turned off) while the device is at school.
- E. E-readers must be used at appropriate times in accordance with teacher instructions. The e-reader must not be a distraction for the student or those around him/her nor be a source of any classroom disruption.
- F. E-readers are not to be used during lunch, middle-school breaks, or during playground/recess time or during carpool.
- G. The student is responsible for knowing how to use their e-reader properly and effectively and this should not be a burden for the teachers.

### ***Social Media***

Parents are cautioned to be aware of the online sites visited by their children, knowing that often predators can access the home via a computer.

To protect the confidentiality rights of all students, parents are forbidden from posting or electronically transmitting photographs taken at school sponsored events that include the images of students other than their own on any social media or internet site.

Images, captions, or comments posted on a student or parent's social media account or other internet site that depict the school, the faculty, other students, other parents, or the parish in a defamatory way may result in disciplinary action.

No parent may open a social media or other internet account under the name of the school or a particular grade or school organization. The only official social media accounts are the ones created and monitored by the school, the parish, and the diocese. A parent who chooses to create such an account may subject his/her child(ren) to separation from the school.

### ***Parent Volunteers***

All individuals who volunteer in the school must complete the volunteer application form and will be asked to complete the Diocesan mandated background check.

All volunteers are expected to dress appropriately. Clothing should be modest and neat.

The main responsibility of a volunteer is to assist the administration or teachers. For this reason, pre-school siblings are not allowed to accompany parent volunteers to school for meetings, to serve lunches, to assist with class parties, or to decorate bulletin boards.

### ***Parents As Partners***

As partners in the educational process at Maine Catholic Schools, we ask parents to:

- A. Set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
  1. Gets to bed early on school nights,
  2. Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day,
  3. Is dressed according to the school dress code,
  4. Completes assignments on time,
  5. Has lunch money or nutritional sack lunch every day, and
  6. Takes prescribed medications,
- B. Actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences,
- C. See that the student pays for any damage to schoolbooks or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student,
- D. Notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy,
- E. Notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers,
- F. Meet all financial obligations to the school,
- G. Inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health,
- H. Complete and return to school any requested information promptly,

- I. Read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education,
- J. Support the religious and educational goals of the school,
- K. Encourage Mass attendance and teach the Catholic faith by word and example,
- L. Support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school,
- M. Treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems, and
- N. Refrain from posting negative comments about students, teachers, or the administration on any social media, text messaging groups, or other online sites.

In an e-learning environment, the daily support of a parent/guardian is critical to providing students with continued quality education through e-learning. Specific guidelines will be provided to parents/guardians with detailed information regarding the e-learning schedule.

### ***Parent's Role in Education***

Maine Catholic Schools consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life--- physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of a Catholic school involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter a partnership with us, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years, your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential.

It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships. Speaking negatively about a child's teacher at home will only create an attitude of distrust toward the teacher, the school, and the parent.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, it is boundaries and limits which provide a young person with both guidance and

security.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned (student grades are earned not given by teachers) and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. Parents are encouraged to let their child experience a logical consequence for an inappropriate action or behavior. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the person God created them to be.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

### ***Purpose***

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

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

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

### ***Procedure***

#### **Step 1:**

Teacher/Parent

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

#### **Step 2:**

Principal/Parent

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

#### **Step 3:**

Principal/Parent/Teacher

If the parent/grievant is not satisfied with the results of the Step 2 Procedure, he/she may proceed to Step 3. The parent/grievant shall prepare a written statement, setting forth in detail the basis for the complaint. The Principal shall arrange, within fifteen (15) days, a formal meeting with all parties, at which time another effort will be made for equitable resolution of the grievance.

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

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

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

Step 4:  
Pastor/Principal/Teacher/Parent and Student

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

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

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

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

Step 5:  
Superintendent/Pastor/Principal/Teacher/Parent and Student

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

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

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



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

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

### **RIGHT TO AMEND**

The Office of Maine Catholic Schools reserves the right to amend this handbook. Updated handbooks will be made available to parents. Any issue not covered in this Parent/Student Handbook is addressed on an individual basis.