
**The Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Phoenix
Catholic Schools Office Policies and Procedures**

Policy 3-1 Catholic Schools

The following policies and procedures are established by the Diocese to assist the Superintendent of Schools (in the case of a Diocesan School), the Pastor (in the case of a Parish School) and Principals and Preschool Directors in the administration of Catholic schools in the Diocese.

Policy 3-1.2 CURRICULUM

3-1.2.01 ACCREDITATION

ALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS MUST BE ACCREDITED BY THE WESTERN CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

The purpose of accreditation is to confirm that the professional educational standards of the school meet applicable guidelines. The accreditation process is intended to promote continuous school improvement.

3-1.2.02 LICENSING OF PRESCHOOLS AND EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS

ALL PRESCHOOLS AND EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS MUST BE LICENSED BY THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES OFFICE OF CHILD CARE LICENSURE.

3-1.2.03 SCHOOL CALENDAR AND HOURS OF INSTRUCTION

THE DIOCESAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE WILL ISSUE A GENERAL SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR ALL PARISH SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE. SCHOOLS MUST SUBMIT THEIR ANNUAL CALENDAR TO THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE FOR APPROVAL.

A. Length of School Year and Hours of Operation

All schools shall follow the State of Arizona regulations for the minimum number of instructional days that students are required to be in school, and for the minimum number of hours of instruction that are required in a school day. Schools are required to be in session for a minimum of 180 instructional days.

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1. The minimum hour requirement (for hours of instruction, as mandated by the State of Arizona) is exclusive of lunch and time spent teaching religion for elementary and middle level students, and is exclusive of lunch for those at the secondary level.
2. For the purpose of staff development, a condensed school day of at least four hours is allowed.
3. Preschool hours are determined by the local school.

B. In-Service Days

The Diocese shall schedule certain days on the annual calendar for Diocesan in-service. All teachers and administrative staff of Diocesan Schools and Parish Schools are expected to participate in those in-service sessions. Principals/Preschool Directors may schedule additional, local in-service days for their staff, if necessary. Parents are to be notified, in advance, when Diocesan and local in-service days are to be held.

C. Full and Half-day Attendance

A student must be in class for at least two hours to be considered in attendance for one-half day. A student must be in class at least four hours (PK-8) or four class periods (9-12) to be considered in attendance for one full day. A full day in school shall meet the minimum clock hour requirements of the Arizona Department of Education.

3-1.2.04 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

ALL SCHOOLS WILL FOLLOW THE REQUIREMENTS REGARDING SPECIFIC COURSES, TIME ALLOTMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS SET BY THE DIOCESAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE, THE STATE OF ARIZONA, AND THE WESTERN CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

A. Philosophy

In collaboration with the student's family, each school shall provide an environment permeated by the Gospel, which promotes total human formation in Catholic values and traditions, faith and moral perspectives, academic development, personal responsibility and service.

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B. Instructional Program

A planned instructional program will lead to discovering and developing the abilities and talents of each student. Instruction is intended to enable each student to achieve the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Certain Diocesan Schools or Parish Schools may not be able to provide instruction to students with disabilities.

C. Instructional Objectives

The instructional objectives of each school shall be consistent with the Diocesan curriculum standards, and shall be based on the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, physical and learning needs of the student.

D. Textbook Selection

The Catholic Schools Office will establish, direct and coordinate the process of textbook selection to be used in all schools. The Principal/Preschool Director, in consultation with the faculty, shall select textbooks for use in the school from the approved Diocesan list. All schools shall submit a list of textbooks annually to the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office.

E. Material Selection Policy

Diocesan Schools and Parish Schools, in their role of supporting parents as primary educators of their children, are committed to mature and appropriate literary study while maintaining the dignity of each and every person created in the image and likeness of God. All books or other reading materials that are selected for use by Diocesan Schools and Parish Schools are to be consistent with the Diocesan curriculum.

While theological truths are not relegated solely to theology class or campus ministry alone, the truths of the faith permeate all subject matter and all aspects of the school's life. In light of these truths, it must be noted that some books or other reading materials that are selected for use by Diocesan Schools and Parish Schools may contain controversial language and subject matter. Extra care is taken to ensure that these truths are upheld and that human sexuality not be depersonalized, trivialized or viewed as anything less than the sacred gift of God that it is.

While encouraging intellectual growth through exposure to fine literature, Diocesan Schools and Parish Schools must continually (a) support and maintain the family's positive atmosphere of love, virtue and respect for the gifts of God, in particular the gift of life; (b) promote the ideal of chaste love that is called for in the Gospel and

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(c) aid and protect children as they seek to understand and discover their own particular vocation in life.¹

Diocesan Schools and Parish Schools must support their teachers in their work to convey messages that are consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Diocesan Schools and Parish Schools should select literature that supports the positive practice of chastity as the “successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being.” As believers, we affirm this to be fully attainable and a motive for joy experienced in the sacramental life on which the Catholic school rests.²

As in all subjects, the spiritual and moral dimensions must always be considered in the study of literary works, to allow for the formation of a right conscience. The formation of conscience requires being enlightened about the truth and God's plan and must not be confused with a vague subjective feeling or with personal opinion.³

F. School Literature Core Courses

Process for selection of course assigned literature:

In order to add a book or other reading materials to the curriculum as course assigned literature, a Diocesan School or Parish School must consider the following:

1. What students (in which grade) are going to read the materials?
2. What is the literary and curricular value to the students of the materials in question?
3. What material therein might be objectionable?
4. How does this material support Catholic identity and values?
 - a. How does this material support and maintain the family's positive atmosphere of life, virtue and respect for the gifts of God, in particular the gift of life? If no, how would it be related to Catholic identity and values?

¹ Pontifical Council for the Family *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_08121995_human-sexuality_en.html, 22.

² Ibid, 4.

³ Ibid 94-95.

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- b. Does this material ensure the maintenance of the ideal of chaste love called for in the Gospel? If no, how would it be related?
- c. How does this material assist students as they seek to understand and discover their own particular vocation in life?

G. School Library

Print and non-print materials will be evaluated by the following criteria as they apply. Materials should:

1. Support, and be consistent with, the philosophy and goals as stated in the Diocese of Phoenix Catholic Schools' Mission Statement.
2. Support the curricula of the Diocese of Phoenix.
3. Provide for the special interests, leisure reading and global awareness of the Diocese of Phoenix students.
4. Represent both historical and up-to-date information.
5. Have aesthetic, literary, social, and/or spiritual value in alignment with the Diocese of Phoenix standards.
6. Be appropriate for the age, emotional development, ability level, and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected.
7. Be created by competent and qualified authors and producers.
8. Realistically represent our pluralistic society.
9. Have a physical format and appearance suitable for their intended use.
10. Be of acceptable technical quality with adequate documentation (this applies to software and AV materials).

The process of library selection

1. Assess existing collection to determine areas that need to be improved to meet the Diocese of Phoenix curricula and other needs.
2. Consult reputable professionally prepared selection tools.

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3. Solicit recommendations from faculty, staff, and students.
4. Accept gifts with the understanding that only those materials which meet regular selection criteria will be added to the collection.
5. As new topics relevant to the current curricula or the current world arise, an effort is made to purchase appropriate materials.

Criteria for removal of materials from the collection

1. Contain inaccurate or outdated information.
2. Are no longer useful for curricular support or recreational reading.
3. Have not circulated for a number of years.
4. Are in poor physical condition.

Instructional/Learning/Media/Technology Center

1. Each school shall organize a coordinated instructional media program of library, technology and instructional materials. The media center coordinator will select appropriate materials under the supervision of the Principal/Preschool Director.
2. Schools will comply with all copyright laws.
3. Schools will develop and use an internet use agreement.
4. Schools will develop a school technology plan and update it every three years. Plans shall be submitted to the Catholic Schools Office for approval.
5. Schools that choose to use commercial videos or technology programs will subscribe to the appropriate licensing agreement for such use.
6. Media and technology used in the classroom must have an educational purpose related to the instructional program and be approved by the administrator. Material with sensitive or mature content used for instructional purposes shall require written parental permission prior to student viewing. PG-13 and R rated material are not appropriate for viewing in the classroom school setting.

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7. School administrators will establish implementation procedures for teacher/student permission for the use of media and technology programs for instruction or in the extended day programs.

H. Federal/State Program Materials

Materials placed in the schools through federal or state programs are the property of the local school district. An inventory of the materials is to be maintained in the school office or library. The materials will be used and maintained according to federal and state regulations.

3-1.2.05 CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

**ALL SCHOOLS FOLLOW CURRICULUM GUIDELINES DEVELOPED BY THE
DIOCESAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE.**

A. Preschool Course of Instruction

1. The basic preschool program shall include: religion, language and literacy, mathematics, personal-social development, social studies, media-art, music, science and sensory-motor development.
2. The basic pre-kindergarten program shall include: religion, communication and language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, art, physical education, music and rhythm, and technology education.
3. The underlying instructional strategy in preschool and pre-kindergarten programs shall be the use of organized and free-play activities that are intended to provide opportunities for the child to interact, explore and relate successfully in his/her environment.

B. Elementary School Course of Instruction

The basic elementary school program (grades kindergarten through eight) shall include religion, language arts (including reading, writing, spelling and handwriting), social studies, mathematics, science, fine arts, technology education, physical education, health, safety, and world languages.

C. High Course of Instruction

1. Each Diocesan School shall have a Curriculum Committee comprised of teachers and administrators whose function shall be to assist and advise the

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Principal in maintaining a quality and balanced curriculum that adheres to the broad minimum standards set by the Catholic Schools Office, the State of Arizona, and the Western Catholic Educational Association.

2. The high school curriculum shall include a four-year program for religious instruction that adheres to the Diocese's Theology Curriculum Standards.
3. Each high school will establish a sequentially developed four-year Campus Ministry Program that is adapted to the intellectual, moral, spiritual and emotional growth of high school students. These programs will include worship, ministry, and service components.

D. Catholic Human Development Program

All Diocesan Schools and Parish Schools shall have a Catholic Sexuality Program that is approved by the Diocese. These programs help students build self-esteem, improve relationships with family and peers, better understand the gift of sexuality, cherish and practice commitment and develop a sense of social justice and responsibility.

E. Homework

Homework is an integral part of the school's instructional program. It is intended to reinforce learning and to foster habits of independent study. While students' ability and concentration will vary, general minimum suggested time allotments for homework in schools are as follows:

Grades K – 3	15 to 30 minutes per day
Grades 4 – 6	30 to 60 minutes per day
Grades 7 – 8	60 to 90 minutes per day

The amount of time that high school students spend on homework will depend on the course of study being pursued.

F. Summer School

All summer school programs must have the prior authorization of the Principal/Preschool Director and the Pastor (in the case of a Parish School) or the Superintendent of Schools (in the case of a Diocesan School).

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3-1.2.06 CO-CURRICULAR ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

ALL SCHOOLS SHALL OFFER APPROPRIATE CO-CURRICULAR ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THEIR STUDENTS. ALL CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES WILL BE CORRELATED WITH THE COURSE OF STUDIES AND DIRECTED BY THE SAME GENERAL OBJECTIVES. ALL CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE MUST MEET THE MINIMUM STANDARDS SET BY THE ARIZONA INTERSCHOLASTIC ASSOCIATION.

A. Speakers

Teachers may not invite a speaker to interact with a class without the approval of the Principal/Preschool Director. Speakers from outside of the Diocese must be approved in advance by the Superintendent of Schools.

B. Off-Campus Trips

The Catholic Schools Office recognizes the importance and value of off-campus trips for educational field study, and encourages visits to places of cultural or educational significance to further enrich the lessons of the classroom. Off-campus trips consist of field trips during normal school hours on a single school day or evenings and weekends, trips out of state or to a foreign country, or athletic or extracurricular trips.

All out-of-state trips or trips to foreign countries must have the prior written approval of the Catholic Schools Office.

Each off-campus trip must be carefully planned to include:

1. Signed and dated permission slips and/or written releases from the parent(s) or guardian(s) of each child, using only the official off-campus permission form. (Off-Campus Permission Form that includes permission for medical treatment or Out of State, Out of Country and Airline Flying permission form (Appendices G.1; G.2; G.3; G.4; G.5). A school may accept original or faxed copy of these signed forms. A school may not accept a phone call as permission for students to attend off-campus trips. Permission must be given in writing. Schools must take all original signed permission forms on the field trip. A copy of all signed permission forms should also be kept in the school office for one year. Any preschool or prekindergarten field trips must comply with the directives of the State of Arizona.

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2. Adequate adult supervision: All adults accompanying students on any off-campus trip as chaperones or drivers or in any other capacity must (a) have completed and must be current in their Safe Environment training, (b) must have signed the Code of Conduct, and (c) must have completed an adult liability waiver (Appendix G.4).
3. All forms of transportation used in connection with any off-campus trip must meet the Diocesan Transportation Policy. All drivers (except bus drivers, or chartered bus drivers) must complete the driver's form. A fire extinguisher must be present in each school-owned bus.
4. All vehicles used in connection with any off-campus trip must contain a working cell phone.
5. If more than one vehicle is used for an off-campus trip, the Diocesan School or Parish School must maintain a list of students that are in each vehicle.
6. All vehicles used in connection with any off-campus trip must contain a first aid kit.
7. If any student on the off-campus trip requires medication, the organizer of the trip shall be responsible for transporting that medication, along with appropriate documentation.

C. Student Council

Each school will have a Student Council to develop the leadership potential of the students.

D. School Publications

The Principal/Preschool Director shall have the ultimate responsibility for supervision of students involved in any school publications, and shall have the final right to approve any material contained in a school publication. Schools may choose to publish a school newspaper and/or yearbook under the supervision of a moderator.

E. Athletics

1. Eligibility

A student must be enrolled as a full-time student in a Parish School or a Diocesan School in order to be eligible to participate in any athletic contests or extracurricular programs on behalf of the Parish School or Diocesan School.

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2. Elementary School – Scheduling and Code of Conduct

Parish Schools shall participate in the Catholic Youth Athletic Association (CYAA). Parish Schools shall schedule their athletic contests in conjunction with and according to the processes developed by the CYAA and local schools. If a Parish School engages in an athletic contest that is not affiliated with CYAA, the school Principal and/or Athletic Director shall schedule that contest. Parish Schools shall abide by and shall enforce the CYAA Code of Conduct, which shall govern all students, coaches, athletic directors and parents/families and others who are involved in CYAA school athletics. Each school shall publish an athletic guide that includes a Code of Conduct.

3. High School – Scheduling and Code of Conduct

High Schools shall be responsible for scheduling their athletic contests. High Schools shall develop Codes of Conduct for all students, coaches, athletic directors, and parents/families involved in school athletics, with attention to the Diocese's Catholic Mission Statement and the Arizona Interscholastic Association (A.I.A.) guidelines and rules. High Schools shall be responsible for complying with that Statement and those guidelines and rules.

4. All coaches, whether paid or volunteer, must meet all Diocesan guidelines.

F. Other Co-Curricular Enrichment Activities

The Principal/Preschool Director shall be responsible for the supervision and final approval of all co-curricular enrichment activities. The Principal/Preschool Director may share this responsibility with a faculty moderator.

G. Sunday Activities

The celebration of the Lord's Day and His Eucharist on Sunday is at the heart of the Church's life. (CCC 2177) It is a day for the whole parish community's central act of worship, through which Christ unites the faithful to himself and to one another in his perfect sacrifice of praise. (NDC, p. 128, 3b)

1. The parish is the primary Eucharistic worshipping community. Parish Schools and Diocesan Schools shall not hold any activities (such as Mass or Communion breakfasts) that conflict with any parish Sunday liturgies.

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2. Parish Schools and Diocesan Schools shall not permit any school-related athletic activities on any Sunday during the school year, including but not limited to athletic contests, practices, chalk talk, or film review. (AIA Rule 14.2.1)
3. Parish Schools and Diocesan Schools shall not permit any school-related athletic activities (including but not limited to athletic contests, practices, chalk talk, or film review) or any school-related social activities (including but not limited to dances, plays, or musicals) during the Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday).

3-1.2.07 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

EACH SCHOOL WILL PROVIDE A GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM.

A. Elementary School Guidelines

Each Parish School will make arrangements to have a counselor available when appropriate. Schools are also encouraged to have an organized guidance program which assists students in strengthening learning skills, in relating the spirit of ministry to self and others, and in establishing good mental health practices. Schools will also have referral directives for encouraging a parent or guardian to seek outside assistance for a student when necessary.

B. High Schools Guidelines

Each Diocesan School will have a defined guidance program that assists students in developing a sense of self-awareness with respect to study and interpersonal skills, aptitudes and interests; in acquiring decisions and goal-setting skills needed to further their education and career growth; in demonstrating good mental health practices; and in learning to share with others their spirituality derived from Catholic tradition, talents and time. Schools will have referral directives for encouraging a parent or guardian to seek outside assistance for a student when necessary.

3-1.2.08 STUDENT ASSESSMENT- GENERAL ASSESSMENT

STUDENT PROGRESS SHALL BE ASSESSED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. ACCEPTABLE MODES OF ASSESSMENT SHALL INCLUDE, BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO, WRITTEN TESTING, ORAL PERFORMANCE TESTING, OBSERVATION, CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE, AND COOPERATIVE GROUP TESTING.

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A. Achievement Tests

The Diocesan Catholic Schools Office is responsible for approving and monitoring a comprehensive testing program in all elementary and high schools. Each elementary school shall annually administer the designated achievement tests according to the schedule established by the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office. Each school is responsible for ordering tests, providing teacher in-service regarding test administration, maintaining test security, recording, utilizing test scores for instructional improvement, and reporting test results to parents.

B. Placement/Entrance Exams

Tests may be given to students that are entering a school to determine whether the school can provide an appropriate program for the student, to diagnose needs, and to place the student in the appropriate grade or classes.

3-1.2.09 STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO

ALL SCHOOLS MUST MAINTAIN STUDENT-TEACHER RATIOS AT LEVELS THAT WILL SUPPORT EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION.

Elementary Schools that average 35 or more students per class should be monitored to ensure that the general educational program is not compromised. The number of students in any single classroom shall not exceed 35 without prior approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

3-1.2.10 RETENTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RECORDS

All Diocesan Schools and Parish Schools must retain the following school records in fireproof lockable containers on campus for the following periods of time:

- A. Permanent Student Records, including personal identifying information such as name, student identification number, transcript of final grades, summary of attendance and standardized test scores, must be kept permanently.
- B. Teacher lesson plans, school registers, student sign in/out logs, and excused absence reports must be kept for five (5) years.
- C. Grade records must be kept for two (2) years after the grades are transferred to the Permanent Student Record.

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- D. Standardized test score sheets must be kept for three (3) years after the scores are transferred to the student permanent record.
- E. Student activities records, including extracurricular activities, awards, recommendations and other related records must be kept for four (4) years after the fiscal year of last attendance.
- F. Discipline records must be kept for five (5) years.
- G. Child abuse reports to Child Protective Services and/or the police must be kept for two (2) years after student's 18th birthday. These reports follow the student and are sent to transferring school confidentially, they are not part of the permanent record.
- H. Professional counseling and working records must be kept for four (4) years after the fiscal year of last attendance.
- I. Access and release of records must be kept for four (4) years after the fiscal year of last attendance.
- J. Pesticide notification records must be kept for two (2) years after being posted.
- K. Health records, including basic identifying data, general medical history, medical reports, vision and hearing tests, student accident reports, and other related records (not including immunization records), must be kept for three (3) years after the fiscal year of last attendance.
- L. Immunization records (card specified by Department of Health Services) must be kept permanently.
- M. Anecdotal records must be kept for four (4) years after the fiscal year of last attendance.
- N. Non-medical professional reports (including reports from psychologists, social workers and other related records) must be kept for four (4) years after the fiscal year of attendance.
- O. Student withdrawal notices must be kept for four (4) years after the fiscal year of withdrawal.
- P. Records for Students with Disabilities (including placement records, referrals, evaluations, testing data and other related records) must be kept for four (4) years after the fiscal year of the final enrollment in program. (Parents must be notified prior to destruction of records.)

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- Q. Tuition program records must be kept for four (4) years after the fiscal year in which they were created or received.
- R. Juvenile probation records must be kept for three (3) years after the student's 18th birthday.
- S. All other non-permanent student records must be kept for four (4) years after the fiscal year of last attendance.

Approved by Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted on November 24, 2011