

# Epiphany Catholic School



## Parent-Student Handbook

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The Parent-Student Handbook reflects current school policy. The formation of local school policy is the direct responsibility of the Administration and will follow policies established by the Diocese of Peoria, the Bishop of Peoria, and the Office of Catholic Schools.

The Education Commission is an advisory committee, appointed by the pastor, which promotes the participation of Epiphany Catholic School (ECS) and Parish in the educational mission of the Church. They may make recommendations to the pastor about how to fulfill this mission, including policy formulation.

The Pastor of Epiphany Parish is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations, and after consultation with the Principal, may waive any or all regulations for just cause at his discretion. Parents will be promptly notified if changes are made.

Parents are required to read the *Parent-Student Handbook* each school year. This handbook is posted on the school website and on the school's data management system, RenWeb. A printed copy can be given to families, if requested. Parents are required to agree to the terms of the handbook as part of the online registration process.

*Note: Parent/Guardian in this Handbook, unless otherwise designated, shall be referred to as Parent(s).*

The policies and regulations presented in this Handbook were reviewed by the **Education Commission** accepted on August 2nd, 2022.

#### **Right to Amend**

Circumstances may arise in which ECS determines that changes are required in these guidelines and procedures. For this reason, ECS reserves the right, at any time, to modify, terminate, rescind or supplement any or all of the guidelines or procedures contained herein, and to take actions which may be contrary to guidelines, benefits, or procedures set forth in this Handbook.

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## Epiphany Catholic School

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#### **Statement of Mission**

Epiphany Catholic School provides a student-focused, standards-driven, and secure educational environment. Our teachings are based upon the Gospel values that promote the spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and physical development of all students.

#### **Statement of Philosophy**

Epiphany Catholic School is a Catholic educational community, committed to teaching Catholic doctrine and incorporating it into all areas of daily living. We recognize that our mission is to work hand in hand with our parents who are the first teachers of their children. We strive to instill a spirit of prayer and worship and to emphasize the development of faith, values, and virtue based on Catholic teaching. From the heart of our parish, we seek to provide an atmosphere of living and learning in the light of faith. Our parish and school communities are joined to form a faith community that seeks to provide an atmosphere of living and learning. It is our belief that our school should be a place where students, faculty, staff, clergy, and parents enjoy the process of education and feel involved in the exciting experience of learning and maturing. We recognize each child's individuality, the fact that all children can learn, and the need for differentiated instructional methods and assessments. We strive to develop and maintain an aligned educational curriculum that utilizes and leverages technology and maximizes the use of instructional time.

### **Accreditation and Recognition**

Epiphany Catholic School will maintain high standards, implement an annual school improvement plan, and be evaluated by Diocese of Peoria Office of Catholic Schools on a periodic basis. The School has also obtained Full Recognition by the State of Illinois under the guidelines for Recognition of Non-Public Elementary Schools in Illinois. The School has met or exceeded the standards set by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and fulfilled application requirements.

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## Diocese of Peoria

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### **Catholic School Statement of Purpose**

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Peoria are established to assist the Bishop and pastors in the transmission of the Faith to the young people of the diocese. We welcome non-Catholic students into our schools who wish to take advantage of the opportunities provided by Catholic education. Every school must have as its main goal to help each student develop a personal and ecclesial relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). The principles, practices, and beliefs of the Catholic Faith must be fully integrated throughout the school’s curricula, service projects, co-curricular activities, and culture.

Students in our Catholic schools are reminded of their dignity as children of God through the study of Catholic doctrine, frequent opportunities for personal and communal prayer, and active participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Together with parents, the primary educators of their children, our Catholic schools pursue academic and spiritual excellence by helping students to develop their intellectual abilities, foster wholesome friendships, practice discipleship, strengthen their daily prayer life, grow in virtue, and become leaders through serving others.

All **staff and volunteers** that work in our Catholic schools must have at heart the promotion of the educational mission of the Church, and live as visible role models of faith within the parish/school community. Catholic doctrinal, moral, and social teaching is an integral part of each school. Therefore, all faculty, staff, administrative, and volunteer personnel must support the teachings of the Church, actively practice their faith in daily life, and be loyal to the Church’s Magisterium. Our Catholic school personnel share this educational mission and its various commitments and responsibilities with parents and the local Church communities.

### **Right to Life Statement**

Epiphany Catholic School shall uphold the teachings and disciplines of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the dignity of all human life including the rights of the unborn child. Compromise of these doctrines, by word or deed, may be cause for immediate expulsion.

#### ***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. All school personnel, both staff and volunteers, must serve and live as visible role models.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Epiphany Catholic School upholds the teachings of the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Compromise of this doctrine, by word or deed, may be cause for immediate expulsion.

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## Guiding Principles

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### Administration

The Principal is the School Administrator. The Administrator is charged with *implementing* diocesan and local school policy; *guiding* day-to-day school operations; *supervising* staff and volunteers; and *overseeing* enrollment, recruitment and retention.

### Leadership Team

At Epiphany Catholic School, a **Leadership Team** has been formed to ensure that communication is even more enhanced and on a regular basis. Currently, the Leadership Team of the School Advisory Board President, Pastor, Principal, KMAELC Director and a Faculty Member meet **bi-monthly** to discuss school operations, mission effectiveness, and issues that may surface and require prompt attention. The point of the Leadership Team is not to abbreviate grievance or appeal processes, but to ensure a balanced team around the school administrator when issues reach his desk as a result of the above-mentioned processes *and* when communication around school issues at all levels and kinds surface and are time sensitive.

### Parents as Partners

The Catholic Church and ECS recognize parents as the primary educators of their children. The education of students at our school is a partnership between parents and the school. Just as a parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school Administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if it is determined that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

### Professional Conduct: Faculty, Staff, and Volunteers

As a condition of employment or participation, all ECS faculty, staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standard of *professional conduct* when interacting with students, parents, colleagues and superiors. Good public relations for the school are essential and ECS employees share that responsibility. All ECS faculty and staff members are reminded that professional standards for *confidentiality* should be adhered to at all times. Employees or regular volunteers may learn confidential information about the school or a student. This confidential information shall not be shared with non-employees of the school and may only be shared with school employees on a need-to-know basis. The Principal should be consulted when questions arise about the confidential nature of information. The Administration will discuss violations with the faculty and/or staff member, document accordingly, and add to personnel files. Significant or repeat violations may result in termination.

### ***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Epiphany Catholic School staff and volunteers must maintain the highest standard of professional conduct.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The school Administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if it is determined that the partnership between the home and school is irretrievably broken.

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## Admission Policies

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### Non-Discrimination in Admission Policies

No student shall be refused admission to Catholic schools on the basis of race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin. Students of religious denominations other than Catholic may be admitted according to policy.

### Religious Formation

Catholic schools exist to educate students in the Catholic Faith. Therefore, non-Catholic students must participate in the religion classes, liturgies, and prayer services scheduled during the school year. They must also satisfactorily pass all the course requirements of the school's religious education classes.

### Admission Age

P-3	3 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year.
P-4	3.5 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year.
PK	4 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year.
K	5 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year.
Grade 1	6 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year.

When the school's early childhood program combines preschool with extended child care, children may be admitted throughout the academic year on or after the date of their third birthday. In such cases, parents must acknowledge in writing that their child will remain in the early childhood program and will not be admitted to Kindergarten until the child has attained the age of five years on or before September 1 of the given academic year.

### Pre-School Registration

Registration is open to current families and parish families in good standing\* **shortly after** Christmas Break. Other families are welcome to register two weeks after registration is open to our current families. Pre-School materials and instructions are located online at [www.epiphanyschools.org](http://www.epiphanyschools.org), under the Admissions tab.

### Grades K-8 Registration: Returning ECS Families

Registration is open to returning ECS families on February 1 (or the following Monday if the 1st falls on a weekend), if the family is in good standing\*. Families not in good standing may be prevented from registering until good standing is restored. If a change of date is necessary, families will be notified.

### Grades K-8 Registration: New ECS Families

New families to ECS may apply for admission to K-8 **beginning on March 1** (or the following Monday if the 1<sup>st</sup> falls on a weekend). Acceptance to ECS will be based on the following criteria: parish affiliation good standing\*, religious affiliation, and a readiness assessment administered by ECS staff. All applications will be reviewed after March 30 and enrollment status will be communicated by the Principal.

*\*Definition of Good Standing: For our non-parishioner families, a family is in good standing if it is current with all school (including financial) obligations; this includes participation and/or support of the Annual Auction (see school principal with questions). In addition, families that are registered Epiphany parishioners and benefit from in-parish tuition discounts must be active in the life of this parish. The minimal standard for active participation is attending Sunday Mass at Epiphany faithfully, and regularly supporting the parish financially according to means (online or envelope). Returning students may lose their place in school if they are not enrolled by the time registration opens to prospective families.*

### **Admission Documents**

Before a student can be enrolled and start school, the following documents must be on file. This is a requirement of the state:

- Birth Certificate, original document (a copy will be made at the time of registration and original will be returned)
- Baptismal Certificate (if Catholic)
- Sacramental Records (of any other Sacraments received after Baptism, if Catholic)
- Verification of Health Examinations (Dental, Vision) and Immunizations (see below)
- Academic Records: new or transfer students must provide a record of academic history prior to enrollment
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Service Plan, or 504 plan from previous schools attended

### **Health Examination and Immunization Documents**

Every student shall receive such immunizations against preventable communicable diseases as are required by the Illinois School Code and the Communicable Disease Prevention Act, at the time those immunizations are required to be received.

These are the *minimum requirements* to be in compliance with the rules for school entry. The Department of Public Health and your doctor may recommend additional immunizations and exams for your child.

#### **Pre-Kindergarten**

- Physical exam
- Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (complete)
- Polio vaccine (complete)
- Measles/mumps/rubella (approved schedule)
- Lead poisoning screening assessment
- Hepatitis B (series of 3)
- Varicella immunizations or date of the chicken pox disease

#### **Kindergarten**

- Physical, eye, and dental examination
- Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (complete)
- Polio vaccine (complete)
- Measles/mumps/rubella (approved schedule)
- Lead poisoning screening assessment
- Hepatitis B (series of 3)
- Varicella immunizations or date of the chicken pox disease
- Vision Exam

#### **2nd Grade**

- Dental exam

#### **6th Grade**

- Physical and Dental examination
- Measles/mumps/rubella (complete)
- Hepatitis B (complete)
- Measles/mumps/rubella (complete)
- Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (complete)
- Meningococcal Meningitis Booster



### Transfer Students

Students applying for admission in Grades 1-8 must grant permission for the sending/home school to provide a copy of the current report card, standardized test results, discipline record and the opportunity to interview the sending school Principal. An interview with the parents, new student, and Principal is part of the admission process.

Acceptance of transfer students will be evaluated on an individual basis by the school Administrator. Any student who has been previously expelled from a school, asked to leave a school, or left a school to avoid expulsion shall not be admitted into an elementary or secondary school of the diocese without written permission from the Superintendent of Schools.

#### **POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each.)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Business Manager will monitor *good standing status*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Some sort of statement is needed to reinforce *good standing*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Families deemed not in *good standing* may be prevented from registering for upcoming school years.

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## Tuition and Fees

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### Tuition Policy

School Teachers and staff are dedicated professionals who make sacrifices to teach in a Catholic School. The parish itself sacrifices for parish children at the School. In order to demonstrate full support and cooperation, parishioners agree to attend Mass at the parish regularly and support the parish financially according to their means.

All parish children receive financial aid. Non-parishioners are responsible for actual education costs. Parishioners benefit from the following Aid Discounts from Epiphany Parish and School for the 2022-2023 year. A 10% per child discount at the KMAELC (Kathryn Marie Albee Early Learning Center) is given when other children are enrolled K-8. Students enrolled K-8 are given the following discounts:

	<b>Tuition</b>	<b>With 1 Payment due August 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>With 2 Equal Payments due August 12<sup>th</sup> and January 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>12 Monthly Payments July-June</b>
K-8 Single Child	\$5,400.00	\$5,400.00	\$2,700.00	\$450.00
K-8 Family w/2	\$9,560.00	\$9,560.00	\$4,780.00	\$796.66
K-8 Family w/3+	\$12,350.00	\$12,350.00	\$6,175.00	\$1,029.16
Non-Parishioner (each)	\$6,650.00	\$6,650.00	\$3,325.00	\$554.16

School families must be current with their tuition payment plan in order for their children to attend class. In addition, families with graduating eighth graders need to be current (with tuition and all fees) before graduation in order to receive a diploma. The parish may seek legal recourse to **recover** unpaid tuition and fees.

Once again, the School's budget relies on parents' generous volunteer and fundraising support (cf. Service Hour Agreement), especially with the *Auction for Excellence*, to help defray education costs, and enhance our school's programs/technology. Participation is expected and is a measure of "good standing" in the school (cf. Registration, p. 7).

### **Additional Financial Aid**

Only active parishioners may apply for Spaulding and parish financial aid. To qualify for aid, interested families must first apply for the John Lancaster Spaulding Scholarship through the Diocese. All diocesan grants are based on objectively assessed financial need. ECS uses the results of this assessment to distribute local grants (a separate fund). Information about the grants and application materials may be obtained from the parish office, the school office, or from the Diocesan website, [www.cdop.org](http://www.cdop.org). Grants are for one year only; past recipients must reapply annually. The Spaulding Scholarship Deadline **will be shared by the administration**. Contact the parish and school Business Manager for assistance in this process. Notification of grant awards is generally made sometime in the spring.

Grants from Empower Illinois are also available dependent upon the amount of money that is directed to the organization by donors. One does not need to be a parish member to apply for this award. Application for grant typically happens in February.

### ***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. All families must be current with their tuition payment plan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The parish may seek legal recourse to recover unpaid tuition and fees.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Families in good standing may apply for additional financial aid from the diocese (Spaulding Scholarship), Empower, and from the parish.

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## Health, Safety, and Security

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### **McLean County Health Department**

The McLean County Health Department requires weekly reports concerning influenza-like illnesses. A child should be symptom free for 24 hours in cases of diarrhea, fever, and vomiting before returning to school. Infections such as pink eye and strep throat require your child to be on medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Clearly, many childhood diseases are communicable. It is essential that parents use good judgment in determining if their child is well enough to attend school. If a communicable disease is reported, the parents will be notified.

If there is an indication that a child has head lice, parents should call the school and notify the office. The school will notify the parents of any student they suspect may have acquired head lice, as well as alert the parents of the entire class.

### **Medication**

Medications, prescription and non-prescription, must be kept in the school office at all times. It must be kept in the original container with clear directions for Administration. If a student requires medication during school hours, it will be self-administered or a parent must come to school to administer the medication. Written permission from the parent or guardian must be on file in the school office.

The procedure for self-medication is:

1. The student will report to the office when it is time to take the medication.

2. A staff member will retrieve the medication.
3. The student will self-administer medication, and each dose will be documented.
4. The medication is returned to the storage area.

Permission for the self-medication procedure expires at the end of the school year. It must be renewed for the following school year. Permission for non-prescription medication must also be renewed yearly. Any medication for which a written request is not on file will not be allowed in school.

*Important: Please ensure all medicine is collected at the end of the school year.*

### **Self-Administered Medication**

As required by state law, students may self carry and self-administer drugs for the treatment of asthma, diabetes, or serious allergies, provided that the parent has submitted their consent in writing as well as a written authorization from the student's physician.

1. A written authorization from the parents of the student.
2. A written statement from the physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse containing the following information:
  - a. The name of the student/patient.
  - b. The name and purpose of the medication.
  - c. The prescribed dosage.
  - d. The time or times at which (or the special circumstances under which) the medication is to be administered.

Used inhalers are to be taken to the office for proper disposal. Students are to use only the inhaler prescribed to them, not to a sibling or to a relative. Any abuse of this medication or endangerment of other students as a result of possessing this medicine may result in disciplinary action by Epiphany Catholic School. The school reserves the right to restrict the self carry and self administration of medication for asthma, diabetes, or serious allergies to certain grade levels and/or ages of students.

### **Severe Health Issues**

When a student with severe health issues applies for enrollment in Epiphany Catholic School (PK-8), the administration (KMAELC and ECS) and the parents will meet to discuss and define the student's special needs and the school's ability to meet those needs. If your child needs an asthma inhaler or an Epi Pen, it is the parent's responsibility to provide the medication and dosage instructions to the school. In addition, there needs to be a Care Plan from their doctor on file. Registration may not be possible due to staff or other limitations.

### **Accidents**

All accidents should be reported promptly to the nearest staff member, who must report it to the Principal. In the event of an emergency involving a child, the parents will be called immediately. If the parents are not available, persons listed on the Emergency Card will be notified. An Accident Report will be filed by faculty or staff supervising such student.

### **Asbestos Statement**

Regarding Asbestos Inspections, ECS has complied with all rules and responsibilities under Illinois 763.84. The operation and management plans that are now in effect are available for parental inspection. The plans are located in the school and can be viewed by appointment with the Principal.

### **Wellness Policy**

ECS, like all elementary and secondary schools of the Diocese of Peoria, is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle and recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and the capacity of students to develop and learn.

### **Safe Environment Training**

ECS incorporates Safe Environment Training in an ongoing effort to help create and maintain a safe environment for children and to protect all children from any form of exploitation. At least one parent in a family is strongly encouraged to participate in the Safe Environment Program, offered through the School or at other acceptable venues (e.g. other parishes, CCHS). A parent who opts out of the Safe Environment Program will not be permitted to lead any event affiliated with ECS or to be alone with children anywhere in the school, or at a school sponsored event, at any time. The participating parent must complete the CMG Safe Environment Program protocols before volunteering. Contact the parish or school office with questions.

### **Emergency Procedures/Crisis Plans**

ECS complies with the emergency crisis management plan of the Diocese of Peoria and the State of Illinois required health and safety drills.

Safety drills will occur at times established by the school Administration. Students are required to be silent and shall comply with the directives of school officials during emergency drills. Each school year there will be evacuation drills, severe weather drills, and law enforcement (lockdown) drills. There may be other drills at the direction of the Administration. Drills will not be preceded by a warning to the students. *However, parents will be alerted in advance for drills involving school intruders.*

### **Building Security**

For the safety of our students, ECS has adopted a closed-building concept. All exterior doors are locked. All visitors to the building are required to check into the office/sign-in at front desk to report their purpose for being in the school. Visitors will wear a visitor badge so they can be identified. We encourage everyone to cooperate in providing a safe learning environment for the children.

### **Possession of Use of Weapons or Look Alike Weapons in School**

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Peoria teach and uphold the sanctity of human life. Virtues such as respect for others, peacemaking, and self-discipline are foundations of Catholic education. Furthermore, a safe academic and social environment is essential for learning and Christian formation. The possession or use of weapons not only disrupts the school's learning environment, it fundamentally violates the sanctity of human life by threatening the very health and safety of teachers and students.

It is strictly forbidden for any student to possess, use, attempt to use, manufacture, distribute, purchase, trade or sell (or seek the sale or trade of) any weapon on school premises or at any school-related activity or function, including but not limited to travel to and from school and/or school-related functions. Possession means having a weapon on one's person or in an area subject to the student's control such as desks, lockers, backpacks, and vehicles. Any student possessing, using, attempting to use, manufacturing, distributing, purchasing, trading or selling (or seeking the sale or trade of) weapons at school or any school-related function shall, at the discretion of the pastor and principal, be subject to immediate expulsion.

Weapons are defined as any object, device, or instrument that has been designed, created, adapted or used for the purpose of intimidating, threatening, and/or inflicting physical injury (including but not limited to anything which resembles such items). Any student found to be in possession of a weapon shall be immediately suspended from school. The weapon will be confiscated and police officials contacted. The student's parents will be notified, and there will be an administrative review. The normal consequence shall be expulsion from school.

*The complete Diocesan Policy may be found on the Catholic Diocese of Peoria website.*

## **Technology Acceptable Use Policy**

### **Purpose**

ECS supports the use of computers, the Internet, and other technological devices in its instructional programs in order to facilitate access to information, research, collaboration, and interpersonal communications. The use of computer hardware and software shall be consistent with the Catholic identity of our school, reinforce the curriculum, and reflect the varied instructional needs and learning styles of our students.

### **Responsibility**

ECS shall make every effort to ensure that students and staff use this educational resource responsibly. Teachers have a professional obligation to help students develop the moral foundation and intellectual skills necessary to discriminate among sources, to identify appropriate information, and to evaluate and use information to meet their educational needs.

ECS has implemented an Internet filter and anti-virus software to assist in preventing users from accessing objectionable sites. However, no filtering software is entirely effective and we cannot guarantee that your child will not gain access to inappropriate material. Teachers and staff will make every effort to monitor usage. Ultimately, parent(s) are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their child should follow.

The electronic information available to students and staff does not imply endorsement of the content by ECS, nor do we guarantee the accuracy of information received on the Internet. We believe the advantages of Internet resources outweigh the risks associated with such use.

ECS shall not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the Internet. We reserve the right to log network use and to monitor files saved on the school network and computers. The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right; inappropriate, unauthorized, and/or illegal use will result in the cancellation of those privileges and appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Computer Access**

Students are allowed to use the school computers after both of the following criteria are met:

- A parent or guardian acknowledges that they have read the Acceptable Use Policy in the handbook on the school web site and gives permission for their student(s) to use ECS's computers. A parent or guardian signature indicates parental permission for students to use Epiphany's school computers.
- The student signs a copy of the Network/Online Safety Pledge. This form is handed out and discussed at school. A parent signature is not required but a copy of the pledge is available at the end of the handbook for review.

### **Guidelines**

All network accounts shall be used only by the authorized owner of the account for its authorized purpose. All communications and information accessible via the network shall be assumed to be private property and shall not be disclosed. Network users shall respect the privacy of other users on the system. Students must maintain safe and secure strategies when using the devices.

### **Unacceptable Use of School Technology**

Students and staff are expected to act in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the moral principles espoused by the Catholic Church, accepted rules of network etiquette, and federal and state law. Specifically, the following uses of computer hardware and software, the Internet, e-mail, and/or the network are strictly prohibited:

- To facilitate illegal activity.
- To retrieve or send material likely to be offensive or objectionable to recipients, including but not limited to: obscene or pornographic material, hate mail, discriminatory remarks, and offensive or inflammatory communication.
- Inappropriate language or profanity.
- To intentionally obtain, modify, or tamper with files, passwords, and data belonging to other users.
- For commercial purposes, product advertisement, political lobbying, including lobbying for student council, or other non-school related work.
- Unauthorized or illegal modification, reproduction, distribution, or use of copyrighted materials.
- Quoting personal communications in a public forum without the author's prior consent.
- To plagiarize. All sources must be cited.
- To load or use unauthorized games, programs, files, or other electronic media.
- To share, publish, or e-mail content created at school or for school purposes without consent from a teacher. This includes but is not limited to: uploading audio, video, and pictures to sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, etc.
- Destruction, modification, or abuse of hardware and/or software.
- The use of social networks, including but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Unauthorized use of Internet or network connections to live and or pre-recorded communications, including voice and or video.
- Engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.

### **Unacceptable Uses of Personal Devices**

Unauthorized use of personal electronic devices by students during the school day, including lunch and recess, is strictly prohibited. Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to: cell phones, Smart phones, MP3 players, video cameras, digital cameras, tablets, and handheld game systems. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in confiscation of the electronic device. This electronic device must be retrieved by a parent or guardian.

### **Consequences for Unacceptable Use**

All users shall be held responsible for damages to equipment, systems, and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts. Anything not explicitly covered in this document will be left to the discretion of school Administration. Consequences for violating the guidelines provided in the acceptable use policy may be subject to any or all of the following:

- Loss or restricted use of computer and/or network privileges
- Monetary reimbursement for damages
- Detention
- Suspension from school
- Expulsion from school
- Police notification

### **Disclaimer**

ECS shall not be held responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable when using its computers. ECS and its employees shall be held harmless from any cause of action relating to a student obtaining access to materials or software which is inappropriate. ECS reserves the right to change the acceptable use policy at any time.

### **Care of School Property**

- At the beginning of the school year each child should have a book bag so that no damage to the books results. Care of books is the pupil's responsibility. Payment is required when damage results.

- Each child will have one set of books to use. If books are badly used or damaged, additional remuneration will be charged.
- Textbooks are on a loan basis. Students may be charged replacement costs for damaged or lost textbooks, workbooks, and library books.
- Students are responsible for good care of their desks, tables, lockers and chairs. Students should not sit on or damage desks or tables. Desks and lockers should not be overfilled or hinges may break. Students will be asked to remove excess items.
- Students may not hang on doors, overhead pipes, and basketball rims, or in any way damage school property. Windows must be handled with care under the supervision of teachers or designated staff.
- If any school property is used in a manner beyond normal wear and tear, students will be referred to the school office. Consequences include, but are not limited to, detention, referral to the pastor, and monetary compensation.
- All students' desks and lockers are the property of ECS and school personnel reserve the right to inspect desks and lockers at any time. Students are required to lock their lockers before leaving school at the end-of-the-day dismissal and are subject to disciplinary action if they do not comply.
- There is to be no writing on or around desks or lockers. Any damage to school desks and lockers is considered vandalism.

***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. All student medications must be kept in the school offices at all times.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In order to participate in any activity with students an individual must complete the requirements of the Safe Environment program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Failure to abide by school policy concerning technology will result in the revocation of privileges; failure to properly respect school property may result in the assessment of damages.

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## Academics

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### **Differentiated Instruction**

ECS offers a school-wide support system to try to meet all students' academic needs. To ensure that our students succeed, a high-quality, research-based curriculum and instruction is provided through differentiated instruction that is matched to student needs. The use of research-based interventions and strategies, problem solving, ongoing progress monitoring, and evaluation of outcomes will ensure that all students will be provided the opportunity to succeed to their full potential.

### *Outcomes*

- A common vision of teaching and learning will be evident in all classrooms.
- The curriculum will be aligned with the Common Core Standards.
- Classroom instruction will be differentiated to meet the needs of all students.
- Research based interventions, strategies, and assessment tools will be utilized and documented.
- The school culture will promote trust, collaboration, and a shared responsibility for student learning across all grade levels and stakeholders.
- The school staff will systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the core curriculum and make adjustments, as needed, based on an analysis of the data.

## Academic Testing

### **MAP Assessment**

The MAP Growth Test Assessment are grade independent and adapts to each student's instructional level. Every item on a MAP Growth Assessment is anchored to a vertically aligned equal interval scale, called the RIT scale for Rasch UNIT. RIT scores serve as an essential data point in a student's learning plan.

Students in Grades K – 8 take the MAP Assessment three times a year (Fall, Winter and Spring). All students are assessed in Reading and Mathematics. Students in Grades 2 – 8 also are tested in Language Usage.

### Grading and Report Cards

#### **Report Cards**

Report Cards will be available online at the end of each trimester for students in Grades K-8. A printed copy of the report card will be distributed to each student at the end of the year. Student grades are posted by teachers to the RenWeb Student Management system, accessible to parents.

#### ***Grades K – 2***

S+ = Exceeds basic requirements

S = Satisfactory progress; consistent with ability

S- = Having difficulty meeting basic requirements

= Does not apply this grading term (blank)

#### ***Grades 3 – 8***

Letter grades will be assigned to students in grades 3 – 8. The Principal must approve adjustments to this grading scale. Grade Cutoff % are as follows:

A= Excellent                      A+ 99.5, A 95.5, A- 93.5

B= Very Good                      B+ 90.5, B 87.5, B- 84.5

C= Satisfactory                      C+ 81.5, C 78.5, C- 75.5

D= Below Average                      D+ 73.5, D 71.5, D- 67.5

F = Below 67

I = Incomplete

#### ***Learning Skills and Behavior***

E = Excellent – Consistently Demonstrates/Applies/Grasps with minimal prompting

S = Satisfactory – Demonstrates Understanding; meets expectations

P = Progressing – Student is progressing; displays appropriate learning behaviors most of the time

N = Needs Improvement – Student does not display learning skills and behavior that lead to success

(blank) = Does not apply this grading term

### Honor Roll Recognition

Grades 6 - 8 use an "A" and "A-B" Honor Roll system. "A" Honor Roll students must receive all A's in all graded subjects. "A-B" Honor Roll includes students with A's and B's in all graded subjects.



### **Promotion and Placement**

ECS places students in grade levels for which their level of maturity and learning skills are appropriate. Retention and promotion are recommended on an individual basis with the goal to best meet the student's needs. Retentions are made only after thoughtful consideration and possible alternatives have been explored by the teacher, parent(s), and Principal. Determination of a student being promoted or retained is a function of the teacher(s) and the Principal after consultation with the parent(s). The Principal assumes final responsibility for grade placement.

There are a variety of factors and guidelines that are considered in promotion and retention. These factors include but are not limited to: academic performance (performance data, work completed, effort and purpose), chronological age, social growth, physical development, emotional status and student attendance. Chronic student absence may be cause for retention.

It is the teacher's responsibility to keep parents informed of student progress throughout the year. The teacher will inform the Principal and parents of the possible need for retention prior to the beginning of the second trimester, providing both parents and Principal with student data indicating a need for retention. Parents may also request or discuss retention with the teacher at any time.

The Pastor is kept fully informed during this process. The final decision regarding retention will rest with administration.

### **Inclusion of Students with Special Needs**

Students enrolled in local private schools and parochial schools are included in local public school district efforts for *Child Find* through a consultation and collaboration model. When a student is suspected of having deficits in the areas of learning, social/emotional, or speech and language, assistance is offered through the local school district where the private-parochial school is located. ECS works directly with McLean County Unit 5 School District for these services. The private-parochial school administrators, teachers, and counselors are able to communicate with designated Unit 5 staff on the degree and type of assistance being sought on behalf of the students.

When parents have concerns about their child in any of these areas they should communicate with the classroom teacher to address these concerns. The teacher will work with the ECS Principal and the appropriate Epiphany staff members to address the needs and when needed begin the CARES process (Collaboration, Analysis and Response for Educational Services) with Unit 5 staff. If parents desire to have their child evaluated for special education during or prior to the CARES process, they should submit their request for a special education evaluation in writing to the ECS Principal.

The school will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodation within the confines of its limited staffing resources. If a child with a disability persistently disrupts the educational setting, requires an extraordinary amount of individualized time, or places risks on the education of others, then ECS reserves the right to terminate enrollment of the child. Additionally, if something happens to a child while enrolled in ECS, such as a serious accident and more than reasonable accommodations are necessary for the education of the child, ECS reserves the right to review and discuss the continued enrollment of the child. If a child is found to be a danger to him/herself or to others, the school reserves the right to terminate enrollment of the child. In both situations, the Principal will determine what constitutes a disruption.

### **Homework Philosophy and Purpose**

Homework is a crucial aspect of the learning process for ECS students, as it is a natural extension of the classroom.

Homework is given in order to:

- Practice newly taught skills
- Review previously mastered skills

- Develop independent study habits
- Extend and enrich the curriculum

### **Homework Responsibilities**

The following defines the responsibilities of students, parents, teachers and the Administration concerning homework at Epiphany Catholic School.

#### **Students' Responsibilities**

- Get the assignment and ask for help if the assignment is not clear.
- Copy all assignments into planner (grades 3-8) carefully recording due dates and important information. Junior high students will utilize Google Classroom in addition to their planner.
- Set a time each day to do homework.
- Make use of time provided to do homework during the school day.
- Check work and, if possible, explain it to an adult.
- Maintain the highest quality work on homework assignments.
- Take home all necessary resources, such as packets, textbooks, notes and study guides.
- Bring the completed homework to school when it is due.
- Be responsible for getting assignments when absent from school.
- Be responsible for taking care of, and returning, any borrowed resource materials.

#### **Parents' Responsibilities**

- Promote a positive attitude toward homework as part of the learning process.
- Understand and reinforce expectations for the quality of student work.
- Provide structure, a site and tools needed to help the child organize and complete homework.
- Be available to provide supervision and support, but do not do the assignment.
- Understand the amount of assistance appropriate for homework assignments.
- Communicate first with your student's teacher, giving feedback to the teacher when there is a homework concern. It is requested that this correspondence be via e-mail with the school principal copied.

#### **Teachers' Responsibilities**

- Identify the purpose of homework assignments for students.
- Establish objectives and guidelines for special projects, including any expectations for parent participation.
- Communicate expectations to students.
- Post all assignment (Grades 6-8 –Google Classroom) and provide time for the students to record them in their planners.
- Model homework strategies and provide models as appropriate throughout the school year.
- Review, return and record homework in a timely manner.
- Ensure that the students easily obtain resources and material required for the homework.
- Communicate with parents when concerns are expressed.
- Communicate with parents regarding homework problems and/or missing assignments.
- Discuss homework practices with other teachers and post homework on staff Google Classroom.

#### **Administration Responsibilities**

- Ensure that homework is consistent with school goals.
- Facilitate communication between classroom teachers and the Learning Specialist concerning homework.
- Encourage teachers to use homework as a tool to reinforce learning.
- Facilitate the communication process between the school and home and help maintain the parent/school partnership as it relates to homework.

**Parents support their child with their homework when they:**

- Check each day to see if your child has homework and if they understand how to complete it.
- Set aside a particular time for doing homework and provide them with a quiet place to study.
- Let your child do his/her own work.
- Ask your child what they are learning about and studying.

**Parents hinder their children when they:**

- Do their child's homework for them.
- Leave homework for the last minute at the end of the day when children are tired and less likely to be able to focus on academics.
- Disagree with or criticize their child's teacher in front of their child.

**Basic Homework Guidelines:** students should allot this much time for homework each day, keeping in mind that it may take some students more or less time to complete particular assignments:

- Grades 1-3: 20-30 minutes
- Grades 4-5: 30-50 minutes
- Grades 6-8: 60-90 minutes

If a student consistently takes longer than the above noted time allotments for homework, parents need to discuss homework difficulties and strategies with the teacher. In addition, nightly reading is always encouraged at all grade levels.

**Grades 5th – 8th Late Homework**

**Junior High**

Homework is due at the beginning of the period for which it was assigned. If homework is not complete or not available when due, the homework may be turned in by 3:15 pm the NEXT school day for a late grade. A late grade includes a 20% deduction of the amount earned. In order to build responsibility, any homework brought to the student after the school day has begun will be considered as a late assignment. Students are not allowed to call for someone to bring forgotten work. Homework turned in two (2) or more days late may receive a "0".

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

A late grade is figured on a point value that is one letter grade down from the original point value. Therefore, the highest grade a late assignment may receive is a B+. In grades 6 through 8 the late work will be reduced 20% of the points earned.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

It is the policy of ECS that cheating by students in any form will not be tolerated and that work submitted for grading must be the independent work of the student (or the students in a collaborative learning situation).

Plagiarism, or the copying and use of someone else's work without proper acknowledgment, is not permitted nor is it permissible for any student to allow another student to copy their work.

Assignments or projects found to be plagiarized will earn a grade of zero (0). At the discretion of the teacher, these assignments might be made up and accepted for partial credit. Students are reminded that if they allow another student to copy their work, they will receive the same penalty.

***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Epiphany Catholic School offers a school-wide support system to try to meet all students' academic needs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. If a child with a disability persistently disrupts the educational setting, requires an extraordinary

amount of individualized time, or places risks on the education of others, then ECS reserves the right to terminate enrollment of the child.

3. If a child is found to be a danger to him/herself or to others, the school reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of the child.

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## *Student Affairs*

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### **Educational Field Trips**

Field trips are well planned and correlated to learning activities and approved by Administration. Field trips are privileges given to students; no student has an absolute right to a field trip. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic and/or behavioral requirements. *Permission Forms* with parent signatures shall be required for students to attend any trip. The Peoria Diocese liability insurance plan does not cover vehicles of any kind. Students who are transported in a vehicle are covered under the vehicle owner's personal insurance. The Peoria Diocese policy mandates that volunteer drivers must provide proof of a valid driver's license and insurance each school year. Also, the diocese requires drivers on field trips to complete the Catholic Mutual, *Drive Safe, Drive Smart* program. Additional information regarding this policy can be found at the Catholic Diocese of Peoria website: [www.cdop.org](http://www.cdop.org). A driver or a chaperone must have completed a Safe Environment class and completion certificates must be on file at the Parish office.

### **Fundraising**

Students are not permitted to collect money or sponsor moneymaking projects without the permission of the Administration. Money contributed to the missions should be free-will offerings on the part of the student. Students are encouraged to carry only the necessary amount of money needed for a specific school activity and must assume responsibility for its safekeeping.

### **Student Phone Calls**

There are telephones available for student use in the school lobbies. Permission must be granted by office or staff prior to using the phone. We encourage all students to be responsible. Consistent phone usage may result in denial of privilege.

### **Cell Phones and Portable Electronic Devices**

Unauthorized use of personal electronic devices by students during the school day, including lunch and recess, is strictly prohibited. Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to: cell phones, Smart phones, MP3 players, video cameras, digital cameras, and handheld game systems. *Cell phones will remain off or silenced and will be in student lockers until dismissal.* Failure to adhere to this policy will result in confiscation of the electronic device. This electronic device must be retrieved by a parent or guardian.

In recognizing that e-readers are growing in popularity and are increasingly being used to support literacy instruction and personal reading, an exception to the policy above will be made for bringing and using ereaders, for the sole purpose of reading. Parents must complete Parental Liability Waiver for Student Use of Personal E-Reader form. (See Appendix)

### **School Dances**

School dances for Junior High students at ECS are permitted as a positive social experience. They are held under the following circumstances and ground rules:

1. The School Club sponsors a dance in the fall and CCHS sponsors one in the spring.

2. Only students in ECS JH School are participants at its dance.
3. ECS dances must be well-monitored with at least eight (8) to ten (10) parent chaperones under the direction of the School Club. Failure to have volunteers will result in cancellation of the dance.
4. ECS dances will be held from 7:00 pm – 9 pm in the Lyceum gym.
5. Dress for all dances should reflect modesty. Strapless dresses or dresses with spaghetti straps are prohibited. Attire should adhere to the standards set forth by the dress code.
6. In the event there is any discipline problem during the dances (including, but not limited to, disrespectful behavior, the possession and/or use of lighters, tobacco, or alcohol), the student(s) will be separated and put under adult control. Parents will be called and asked to come and take their son/daughter home. Activities of this nature will also be handled under the school's disciplinary policies.

### **Parties and Treats**

Epiphany Catholic School does not permit any edible treats being brought into the buildings for the celebration of a student's birthday. No gum or soda pop is allowed. Parties may be scheduled for special occasions and directed by School Club volunteers.

Exchange of material gifts between students is not permitted during school. Private birthday party invitations may only be passed out in the classroom if all the students are invited or all students of the same gender.

### ***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. In order to be a chaperone and to drive on field trips all diocesan requirements including the Safe Environment items and the Catholic Mutual *Drive Safe, Drive Smart* program must be completed prior to the trip.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Edible treats are not to be brought into the buildings to celebrate student birthdays.

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## The School Day

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### **Arrival and Dismissal**

7:55 a.m. School Begins at Opening Bell

3:15 p.m. Dismissal for all K-8 Students

### **Drop off and Pick Up Procedures**

For drop-off, parents should use the *Rectory Drive* for entering ECS premises and proceed to the rear of the Grade School. This prevents confusion on the parking lot and hazardous conditions. Students should be dropped off in the north parking lot between the Lyceum and the Elementary Building. Students are to go immediately into the Lyceum to await the first bell. Staff members will be available at 7:30 a.m. to 7:55 a.m. to supervise students. Drivers will then proceed forward and exit the church lot at the KMAELC drive.

For pick-up, parents should again use the Rectory drive. Junior High students will be dismissed to their designated pick-up person. Parents can park in the north parking lot between the lyceum and the elementary building. K-5 students will be dismissed from class cones in the front of the building if weather is permitting, if it is too cold or raining, students will be dismissed from the Small Gym.

### **Absences and Appointments**

Parents are expected to contact the school offices daily *before 9:00 a.m.* whenever a student will not be attending school.

In the event of prolonged illness or absence, arrangements for class assignments should be made by contacting the classroom teacher or school office. All student illnesses must be reported to the office.

Every effort should be made to avoid scheduling appointments during school hours, particularly during times of school Mass. A note should be sent to the child's teacher explaining when, where, and why a child is leaving, and estimated time of return. Parents will pick up the child in the lobby of the K-5 building.

Students who stay home from school past 10 a.m. due to illness are not allowed to practice or compete that day in co-curricular activities. If a student misses classes due to a previously scheduled medical appointment, he/she may practice or compete. Absences due to funeral attendance or family obligations do not affect participation in co-curricular activities.

### **Late Arrivals (Tardies)**

Students are expected to report to school on time, 7:55 a.m. Students will be issued a tardy when they arrive after attendance is taken. Extreme situations are taken into consideration. Junior High students will be issued a tardy if they are late to class during the school day and they do not have a written excuse. Tardies are tracked and reported through RebWeb.

*Important: As a reminder, students who arrive at school after 10 AM will not be allowed to participate in any school extra-curricular activities that day.*

### **Before and After Care**

The Before Care program of ECS is available to students in grades Pre-K-5 during the following session time periods: 6:30 a.m. – 7:55 a.m.; 3:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. The programs operate on days when school is in session, and on a few days (determined by Care staff) when school is not in session. When half-day sessions of school are scheduled, the program operates from dismissal time until 5:30 p.m.

### **Lunch and Recess**

#### **Cafeteria Guidelines**

Please note that the student services such as athletics/non-athletics and the cafeteria are designed as nonprofit services. Each teacher accompanies their class to the lunchroom. Quiet, mannerly conduct is expected of all students in the line and at the tables.

#### **Parents Taking Students Out to Lunch**

Parents will be permitted to take only their own children out to lunch during their scheduled lunch period.

#### **Playground Guidelines**

During scheduled recesses, students shall remain in the designated recess areas. They are not allowed to return to the building except with the permission of the supervisor. Students should report injuries immediately to the nearest staff member.

Inappropriate language, disrespect to supervisors or classmates, tackling, wrestling, tripping, rough games; throwing rocks or sticks and fighting are subject to school disciplinary action.

During the winter months, students should bring hats, gloves, and scarves to school because they may go outside for recess. All outerwear should have the child's name on it.

### Recess – Staying Inside

Requests are sometimes made to have the children indoors during recess periods. This should not be requested unless absolutely necessary. A note should be sent with the child to the homeroom teacher.

#### ***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Every effort should be made by parents to avoid scheduling appointments during All-School Masses and other liturgical celebrations.
  
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2. As a reminder, students who stay home from school past 10:00 am due to illness are not allowed to practice or compete in co-curricular activities.
  
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Parents are reminded to order lunches between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of the preceding month.
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## Communication between School and Home

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### **Chain of Communication: Academic or Policy Concerns**

A variety of means are provided for communication between home and school. The faculty and staff recognize the responsibility to demonstrate open and courteous communication with parents. All faculty members may be contacted through school email or by a message left with the school office.

Conferences may be initiated by parents or teachers at any time and scheduled at the convenience of both parties.

### **Guidelines for Communicating Parental Concerns**

The direction of the school is delegated to the principal.

The direction of the classroom is delegated to each classroom teacher.

A parent/guardian who has a question or concern regarding a situation involving their child should follow these guidelines:

- Contact the student's teacher first to discuss the concern and work with the teacher to arrive at possible solutions. Appointments with the teacher will be made by writing a note or emailing the teacher.
- If the concern cannot be resolved with the teacher, the parent/guardian should then contact the principal. After discussing the situation with both parties, the principal will act as a facilitator in making every effort to resolve the issue.

### **Emergency Notification System**

A voice/phone notification system, operating through our RenWeb student management system, communicates important messages to families. All parents listed in the RenWeb system will receive general information calls. The default setting for general information calls is the cell phone. To change that setting to home phone, log into RenWeb/Family/Preference. *In case of emergency all numbers will be called.* The text of all phone messages sent from the office can be read on RenWeb. It is extremely important to keep telephone numbers current.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are an important step in building the bridge between home and school to ensure the highest quality of education for children. Parent-teacher conferences supplement the information conveyed by report cards focusing on students' specific strengths and weaknesses in individual subjects and generalizing the level of inter-curricular skills and competences.

Junior High students will lead student-led conferences in October and be mentored by a junior high teacher. However, any parent wishing to schedule an individual conference may do so by request.

All parents have an opportunity to schedule a conference with their child's teacher in October. Only parent or teacher requested conferences will be held in February.

### **Website Information**

The ECS Website is found on-line at [epiphanyschools.org](http://epiphanyschools.org). Parents can find resources about school-related matters on this page.

### **Social Media**

The school recognizes the importance of the Internet in forming public opinion. Therefore, it is essential that administration, faculty/staff, parents, students and volunteers join together and help shape the way the school is perceived in the community via interaction in social media. The following guidelines will help everyone make appropriate decisions about utilizing various social media.

- Parents , students, employees and volunteers are personally responsible for the content that they post, share and respond to online.
- Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information, internal school discussions, or specific information about students, staff or other parents.
- Never discuss sensitive school matters using social media outlets.
- Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about students, parents or staff nor the school in general.
- Social media sites using the school name may not be created without permission.
- Do not use any school logo or image without permission.
- Public postings on social media should not be used to challenge or ridicule Church teachings.

The school reserves the right to require parents, students, employees or volunteers to remove content or comments posted on social media for any reason, including but not limited to the administration's opinion that the comments violate this policy. The core values of the school apply to behavior both on and off campus including the online environment. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the school and/or termination of employment and/or volunteer activities.

### **RenWeb**

ECS uses a web-based school Administration system called RenWeb to enhance communication among teachers, parents, and students. RenWeb is the primary source for school information, and should be checked by all school families on a regular basis. Parents and students utilize a component of RenWeb which is called ParentsWeb. The ParentsWeb component of RenWeb provides parents and students password-secure access to ECS student information such as the following: Attendance, Grades, Progress Reports, Report Cards, Homework, and Missing Assignments..

RenWeb will be used to send a broadcast message to all families via email and/or telephone in the event of an emergency situation or in the event of any school closings or early dismissals. ECS will confer with the Bloomington-Normal Catholic Partner Schools to coordinate the dismissal times and closing of school due to inclement weather. Please also refer to the local radio and television stations for information about school closings and early dismissals.

### **Accessing RenWeb**

The best way to access RenWeb is through the ECS web site at [epiphanyschools.org](http://epiphanyschools.org). Then click on the 'RenWeb Parent Login' link under the "Quick Link" menu. If you are new to RenWeb, you can view a brief tutorial at [www.RenWeb.com](http://www.RenWeb.com), then click on the ParentWeb Demo button.



## **Parish Website**

The parish website is found at [epiphanyparish.com](http://epiphanyparish.com). This resource contains Parish related information.

## **Texting**

**Policy:** ECS allows texting between faculty/staff and students *only* through the use of the school-approved texting method. "Faculty/staff" includes coaches, employees, and other volunteers providing services to the ECS community.

Parents and students have the *option* to participate in the text messaging service. If parents opt to use this service, they can choose to have texts sent to the parent only, to the student only, or to both the parent and the student.

## **Confidentiality in Communications**

Faculty/staff will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is compromised. Parents will be notified of teacher concerns if the above conditions exist.

## **Publicity**

**Policy:** For the purpose of this policy, "staff" also includes coaches, scout leaders, parent volunteers and other individuals who lead student activities at ECS. The school policy regarding publicity is stated below.

On occasion, ECS takes photographs or makes an audio or video recording of children and/or adults involved in school or parish activities. Such photographs or video records may be used by staff and participants to remember the activities or participants. In addition, such photographs and audio/visual recordings may be used in school or parish publications or advertising materials to let others know about the school or parish. Also, local news organizations may learn about the school's activities or events, and the school or parish may invite or allow them to photograph or record such events to be used, distributed, or displayed as the agents of the school or parish see fit.

Unless parents submit a signed *Publicity Opt Out Form*, they expressly grant to ECS, its affiliated parish(es), and/or the Diocese of Peoria the right, privilege and license to use the picture or likeness of their child/children in any photograph, movie, video production or any other forms of media publication and to use the verbal or written statements or declarations of their child/children for the purpose of publicizing, fostering and promoting the school and its programs, or for any other purpose in furtherance of the mission of ECS, its affiliated parish(es), and/or the Diocese of Peoria. *A copy of the Publicity Opt Out form can be obtained by contacting the school office.*

## **Use of Student Information/Pictures**

ECS strives to insure the privacy and safety of our children. To that end, we make every attempt to follow the points below:

- When a student's name is used on the Internet, they will be identified by first name only unless more than one student shares the same name. In those cases, we may include the first letter(s) of the last name of each student. This includes publishing information such as the honor roll, recognition for special accomplishments, and team/club lists and accomplishments.
- When we include names with student photographs, audio/video recordings, or work on the Internet, we will do it in a manner that does not single out or identify a child without written consent from a parent or guardian. We will include the full name of a child with his or her photograph, audio/video recording, or work only with written consent from a parent or guardian. Emails from a parent or guardian can be accepted as written consent.
- Any Epiphany student may appear anonymously in group photographs and audio/video recordings or in the background of photographs and audio/video recordings of other children.

*In the event a mistake is made, please notify the appropriate staff member and the problem will be rectified as soon as possible.*

### **Student Records**

#### **Examination of Records**

A parent who requests to examine records of their child(ren) may do so by contacting the Principal. The Principal will be present during the examination of records by the parent. Upon completion of the examination, the parent and Principal sign a form indicating that such a review has taken place. This form is then placed on file.

#### **Transfer of Student Records**

School records are transferred between schools. Elementary schools use the student transfer form when transferring student records. Parents sign a release form and records ordinarily are mailed to the new school immediately. Official records may be retained until outstanding fees have been paid to the school/church. Transfer of records cannot be completed if the previous parish/school is withholding records.

### **Rights of Non-Custodial Parents**

Our school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with *access to the academic records* and other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that no information be given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. *Any changes made in custody agreements should be promptly reported in writing to the Principal.* It is the parent's responsibility to provide a copy of the custodial agreement in the divorce decree to be kept (confidentially) in the school's files.

#### ***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Conferences may be initiated by parent or teachers at any time and scheduled at the convenience of both parties.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The parish and school business manager will monitor financial good standing for all families.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that information on ParentWeb is correct and current.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Faculty and staff will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is compromised.

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## Uniform Dress Code

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The importance of proper dress for ECS students and the demonstrated commitment to it by parents and school cannot be over-emphasized. The uniforms and the traditions they convey demonstrate our commitment to quality in Catholic education. It is an expression of unity that eliminates materialistic competition and strengthens our academic focus and discipline. It assists students in feeling they belong and are accepted by others. Students are to dress and groom themselves in a manner that is modest, clean, and appropriate to a Catholic School academic environment. While parents and students have the primary responsibility for personal appearance, the Administration is responsible for interpreting dress code standards. Students must adhere to the following dress code while in the building during school hours by arriving in dress code and remaining in code throughout the day.

The Principal may change the dress code within the school day (for specific celebrations, etc.). If an item is not listed in the dress code, it is not a part of our dress code and cannot be worn at school.

### **Dress Code Enforcement**

For grades K-5, the teacher fills out a uniform reminder form and it is sent home. For junior high, students will receive a reminder followed by a uniform infraction (this serves as a reminder). If multiple infractions are incurred, this may result in a detention.

If necessary, parents will be called to come and take the student home to remedy the situation – particularly if the violation is considered grave or repetitive in nature.

### **Uniform Policy**

#### **Jumper/Skirt/Skort** (Regulation plaid Girls only)

- must be no shorter than 3 inches above the crease on the back of the knee
- navy or black shorts must be worn under jumper/skirt and must be shorter than the length of the jumper/skirt

#### **Shirts**

- short or long sleeve
- solid white or navy
- polo style with plain collar
- only ECS or CCHS logo
- must be tucked in at all times
- undershirt or camisole must be solid white

#### **Pants**

- solid navy or khaki
- dress pants with waistband and zipper
- no cargo styles
- no extra low rise waist styles
- They should fit at the regular waist line and be of hem length. Pants that are not permitted include: knit or sweatpants, corduroy's, jeans and denim, cargo or pants with flapped pockets, pants with elastic at the ankles, pants with extreme flared legs or slit bottoms. Also, pants must be plain with no studs, and no pockets or zippers on the pant legs.

#### **Shorts/Capris**

- solid navy or khaki walking shorts with waistband and zipper
- must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee
- no cargo styles
- Girls only: Capris - solid navy or khaki; no cargo styles
- Shorts and Capris may be worn the months of August through October and April and May. The Principal reserves the right to make changes.

#### **Socks**

- solid white, solid navy, or black
- must be worn at all times
- solid white, black, and solid navy tights are acceptable
- Leggings permitted only under skirts/jumpers

### **Shoes**

- closed toe and closed heel
- no lights, sequins, or other sparkly items
- Girls only: Flat boots may be worn from November through March. When worn with a skirt or jumper, the boots must be accompanied by solid white or solid navy tights/leggings. Boots must be plain in style, in black, brown, gray, or navy blue.

### **Belts**

- solid black, brown, khaki/tan, or navy
- required for Junior High students only

### **Sweaters**

- solid navy or solid white, no insignias, no hoods
- vests, cardigans, v-necks, and crew necks

### **Sweatshirts and Fleece**

- approved solid navy, white or grey ECS or CCHS logo
- solid navy blue fleece
- quarter zip
- No hoodies

### **Jewelry (only permitted jewelry)**

- one non-dangling post earring in each ear
- boys may not wear earrings
- one religious necklace and/or bracelet
- watches permitted

### **Hair**

- clean, well-groomed, conservative hair style
- Hair should be worn in its natural color.
- Hair accessories are to be simple and plain.
- Boys only: out of the eyes and face. Boys must be clean shaven.

### **Make-up**

- acne/blemish cover-up allowed
- clear fingernail polish only
- no artificial nails

### **Tattoos/Body Piercing**

- no body-art or piercing of any kind

### **Casual Dress Days**

- Jeans are permitted but cannot have holes
- Shoulders must be covered (dresses and tops must have sleeves that are at least short sleeves.
- Midriff shirts, sweatshirts and sweaters are not allowed.
- On Spirit Days, students may wear ECS or CCHS shirts with uniform bottoms. The principal reserves the right to make changes.
- Spirit Days will be held every Friday unless otherwise noted.

***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Students are to dress and groom themselves in a manner that is modest, clean and appropriate for a Catholic school academic environment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Students must adhere to the listed Dress Code while in the building during school hours and need to arrive in Dress Code and remain in Dress Code throughout the day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. If an item is not listed in the Dress Code, it is not part of the Dress Code and cannot be worn at school.

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## Student Discipline Policy

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The primary purpose of discipline at Epiphany Catholic School is to educate all of our children in a Christian atmosphere, to ensure the safety of our children, and to act with respect to all. We believe that in order for our students to meet the challenges that he/she will face in our society, the development of self-discipline and individual responsibility are essential. In order to learn in the excellent climate each student deserves, Epiphany Catholic School has discipline policies in place. Students are expected to respect these rules as well as the people responsible for carrying them out. Our goal is for each student to learn to be responsible for their own actions. Appropriate behavior is expected of every student at ECS.

The parent is expected to cooperate with the school and support its corrective measures and to notify the school of any unusual behavior pattern on the part of the child that might lead to serious difficulties. It should also be understood that since we view the education of a student as a partnership between the school and the parents, the school has the right just as the parents have the right to require withdrawal of a student if the Administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

The discipline policies will be enforced at school, during any function or activity involving ECS or parish, regardless of the location or time of the event. A student's behavior reflects on our school. Any student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school and/or inconsistent with the mission, philosophy, or teachings of the Catholic Church may be subject to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion. Parents/guardians of students involved in behavior that is inappropriate, disrespectful or harmful to themselves or others shall be notified as soon as possible.

Junior High faculty will distribute a more detailed explanation of expected behaviors and the consequences at the beginning of the school year. Please refer to this when necessary. Additional disciplinary action may be imposed, if deemed necessary, by the administration in accordance with the Diocesan policy.

Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in behavior that disrupts the teaching/learning environment.
- Engaging in any unacceptable physical contact as determined by the teacher or principal.
- Flagrant and/or habitual disregard for uniform policy.
- Eating candy or chewing gum.
- Disrupting the quiet of the school, including all classes, hallways, lunch and recess.
- Leaving the classroom without permission.
- Inappropriate behavior on a field trip.
- Disrespect of any school personnel, including volunteers.

The actions listed above will be handled on an individual basis by the teacher or principal. Disciplinary action may include notifying parents to come and immediately remove their child (ren) from the school setting. The

administration investigates all matters brought to their attention, responding in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner.

Behaviors which risk the safety of others are more serious offenses and will be handled accordingly. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Exhibiting any hostile actions or threats, either in action, writing, or electronically
- Using profane, obscene, or offensive language and/or gestures
- Possession of pornography or indecent material
- Serious or persistent acts of disobedience or disorderly behavior
- Damaging or defacing school, parish, or student property
- Discrimination, intimidation, or coercion against any student or school personnel, including volunteers
- Illegal activities may result in suspension, expulsion, and/or notification of law enforcement authorities.

### **Search and Seizure**

Catholic school officials may conduct periodic inspections of all or a randomly selected number of lockers, desks, and other storage spaces owned by the school and provided as a courtesy to students. The furnishings of lockers, desks, and other storage spaces provided as a courtesy to students shall not give rise to an expectation of privacy. Schools shall contact the Office of Catholic Schools prior to conducting any search.

The administration of the school is free to enter a student's locker, desk, or other storage spaces owned by the school at any time. Therefore the school reserves the right to search them without prior notice. If illegal and/or inappropriate items are found in a student's locker, desk, or other storage space (e.g., non-prescription drugs, stolen property), they will be turned over to law enforcement. Any items (i.e., personal possessions) that violate school rules will be kept by the school administration and returned to the parents.

The school reserves the right to have law enforcement assist in conducting searches of lockers, desks, or other storage areas and the contents contained therein.

Students shall not lock or otherwise impede access to any locker, desk, or storage area except with a lock provided by or approved by the administration. Unapproved locks will be removed and may be damaged or destroyed in the search process.

### ***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each item.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ **1. Students are responsible for their behavior in and out of school as representatives of Epiphany Catholic School.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **2. The parent is expected to cooperate with the school and support its corrective measures.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **3. We believe the education of a student is a partnership between the school and the parents, the school has the right just as the parents have the right to require withdrawal of a student if the Administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken.**

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## **Bullying Prevention**

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All elementary and secondary schools in the Catholic Diocese of Peoria shall actively seek to provide a supportive, caring environment in which all persons are safe from all forms of intimidation including bullying, which is unacceptable, unchristian, and strictly prohibited.

Although religious schools are exempt from the Illinois law and its application to bullying situations, for the purpose of *this* policy, Illinois law shall be used to define bullying in our diocesan schools:

Bullying, including cyber-bullying, is any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; and/or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7b).

Bullying conduct covered under this policy is conduct that occurs on school property or at school sponsored activities or events, while students are being transported or walking to and from school or school sponsored activities or events, while students are waiting at bus stops for transportation to and from school, or cyberbullying as defined hereinafter.

Any reported bullying issue shall be promptly brought to the attention of the appropriate party, the pastor or principal or their designee, and thereafter investigated. Any student who engages in bullying and/or cyberbullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion and referral to local law enforcement. Behavioral interventions may be included as a component of the disciplinary actions. This may include but is not limited to mandatory counseling.

Retaliatory behavior by a student accused of bullying will also incur consequences. False accusations of bullying will result in disciplinary action taken against the accuser.

#### Types of Bullying

1. Relational: ostracizing another student, psychological manipulation, and systematic actions to isolate, shun, or exclude.
2. Verbal: name calling, put downs, and/or the spread of rumors.
3. Physical: aggressive acts such as hitting, slapping, choking, kicking, spitting, or pushing, as well as the destruction of property or the writing of offensive notes/graffiti.
4. Cyberbullying: actions associated with one or more types of bullying utilizing email, instant messaging, social networks, text messages, or other means of electronic communications.

Bullying conduct may include but is not limited to:

- Physical acts such as inappropriate, unwanted, uninvited, or injurious physical contact with another; stalking; sexual assault; or destruction or damage to the property of another.
- Written or electronic communication of any type that incorporates language or depictions that would constitute bullying, using any medium including but not limited to cell phones, computers, websites, electronic networks, instant messaging, text messages, and emails.
- Verbal threats made to another; blackmail or demands for protection money.
- Non-verbal threats or intimidation such as aggressive or menacing gestures.
- Direct or indirect relationally aggressive behavior such as social isolation, rumor spreading, or damaging someone's reputation.
- Blocking access to school property or facilities.
- Stealing or hiding or otherwise defacing books, backpacks or other personal possessions.
- Repeated or pervasive taunting, name calling, belittling, mocking, putdowns, or demeaning humor related to a student's race, color, sex, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics, whether or not the

student actually possesses them, that could reasonably be expected to result in the disruption of school activities or create a hostile educational environment for the student.

- Any of the preceding conduct which occurs off school grounds when such conduct creates, or reasonably can be expected to create, a substantial disruption in the school setting and/or at school sponsored activities and events.

***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each item.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Any student who engages in bullying inside or outside of school will be subject to disciplinary action.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Epiphany Catholic School has procedures in place for dealing with bullying and teasing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. All parties should be willing to inform the school of any case of suspected bullying even if they are not directly involved.

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## Co-Curricular Activities

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There are a variety of co-curricular activities available for students. The mission of the co-curricular activities program at ECS is to serve as an extension of the academic learning process within our classrooms. Co-curricular activities teach the attributes of Christian attitudes, teamwork, sportsmanship, diligence, and accepting loss and winning graciously, while building self-esteem, school pride, and respect for others. Our program offers all interested students the opportunity to participate. The *Co-Curricular Handbook* is located on the school's website. For each activity, the Activity Participation Agreement must be signed by each custodial parent and student.

***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each item.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The mission of the co-curricular program is to serve as an extension of the spiritual and academic mission of the school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Epiphany Catholic School offers all interested students the opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The *Co-Curricular Handbook* is located on the school website.

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## School Organizations

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**School Advisory Board**

The "School Advisory Board" (SAB) supports the Pastor and Principal or Preschool Director and promotes the mission of the school. Meeting dates and minutes can be found on the school website. School Advisory Board members, who are Catholic, must be active and practicing. It is the responsibility of parents, teachers, the School Advisory Board, and Administration to recognize parents as the primary educators of their children. The School Advisory Board assists the school in achieving its goals to provide quality Catholic education. It shall be the goal of parents, teachers, the School Advisory Board, and administration, through Gospel teaching and an excellent program of academics, to direct students toward a conscious choice of living a responsible Catholic life. A list of Board members and the Board statutes are available on the school's webpage.



### School Club

All parents are considered members of Epiphany's School Club. Meetings will be held and parents will be notified via email. Parents are always welcome to attend meetings and are encouraged to help with any School Club activities. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the president for more specific options to help, or sign up to volunteer for activities on the website. School Club programs and contact information are available on the school's webpage.

### Booster Club

The Booster Club provides financial support and volunteer assistance to the co-curricular programs.

#### ***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each item.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The School Advisory Board assists the school in achieving its goal to provide quality Catholic education.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The list of SAB members is located on the school website.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. All parent are considered to be members of the School Club. The Booster Clubs welcome parent volunteers.

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## Request for Appeal and Review

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A review or appeal of any decision concerning policies, procedures, or other serious matters made by the competent authority of any of the schools of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria may be requested by any member of the diocese under the following conditions only:

- 1. The decision violates or is in conflict with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church; or
- 2. The decision violates or is in conflict with an applicable diocesan policy;
- 3. The decision violates or is in conflict with a policy or procedure of the parish, the school, or other entity that takes precedence over the decision in question, or,
- 4. The decision violates or is in conflict with an applicable federal, state or local civil law.

It is to be noted that dissatisfaction with a decision is not a sufficient condition for appeal.

### Appeal Letter

The individual or group desiring the appeal or the review must make that known to the governing pastor or pastors' board responsible for that school in the form of a letter. As a matter of record, a copy of that letter is to be forwarded to the local Vicar and to the Superintendent of Schools.

This letter must clearly cover each of the following points:

- 1. The decision that is being questioned and which competent authority made it;
- 2. The grounds for the appeal or the review with specific reference to one or more of the four (4) conditions listed above, and,
- 3. The proposed resolution.

The pastor, having received the request for appeal or review, is to respond to those making the request within thirty (30) days of receiving the request. A copy of the response letter is to be forwarded to the local vicar having jurisdiction over the particular parish/school and to the Superintendent of Schools.

In most cases, the decision of the governing pastor is final. However, those who have requested the appeal or review may further appeal the decision of the governing pastor to the local vicar within thirty (30) days. The local vicar has the authority to summarily dismiss the appeal or he may forward the appeal to the Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria and the Office of Catholic Schools. The Vicar General shall make a final decision on the appeal in such cases. If the local vicar decides to dismiss the case he must, as a matter of record, forward a copy of such decision to the Vicar General and the Office of Catholic Schools.

***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please intitial by each item.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. An appeals process exists for decisions concerning policies, procedures, or other serious matters.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Dissatisfaction with a decision is not a sufficient condition for appeal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The final decision making power rests with the Diocesan Vicar General.

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## Diocese of Peoria Harassment Policy

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Harassment, including but not limited to, sexual harassment, of any employee or other person is unethical, is illegal and is prohibited. This policy is intended to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Diocesan or parish personnel who have administrative responsibility involving the diocese, a parish, a parish institution, school or organization in situations involving possible sexual harassment. It sets forth the Diocesan response to victims.

The term "harassment" includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, or any other form of verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct or advances which reflect adversely on an individual's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, marital status, veteran status, or physical or mental handicap. Harassment under this policy includes sexual harassment which means any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment; or (4) such other conduct or actions as are defined as "harassment" under the Illinois Human Rights Act as amended from time to time. Further, retaliation against a complainant or witness who initiates a case under this policy is included within the term "harassment" as used herein and shall be handled under this policy.

***POINTS OF EMPHASIS (Please initial by each item.)***

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The complete Diocesan Policy may be found on the Catholic Diocese of Peoria website.

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## Diocese of Peoria Sexual Abuse Policy

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In accord with the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People", the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops promulgated "Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with the Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons" as approved by the Apostolic See. The Charter addresses the Church's commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, and other church personnel (i.e., employees and volunteers).

The Bishops of the United States have promised to reach out to those who have been sexually abused as minors by anyone serving the Church in ministry, employment, or a volunteer position, whether the sexual abuse was recent or occurred many years ago. They stated that they would be as open as possible with the people in parishes and communities about instances of sexual abuse of minors, with respect always for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. They have committed themselves to the pastoral and spiritual care and emotional well-being of those who have been sexually abused and of their families. In addition, the Bishops will work with civil authorities, parents, educators, and various organizations in the community to make and maintain the safest possible environment for minors. In the same way, the Bishops have pledged to evaluate the background of seminary applicants as well as all Church personnel who have responsibility for the care and supervision of children and young people.

The Diocese of Peoria will implement these Norms diligently, compassionately, and fairly. This Policy and the procedures set forth herein will be reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually, by competent Diocesan authorities and Diocesan legal counsel. The following policies and procedures are intended to implement these goals.

*The complete Diocesan Policy may be found on the Catholic Diocese of Peoria website.*

## **Absenteeism and Truancy Policy**

**Addendum: January 13, 2023**

### **Attendance Procedures**

When a student is absent from school, the student's parent/guardian is requested to contact the school between 7:45am-9:00 am to inform the elementary or junior high secretary of the student's absence.

### **Leaving School Early**

Students who need to leave school early for medical purposes (doctor or dental appointments) must contact the office before leaving school. Parents are encouraged to communicate any dismissal changes no later than 2:00pm.

If a student is ill during the day, the student/parent must check out in the office before leaving the building.

### **Absences**

Epiphany Catholic School recognizes three (3) categories of absences:

- Excused absences
- Unexcused absences
- Truant absences (after the 9th unexcused absence)

**Excused Absence:** An excused absence is recognized as:

- A student's personal illness, including mental or behavioral health
- A death in the immediate family
- A family emergency
- Medical visits
- Family vacations (up to 5 school days)
- Other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's safety or health
- Other situations beyond the control of the student (such as court appearances)
- Other reasons approved by the Principal.

A health care provider's note may be required to excuse a student and/or for returning to school after the third consecutive day of being reported ill. If medical documentation is not provided, the absence may be marked

“unexcused.” Students who have 9 or more days of absences due to being sick may be required to provide a doctor’s note to excuse the absences.

**Unexcused Absence:** An unexcused absence is defined as an absence from school for a reason other than those listed above as an excused absence and/or an absence not authorized by the student’s parent/guardian or the Principal. When a student’s absence is unexcused, the parent/guardian may recognize the absence as being valid or legitimate; however, the school does not. School officials will identify causes for unexcused absences through contacting or interviewing students/parents/guardians. The following are unexcused absences (even with parent/guardian consent):

- Family vacations that are 6 or more school days
- Other avoidable absences.

**Truant Absences:** Truancy is defined as absence without valid cause for one or more periods of the student’s school day. Parents/guardians may be notified following 3, 5, and 9 days of absence or tardies within a school year, and a school intervention may be initiated. After the 9th school day (5% of regular attendance days) on which a student is absent without valid cause, he/she is deemed to be truant under Illinois law. Interventions to address truancy may include attendance letters, parent/teacher/principal conferences, student counseling, and/or involvement of the county truancy officer and/or local law enforcement. No punitive action, including out-of-school suspensions or court action will be taken against a chronically truant student unless available support services and other resources have been provided to the student, or offered to the student and refused. The school shall collect and review its chronic absence data and determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students and their families to encourage the habit of daily attendance and promote success.

Any person who has custody or control of a child subject to compulsory attendance who knowingly or willfully permits the child to persist in truancy, if convicted, is guilty of a Class C misdemeanor and may be subject to up to 30 days imprisonment and/or fine up to \$1,500.

**Family Vacation Absences:** Family travel during the school year does interrupt a student’s regular progress; however, we recognize the educational value of these trips. Therefore, five (5) vacation days per school year will be allowed as excused. Any days after five (5) school days will be unexcused. Early notice of travel will help school personnel to accommodate parents and students during that period. It will be the student’s responsibility to obtain all missing work from their teachers during their absence. Some assignments may not be available until the student returns to school. Work shall be completed and returned to the teacher within three (3) days for the child to receive credit.

**Tardiness:** Students are expected to be in class on time so they may maximize their learning opportunities. Teachers and the Principal will monitor student tardies. Students may be considered tardy if they arrive after the bell has rung. Students may receive consequences for excessive tardies.

### **Make Up Work**

Students who have excused absence(s) from school will be allowed to make up work for equivalent academic credit. In the event of prolonged illness or absence, arrangements for class assignments should be made by contacting the classroom teacher or school office. All student illnesses must be reported to the office.

The time allowed for makeup work will generally be one school day for every day missed, starting with the first day the student returns to school. In extenuating circumstances, a student may ask his/her teacher or the Principal for additional time to make up work. It is the responsibility of the student (and his/her parent/guardian), not the teachers, to get the assignments, complete them, and turn them in, and to arrange a time with the teacher to make up any missed quizzes or tests. Incomplete work or failure to do the work may result in a lowering of grades.

### **Attendance at Extracurricular Activities**

Students who stay home from school past 10 a.m. due to illness are not allowed to practice or compete that day in co-curricular activities. If a student misses classes due to a previously scheduled medical appointment, he/she may practice or compete. Absences due to funeral attendance or family obligations do not affect participation in co-curricular activities.

### **School Employee Code of Professional Conduct (C-411, P-CDOP)**

Pursuant to Illinois's Faith's Law requirements, the Diocese of Peoria adopts this Code of Professional Conduct for School Employees. Each of the provisions below is contained in existing policies and rules of the Diocese of Peoria, but are restated as a Code of Conduct for School Employees to comply with the law. Each school is required pursuant to Faith's Law to post this Code of Professional Conduct for School Employees on the school's website and to publish this document in the school's parent/family/student handbook, if the school has one.

#### **I. Educator Code of Conduct**

Pursuant to recent Illinois law, the Diocese adopts the relevant portions of the Illinois Educator Code of Conduct, as follows, which applies to school employees who are certified or working toward certification or whose certification has been waived:

Principle 1: Responsibility to Students. Educators are committed to creating, promoting, and implementing a learning environment that enables students to achieve their highest academic potential, and to succeed as a responsible member of society. They are committed to embodying standards of professionalism in the learning environment; respecting the inherent dignity and worth of each student by assuring that the learning environment is characterized by respect for each student; maintaining a professional relationship with students at all times; providing a curriculum based on high expectations for students; and fostering in each student the development of attributes that will enhance skills and knowledge necessary to be a contributing member of society.

Principle 2: Responsibility to Self. Educators are committed to establishing high professional standards and striving to meet these standards through their performance. They are committed to assuming responsibility and accountability for their performance and striving to demonstrate proficiency and currency in both content knowledge and professional practice; developing and implementing personal and professional goals with attention to professional standards through a process of self-assessment and professional development; representing their professional credentials and qualifications accurately; and using sound professional judgment.

Principle 3: Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession. Educators are committed to collaborating with school and Diocesan colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning and to meet state educational standards; working together to create a respectful, professional and supportive school climate for educators to maintain their individual professional integrity; seeking out and engaging in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession; encouraging promising candidates to enter the education profession; and supporting the preparation, induction, mentoring and professional development of educators.

Principle 4: Responsibility to School Parents and Families. Educators are committed to collaborating, striving to build trust, and respecting confidentiality with school parents and families striving to develop and maintain professional relationships with school parents and families; and promoting collaboration and supporting student learning through communication with parents and families.

Principle 5: Responsibility to the ISBE. Educators are committed to supporting the Administrative and School Codes as applicable to Catholic schools, state and federal laws and regulations as applicable to Catholic schools, and the Illinois State Board of Education's standards for highly qualified educators, as applicable to Catholic schools. They are committed to providing accurate communication to the Illinois State Board of Education concerning all certification matters; maintaining appropriate certification for employment; and complying with the state and federal codes, laws, and regulations that apply to Catholic schools.

Any employee who sexually harasses a student, willfully or negligently fails to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/), engages in grooming as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25, engages in grooming behaviors, violates boundaries for appropriate school employee student conduct, engages in sexual misconduct as defined in 105 ILCS 5/22-85.5, or otherwise violates an employee conduct standard will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. The Catholic Diocese of Peoria and its associated schools have no tolerance for any unprofessional conduct.

## **II. Sexual misconduct**

The Diocese's Norms for the Prohibition of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Sexual Misconduct with Adults: Education, Prevention, Assistance to Persons making a Report, Investigation, and Procedures for Determination of Fitness for Ministry/Employment, prohibits sexual abuse of minors by its employees, clergy members, and volunteers. Pursuant to Faith's Law, the Diocese has amended its Norms to add additional description of acts constituting sexual abuse of a minor:

- I. Sexual misconduct, defined by Faith's Law as any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity directed toward or with a minor for the purpose of establishing a romantic or sexual relationship with the minor, including but not limited to a sexual or romantic invitation; dating or soliciting a date; engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog; making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a minor; self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature; and/or a sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the minor (Illinois' Faith's Law, Public Act 102-0676, (105 ILCS 5/22-85.5).
- II. Grooming behavior, defined by Faith's Law and the Illinois Criminal Code as knowingly using a computer online service, internet service, local bulletin board service, or any other device capable of electronic data storage or transmission, or performs an act in person or by conduct through a third party, or uses written communication to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, or attempt to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, a child, or another person believed by the person to be a child, to commit any sex offense as defined in Section 2 of the Sex Offender Registration Act, to distribute photographs depicting the sex organs of the child, or to otherwise engage in any unlawful sexual conduct with a child or with another person believed by the person to be a child.

## **III. Expectations of School Employees**

School employees are expected to maintain professional relationships and boundaries, recognizing the age and the developmental levels of the students with whom they interact.

1. Employees are strictly prohibited from using any form of communication with students (e-mails, letters, notes, text messages, phone calls, conversations) that includes any subject matter that would be deemed unprofessional and/or inappropriate between an employee and student.
2. Employees are not permitted to transport students in the employee's privately owned vehicle, unless the employee has obtained the prior permission of the Principal to do so.
3. Employees are not permitted to take or possess a photo or video of a student on their private devices that would be construed as inappropriate.
4. Employees are expected to maintain a professional relationship in all interactions, both in and out of school.

#### **IV. School employees are mandated reporters**

The Diocese restates here the Diocese's requirement that its employees, including employees who work at diocesan elementary schools and high schools, shall report suspected child abuse and suspected child neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Pursuant to the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, (325 ILCS 5/4), school employees are required to make a report suspected child abuse and suspected child neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services by calling the hotline number at 1-800- 25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873) whenever the employee has reasonable cause to believe that a child known to the employee in the employee's professional or official capacity may be abused or neglected.

#### **V. Employee training related to child abuse and educator ethics**

The Diocese requires its employees be trained annually in their obligations as mandated reporters and every three years to be trained in preventing, detecting and responding properly to sexual harassment. The trainings are entitled *DCFS's Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters*; and the *State of Illinois' Prohibition of Sexual Harassment training*. Those requirements are set forth in the *Diocese's Employee Handbook* and in the *Diocese's Safe Environment Requirements for Clergy, Adult/Teen Employees and Volunteers* whose role involves direct contact with minors. The Diocese will require its school employee educators to receive training in educator ethics. When those resources are completed, they will be shared with educators. Effective 7/1/2023

#### **Faith's Law, Faith's Law Mandate Against Sexual Abuse in Schools**

On December 3, 2021, Governor Pritzker signed Faith's Law, P.A. 102-0676 (HB 1976), into law. Faith's Law expands the criminal definition of grooming beyond electronic communications to include written communications and acts committed in person or by conduct through a third party. The law also makes it clear that mandated reporters must report suspected grooming to DCFS under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. In addition to expanding the criminal definition of grooming, Faith's Law includes several new requirements for schools and educators intended to prevent sexual abuse and misconduct in schools.

The law specifically provides that any violation of the employee code of professional conduct or failure to report a violation may subject an employee to discipline, up to and including dismissal from employment. As part of this law, we are posting a copy of the resource guide to support you and your family should you need it. [RESOURCE GUIDE LINK](#)