A Code of Conduct for Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Volunteers, and Visitors of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Orlando

"Search Me, O God, and Know My Heart"

-Psalm 139

The Diocese of Orlando recognizes that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children. Parents and guardians in the local school community are expected to always demonstrate respectful behavior with faculty, administration, support staff, students, and volunteers, whether on or off school grounds or at school-related events. Parents should demonstrate support of the school's and Diocesan educational mission, personnel, policies, and procedures. Inappropriate behaviors on the part of a parent may result in the parent being barred from attending school sponsored activities and sporting events.

In cases of serious or repeated noncompliance by a parent/guardian with the school policies or procedures, the administration reserves the right to withdraw that parent's/guardian's child(ren) from the school. Please note that harassing teachers or administration over disciplinary decisions, threatening civil legal action over disciplinary decisions, and initiating civil legal actions against other students are considered to be an irretrievably broken school/parent relationship. This in no way prevents a parent from notifying law enforcement if they believe a crime has been committed. Parent or family members who are convicted and registered sex offenders may not enter the school grounds with the exception of driving and picking up student then immediately leaving property.

This **Code of Conduct** applies to all parents, guardians, caregivers, volunteers, and visitors who interact with our schools and Catholic Education in the Diocese of Orlando. It also applies to all parents, guardians, caregivers, volunteers, and visitors who are present at school and school sponsored activities, meetings, and/or functions within and outside of school hours. As parents, guardians, caregivers, volunteers, and visitors, there is an expectation of support for the Vision and Mission of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Orlando.

Code of Conduct for
Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Orlando

It is the expectation of the school that all parents/guardians/caregivers/volunteers and visitors always model acceptable behavior within the school setting, at school sponsored activities or in any social or professional media involving the school and/or Diocese. "It is incumbent upon parents to cooperate closely with the school teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated; and in fulfilling their duty, teachers are to collaborate closely with parents who are to be willingly heard and for whom associations or meetings are to be inaugurated and held in great esteem" (*The Code of Canon Law*, Canon 796, Para. 2).

This Code is designed to guide all stakeholders in their dealings with staff, other parents, students, and the wider school community. The Code stands beside but does not exclude or replace the rights and obligations of individuals under common law while recognizing the rights of the Diocese of Orlando as a Catholic religious entity and the religious nature of Catholic schools.

Mission Statement:

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Orlando proclaim the Gospel message within an academic environment of excellence that challenges students to be creative and critical thinkers who integrate faith, moral leadership, and compassionate service in order to create a more just and humane world.

Rights of a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:

- To be treated with respect and courtesy by staff, students, and other parents.
- To be listened to and clearly communicated with by the school in a timely manner, regarding your child/ren's education and development. This does not mean that school staff can always respond within 24 hours.
- To have confidentiality over sensitive issues respected by faculty/staff. This does not limit the staff's ability to conduct investigations into discipline issues.

Responsibilities of a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:

- Value and advocate for your school and its reputation. Be mindful of the hurt and damage social media may cause to faculty/staff members, other parents, and students.
- Respect the rights of faculty/staff members and other individuals.
- Respect the reputation of teachers, coaches and administrators and be mindful of communications especially social media; e.g., tone of emails.
- Follow the correct procedures to resolve a grievance or conflict, as outlined in the school's handbook.
- Parents must follow the instructions and directions of the teacher. A parent may remind students of the rules but at no time issue consequences and should refer the student to the teacher if the behavior continues.
- As valued members of the school community attend and participate appropriately in school liturgies, extra-curricular or special events including athletics, concerts, academic and cultural events.

As a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and/or Visitor, we ask that you:

- Cooperate with school/campus security protocols when on school grounds in order to support the overall safety and security of all children in our care.
- *Note that each school in the Diocese of Orlando has a "Raptor" comprehensive visitor check-in/check-out system located at the front reception desk to prevent school access to unauthorized persons. Using a valid driver's license, "Raptor" runs all visitors against the National and State Sex Offender Registry each time he/she visits the campus. ALL visitors and volunteers must wear their name badges/lanyards in plain sight at all times while on school grounds or at school-related events.*
- Support in words and actions the philosophy of Catholic Education.
- Under no circumstances approach/contact another student to address, discuss, or reprimand them because of actions towards one's own child/ren. Issues should be addressed by school administration. This includes the use of digital/social media to address or air grievances or talk negatively against them.
- Respect teachers' preparation and assigned supervisory time before, during, and after school. Make an appointment for long discussions at a mutually convenient time. If you wish to speak to a teacher, please do not expect a meeting unless pre-arranged.
- Protect our children and do not discuss any grievances or perceived failings in front of any student regarding the school.
- Respect the decisions made by the administration and faculty, even if you disagree with them. Continued demands to re-visit administration and faculty decisions is not acceptable.
- Listen to your child/ren, but remember that a different version of the event may be interpreted by others.
- Understand the importance of a healthy parent/teacher/child relationship and communicate any concerns to your school in a constructive and appropriate manner.
- Observe the school's policies, as outlined on the school webpage and/or the school's handbook and endeavor to support them in the home.
- Cooperate where one's own child's behavior has overstepped accepted school standards, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, and follow specified protocol for communication with faculty/staff members.
- Value the school community and its reputation especially when engaging with social media.

- Do not smoke or use offensive language on school premises.
- During livestreaming instruction, parents/guardians must not record or take screenshots of the instruction or share the livestream link with others. A quiet space needs to be provided to the student only, to avoid disruptions or distractions to the teacher and other students. If parents/guardians have any concerns with the livestream instruction, they need to schedule time with the teacher outside of class time.
- Respect the decisions made by the administration on how to comply with court ordered custody and parenting plans for separated parents.

Addressing concerns regarding situations involving your student(s):
Our Catholic schools want to work in partnership with our families. Therefore, the administrative structure for addressing concerns is as follows:

- Speak to the appropriate school person involved (e.g., class teacher) first and try to resolve the concern with mutual respect and clear communication. Where/if possible, make an appointment with the relevant person. Follow the chain of command.
- If for some reason this is not possible, then make an appointment to see an administrator, or other designated leadership personnel.
- The Administrator (or designee) should attempt to mediate and find resolution in the presence of both parties.
- If, having followed Steps 1-3 with no satisfaction, the parents must contact the pastor. Only after steps 1-4 have occurred with no resolution, then you may contact the Office of Catholic Schools using information on the website of the Diocese of Orlando - Office of Catholic for further facilitation (https://www.orlandodiocese.org/ministries-offices/schools/).
- Understand that parents, caregivers, guardians, etc. will not receive disciplinary or conflict resolution details that involve children other than their own. This is in accordance to Florida Statute.

<u>It is important to note that criticism regarding a faculty/staff member will only be heard if it is related to their professional conduct.</u>

Breaches and/or the inability to respect the Diocese of Orlando – Office of Catholic Schools Code of Conduct for Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Volunteers, and Visitors, or exasperating complaints, may result in exclusion of a parent, guardian, caregiver, volunteer, and/or visitor from a school, and/or possible termination of enrollment of their child/ren.

If your complaint relates to Sexual Abuse by a faculty/staff member towards a child in both an historical or current matter, you should, contact the statewide toll-free abuse and neglect registry at 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873) and/or law enforcement. The Diocese of Orlando also offers the service of a Victim Assistance Coordinator. The number is 407-246-7179.

Parents, Guardians, and/or Caregivers, when signing off on accepting the school's policies in the Enrollment Application Form, and by the act of accepting enrollment at a Diocese of Orlando Catholic School, are accepting of this Code of Conduct in its entirety.

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