

CATHOLIC SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Discipline in the Catholic school is an aspect of moral guidance and refers to those reasonable controls which promote the individual student's development and self-discipline. Discipline also promotes a Christian environment in which the rights and responsibilities of students and teachers are recognized and upheld. It is important to constructively maintain discipline in order to further the student's growth in Christian virtue and to create a safe and peaceful atmosphere to advance the educational process.

Discipline Policy

Each school must develop its own policies and procedures concerning disciplinary action. These policies should be consistent with the overall mission and goals of the school, the Catholic community, and should stem from a loving, accepting attitude toward the child as a person of dignity. In all cases parent/guardian contact must be made about the implementation of the discipline programs.

These policies shall be written, published, and made available to students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and faculty members.

It is in this spirit that the following are unacceptable:

1. Corporal punishment.
2. Language which will ridicule the student, parent/guardian, or family background.
3. Withholding or altering rightfully earned academic marks.

Administrative Policy

The administration defines the procedure followed when a problem arises within a school. Fairness and reasonableness in disciplinary actions are to be considered in the administrative process. The steps in serious school disciplinary actions are as follows:

1. Charges against the student are objectively investigated. (Whenever possible, facts are to be obtained from eye witness accounts.)
2. Charges and supporting evidence are explained to the student.
3. A conference with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and school officials is provided so that each party has an opportunity to discuss the problem together.

Code of Student Conduct

In order to assure the well-being of students in the educational system, a code of student conduct shall be established at school as follows:

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1. The school principal shall develop a student code of conduct in cooperation with faculty members, parent(s)/guardian(s), and students. Each school code is to be consistent with the Catholic Schools Office policies.
2. Each school's policies and student code of conduct shall be reviewed by the Catholic Schools Office. A copy of the school policies and student code of conduct, as amended each year, shall be made available to parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and teachers at the beginning of each school year.
3. Violations of the school code of conduct are to be resolved at the local level through a series of conferences between the teacher, student, parent/guardian, and the local school administrator.
4. When violations may lead to substantial penalties against a student, including a student with a disability, the following procedures are to be initiated by the local school administrator.

General Procedures (Note: When dealing with students with disabilities, any change in the student's program must be effected through a formal meeting.)

- A. Investigate and document the charges.
 1. Conduct an impartial investigation.
 2. If, after full investigation, discussion and attempted resolution of a complaint against a student, there is:
 - a. evidence of a serious violation in the student code of conduct, and
 - b. discussion and counseling has not brought a resolution, the local school administrator shall initiate conference procedures.
- B. Hold a conference with the student and the local school administrator.

Procedures for Student Disciplinary Action

- A. In the conference, the school administrator shall:
 1. Explain the charge or violation of the student code of conduct to the student,
 2. indicate the evidence; and
 3. provide the student a reasonable opportunity to state his/her version of the facts and present any related evidence.
- B. If the conference with the student does not resolve the issue, inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student violation as soon as possible and request a conference.
- C. Hold a conference with the student and parent/guardian.

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1. Schedule the conference at the earliest possible date.
2. In the conference, the local school administrator shall explain the charges of violation of the student code of conduct to the student and parent/guardian (in writing, if appropriate) and present the evidence known to the school authorities.
3. The student shall be given an opportunity to present his/her version of the facts and present any relevant evidence.
4. The local school administrator will then initiate appropriate action.

Detention

Students should not be detained unduly after school without the knowledge/permission of parent(s)/guardian(s).

Probation: Disciplinary/Academic

Each school shall define its own policy concerning probation. The policy shall include conditions and the process to be followed. The policy shall be published in the local handbook. A written record shall be kept of any student probation.

In-School Suspension

Individual schools may have staff and support for an in-school suspension program. This is an alternative to the out-of-school suspension. Contact with a parent/guardian must be made.

Suspension

Suspension is a disciplinary punishment to be invoked at the discretion of the principal or designee for less serious infractions of rules. A pupil shall be suspended for no more than five (5) consecutive school days, absent mitigating circumstances. Failure to correct behavior can become grounds for expulsion.