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1000 PHILOSOPHY

1100 MISSION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

1110 MISSION STATEMENT

In the Diocese of Fresno, the primary mission of CATHOLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION is to be an effective instrument of the Catholic Church in its ministry of teaching the Gospel message and assisting children to grow into fullness of life in Jesus. This mission supports parents in their role as the primary educators of their children. This mission is accomplished at each school through the efforts of the school's pastor, parishioners, staff, parents, and students who form a faith community. This faith community is the vehicle for developing in students the responsibility for founding and promoting a society rooted in justice, love, and peace.

1111 PREFERENCE FOR PRACTICING CATHOLICS

To support the religious mission and purpose of Catholic schools and to build a strong Catholic culture on each campus, Catholic schools shall give preference in hiring, admission of students, and the awarding of tuition assistance to those individuals or families who are "active and practicing Roman Catholics."

Definition: The phrase, "active and practicing Roman Catholic," is applicable to any individual or any family whose member generally meet the following criteria:

1. Be baptized in the Roman Catholic faith;
2. Regularly participates in the worship and life of the Church; and
3. Lives a lifestyle that is not contrary to the teachings of the church and the moral demands of the Gospel.

1120 MOTTO: FULFILLING THE MISSION OF JESUS

The primary goal of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fresno is to assist students to grow into fullness of life in Jesus, to embrace their baptismal call to ministry, and to continue the mission of Jesus in their lives. Therefore, the diocesan motto for the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Fresno is,

"Fulfilling the Mission of Jesus Christ."

This motto stresses that graduates from our schools should realize Jesus' unconditional love in their lives and freely embrace His mission, ministry, and values. Their lives should be founded upon six central Christian virtues:

- A. Faith: The graduate is a person whose faith in God is living, conscious, and active.
- B. Courage: The graduate is a person who willingly acts on his/her Christian convictions no matter the cost, the pain, or the sacrifices it entails.
- C. Respect: The graduate is a person who respects and honors God, self, and others.
- D. Integrity: The graduate is a person who consistently stands for and lives his/her moral principles.
- E. Responsibility: The graduate is a person with the capacity to make free and responsible decisions and the ability to accept both personal and social responsibility for his/her actions.
- F. Compassion: The graduate is a person who feels the pain of those suffering and who works toward making a better life for all those in need.

1200 PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS STATEMENT

“The Catholic school pursues cultural goals and the natural development of youth to the same degree as any other school. What makes a Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love. It tries to guide youth in such a way that personality development goes hand in hand with the development of the ‘new creature’ that each one has become through baptism. It tries to relate all of human culture to the good news of salvation so that the light of faith will illumine everything that the student will gradually come to learn about the world, about life, and about the human person.”

*Vatican II Declaration on Christian Education
Gravissimum educationis, 8*

In Sharing the Light of Faith – (National Catechetical Directory) the Catholic bishops of the United States call Catholic schools “To be communities of faith in which the Christian message, the experience of community, worship, and social concern are integrated in the total experience of students, their parents, and the members of the faculty.”

In the spirit of the church’s documents, the Catholic Schools of the diocese of Fresno strive to provide students with the best Catholic education and formation possible. Focusing on the holistic development of each student, the curriculum of the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Fresno includes comprehensive instruction in the academic subjects and in the beliefs and values of the Catholic faith which are integrated into all the academic areas of each school’s program. While striving for academic excellence, the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Fresno provide opportunities for religious, moral, social, cultural, and physical development.

Catholic schools acknowledge that parents, who have the primary responsibility for the moral and religious development of their children, are partners with the parish and the entire Christian Community in the continuing educative process. Parents work with the school’s administration in the development of school policies and the budgetary process based on Christian values within the constraints of the local school resources.

The Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Fresno are committed to provide:

- A. Activities that allow students to actively participate in prayer and liturgy;
- B. Quality educational opportunities for students of varied academic abilities;
- C. Financial aid programs to assist those families unable to assume full financial responsibilities of tuition; and
- D. Opportunities for students to serve others in order to fulfill the mandate of the gospel and demands of justice and to recognize that society requires the cooperation and contribution of each of its members.

1210 PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES

Since it is the philosophy of the diocese that gives the school community unity of purpose and cohesion in the execution of its programs, it is essential that:

- A. School administrators acquaint applicants for staff positions with the philosophy of the school, discuss it with them, and assure themselves that the applicant is prepared to serve within the framework of this philosophy.

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- B. Teachers, as well as administrators, test honestly their own personal philosophy against the school's philosophy and agree to serve in the schools of the diocese only when these two philosophies are compatible.
- C. Parents need to be acquainted with the philosophy of the schools of the diocese as they enroll their children. They should understand that enrollment constitutes an agreement that their children are taught according to the school's philosophy, and they should be ready to cooperate with the school on this basis.
- D. Students, too, should be made aware of the meaning of the school's philosophy and how it impacts their daily living of the gospel message. Children cannot learn too early that each person has a God-given power to think, to judge, and to make free and responsible decisions.

1220 RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

Schools of the diocese recognize the special relations which result from enrolling children and engaging staff of a different faith than the Catholic faith and from hosting programs sponsored by public agencies dedicated to neutrality in relation to religious convictions. The following principles shall govern these relationships:

- A. All staff shall respect the religious and ethical teachings to which the school is committed as a Catholic school; therefore, they shall neither explicitly nor implicitly teach or counsel in such a manner as to undermine these teachings. They shall support and participate in the school's efforts to build community on the basis of mutual respect and caring; they shall motivate students as well as other staff members to be of service both within and beyond the school setting.
- B. All students shall be expected to participate in the total instructional program of the school. The religious education program of the school shall respect the beliefs of children of other faiths without apologizing for the positive content of faith which is conveyed by this program; such content shall be that of the Catholic religion.
- C. Schools in the diocese shall be gracious hosts to programs sponsored by public school agencies. At no time shall the religious neutrality under which the agencies operate be restricted. Programs sponsored by these public agencies shall not commingle with programs of the schools in the diocese in such a way as to blur the line between the distinct nature of the contributions made by each of the education of the students in our schools.
- D. Public school personnel working in the schools of the Diocese of Fresno are always exempted from participation in any religious programs. Any materials on loan from public schools shall not be used in any religious-oriented programs.

1230 LOCAL ADAPTATION

Each of the schools of the Diocese of Fresno shall adapt this general diocesan school philosophy to its particular situation and incorporate its own school's philosophy into its own local handbook. Local school philosophies may go beyond the general diocesan philosophy, but shall not contradict it.