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8000 PUBLIC RELATIONS

8100 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Public relations embodies all communication between the school and the community, and provides the basis for mutual understanding. The purpose of a public relations program is to keep the public informed regarding programs, policies, and conditions of the catholic school community. The public includes diocesan and pastoral administrators, the parish council and/or parish school board, the school staff, the parents, the students, the former students, the parish, and the local civic community.

It is the responsibility of the school principal to plan and coordinate the public relations program at the local level in cooperation with the pastor and with the neighboring parish schools serving the same community.

8110 SCHOOL SPONSORED MEDIA

A school atmosphere and program which integrates religious belief and practice with the normal development and education of children are the most effective media for the purpose and objectives of Catholic education. Other means of communication frequently used are: parent organizations, community activities, public service projects, open house observances, promotional literature, school reports and publications, press releases, and broadcast features.

The principal shall formulate and publicize local regulations and procedures regarding this matter. All announcements, news releases, and promotional materials regarding a school shall be cleared by the principal or designated official to assure consistent policy and to avoid duplication.

8120 NEWS RELEASES

Individual schools are encouraged to release to the diocesan newspaper, Catholic Life, KNXT Channel 49, to the local press, and to community affairs producers, stories and information that will keep the public informed of current school activities and achievements.

8130 BROCHURES, CATALOGS, ADVERTISING

Every school must include a statement of its non-discriminatory policy in all its advertising brochures and catalogs dealing with student admissions, programs, and scholarships. In addition, every school must include a reference to its non-discriminatory policy in other written advertising that it uses as a means of informing prospective students of its programs (see policy 4110).

8140 SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Data designated as directory information for elementary and secondary students shall be released only in response to legitimate interest requests and for purposes approved by the school administrator. No information may be released to a private profit-making entity.

8200 OFFICE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION SPONSORED MEDIA OR OTHER MEDIA

The Office of Catholic Education has the duty of establishing contact with all groups and individuals concerning the mission and functioning of schools. A variety of media shall be used, as necessary, to foster articulation and communication and to support the educational endeavors of the diocese.

8210 RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

8210.1 SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent shall represent the diocese in all matters that concern the Office of Catholic Education and the Catholic schools in the diocese. Any announcement of policy for Catholic education and news items that pertains to the schools of the diocese shall be released by the proper diocesan official.

8210.2 PRINCIPAL

In each school, the principal shall coordinate the public relations activities. All school bulletins, newsletters, publications, and public programs require prior approval by the principal.

8300 PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent participation is vital to a successful school program. A sense of joint responsibility shared by parents and teachers forms the basis of the faith community in which the child will be nurtured and grow to a happy, responsible Catholic adult.

Principals and teachers have a grave responsibility to respect the dignity of parents, to affirm and support them. A program that brings about successful parent-teacher interaction assures that the task of educating the child is a cooperative learning responsibility.

The effectiveness of an educational endeavor of the school is contingent upon the parents' understanding and support. Energy dedicated to parent participation and education is not a fringe activity, but an integral part of the education process and the mission of the Catholic school. Parent education fosters parent-teacher communication and encourages and stimulates parents to assume an attitude of shared responsibility.

8310 PARENT GROUPS

Parent-Teacher Groups and other school support groups may be organized:

- A. To promote a broader appreciation of the mission, goals, and ideals of Catholic education;
- B. To enlist the spiritual, educational, and social resources of home and school to provide the best Catholic education possible;
- C. To foster the integration of families into the life of the parish community;
- D. To provide a solid resource group to plan, coordinate, and staff the school's fund-raising efforts and social functions (see policy 6220ff).
- E. To provide a forum of exchange for parents and teachers on matters of mutual interest;
- F. To establish, guide, and coordinate the efforts of other school related parent organizations, such as sports booster clubs, band booster clubs, Future Farmers of America, etc.; and
- G. To foster the political action of parents as advocates regarding national, state, and local legislation that affects Catholic schools as well as the lives of students and parents.

All Parent-Teacher groups shall operate under constitutions that are in substantial conformity with the model constitution approved by the diocese.

8320 SCHOOL BOARDS

Each Catholic school has been directed by the Bishop to establish a local board that meets regularly and functions effectively (see series 7000).

8400 PUBLIC ACTIVITIES INVOLVING STAFF, STUDENTS, OR SCHOOL

8410 RELATIONS BETWEEN PUBLIC AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Every member of the school staff has a responsibility in this matter since public relations are exercised to the greatest extent by day-to-day contact between school personnel and the public.

8420 VISITOR REGULATIONS

All visitors shall be required to report or register in the office of the principal upon their arrival at the school.

The principal shall provide for appropriate hospitality for visitors and shall establish a local policy concerning visits to the school or classes that will enhance the effect of the educational program rather than hinder it.

8420 CONFERENCE WITH TEACHERS

Parents and other persons shall confer with teachers after school or at other appointed times so as not to interrupt class instruction.

8430 GUEST SPEAKERS

Persons who are not officials of the school, the diocese, or of approved groups, such as policemen and firemen, shall not be allowed to address the pupils of a school, either in class groups or in assemblies, without the advance approval of the principal.

8440 RELATIONS BETWEEN PUBLIC AND STUDENTS

In regard to public performances and service activities, the primary educational aims of the school and the needs and best interests of the students must be the first consideration in these matters at all times.

8450 CONTESTS

In consultation with the faculty, approval of contests is the responsibility of the principal. Students should be encouraged to participate in contests that are related to the curriculum and that promote good public relation.

8460 SOLICITATION OF FUNDS FROM STUDENTS

- A. There may be no solicitation or collection of funds without the approval of the principal.
- B. Every precaution shall be taken to ensure the voluntary nature of any authorized solicitation. In these collections, the element of competition should be used with discretion.
- C. Any authorized solicitations shall be scheduled and conducted in such a manner as to reduce to a minimum:
 1. Interruption of the regular school activities
 2. Imposition on families
 3. Conflict with school/parish fund-raising
 4. The individual solicitation of funds by a student or faculty member is prohibited.

8470 FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES

Students may participate in and cooperate with fund-raising activities conducted by the school or parish.

8480 ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

A school may distribute literature of a commercial nature to students or parents only after the principal has assessed its educational merit.

8500 RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS

8510 RELATIONS WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL CIVIL AUTHORITIES

Cooperative relationships shall be maintained with governmental agencies for the welfare, health, and safety of all citizens including the students in our schools.

Civil officials who desire to enter the school or to perform some service there, shall be courteously requested to present identification and proof of official capacity unless personally known by the school's officials.

8520 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

Schools shall cooperate with local and state law enforcement departments, keeping in mind the rights of students and parents.

Schools are urged to invite the cooperation of the local law enforcement agencies in instruction students about crime prevention, drug traffic and abuse, bicycle and traffic safety, and similar pertinent topics.

8530 QUESTIONING OF STUDENTS

When it is necessary in the performance of his/her duty for a police officer to question or arrest a minor in attendance at school, the officer is empowered to do so. While the constitutional rights of students may not be infringed upon by police officers, school officials are not required to nor should they attempt to prevent such interviews. In taking this action, police officers are required to give due consideration and recognition to the rights and responsibilities of the school personnel. Consequently, all police officials shall be requested and expected to deal directly with the principal, pastor, or delegated school official.

In such matters, the principal, pastor, or delegated school official may take the following steps:

- A. Ascertain the identity and the official capacity of the police officer, the authority under which he/she acts, and in the case of the release of the student, the reason for such action.
- B. Question the officer to ascertain whether the student is a victim, suspect, or witness to a crime.
- C. Notify the parents immediately unless prohibited from doing so by the police officer. The principal may also request that the police officer delay interviewing or arresting the student until the student's parents are present. If the officer is unwilling to wait until the parents arrive, the principal shall request to be present for the interview and/or arrest. The officer has the right to refuse this request except when the student is being interviewed by a police officer or a child protective agency investigator concerning a report of suspected child abuse. In this situation, the student has the right to select a member of the school staff to be present at the interview. Presence of a staff member during a student interview lends support to the student; however, the staff member may not verbally participate in the actual student interview. The staff member is subject to the confidentiality requirements of the child abuse statutes (see the "California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act," Penal Code Article 2.5, Section 11174.3).

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- D. Keep a record of the events and the sequence of procedures followed. This shall include the name and identification of the officer to whom the parent should be referred.

In these situations, every possible step should be taken to insure a minimum of embarrassment or loss of class time for the student. The fact that a student is interviewed or arrested by a police officer does not necessarily constitute cause for suspension or expulsion.