

The Parent-Guardian Guide to Safety in the High Schools of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia

The mission of the schools of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is to equip saints for life in this world and the next.

The Parent's Guide to Safety in Archdiocesan High Schools is designed to be a complement to the individual archdiocesan high school policies and procedures outlined in the student and faculty handbooks.

The following represents policies of the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education Secondary School System which apply to all archdiocesan high schools.

Code of Conduct

The teaching of responsibility to God, to self, and to others is the basic premise of a Code of Conduct in a Catholic school. The Code of Conduct contributes to establishing a safe and orderly school environment where respect for the human person is demonstrated in all situations. Students represent their high school at all times whether within the school itself or within the broader community. Therefore, students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct established by the school at all times.

A student who would demonstrate immorality, public disorder, or act in a way which would cast shame or cause embarrassment to the high school is liable for any or all of the following: suspension, expulsion, or denial of public graduation.

Enforcement of the Code of Conduct is expected to protect the safety and well-being of all members of the school community while equipping each student with the skills needed to succeed in this world.

The Student and the Law

Any student *involved* in any legal action is liable for suspension, dismissal, or both. The parent has the responsibility to notify the school if the student is involved in a legal matter. Parents are expected to fully disclose the details of the situation so the school along with the Office of Catholic Education may determine the appropriate course of action with regard to the student's school status.

Any student *found guilty* of a juvenile or adult crime is liable for dismissal from school or may be denied admission to the school. The parent has the responsibility to notify the school if the student is found guilty in a legal matter. Parents are expected to fully disclose the details of the situation so the school along with the Office of Catholic Education may determine the appropriate course of action with regard to the student's school status.

Enforcement of the Student and the Law Policy is expected to protect the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.

Harassment

Harassment in any form is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. Any pervasive, unwelcome action, physical, verbal or written, which has the effect of disrupting the normal and appropriate activities of a teacher, student, staff member or anyone within the school community, is prohibited by this policy.

Harassment because of a person's sex, race, age, national origin or disability is particularly egregious. Accusations of such harassment will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate sanctions will be imposed on individuals found to have violated this policy.

Examples include:

1. Threatening adverse action if sexual favors are not granted;
2. Promising preferential treatment in exchange for sexual favors;
3. Unwanted physical contact;
4. A pattern of offensive remarks such as unwelcome comments about appearance or clothing, obscene jokes, sexually explicit or offensive language;
5. Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
6. Unwelcome notes, e-mails, and other communications which are sexually suggestive.

Any student who feels he/she has been subjected to harassment should bring the matter personally to the immediate attention of the Assistant Principal for Student Services. If the student is uncomfortable for any reason discussing the matter with the Assistant Principal for Student Services, the student should report it to the Principal.

All allegations of harassment will be investigated promptly and in as confidential a manner as possible. When warranted by the results of the investigation, appropriate action will be taken up to and including dismissal. Retaliation in any form against anyone for making a complaint under this policy or for participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Any retaliation should also be reported pursuant to this policy and is itself a cause for disciplinary action.

Enforcement of the Harassment Policy is expected to protect all members of the school community by demonstrating respect for the human person.

Bullying

Bullying is generally defined as a pattern of unwanted aggressive, intentional, or deliberately hostile behavior that may involve a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes but is not limited to actions such as making threats, intimidation, assault, extortion, oral or written threats, cyber threats, teasing, name-calling, threatening looks or gestures, false accusations, hazing, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Each high school is committed to providing a safe, caring, respectful and non-threatening atmosphere in which each student can learn and succeed. Bullying of any sort is unacceptable in our schools. For clarity, it is important to note that bullying in our schools includes, school buildings, school grounds, school-sponsored events, trips, sporting events, buses, bus stops, and cyber-bullying through social media and or use of the internet. If bullying does occur, students should be assured of the fact that all incidents will be addressed quickly. It is expected that anyone, whether student, faculty, staff, or family

member who witnesses or has knowledge of an incident of bullying, will report the incident to the school administration or the Guidance Office immediately.

Bullying is a form of harassment and subject to the same sanctions established under the Harassment Policy by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Enforcement of the Bullying policy is expected to demonstrate the Catholic value of respect for the human person.

Contraband

Students are forbidden to bring to school or to have in their possession any materials which do not pertain to school work, which are a source of disturbance, or which do not promote the common good. Drugs/alcohol, weapons/firearms and tobacco are items forbidden in schools by regulation. These materials are subject to confiscation and violators will receive appropriate disciplinary action as determined by the school, up to and including dismissal.

Smoking

In accordance with the legal code of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, smoking is not permitted on any school campus by anyone. Cigarettes or other tobacco products are not permitted on the school grounds or in the school building.

All tobacco products will be considered contraband and will be confiscated. Students found to be smoking, using tobacco products, or in possession of tobacco products on school property will receive appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Civil authorities may be notified.

Enforcement of the Smoking and Tobacco Policy is expected to protect all members of the school community.

Alcohol/Drugs

The possession or use of alcohol or other drugs is strictly prohibited on school property and during school-related functions, on or off campus. Consumption of alcohol and/or the use of drugs, or the possession of the same will result in serious consequences. These consequences include, but are not limited to, immediate suspension, notification of parents, loss of privileges and possible dismissal from the high school. Individual circumstances may warrant denial of public graduation. In addition, a student may be scheduled for assessment with a counseling team at parental expense. Civil authorities may be notified.

Universal Search Policy

To protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may question and search a student, his/her personal effects, lockers, and vehicles used by the student and may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in the search. Searches conducted by school authorities may include, but are not limited to utilization of certified drug detection dogs or any devices used to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the school population.

Student searches will be gender specific to protect the modesty of the student being searched.

Ordinarily, a student has the right to privacy with regard to the school locker. It is the proper function, however, of school authorities to inspect the lockers under their control and vehicles on school property to prevent their use in illicit ways or for illegal purposes. In any contemplated search of a student's person, a school official should have "probable cause," or justification for immediate search and in the presence of one other witness, i.e., to prevent injury or loss of evidence. Under no circumstances may a student be asked to remove any part of his or her clothing as part of the search. In the event of a search, there will be parental notification of the probable cause for the search.

Police may not inspect lockers without a warrant and/or school permission; parents may be notified and a school official must be present for the search.

A student's refusal or failure to permit such searches and seizures as provided in this policy will be considered grounds for disciplinary action.

Law Enforcement and Interviews of Students

On occasions, it is necessary for law enforcement officers to interview students during school hours or to take them into custody. The police or officers of the courts deserve the full cooperation of the school officials. However, in order to safeguard the individual rights of students, the school administrators have certain responsibilities to the student regarding cooperation with law enforcement agencies.

The following procedures are followed by the school regarding the interview and apprehension of students during school hours:

- A. The law enforcement agent should contact the principal or his/her delegated administrator and advise the administrator of the nature and circumstances of the visit.
- B. All reasonable efforts should then be made by a school official to locate the parents to notify them of the nature of the proposed police contact and to secure the presence of at least one of the parents for the interview.
- C. If it is impossible to secure the presence of the parents, the school official has the right and power to act in loco parentis, and to take appropriate actions in that capacity. The principal or his/her designee should be present during all interviews.
- D. In emergency situations where the commission of a criminal offense has been witnessed by the police, the police have the legal right to take direct action in schools in such situations where they are engaged in "hot pursuit." In non-emergency situations, the law enforcement authorities must have an arrest warrant. The principal must be notified of the action as soon as possible.
- E. In the event it becomes necessary to make apprehension during school hours, the police should contact the principal to have the student summoned to the principal's office before being released from school into police custody. No arrests should be made in the classroom.

The school should record the name and organization of the officer, the time of departure and the reason for the apprehension. The parents should be notified immediately as to where the student will be taken.

Identification Card

All students will be provided with one Identification Card. The identification card is used to grant access by the student to the school. The student is responsible for his/her identification card and may not permit anyone to use his/her card at any time. The identification card is to be worn on the lanyard and around the neck at all times. The identification card is critical in an emergency situation when identifying injured students may not be possible. The use of the identification card also deters entrance and access to school facilities by intruders.

School Emergency Operations Planning/Crisis Planning

Each school is required to have a School Emergency Operations Plan/Crisis Plan in place. Details of the Plan are shared with local law enforcement and shared school wide with school personnel. The Plan may not be posted on school websites or in other public arenas for the protection of the plan itself.

The Crisis Plan includes procedures for the following:

- Internal and External Communications Procedures
- Fire Drill Schedules and Procedures (10 fire drills are required per school year with one per month as the recommendation)
- Evacuation Procedures and the Alternative Site
- Lockdown Procedures for both Internal and External Lockdown Situations
- Shelter in Place Procedures
- Tornado Drill Procedures
- Bus Evacuation Drill Procedures (conducted by local public school transportation offices)
- First Aid in a Crisis
- Basic CPR
- Common Steps to Operate all AEDs
- Guide to Hyperglycemia and Hypoglycemia
- Guide to Seizures
- Guide to Asthma Attacks
- Guide to Allergic Emergencies
- Guide to Major Open Wounds
- Care for Shock
- Care for Injuries to Muscles, Joints and Bones
- Care for Burns
- Crisis Counseling

Notifications in the Event of a Safety Threat

In the event of a safety threat, security breach, or other risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a member of the school community, notifications are made by school personnel in a very specific manner.

School personnel may notify local law enforcement, the Office of Catholic Education, the Office for Communications of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Child Line, the Office for Investigations, the Office for Youth and Young Adults, other offices as appropriate, and parents depending on the situation. While it would be desirable to state a specific time frame for notifying parents, and a specific order of notifications, each situation is handled on a case-by-case basis.

Ideally, parents would be notified of any safety concerns immediately. However, schools must act in accordance with local law enforcement in the event that law enforcement becomes involved and must await law enforcement's directives before making any notifications.

Weather and Non-Weather-Related School Closings

In the event of school closings, it is important to listen to KYW 1060-AM radio, Channel 6- WPVI TV, Channel 3- NBC TV, Channel 10-CBS TV, or FOX-29 TV. Important to note is that our archdiocesan suburban schools usually follow the opening or closing decisions of the suburban public school district in which they are located. The Philadelphia City archdiocesan schools usually open or close in agreement with the Philadelphia School District. It is important to listen carefully as our school transportation needs are served by a large number of school districts. Late starts and early dismissals are also handled as above. Each archdiocesan school has its own detailed procedures for weather and non-weather-related closings available in the student handbook.

School Reach:

Each school uses *School Reach* or a similar voice and email alert system, in order to communicate with families regarding snow or school emergencies. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the school has up-to-date phone and email contact numbers for use with these communications systems. Updated information should be provided to the Main Office.

Visitors to the School

All visitors are expected to use the buzzer system to gain entrance to the school. The visitor must state name and reason for the visit. If asked, the visitor must show identification. No visitor should allow anyone to hold the door open or open the door for him/her. All visitors, once entered into the building, must report to the main office and must use the school's sign-in sheet to indicate the reason, time, date, etc. for the visit.

Public Access to School Property

When school-sponsored activities or events take place on campus and the public is invited to attend, it is everyone's responsibility to be mindful of potential threats to the safety of the school community. Use common sense to ensure everyone's safety by reporting to the school authorities anything that seems to be contrary to the safety and well-being of all in attendance.

Supervision of Students in Activities Programs and Sports Programs

All clubs and activities sponsored by the school must be recognized by the principal and supervised by an administrator-approved faculty sponsor who directs and guides the students and attends all meetings and functions.

All activities must be supervised. Students are responsible for good behavior whether the school-sponsored activity takes place on or off campus.

Clearances Required of School Personnel

All volunteers and employees must have the following clearances and background checks:

- Pennsylvania State police Criminal Record Check – renewal is required every five years
- Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse Clearance Check- renewal is required every five years
- Federal Criminal Background Check- (all new employees, all who live outside of PA, and all who have lived outside of PA within last two years)
- Safe Environment Training- Office of Child and Youth Protection Archdiocese of Philadelphia
- Mandated Reporter Training

Cell Phone Policies

Cell phone policies greatly vary by individual school. Parents should ensure student understanding of the school's cell phone policy.

Parking and Driving Regulations

Parking and driving regulations greatly vary by school. Parents should ensure student understanding of the school's parking and driving regulations.

Acceptable Use of Technology

All students and school personnel are bound by the Archdiocesan Acceptable Use of Technology Policy. The policy can be obtained from the local schools.