

*"In Unity, We are One in the Lord"*



*A Code of Conduct  
for  
Parents, Guardians, Caregivers,  
Volunteers, and Visitors  
of Catholic Schools  
in the  
Diocese of St. Petersburg*

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

*-Psalm 139*

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 St. Petersburg. 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 St. Petersburg.

# **Code of Conduct for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of St. Petersburg**

The school is a multifaceted organization comprising a diversity of populations that have distinctive relationships to one another. Relationships are at the very core of our Catholic Christian belief in our Triune (three persons in one) God. The Holy Trinity is God in a relationship! This beautiful doctrine inspires all of us in Catholic Schools, to attempt to be a living Christian community in relationship with God and others. It is essential in such a community that all members recognize and respect not only their own rights and responsibilities but also the rights and responsibilities of other members of the community and those of the school itself. "All rights have to be balanced by responsibilities because we are in relationship" (Putney, 2005).

The responsibility for promoting and upholding these core values of the school community must fall on all those with the greatest capacity to reason and control their actions. Therefore, it is the expectation of the school that all parents/guardians/caregivers/volunteers and visitors model acceptable behavior always within the school setting, at school-sponsored activities or when the school can be involved in any social or professional media. "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).

As a parent, celebrate that you play a foundational role in the development of your child's sense of justice, equity, and worth of all members of the school community. You are one of the most instrumental role models in your child's life. "Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965, para. 3).

All Catholic schools are private property; This Code is designed to guide all stakeholders in their dealings with staff, other parents, students, and the wider school community.

## **In living out the Gospel values, we strive to create a safe environment for all stakeholders developing:**

- An inclusive and welcoming attitude towards all people
- An ability to appreciate the situation of others
- A cooperative attitude in working with others
- An open, positive and honest communication
- The ability to work civilly with other people
- The reverence for Creation
- Trusting relationships
- Responsible actions

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

- Support in words and actions the philosophy of Catholic Education

- Respect the decisions made by the administration, even if you disagree with them.
- Work in trust with the school for the common goal of achieving what is best for all
- Communicate with the school in a supportive manner, which does not interfere with the administrative functioning of the school
- Support your child/ren in all educational endeavors by giving praise and showing interest in school activities
- Help your child/ren to discover that it is more the process that is experienced, rather than the end-product, that makes it all worthwhile
- Model flexibility – encourage healthy problem solving
- Help your child/ren to understand that ‘giving of your very best’ is what matters rather than always comparing yourself against the capabilities or achievements of others
- 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
- Validate that both parents and teachers work together for the benefit of the child/ren
- Observe the school's policies, as outlined in the school webpage and/or the school's handbook and endeavor to support them in the home
- Cooperate where your 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
- Support the school in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment
- Refrain from engaging in gossip and hearsay by communicating with the school and always model good manners for your child/ren
- Sustain a positive and co-operative attitude and interact positively with other parents and community members
- Encourage community building with other parents and community members
- Value the school community and its reputation especially when engaging with social media
- Do not smoke on school premises
- Do not use offensive language on school premises

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

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To be treated with respect and courtesy by staff, students and other parents</li> <li>▪ To be listened to, and clearly communicated with by the school, regarding your child/ren's education and development</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To have confidentiality over sensitive issues respected by faculty/staff</li> <li>▪ To be treated in a caring and polite manner</li> <li>▪ To have a timely response to concerns raised, usually within 48 hours</li> <li>▪ To be treated with professionalism by all faculty/staff members</li> </ul> |
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### **Specific Guidelines for 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 and other parents

- Under no circumstances approach another child while in the care of the school to address, discuss or reprimand them because of actions towards your own child/ren
- Respect the rights of faculty/staff members and other individuals
- Respect the reputation of teachers 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
- Respect teachers' preparation 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
- To protect our children do not discuss any grievances or perceived failings in front of them regarding the school
- On excursions, helping in class or on campus, 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 or special events including athletics, concerts, academic and cultural events

## **Communication Process for a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:**

Our Catholic schools want to work in partnership with our families. If anyone has a **current complaint, criticism, or concern**, it is expected the following steps be followed:

1. 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.
2. If for some reason this is not possible, then make an appointment to see an administrator or other designated leadership personnel
3. The Administrator (or designee) should attempt to mediate and find resolution in the presence of both parties
4. If having followed Steps 1-3 with no satisfaction, you may complete the Parent Concern Form found on the website of the Diocese of St. Petersburg - Office of Catholic Schools and Centers for further facilitation

***Deliberate breaches and inability to respect the Diocese of St. Petersburg – Office of Catholic Schools and Centers Code of Conduct for Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Volunteers, and Visitors, or vexatious 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 allegations of Physical or Sexual Abuse by a faculty/staff member towards a child in both a historical or current matter, you should, in the first instance, contact the statewide toll-free abuse and neglect registry at 1-800-96ABUSE ( 1-800-962-2873) and/or law enforcement."

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 St. Petersburg Catholic School, are accepting of this Code of Conduct in its entirety.