



ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Established 1955 ♣ God Is Good All the Time

Student Handbook 2013-2014

Philosophy

St. Patrick Catholic School is a unique interwoven community of students, teachers, staff, parents, religious, priests, and parishioners. Our purpose is to evangelize: Make the good news of Jesus Christ known to all. We accomplish this through the spiritual/moral, intellectual, social/emotional and physical development of each child. Together we teach our young people to extend an open hand to all and to be sensitive and responsive to their own needs as well as those of their neighbors.

We believe education and learning should be flexible, enjoyable, informative, and formative, while providing opportunities to exercise responsible judgment. With all sectors working in harmony, St. Patrick Catholic School will succeed in making a decisive difference to each child, family, the church community, and the world.

Mission

St. Patrick School is a co-educational Catholic elementary school offering exceptional educational opportunities to students in Angelina and surrounding counties. St Patrick School is dedicated to the spiritual, academic, and physical development of children with programs emphasizing religious education, advanced curriculum, technology, and physical fitness. The school believes that the combination of these will empower the students to excel in today's society.

Accreditation

The Texas Catholic Conference Education Department and Accreditation Commission (TCCAC) accredit all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Tyler. This accreditation is recognized by the Texas Education Agency, and is listed in the Texas Schools Directory.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Policy of Non-Discrimination

St. Patrick School does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or national origin in the application and/or acceptance of students for admission; in administering educational policies, in the awarding of scholarships and loans, other than those developed in consideration of special needs or for participation in extracurricular and athletic programs.

Enrollment and Handbook Agreements

New families entering St. Patrick School are given an enrollment agreement that must be signed by the parents (or guardians) and the student. It is placed on file in the school office. All sections of the enrollment agreement must be adhered to at all times. All families are given a handbook agreement (a copy is in the back of this handbook) and this must be signed by the students and a parent or guardian. The form must be returned to the homeroom teacher by Friday, August 19 2011.

Admission

Families wishing to enroll children at St. Patrick School must:

1. Fill out a current application and pay determined fees.
2. Sign enrollment agreement.
3. Present academic and immunization records.
4. Present birth certification, social security card, and baptismal certificate.

All students seeking school enrollment with below average academic and/or conduct grades may be placed on a six-week evaluation period. Upon conclusion of this period, a child may be taken off evaluation, kept on the evaluation plan, or dismissed from St. Patrick School.

Registration Procedures

Registration fees must be paid at the time of registration for the following year or at the time a new student is registered. Registration fees are non-refundable. Registration for the next school year will not be processed until tuition, fees, and all other financial obligations for the current year are paid in full.

Entry into Pre-K, Kindergarten or First Grade

Students entering the three-year-old program (K-3) must be three years old and potty-trained before September 1st. Preschool (K-4) students must be four years old on or before September 1st. Kindergarten students must be five years old on or before September 1st and first grade students must be six years old on or before September 1st. These are state requirements.

Student Success Program Hours

The academic year will continue required service hours from each family as requested by the Diocese. The purpose of service hours that benefit the school directly is to maintain the lowest possible tuition rates while, at the same time, inviting from within the school community the talents and gifts of all families. A total of twenty (20) hours is required from each family. The time and type of service will be determined by the volunteer adult family member/guardian in cooperation with the school. The various means by which families can attain the required service hours and an accurate total of hours given may easily be obtained by calling the School office. Lists of projects/needs of the school will be stated in newsletters from the school. This

information will be provided on a regular basis through the communications folder from the office sent home on Thursdays. Should a family genuinely determine that they are unable to provide the required time, or are unable to complete the service hours, a nominal fee of ten dollars per un-served hour will be charged to the family. The total would never exceed two hundred dollars (\$200). St. Patrick School seeks to keep costs to a minimum, utilize our own talents, and build a strong sense of community and stewardship. Working together, our school will be literally and figuratively, a labor of love.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Financial Policies

Parents or guardians pay tuition and fees directly to the school office **(Prepayment Basis)**. These payments are **due on the 1st of each month and are late after the 10th of each month from August through May . Monthly statements will be sent to families who are late on their payments.** If tuition and/or fees are paid **after the 10th of the month, a 10% late fee** will be charged. Payments for breakfast, lunch and after school care should be made directly to the school office. Breakfast and lunches should be paid for in advance, preferably one month at a time. Parents/guardians are expected to be prompt in attending to their financial obligations. If a financial problem arises, contact the principal immediately. There is a \$25 fee for each check returned to the school for insufficient funds. Non-payment of financial obligations could result in dismissal and/or non-release of school records.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Homework

Homework is given to practice and enhance what has been taught in the classroom. Homework is an integral part of the learning process. Reading of assigned material, consistent review of previous materials, and a strong partnership between home and school leads to academic success.

Grading

The evaluation of student achievement is one of the most important functions of a teacher. The present marking scale for grades 1-8 is:

Code for academic achievement and Conduct/Work Habits

A – Outstanding (90-100)

B – Good (80-89)

E – Excellent

S – Satisfactory

I – Improving

N – Needs

Improvement

U - Unsatisfactory

C – Satisfactory (70-79)
F – Failing (69-below)

Achievement & School Ability Testing

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is administered in the spring to all students in grades 1-8. Results of the test will be available by the end of May.

The Cogat test is also given in the spring to students in grades 2, 5 and 8. This test measures a student's learning ability. These results are also available by the end of May.

The ACRE Religion test is given to students in grades 5 and 8 in February. The results are available by April.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports are sent to parents at the mid-point of each six-week period and at other times as needed. The purpose of the report is to inform parents of student progress or lack of progress in each academic subject as well as in conduct. Visitation with teachers concerning a child's progress is encouraged, and it must be scheduled in advance through the office.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued at the end of each six-week period and are sent home with students in the PIE (Parent Information Envelope). They should be reviewed by parents, signed, and returned to school by the Monday after they are received. Report cards and other school records are withheld when financial responsibilities to the school have not been met. This includes other obligations such as library fines, lunch fees, extended care fees, or any other fines or fees.

Extracurricular Sports and Academic Events

Students must maintain a passing average in all classes in order to participate in extracurricular sports, including practices and games, and extracurricular academic events. If a student has a failing average in any class on a progress report or a report card, the student will not be allowed to participate in these events until/unless the student has a passing average in all classes on the next progress report or report card. If a student has an incomplete on a progress report or report card, the student will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular sports or academic events until/unless the incomplete is replaced with a passing grade for the class(es). The teacher and principal

may allow the student to participate in the event if the incomplete is due to an excused absence and the teacher believes the grade will be passing once the incomplete is resolved. If a student has a failing grade in conduct on a report card, the student will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular sports or academic events until/unless the student has a passing grade in conduct on the next progress report. A \$65 athletic fee is also required as a separate registration fee to help cover the cost of the extracurricular sports.

Promotion and Retention

A student is promoted to the next grade if he/she has satisfactorily completed the current grade level.

If a student receives a final grade below 70, the student fails the subject. Failure in one or more core subject areas (Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, and Religion) may cause the child to have to attend summer school, complete an academic plan approved by the principal or repeat a grade. A meeting of the principal, teacher(s), and parents would be required before a child is retained.

Special Education Services and Programs

Students who are believed to have specific learning challenges are referred for testing to the public school district in which they reside. When a parent/guardian enrolls a child at St. Patrick School, they must notify the principal if the child has learning challenges so appropriate actions can be taken promptly.

After a referral packet is completed and the student is tested, recommendations by the district are made to the principal, teacher(s), and parents. A decision will then be reached as to what educational program will best meet the student's needs. Every effort will be made to accommodate those needs.

Records

The student's official record file consists of academic transcripts, disciplinary record, academic testing, health records, and emergency card. All financial obligations must be met before any records may be released.

Guidance

The Diocesan Office has defined guidance in our schools as the organized effort of a school to assist the individual in developing his/her maximum potential. Students need guidance to become aware of the gifts they can give and receive. Knowledge and experience ultimately lead to an appreciation of self and others.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Absences

Parents should notify the school by 8:30 a.m. if a student will be absent from school. Requests for assignment sheets must be made at this time. When a student returns to school after an absence, a note of explanation should be given to the homeroom teacher. A student is allowed a maximum of 18 absences (10% of the total number of instructional days) for the entire school year. If a student exceeds 18 absences, that student will have to repeat that grade level.

Students are expected to make up missed work within one week after returning to school. If more than one day is missed, additional time may be allotted to make up work at the discretion of the teacher. Work for partial day absences is due on time. It is left to the teacher's discretion to distribute make-up work in advance due to an upcoming absence.

Absentee Policy

After ten days of non-consecutive absence without a just cause, the parents will meet with the principal to discuss the student's attendance record. Reasons for an extended consecutive absence will be evaluated, and performance on a homebound program will be taken into consideration in determining promotion to the next grade. If there is to be an extended absence, permission for an excused absence is required from the principal.

Tardiness

It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to see that their children arrive to school on time. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. are tardy and must report to the office. **Students arriving late must be escorted to the office by a parent or guardian and signed in.** This ensures the safety of everyone on the campus. It is the duty of all students to be on time for class. Tardiness interrupts the learning environment and should be avoided. If a student is tardy 5 times during a 6 week period, a meeting will be required with the principal and students in grades 3-8 may be assigned detention.

Attending a School Event on a Day a Student has been Absent

A student who has been absent half or all of a school day will not be allowed to attend/participate in a school event on that day unless an exception is made in advance by the principal for special circumstances. This includes extra-curricular activities, school competitions, athletic events, or any school related function.

Procedure for Leaving School Early

No student may leave the school premises during the school day without approval from the principal's office. Such approval is usually granted, within reason, upon request by the student's parent or guardian.

Parents or guardians must notify the office if early dismissal is necessary. Students must be signed out in the school office before leaving the campus for any reason, and they must be "signed-in" in the school office when they return to school.

Morning Drop-Off Procedure

Children may be dropped off as early as 7:15 a.m. at the cafeteria. To drop off your child, use the cafeteria entrance to pull up in front of the cafeteria and someone will be there to greet you in your car and pick up your child. DO NOT park in front of the cafeteria and come in because you will be parking in the fire zone. If you want to come into the cafeteria with your child, park in the school parking lot and walk your child to the cafeteria. At 7:50, a group prayer and the pledge of allegiance will be said. Parents are welcome to attend this service. At 7:55, the teachers will take the children to the classroom. If you arrive before 7:55, take your child to the cafeteria. If you arrive after 7:55 but you can get your child to the classroom by 8:00 a.m., please do so. If you arrive after 8:00, bring your child to the office. If you cannot get your child to the office by 8:05 a.m., he/she will need to stay in the office until 8:30 when the Kumon Math Program is complete.

Afternoon Pick-Up Procedure

At 3:15 p.m., the children in K-8 will be taken to the cafeteria for dismissal. PK students will remain in the rooms at that time. A few minutes later, the dismissal process will begin. To pick up your child from your car (including Pre-K), use the cafeteria entrance to pull up in front of the cafeteria and you will be greeted by a teacher. The greeting teacher will tell teachers inside the cafeteria or Pre-K classrooms to send your child to the greeting teacher for entry into your car. If you want to come into the cafeteria to get your child, park in the school parking lot and walk to the cafeteria. If you do this, **it is extremely important that you tell your child's teacher that you have picked up your child. Otherwise, the teacher may not know that your child was picked up.**

School Visitation

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the school. For the safety of our children and to comply with state law, we require all visitors to sign in at the school's office. Visitor passes must be carried at all times.

Non-Custodial Parent

St. Patrick School abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order, our school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and school-related information regarding their child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

COMMUNICATION

Parent Information Envelope (PIE)

An official communications folder will be sent home from the office on Wednesday. If a family has more than one student, the folder will be sent home with the oldest child. The folder will contain official notes, calendars, and other information and is an effort to streamline communications between school and home. Please have the signed folder returned by Friday morning.

Teacher Conferences

Please see the school calendar for parent/teacher conference dates. Parents desiring additional conferences with teachers or administrators must make a request through the office to set up the appointment. **Please make an attempt to clarify or reconcile questions or concerns with your child's teacher after school.**

Due Process

Due process is provided to all students of the school as soon as possible after the incident in question. The misconduct should be clearly stated to the student with full opportunity for his/her reply or explanation.

First, a conference with the parent/teacher/student involved will be held as the gravity of the matter dictates. Then, if the matter is not resolved, the student has the right of appeal—first to the principal, then, if necessary, to the pastor.

Monthly lunch Menu

Your child will bring home a copy of the lunch menu for the following week in his/her communications folder. Please check the dates on which you want your child to receive school lunch. School lunch will cost \$3.50 per day. Please send a check or cash to cover the school lunch for that particular week.

School Closings

If the Lufkin ISD closes school because of weather, St. Patrick Catholic School will be closed as well. In the event that school must close due to some other situation that affects St. Patrick Catholic School only, information may be found by tuning in to our local broadcasting television station (KTRE TV). Bus riders from Nacogdoches may be unable to ride the bus on rare occasion because of bad weather.

DRESS CODE

Our uniform provider is Landsend. Please see office for samples or alternatives.

For Girls:

- Green or white polo shirt with embroidered St. Patrick School logo.
- Navy uniform shorts, pants (not capris), jumpers, skirts, or skorts. Also, plaid skirts or jumpers from the (shown on Landsend) may be worn.
- Black or brown belts (solid or woven only) must be worn with shorts and pants. (No studs, grommets, patterns, or decorations, please!). Belts are not required for pre-k children.
- Tennis shoes or comfortable close-toed shoes (no light-ups, sandals, crocks, flip flops, cleats, heels or shoes with wheels).
- Boots may be worn only with long pants.
- White Socks must be worn at all times.
- Tights must be white or navy.
- Long-sleeved, logo-bearing uniform shirts, or turtlenecks may be worn under uniforms.
- Landsend has an official school zipper front hooded sweater with the St Patrick Logo
- On days that are exceptionally cold, heavy non-uniform jackets may be worn outside but they must not contain questionable pictures or lettering. The school jacket or sweater should be worn inside the classroom.

Girl's grooming:

- Shirts must be fully tucked in at all times.
- No make-up or nail polish.
- Neat hairstyles.
- Earrings cannot be longer or larger than a quarter for safety purposes.
- Watches may be worn.
- No other jewelry is acceptable unless it is approved by the teacher and principal.
- Only Religious necklaces may be worn. it will have to be removed if the teacher or principal believes that it is distracting.
- Nobody ornamentation is allowed (including, but not limited to tattoos, piercings, polish, etc.).

For Boys:

- Green or white polo with embroidered St. Patrick School logo.
- Navy or Green uniform shorts or pants. No cargo pants or shorts are allowed.
- Black or brown belts (solid or woven only) must be worn with shorts and pants. (No studs, grommets, patterns, or decorations, please!)
- Tennis shoes or comfortable close-toed shoes (no light-ups, sandals, flip flop or cleats)
- Boots may be worn only with long pants.
- Long-sleeved, logo-bearing uniform shirts, or turtlenecks may be worn under uniforms.

- Landsend has an official school zipper front hooded sweater with the St Patrick Logo
- White socks must be worn at all times.
- On days that are exceptionally cold, heavy non-uniform jackets may be worn outside but they must not contain questionable pictures or lettering. The school jacket or sweater should be worn inside the classroom.

Boy's Grooming:

- Shirts should be fully tucked in at all times.
- No facial hair.
- Hair should not be covering any part of the ears or touching the collar. Hair must be above the eyebrows. Ponytails, shaved heads, or designs cut into hair are not permitted.
- Watches may be worn.
- No other jewelry is permitted.
- Only Religious necklaces may be worn. it will have to be removed if the teacher or principal believes that it is distracting.
- No large belt buckles.
- No body ornamentation is allowed (including, but not limited to earrings, tattoos, piercings, polish, etc.).

General Guidelines:

- All students are expected to be neatly groomed at all times.
- All students from Kindergarten through 8th grade are expected to wear belts.
- Skirts, shorts, and skorts must be of approved lengths (no shorter than 2 inches above the knees).
- Caps and hats are not permitted.
- Administration reserves the right to enforce additional dress code policies as necessary.

Dress Code Violations:

If your child is in grades PK-3 through 2nd grade, you will be notified via a policy reminder and you may be asked to correct the situation.

If your child is in 3rd-8th grade a call to the parent will be made.

DISCIPLINE

General Guidelines

- Students are expected to be courteous and respectful to all students, staff, and visitors at all times.
- Items not directly used in the educational process should NOT be brought to school (this includes, but is not limited to trading cards, toys, CD players, tape players, hand-held video games, etc.) without prior permission from the principal. Items needed for a particular class should

be taken directly to the teacher. The school is not responsible for any items or toys brought from home.

- If cell phones are brought to school for emergency use, they must be left in the back pack. If a cell phone or other personal electronic device (i.e. IPOD, etc.) is seen out of the back pack, it will be confiscated and brought to the office where it can be picked up after school by the parent.
- Students are expected to be reverent during Mass and prayers.

Behavior Expectations

The following behaviors may result in disciplinary action. This could include detention, in or out-of-school suspension, and/or expulsion:

- Violation of the dress code.
- Actions or inappropriate behavior unbecoming to a Christian student.
- Fighting, disruption, or interference of curricular or extra-curricular activities (including, but not limited to, fist fights, kicking, pushing, shoving, and biting).
- Damage or destruction of school or private property.
- Stealing school or private property.
- Showing disrespect or being insubordinate toward a school employee, student, or guest of our school (including, but not limited to, rude gestures, behaviors, or foul/profane language).
- Assault on a school employee, student, or other persons while at school or traveling to/from school on the school bus.
- Disregarding or ignoring requests or directions by school personnel.
- Using any form of profanity, written or verbal (words, signs, pictures, publications, or music).
- Engaging in an act which intimidates, threatens, degrades, or disgraces a fellow student, visitor, administrator, or member of the school staff by verbal or written means.
- Engaging in any act of hazing.
- Violating attendance rules.
- Leaving the school grounds without permission.
- Chewing gum.
- Not following rules specified in the student handbook.

Policies Related to School Law

- Students are never allowed to use or possess marijuana, narcotics, hypnotic, or sedative drugs, any chemical, alcohol, depressant, or stimulant, as defined under the Penal Code of the State of Texas, not prescribed by a physician. This prohibition extends not only to school time, but also to before and after school and/or school-related activities. Offenders are liable to expulsion.
- Students are never allowed to smoke or have tobacco on school property or school-related activities.

- Students are never allowed to bring handguns, knives, weapons, or explosive items on the school grounds.

Cheating

Evidence of copying homework, class work, or test answers will result in a ZERO for the assigned work. A note will be sent home notifying the parent of the incident. The note must be signed and returned the next day.

CAFETERIA POLICIES

Parents are welcome to join their students for lunch, but must sign in at the office before entering the cafeteria.

At lunch students should:

- Talk quietly to their neighbors
- Remain seated
- Keep areas neat and clean
- Arrive and leave quietly and orderly
- Practice good table manners and etiquette
- Pray before their meals

USE OF SCHOOL GROUNDS AND OTHER POLICIES

Care of School Property and Grounds

The school is here for the benefit of the students with the intention that the students shall appreciate and care for it at all times. Students are expected to keep the school grounds clean.

Asbestos

St. Patrick School has contracted with 3D/International for inspection and management plans completed prior to August 1998. Asbestos-containing material has been removed or is being managed under an approved management plan. The plan may be reviewed in the principal's office.

Textbooks

All textbook must be cared for and covered at all times. The student's name must be written in ink inside each book. Textbooks must be returned to the teacher if a student withdraws from school and/or at the end of the term. If a textbook is lost or damaged, the student is responsible for its replacement value, and the fee must be cleared before final report cards are issued.

Daily Schedule

7:50 a.m.	Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance in the cafeteria
8:00 a.m.	Tardy
3:15 p.m.	Dismissal begins
3:30-5:30 p.m.	After-School Care begins

Enrichment for Saints (EFS)

We have a program that starts from 3:30-5:30pm. A separate fee is incurred if enrolling in program. It is offered to every registered student. Any student still on campus at 3:30 is automatically included in our program for the day. When a child is being picked up, parents/guardians are required to sign them out. Monthly payments must be made to the school office in order to participate the following month. The after-school program ends at 5:30 p.m. Please do not be late picking up your child.

EFS Charges (Charges are based on pick-up times)

Pre-K – 8 th grade
3:30 – 4:30 \$2.50 an hour
4:31 – 5:30 \$2.50 an hour
\$1.00 per minute after 5:30

Change of Address or Phone Information

Please notify the school office immediately concerning a change of address, telephone number, or other information needed for emergency cards. This ensures quick notification in case of emergency.

Dispensing Medication in School

Only medication prescribed by a licensed physician or dentist and dispensed by a registered pharmacist will be administered at school. Written consent of the parents or guardians will allow authorized school personnel to dispense medication. Student medication must be in a properly labeled container with student's name, physician/dentist's name, date, name of medication, dosage, directions, and duration. The medication must be brought directly to the school office in order to be administered at the appropriate time. This is mandated by state law. Over the counter medication will not be given unless prescribed by a physician and labeled by a pharmacist with proper directions.

Annual Health Screenings

Vision and hearing screenings are conducted annually. Vision and hearing tests are given to PreK-4, Kindergarten, first-time entrants, and odd numbered grades. Parents will be notified of potential problems.

Scoliosis screenings are given to students in grade five. Parents will be notified if their child exhibits noticeable signs of this problem.

Immunizations

All students must be immunized against certain diseases. The immunizations required are diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B and varicella. A record verifying that a student has had chicken pox or the vaccine must also be on file. Proof of immunization from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation is required to be in each student's file. Failure to provide proof of immunization can/will result in dismissal from St. Patrick School.

Illness

Parents should notify the school of any special health condition. When your child has a communicable disease, notify the school as soon as possible. Keep your child at home if he/she runs a fever (99.5 or above), as he/she will not be permitted at school while running a fever above this temperature. They must be free from fever or illness for 24 hours before returning to school. The H1N1 flu virus creates special circumstances for this year. There are three items of importance to reduce the risk of spreading the illness. They include frequent hand washing, covering the mouth while coughing or sneezing and staying home when you are ill. If your child is sick to the stomach at night or in the morning before school, he/she should stay home to prevent the risk of infecting others.

Head Lice

For the protection of students and faculty, head lice checks will be conducted. If lice or nits are found, the child will be sent home. Before returning to school, the child must use a medicated shampoo. All nits must be removed from the hair before re-entry into the classroom is permitted. The home must be cleaned and disinfected as well – recommendations will be sent home if a case of head lice is found.

Emergency Procedures

St. Patrick School is required by the Diocese of Tyler to follow all emergency procedures outlined in our Crisis Manual. A copy of these procedures can be found in the school office.

Fire Drills

Every school is required to conduct a monthly fire drill. Faculty and staff will instruct students on how and when to enter and exit the buildings for such drills, as deemed appropriate by school policy.

Parties

Classes may have 2 parties per year. Birthday parties may not be conducted at school. Balloons, flowers, etc. for birthdays and other events may not be delivered to the school. Parents may bring cupcakes or snacks at teacher's discretion.

PTO

The Parent Teacher Organization was created to provide a way for interested parents to help our school. Participation is voluntary, but all parents are encouraged to attend meetings and participate in the events.

Field Trips

Field trips can enhance the learning experience and are privileges afforded to the students. Students must have signed permission slips for field trips in order to leave campus. Telephone calls will not be accepted in lieu of proper forms. Parents or guardians reserve the right to refuse to allow their child to participate in a field trip.

School Principal's Right to Amend Handbook

The St. Patrick principal and/or pastor retain(s) the right to amend the handbook for just cause at any time during the year. Parents will be given prompt notification of changes as they are made.

Agreement Signed by Parents and Students

This handbook is considered part of the contract which exists between St. Patrick School, parents, and students. It is required that both the students and the parents read and understand the policies and guidelines set forth and agree to abide by its provisions.

Please sign and return the attached form and return it to your child's homeroom teacher by Friday, August 19, 2011.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE DIOCESE OF TYLER

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS GRIEVANCE PROCESS

PURPOSE

A "grievance" is a complaint based on any alleged violation, any inequitable application of policy, or any dispute over the meaning, or interpretation of the terms of a contract at the local or Diocesan level.

The primary purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible administrative level, equitable solutions to problems which may arise. The procedure is intended to resolve grievances in informal proceedings in a cooperative Christian atmosphere. The proceedings are not intended to be of an adversarial nature. No participant is entitled to legal representation in these proceedings. All parties shall agree that grievance proceedings shall be kept appropriately confidential.

NONDISCRIMINATION

No person shall be discriminated against because of filing or participating in the grievance procedure, and no reprisals of any kind shall be taken by the council or the school administration against any person because of participation in the grievance procedure.

LOCAL RECONCILIATION

Before allowing differences to become formalized into grievances, every effort should be made to resolve local-level disputes, by way of a free and open discussion, between the grievant and the immediate authority.

Without exception, an informal settlement between the grievant and the immediate authoritative person shall be attempted prior to formal grievance proceedings.

1. Any individual having a grievance shall first discuss the same with the immediate authoritative person.
2. If the immediate authoritative person is not the principal, the grievant must meet with the principal before the grievance is brought to the next level.
3. If a satisfactory decision is not reached, or if the principal fails to, or refuses to, discuss the grievance promptly, the grievant shall present the grievance in accordance with the procedures outlined herein.

LEVEL ONE - SUPERINTENDENT

If a satisfactory solution was not been reached during Local Reconciliation, the following procedure is to be used:

1. The aggrieved party shall submit a complaint in writing to the Superintendent within ten (10) business days following the grievant's last meeting with the principal.
2. The Superintendent will arrange a meeting within five (5) business days following receipt of the written statement. The meeting is an attempt to informally resolve the issue and reach a solution. This meeting is to be in an atmosphere of cooperative Christian dialogue and not adversarial.
3. If a satisfactory solution was not reached, the grievant will notify the Superintendent of the intent to appeal, in writing, within five (5) business days. Failure to give such written notice will cause the decision to be final.
4. Within ten (10) business days of receipt of the grievant's letter, the Superintendent will arrange a meeting with the grievant.
5. The principal will be instructed to give the Superintendent all documentation relating to the matter.
6. The grievant will have the opportunity to explain, defend, or refute the documentation presented by the principal.
7. The Superintendent will review all the information presented and notify both parties of the decision with ten (10) business days of the appeal hearing.

LEVEL TWO – DIOCESAN SCHOOLS APPEALS BOARD

If a satisfactory decision was not been reached at Level One, the grievant may appeal to the Diocesan Schools Appeals Board consisting of three members appointed by the Bishop. One member will come from the Bishop's Curia, one will be a teacher (from another school system in the diocese) and one will be a principal (from another school system in the diocese). The chairperson will be the Curia representative.

1. The grievant shall have five (5) business days, after receiving the Superintendent's decision, to appeal to the Diocesan Schools Appeals Board.
2. The notice of appeal is sent in writing to the Superintendent.
3. The Superintendent will set a hearing within fifteen (15) business days of receipt of the appeal notice.

4. The grievant will be notified of the hearing at least ten (10) days before the scheduled hearing.
5. The principal will be notified at least ten (10) days before the scheduled hearing.
6. Both parties will be heard on the same day, but at separate times.
7. The Superintendent will not attend the hearing, but will be the official timekeeper and be available to clarify Diocesan policies and procedures.
8. At the hearing, each party will have a maximum of one (1) hour to present their position to the board.
9. The principal and, if necessary, the teacher will present evidence, reasons for actions taken, and demonstrate sufficient cause for the decision.
10. The grievant will be given an opportunity to rebut the evidence and to offer proof and evidence.
11. The Diocesan Schools Appeals Board will consider only the merits of the case based on relevant and reliable documentation based on Diocesan Policies and Procedures.
12. The Diocesan Schools Appeals Board will deliberate in private.
13. The decision will be the result of a simple majority vote.
14. The chairperson will send a letter stating the decision to the grievant, the Superintendent, and the principal within five (5) business days from the date the hearing was held.

Approved by the Diocesan School Advisory Council on May 23, 2005

Date Ratified: June 21, 2005

By: The Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J.
Bishop, Diocese of Tyler