

# ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICES

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM - EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

All employees of the diocese, parishes or schools, as well as volunteers, who have regular contact with children, are required to participate in and comply with all aspects of the Safe Environment Program. The Safe Environment Program will consist of three elements:

- The Code of Ethical Standards for All Those Who Minister on Behalf of the Church;
- Comprehensive Background Checks conducted by the Risk Management Office of the Diocese of Davenport; and
- “Protecting God’s Children,” an education awareness program designed to increase awareness of child sexual abuse, understand a five-step process to prevent child abuse from occurring in our schools and parishes, and allows the employee or volunteer to commit to being a part of a community that will protect all of God’s children.

Prior to working with young people under the age of 18 or a student in a school in the diocese, the employee or volunteer must:

1. Sign a consent form for the completion of a background check conducted by the Risk Management Office of the Diocese of Davenport;
2. Read and acknowledge in writing The Code of Ethical Standards for All Those Who Minister on Behalf of the Church;
3. Attend a session of “Protecting God’s Children” awareness session.

Steps 1 and 2 must be completed before employment or volunteering begins and Step 3 must be completed within 90 days of the assignment.

Volunteers who have regular contact with children are defined as:

- Individuals who have contact with children one or more times a month;
- Individuals who are alone with groups of children; and
- Individuals who are involved in any activities that include overnight supervision of children or young people.

## ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION

Holy Trinity Catholic Schools contain asbestos in its building materials. We employ a comprehensive plan and maintenance activities monitored by Iowa Environmental Services, Inc. to insure that the asbestos in the building is maintained safely. Parents, guardians, students, and employees may review the management plan available during normal business hours in the school office, 2600 Avenue A, Fort Madison, Iowa. You may call the office 372 - 2486 if there are any questions or concerns regarding asbestos compliance.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act permits the release of most student records only upon authorization by parent/legal guardian or by the student if he/she is 18 years of age. Parents have the right to review their children's educational records. The Principal will handle investigation of complaints concerning records.

## **INVESTIGATION OF ABUSE**

In a case where a school employee is reported to have committed an alleged act of sexual abuse against a student, Holy Trinity Catholic Schools has designated the following individuals as Level One Investigators: for the Jr./Sr.High School – Michael Sheerin 837 - 6131, Elementary – Chuck Elbert 372 - 2486.

## **PUBLIC CONDUCT ON SCHOOL PREMISES**

Spectators are permitted to attend school sponsored and approved activities only as guests of Holy Trinity Catholic Schools and accordingly, as a condition of such permission, they must comply with Holy Trinity Catholic Schools rules and policies. Spectators will not be allowed to interfere with the enjoyment of the students participating, other spectators, or with the performance of employees and officials supervising the school sponsored or approved activity. Spectators who violate the rules and policies of Holy Trinity Catholic may be removed from the event by the individual in charge of the event, and the administration may recommend the exclusion at future sponsored or approved activities.

## **DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

Unless provided a written request by a parent/legal guardian, the following information may be released to the public: name and photos of students participating in officially recognized activities of the school as well as the name and weight/height of athletic team members.

## **REPORTING TO DIVORCED PARENTS**

Holy Trinity Catholic Schools will comply with lawful court orders in the case of divorced parents. In the case of a student whose parents' marriage has ended in divorce, the names and addresses of both parents should appear in the student's file. A certified copy of the Order of Dissolution as well as any subsequent modifications of the order should also be on file. Unless otherwise decreed in the order, information commonly made available to parents of any student in attendance may be provided to both parents (i.e., notice of school functions, report cards, appointments for parent-teacher conferences, etc.).

## **SEARCH OF STUDENT LOCKERS**

As required by law, parents and students are hereby notified that school authorities will, without further notice or search warrant, search student lockers, desks, work areas, book and duffel bags, clothing, or student vehicles based on a reasonable suspicion under the circumstances and in the manner reasonable in scope to maintain order and discipline in the school, promote the educational environment, and protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel. School authorities may also seize illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials discovered in the search. Possession of such articles will be grounds for disciplinary action.

## **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, RESTRAINT, AND PHYSICAL CONFINEMENT AND DETENTION**

State law forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student. Certain actions by school employees are not considered corporal punishment. Additionally, school employees may use “reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain” to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property.

State law also places limits on school employees’ abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. The law limits why, how, where, and for how long a school employee may restrain or confine and detain a child. If a child is restrained or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child’s parent.

If you have any questions about this state law, please contact your school. The complete text of the law and additional information is available on the Iowa Department of Education’s website: [www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate).

## **ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICY**

Harassment and bullying of students and employees are against federal, state and local policy, and are not tolerated by the Diocesan Board of Education. The board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school/faith formation environment in which all members of the school/parish community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the board has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students by other students, by school employees, and by volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school/parish. The board prohibits harassment, bullying, hazing, or any other victimization, of students, based on any of the following actual or perceived traits or characteristics: age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status. Harassment against employees based upon the employee’s race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age or disability is also prohibited.

This policy is in effect while students or employees are on property within the jurisdiction of each local boards of education/faith formation committee; while on school/parish-owned or school/parish-operated vehicles; while attending or engaged in school/parish-sponsored activities; and while away from school/parish grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school/parish.

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures which may include suspension or expulsion. If after an investigation a school/parish employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the employee shall be disciplined by appropriate measures which may include termination. If after an investigation a school/parish volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, the volunteer shall be subject to appropriate measures which may include exclusion from school/parish grounds. “Volunteer” means an individual who has regular, significant contact with students.

When looking at the totality of the circumstances, harassment and bullying mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school/faith formation/youth ministry environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school/parish.

“Electronic” means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. “Electronic” includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, electronic text messaging, or similar technologies.

Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc.;
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student; and/or
- Unreasonable interference with a student's performance.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of the student's education/faith formation or benefits;
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for academic/faith formation decisions affecting that student; or
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic/faith formation performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education or faith formation environment.

In situations between students and school/parish officials, faculty, staff, or volunteers who have direct contact with students, bullying and harassment may also include the following behaviors:

- Requiring that a student submit to bullying or harassment by another student, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of the targeted student's education/faith formation or participation in school/faith formation programs or activities; and/or
- Requiring submission to or rejection of such conduct as a basis for decisions affecting the student.

In the case of a student who threatens physical harm to another student for any reason, a “no tolerance” stance will be taken. The perpetrator will be suspended from the educational program immediately. Reentry will be contingent upon a report from a competent mental health professional that the perpetrator is not perceived to be a threat to self or others. It may also be

contingent upon a program of continued counseling.

Any person who promptly, reasonably, and in good faith reports an incident of bullying or harassment under this policy to a school/parish official, shall be immune from civil or criminal liability relating to such report and to the person's participation in any administrative, judicial, or other proceeding relating to the report. Individuals who knowingly file a false complaint may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Retaliation against any person because the person has filed a bullying or harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding is also prohibited. Individuals who knowingly file false harassment complaints and any person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall any person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. Any student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. Any school/parish employee found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment. Any school/parish volunteer found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school/parish grounds.

The school/parish will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment. The investigator or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying or harassment. The investigator or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by employees alleging harassment.

It also is the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the investigator and principals, to develop procedures regarding this policy. The superintendent or designee also is responsible for organizing training programs for students, school/parish officials, faculty, staff, and volunteers who have direct contact with students. The training will include how to recognize harassment and what to do in case a student is harassed. It will also include proven effective harassment prevention strategies. The superintendent or designee will also develop a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the policy in reducing bullying and harassment in the Diocesan Board of Education and each school/parish board of education/faith formation committee. Each local board/faith formation committee will annually publish this policy. The policy may be publicized by the following means:

- Inclusion in the student handbook,
- Inclusion in the employee handbook and volunteer handbook
- Inclusion in the registration materials
- Inclusion on the school/parish or school web site, and the Diocesan website and a copy shall be made available to any person at the administrative office of each school/parish/Diocese.

**\*The Diocese of Davenport Policies Relating to Sexuality and Personal Behavior must be followed if there is a complaint on Sexual Harassment of an employee or volunteer.**