

“Come and You Will See”

An Invitation to Engagement for Parents, Guardians and Guests



Partnership Guidelines

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau

“The Educational Community is an ‘Us’”

Pope Leo XIV

These Partnership Guidelines are designed to assist all stakeholders in their dealings with staff, other parents, students, and the wider school community regarding Catholic schools and school-sponsored activities, meetings, and functions within and outside of school hours. All employees and volunteers must be in full compliance with the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau Safe Environment requirements before they engage in diocesan, parish, and school activities involving minors and vulnerable adults.

The Catholic school is a multifaceted organization comprised of diverse populations that have unique and distinct 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 relationship! This beautiful doctrine inspires each member of the Catholic school, to attempt to be a living Christian community in relationship with God and others. It is a core value 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. “The Educational Alliance requires intentionality, listening, and co-responsibility” (*Drawing New Maps of Hope*, 2025, 5.3 Pope Leo XIV).

The responsibility for promoting and upholding the 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, and guests always model acceptable behavior within the school setting, at school sponsored activities, or when engaged in any social media involving the school. “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, you play a foundational role in the development of your child's sense of justice, equity, and worth together with all members of the school community. You are one of the most instrumental role models within 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).

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

- Christian attitude and behavior toward all people;
- An ability to appreciate the situation of others;
- Cooperation and civility with and toward others;
- Open, positive, and honest communication;
- Reverence for Creation;
- Respectful and trustworthy relationships and actions.

Expectations for Parents, Guardians, and Guests

As a member of the Catholic school community, we ask that you:

- Support the philosophy and mission of Catholic education in both words and deed.
- Support the school in cultivating virtue in electronic communications and the use of social media.
- Mentor your child in holiness by celebrating the liturgy/service of your faith background.
- Partner with the school to promote the well-being and success of all students.
- Communicate respectfully and constructively with school staff, without disrupting school operations.
- Remember a positive culture begins at home.
- Encourage and support your child's education through praise, engagement, and the modeling of a positive attitude.
- Promote healthy problem-solving and help your child understand the value of doing their best rather than comparing themselves to others.
- Listen to your child's perspective while remaining open to other interpretations of events.
- Foster a respectful and collaborative relationship with teachers; share concerns in a respectful and constructive manner.
- Support school policies as outlined in the handbook and website both in school and at home.
- If your child's behavior does not meet school standards, work cooperatively with staff following proper communication protocols.
- Refrain from gossip, hearsay, and negative commentary, including in electronic engagements and social media.
- Interact respectfully with staff, students, and other community members at all times.
- Uphold the reputation of the school, particularly in electronic communications, including when using social media.
- Refrain from smoking or using profanity on school premises or at school events.

Expectations for the school

You have the right to:

- Be treated with respect, courtesy, and professionalism by staff, students, and other parents.
- Clear communication regarding your child's education and development.
- Have your confidentiality respected.
- Receive a timely, appropriate response to concerns.

Guidelines for Conduct

- Advocate for the school and be mindful of how social media can impact others and the school's reputation.
- Do not use the school as a venue for parental disputes.
- Never approach another student for the purpose of discipline. Refer concerns to staff.

- Respect faculty/staff and their professional time; schedule appointments for discussions.
- Use respectful and civil communication, including in emails, online platforms, and social media.
- Follow the school's outlined procedures and chain of command for resolving concerns or conflicts.
- When volunteering or participating in events, follow the direction of the supervising teacher or staff member.
- Engage respectfully in school liturgies and events, supporting the communal life of the school.

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

Diocesan Catholic schools want to work in partnership with 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 first (e.g., classroom teacher) and try to resolve the concern with mutual respect and clear communication. If possible, make an appointment with the relevant person.
2. If for some reason this is not possible, then make an appointment to meet with an administrator or parish priest, following the specific school's established hierarchy.
3. The Administrator should attempt to mediate and find a resolution in the presence of both parties.
4. If, having followed Steps 1-3 with no satisfaction, you may contact the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

* Any suspected or known abuse of a minor must first be immediately reported to the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline 800-392-3738 or 844-CAN-TELL.

By accepting enrollment at a Catholic School in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, parents and guardians agree to abide by these guidelines in full. Deliberate breaches and/or demonstrated inability to comply with these guidelines, may result in exclusion of a parent, guardian, or guest from a school, and/or disenrollment of their child/ren.

Excerpts of this policy have been used by permission of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

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