



## Archdiocese of Seattle Office for Catholic Schools

### Policies for Category II Catholic Schools

#### 1. Introduction

These policies apply to Category II Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle. Category II schools are independently owned and operated Catholic schools, distinct from the Archdiocese and from each other both as corporate entities and in governance.

These Category II Catholic School Policies supersede the former policies first published as part of *Many Gifts, One Spirit: Pastoral and Sacramental Policies for the Archdiocese of Seattle*, and previous editions of this section from the *Catholic Schools Policies and Procedures for the Archdiocese of Seattle* and supersede any and all prior employee handbooks and personnel policies issued by the Archdiocese of Seattle. These Policies pertain only to Category II Catholic Schools and not to Category I schools.

#### 2. Purpose for Catholic Schools

“Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the good news. First and foremost, every Catholic institution is a place to encounter the Living God, who in Jesus Christ reveals His transforming love and truth.” (Pope Benedict XVI).

Catholic schools exist to form young people in the faith and to provide a faith-based environment for their education. In cooperation and partnership with parents – the first educators of their children – Catholic schools seek to educate the whole child by providing an excellent education and the formation of character. Catholic schools cultivate the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity; the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance; and the intellectual virtues of critical thinking and wisdom. Informed by these three sets of virtues, a comprehensive curriculum has as its goal the spiritual, moral, emotional, intellectual and physical development appropriate to the needs of each child.

#### 3. Catholic Identity Standards for Category II Catholic Schools

All Category II Catholic schools will comply with policies that are central to the nature of a Catholic school. It is also imperative than any school called “Catholic” provide a level of academic excellence that is at least as distinguished as that in other schools of the region.

#### 4. Archbishop

4.1 The Archbishop of Seattle (the Archbishop) is the chief teacher of the Catholic faith in the Archdiocese, a teaching role shared with the provincials of Category II schools that are sponsored by religious orders.

4.2 The Archbishop has sole authority to recognize and designate a school as “Catholic.”

4.3 The Archbishop does not possess corporate fiduciary responsibilities for Category II Catholic Schools and, therefore, does not exercise governance responsibilities at these schools. Rather, the Archbishop holds due regard for the autonomy of Category II schools and recognizes their internal management.

## **5. Superintendent**

5.1 The Superintendent is responsible to the Archbishop for providing direction, services and leadership to ensure the Catholic identity of, and support for, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle. The Superintendent is the Archbishop's delegate in matters pertaining to Catholic education and is an essential resource for Category II schools.

5.2 To make Catholic education financially accessible to all Catholics, including those from multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and low and middle income families, the Office for Catholic Schools (OCS) partners with the Fulcrum Foundation, which leverages financial support for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle, and, cooperating with the Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC), lobbies for federal/state support for Catholic schools and for parental choice in education. Category II schools are strongly encouraged to fully support the Fulcrum Foundation and the WSCC.

## **6. Office for Catholic Schools**

6.1 The Office for Catholic Schools implements policies approved by the Archbishop and coordinates services to Catholic schools.

6.2 Category II Catholic schools are encouraged to participate in programs and initiatives sponsored by the Office of Catholic schools.

## **7. Standards for Employees of Category II Catholic Schools**

7.1\_ All employees of Category II Catholic schools must act professionally, morally and ethically in the workplace by treating co-workers, supervisors, volunteers, parishioners, children and visitors with respect and by conducting themselves in a manner consistent with Catholic principles.

7.2 For schools that employ a president/principal model of administration, the role of "chief educational leader" will be defined by each school. However, both the president and the principal must be practicing Catholics, respect Catholic values and exercise professional conduct consistent with Catholic teaching.

7.3 When a new head of school of a Category II high school is named, the school will notify the Archbishop of its selection and schedule a meeting between the new head of school and the Superintendent and Archbishop.

7.4 Teachers of religion must be practicing Catholics, authentic witnesses to the faith, not engage in any practice that conflicts with Church teachings on faith and morals, and hold or be working toward archdiocesan catechetical certificate.

## **8. Adherence to Civil Law**

8.1 Category II Catholic schools should follow the rules and regulations governing approval, currently codified in Chapter 28A.195 RCW and Chapter 180-90 WAC. These schools should also complete and return forms required by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, including SPI 618B and record of all submitted forms should be retained by the schools.

8.2 Unless contrary to the fundamental teachings of the Catholic Church, Category II schools are expected to adopt policies and procedures consistent with local, state and federal law.

## **9. Category II Affiliation**

9.1 All Catholic schools owned and administered by a corporate Board of Trustees (including those that are also sponsored by a religious order) and have been recognized and designated as “Catholic” by the Archbishop possess Category II affiliation.

9.2 Category II schools shall conform to the standards for affiliation, listed below. The school otherwise retains autonomy in internal management and operates according to its own policies and procedures, which should be consistent with Catholic teaching and canon law.

9.3 Category II schools are eligible for the programs and services listed by the Office for Catholic Schools and the Fulcrum Foundation, provided they follow the policies and regulations for those programs and services.

9.4 Category II schools shall pay an assessment to the Office for Catholic Schools. This fee is annually set and announced by the Office for Catholic Schools along with the list of programs and services.

9.5 Category II schools must demonstrate that it is satisfying essential policies established by the Archdiocese to ensure a safe environment consistent with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (USCCB 2005).

9.6 Category II school policies should be available for review upon request from the Office for Catholic Schools.

## **10. Standards of Affiliation**

10.1 A Category II school attains and retains “affiliation” through the sole authority of the Archbishop to recognize and designate a school as “Catholic,” an authority that may not be delegated or denied.

10.2 In all matters of religious instruction, including the design of curricula, the choice of textbooks, and the certification of teachers of religion, Category II schools shall not materially differ from the policies of the Archbishop (who may delegate this responsibility to the Office for Catholic Schools), as well as to the policies of the provincials of Category II schools that are sponsored by a religious order.

10.3 To maintain Category II affiliation, these schools must provide regular evidence of engagement in a comprehensive accreditation or sponsorship process that includes assessment of both religious and academic instruction, and the findings from this process will inform the Archbishop’s determination of affiliation.

10.4 The school will operate under the RCW (Revised Code of Washington) and WAC (Washington Administrative Code) laws, rules, and regulation applicable to private schools in the state of Washington.

10.5 Category II schools shall establish a governing board which shall operate in the understanding that the Archbishop has sole authority to recognize and designate a school as “Catholic.” The board is responsible for the school’s mission statement, a statement that shall not be inconsistent with the mission statement of the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle.

10.6 Category II schools shall be accredited by the organization approved by their governing boards.

## **11. Disaffiliation of a Catholic School**

11.1 Disaffiliation is a serious step, recommended by the Archdiocesan School Board and the Superintendent when a Catholic school persistently fails to comply with affiliation standards. The Archbishop retains the sole authority to recognize and designate a school as “Catholic,” and therefore, also retains the sole authority to disaffiliate a school. A school that is disaffiliated must cease to refer to itself as Catholic and is thereafter ineligible for any parish subsidy or any funding and services from the Office for Catholic Schools, the Archdiocese, or the Fulcrum Foundation

11.2 If a Category II Catholic school fails to comply with one or more of the standards of affiliation, one of the following steps will be taken:

- a. In the case of serious infractions or questionable practices, the Superintendent will send a letter of caution to the head of the school, specifying the infraction or practice and asking for assurances that steps will be taken to come into compliance within either six months or a time prescribed by the Superintendent.

b. In the case of major infractions, the Archbishop may suspend affiliation until a final determination can be made. The Superintendent will advise the Archdiocesan School Board of the situation and seek their recommendation.

c. In the case of persistent failure to comply with the standards of affiliation, the department will request a recommendation from the Archdiocesan School Board and will determine what further action should be taken, including a recommendation to the Archbishop to disaffiliate the school.

d. A disaffiliated school may seek relief from a competent authority in the form of a petition per canon law.

e. A religious order that sponsors a Category II school will be invited to fully participate in any process that may result in disaffiliation.

11.3 Because the Fulcrum Foundation funds only Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Seattle, a disaffiliated school is ineligible for funding from Fulcrum.