

Epiphany Catholic School



2026-2027

Parent-Student Handbook

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Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement Form - Parent/Student Handbook

The Parent-Student Handbook reflects current school policy. The formation of local school policy is the direct responsibility of the Administration and will follow policies established by the Diocese of Peoria, the Bishop of Peoria, and the Office of Catholic Schools.

The Education Commission is an advisory committee, appointed by the pastor, which promotes the participation of Epiphany Catholic School (ECS) and Parish in the educational mission of the Church. They may make recommendations to the pastor about how to fulfill this mission, including policy formulation.

The Pastor of Epiphany Parish is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations, and after consultation with the Principal, may waive any or all regulations for just cause at his discretion. Parents will be promptly notified if changes are made.

Parents are required to read the *Parent-Student Handbook* each school year. This handbook is posted on the school website and on the school's data management system, RenWeb. A printed copy can be given to families, if requested. **Parents are required to agree to the terms of the handbook as part of the online registration process. The Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement Page can be found at the end of this handbook. It should be signed and returned to the ECS Office.**

Note: Parent/Guardian in this Handbook, unless otherwise designated, shall be referred to as Parent(s).

The policies and regulations presented in this Handbook were reviewed by the **Education Commission** accepted on August 2nd, 2022.

Right to Amend

Circumstances may arise in which ECS determines that changes are required in these guidelines and procedures. For this reason, ECS reserves the right, at any time, to modify, terminate, rescind or supplement any or all of the guidelines or procedures contained herein, and to take actions which may be contrary to guidelines, benefits, or procedures set forth in this Handbook.

Epiphany Catholic School

Statement of Mission

Epiphany Catholic School provides a student-focused, standards-driven, and secure educational environment. Our teachings are based upon the Gospel values that promote the spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and physical development of all students.

Statement of Philosophy

Epiphany Catholic School is a Catholic educational community, committed to teaching Catholic doctrine and incorporating it into all areas of daily living. We recognize that our mission is to work hand in hand with our parents who are the first teachers of their children. We strive to instill a spirit of prayer and worship and to emphasize the development of faith, values, and virtue based on Catholic teaching. From the heart of our parish, we seek to provide an atmosphere of living and learning in the light of faith. Our parish and school communities are joined to form a faith community that seeks to provide an atmosphere of living and learning.

It is our belief that our school should be a place where students, faculty, staff, clergy, and parents enjoy the process of education and feel involved in the exciting experience of learning and maturing. We recognize each child's individuality, the fact that all children can learn, and the need for differentiated instructional methods and assessments. We strive to develop and maintain an aligned educational curriculum that utilizes and leverages technology and maximizes the use of instructional time.

Accreditation and Recognition

Epiphany Catholic School will maintain high standards, implement an annual school improvement plan, and be evaluated by the Diocese of Peoria Office of Catholic Schools on a periodic basis. The School has also obtained Full Recognition by the State of Illinois under the guidelines for Recognition of Non-Public Elementary Schools in Illinois. The School has met or exceeded the standards set by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and fulfilled application requirements.

Diocese of Peoria

Catholic School Statement of Purpose

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Peoria are established to assist the Bishop and pastors in the transmission of the Faith to the young people of the diocese. We welcome non-Catholic students into our schools who wish to take advantage of the opportunities provided by Catholic education. Every school must have as its main goal to help each student develop a personal and ecclesial relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). The principles, practices, and beliefs of the Catholic Faith must be fully integrated throughout the school’s curricula, service projects, co-curricular activities, and culture.

Students in our Catholic schools are reminded of their dignity as children of God through the study of Catholic doctrine, frequent opportunities for personal and communal prayer, and active participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Together with parents, the primary educators of their children, our Catholic schools pursue academic and spiritual excellence by helping students to develop their intellectual abilities, foster wholesome friendships, practice discipleship, strengthen their daily prayer life, grow in virtue, and become leaders through serving others.

All **staff and volunteers** that work in our Catholic schools must have at heart the promotion of the educational mission of the Church, and live as visible role models of faith within the parish/school community. Catholic doctrinal, moral, and social teaching is an integral part of each school. Therefore, all faculty, staff, administrative, and volunteer personnel must support the teachings of the Church, actively practice their faith in daily life, and be loyal to the Church’s Magisterium. Our Catholic school personnel share this educational mission and its various commitments and responsibilities with parents and the local Church communities.

Right to Life Statement

Epiphany Catholic School shall uphold the teachings and disciplines of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the dignity of all human life including the rights of the unborn child. Compromise of these doctrines, by word or deed, may be cause for immediate expulsion.

Guiding Principles

Administration

The Principal is the School Administrator. The Administrator is charged with *implementing* diocesan and local school policy; *guiding* day-to-day school operations; *supervising* staff and volunteers; and *overseeing* enrollment, recruitment and retention.

Parents as Partners

The Catholic Church and ECS recognize parents as the primary educators of their children. The education of students at our school is a partnership between parents and the school. Just as a parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school Administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if it is determined that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

Professional Conduct: Faculty, Staff, and Volunteers

As a condition of employment or participation, all ECS faculty, staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standard of *professional conduct* when interacting with students, parents, colleagues and superiors. Good public relations for the school are essential and ECS employees share that responsibility. All ECS faculty and staff members are reminded that professional standards for *confidentiality* should be adhered to at all times. Employees or regular volunteers may learn confidential information about the school or a student. **This confidential information shall not be shared with non-employees of the school and may only be shared with school employees on a need-to-know basis.** The Principal should be consulted when questions arise about the confidential nature of information. The Administration will discuss violations with the faculty and/or staff member, document accordingly, and add to personnel files. Significant or repeat violations may result in termination.

Admission Policies

Non-Discrimination in Admission Policies

No student shall be refused admission to Catholic schools on the basis of race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin. Students of religious denominations other than Catholic may be admitted according to policy.

Religious Formation

Catholic schools exist to educate students in the Catholic Faith. Therefore, non-Catholic students must participate in the religion classes, liturgies, and prayer services scheduled during the school year. They must also satisfactorily pass all the course requirements of the school's religious education classes.

Admission Age

PK3	3 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year.
PK4	4 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year.
K	5 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year.
Grade 1	6 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year.

When the school's early childhood program combines preschool with extended child care, children may be admitted throughout the academic year on or after the date of their third birthday. In such cases, parents must acknowledge in writing that their child will remain in the early childhood program and will not be admitted to Kindergarten until the child has attained the age of five years on or before September 1 of the given academic year.

Pre-School Registration

Registration is open to current families and parish families in **good standing*** **shortly after** Christmas Break. Other families are welcome to register two weeks after registration is open to our current families. Pre-School materials and instructions are located online at www.epiphanyschools.org, under the Admissions tab.

Grades K-8 Registration: Returning ECS Families

Registration is open to returning ECS families on February 1 (or the following Monday if the 1st falls on a weekend), if the family is in [good standing](#)*. Families not in good standing may be prevented from registering until good standing is restored. If a change of date is necessary, families will be notified.

Grades K-8 Registration: New ECS Families

New families to ECS may apply for admission to K-8 **beginning on March 1** (or the following Monday if the 1st falls on a weekend). Acceptance to ECS will be based on the following criteria: parish affiliation [good standing](#)*, religious affiliation, and a readiness assessment administered by ECS staff. All applications will be reviewed after March 30 and enrollment status will be communicated by the Principal.

**Definition of Good Standing: For our non-parishioner families, a family is in good standing if it is current with all school (including financial) obligations; this includes participation and/or support of the Annual Auction (see school principal with questions). In addition, families that are registered Epiphany parishioners and benefit from in-parish tuition discounts must be active in the life of this parish. The minimal standard for active participation is attending Sunday Mass at Epiphany faithfully, and regularly supporting the parish financially according to means (online or envelope). Returning students may lose their place in school if they are not enrolled by the time registration opens to prospective families.*

Admission Documents

Before a student can be enrolled and start school, the following documents must be on file. This is a requirement of the state:

- Birth Certificate, original document (a copy will be made at the time of registration and original will be returned)
- Baptismal Certificate (if Catholic)
- Sacramental Records (of any other Sacraments received after Baptism, if Catholic)
- Verification of Health Examinations (Dental, Vision) and Immunizations (see below)
- Academic Records: new or transfer students must provide a record of academic history prior to enrollment
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Service Plan, or 504 plan from previous schools attended

Health Examination and Immunization Documents

Every student shall receive such immunizations against preventable communicable diseases as are required by the Illinois School Code and the Communicable Disease Prevention Act, at the time those immunizations are required to be received.

These are the *minimum requirements* to be in compliance with the rules for school entry. The Department of Public Health and your doctor may recommend additional immunizations and exams for your child.

Pre-Kindergarten

- Physical exam
- Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (complete)
- Polio vaccine (complete)
- Measles/mumps/rubella (approved schedule)
- Lead poisoning screening assessment
- Hepatitis B (series of 3)
- Varicella immunizations or date of the chicken pox disease

Kindergarten

- Physical, eye, and dental examination
- Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (complete)
- Polio vaccine (complete)
- Measles/mumps/rubella (approved schedule)
- Lead poisoning screening assessment
- Hepatitis B (series of 3)
- Varicella immunizations or date of the chicken pox disease

2nd Grade

- Dental exam

6th Grade

- Physical and Dental examination
- Measles/mumps/rubella (complete)
- Hepatitis B (complete)
- Measles/mumps/rubella (complete)
- Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (complete)
- Meningococcal Meningitis Booster

Transfer Students

Students applying for admission in Grades 1-8 **must grant permission for the sending/home school to provide a copy of the current report card, standardized test results, discipline record and the opportunity to interview the sending school Principal.** An interview with the parents, new student, and Principal is part of the admission process.

Acceptance of transfer students will be evaluated on an individual basis by the school Administrator. Any student who has been previously expelled from a school, asked to leave a school, or left a school to avoid expulsion shall not be admitted into an elementary or secondary school of the diocese without written permission from the Superintendent of Schools.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition Policy

School Teachers and staff are dedicated professionals who make sacrifices to teach in a Catholic School. The parish itself sacrifices for parish children at the School. In order to demonstrate full support and cooperation, parishioners agree to attend Mass at the parish regularly and support the parish financially according to their means.

All parish children receive financial aid. Non-parishioners are responsible for actual education costs. Parishioners benefit from the following Aid Discounts from Epiphany Parish and School for the 2026-2027 year. A 10% per child discount at the KMAELC (Kathryn Marie Albee Early Learning Center) is given when other children are enrolled K-8. Students enrolled K-8 are given the following discounts:

TUITION AND FEES 2026-2027

Monthly pay schedules run from July 2026 – June 2027

TUITION 2026-2027	ANNUAL	SEMI-ANNUAL	MONTHLY
ONE CHILD IN GRADES K-8	\$5,965	\$2,982.50	\$497.08
TWO CHILDREN IN GRADES K-8	\$10,610	\$5,305	\$884.17
THREE OR MORE CHILDREN IN GRADES K-8	\$13,800	\$6,900	\$1,150
NON PARISH MEMBER RATE K-8	\$7,465	\$3,732.50	\$622.08
PK3 (M W F)	\$2,275	\$1,137.50	\$189.58
PK3 and PK 4 (five day)	\$3,650	\$1,825	\$304.17
PK OPTION TO STAY EACH DAY PER WEEK	\$1,150		
*NO MULTIPLE CHILDREN DISCOUNT OR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PK TUITION			

- Tuition collection does not cover the total cost of education. Epiphany Catholic Church subsidizes the difference between tuition collection and the cost of education.
- All families seeking tuition assistance apply for scholarships by completing the FACTS application. along with all required documentation. The FACTS application is used by both the Diocese of Peoria (for Spalding tuition assistance) and Epiphany Parish (for local financial assistance). Tuition assistance is not awarded without a completed FACTS application. Tuition assistance is limited and is based on the objective financial assessment provided through FACTS. The deadline to submit the FACTS application is April 24, 2026. The Diocese of Peoria notifies families of award decisions in May, and the Epiphany Parish office notifies families of local awards in June.
- All tuition payments are made through FACTS. New Families will choose their preferred payment plan when signing into FACTS for tuition set up.
- Other fees for School Club, Athletics, Field Trips and Classroom Supplies will be processed through your FACTS account. There is a \$50 fee per extracurricular activity.

School families are to be current with their tuition payment plan in order for their children to attend class. In addition, families with graduating eighth graders need to be current (with tuition and all fees) before graduation in order to receive a diploma. The parish may seek legal recourse to **recover** unpaid tuition and fees.

Once again, the School's budget relies on parents' generous volunteer and fundraising support (cf. Service Hour Agreement), especially with the *Auction for Excellence*, to help defray education costs, and enhance our school's programs/technology. Participation is expected and is a measure of "good standing" in the school (cf. Registration, p. 7).

Health, Safety, and Security

McLean County Health Department

The McLean County Health Department requires weekly reports concerning influenza-like illnesses. A child should be symptom free for 24 hours in cases of diarrhea, fever, vomiting, open sores and rash before returning to school. Infections such as pink eye and strep throat require your child to be on medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Clearly, many childhood diseases are communicable. It is essential that parents use good judgment in determining if their child is well enough to attend school. **If a communicable disease is reported, the parents will be notified.**

If there is an indication that a child has head lice, parents should call the school and notify the office. The school will notify the parents of any student they suspect may have acquired head lice, as well as alert the parents of the entire class.

Medication

Medications, prescription and non-prescription, must be kept in the school office at all times. It must be kept in the original container with clear directions for Administration. **If a student requires medication during school hours, it will be self-administered or a parent must come to school to administer the medication.** Written permission from the parent or guardian must be on file in the school office.

The procedure for self-medication is:

1. The student will report to the office when it is time to take the medication.
2. A staff member will retrieve the medication.
3. The student will self-administer medication, and each dose will be documented.
4. The medication is returned to the storage area.

Permission for the self-medication procedure expires at the end of the school year. It must be renewed for the following school year. Permission for non-prescription medication must also be renewed yearly. Any medication for which a written request is not on file will not be allowed in school.

Important: Please ensure all medicine is collected at the end of the school year.

Self-Administered Medication

As required by state law, students may self carry and self-administer drugs for the treatment of asthma, diabetes, or serious allergies, provided that the parent has submitted their consent in writing as well as a written authorization from the student's physician.

1. A written authorization from the parents of the student.
2. A written statement from the physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse containing the following information:
 - a. The name of the student/patient.
 - b. The name and purpose of the medication.
 - c. The prescribed dosage.
 - d. The time or times at which (or the special circumstances under which) the medication is to be administered.

Used inhalers are to be taken to the office for proper disposal. Students are to use only the inhaler prescribed to them, not to a sibling or to a relative. Any abuse of this medication or endangerment of other students as a result of possessing this medicine may result in disciplinary action by Epiphany Catholic School. The school reserves the right to restrict the self carry and self administration of medication for asthma, diabetes, or serious allergies to certain grade levels and/or ages of students.

Severe Health Issues

When a student with severe health issues applies for enrollment in Epiphany Catholic School (PK-8), the administration (KMAELC and ECS) and the parents will meet to discuss and define the student's special needs and the school's ability to meet those needs. If your child needs an asthma inhaler or an Epi Pen, it is the parent's responsibility to provide the medication and dosage instructions to the school. In addition, there needs to be a Care Plan from their doctor on file. Registration may not be possible due to staff or other limitations.

Accidents

All accidents should be reported promptly to the nearest staff member, who must report it to the Principal. In the event of an emergency involving a child, the parents will be called immediately. If the parents are not available, persons listed on the Emergency Card will be notified. An Accident Report will be filed by faculty or staff supervising such student.

Asbestos Statement

Regarding Asbestos Inspections, ECS has complied with all rules and responsibilities under Illinois 763.84. The operation and management plans that are now in effect are available for parental inspection. The plans are located in the school and can be viewed by appointment with the Principal.

Wellness Policy

ECS, like all elementary and secondary schools of the Diocese of Peoria, is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle and recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and the capacity of students to develop and learn.

Safe Environment Training

ECS incorporates Safe Environment Training in an ongoing effort to help create and maintain a safe environment for children and to protect all children from any form of exploitation. **At least one parent in a family is strongly encouraged to participate in the Safe Environment Program, offered through the School or at other acceptable venues (e.g. other parishes, CCHS).** A parent who opts out of the Safe Environment Program will not be permitted to lead any event affiliated with ECS or to be alone with children anywhere in the school, or at a school sponsored event, at any time. The participating parent must complete the CMG Safe Environment Program protocols before volunteering. Contact the parish or school office with questions.

Emergency Procedures/Crisis Plans

ECS complies with the emergency crisis management plan of the Diocese of Peoria and the State of Illinois required health and safety drills.

Safety drills will occur at times established by the school Administration. Students are required to be silent and shall comply with the directives of school officials during emergency drills. Each school year there will be evacuation drills, severe weather drills, and law enforcement (lockdown) drills. There may be other drills at the direction of the Administration. Drills will not be preceded by a warning to the students. *However, parents will be alerted in advance for drills involving school intruders.*

Opioid Antagon

Following Illinois law non-public schools are required to maintain a supply of undesignated opioid antagonists in a secure location where an individual may have an opioid overdose. The opioid antagonist is secured in the elementary and junior high offices. Our staff members received training on recognizing symptoms and administration and will administer if necessary.

Building Security

For the safety of our students, ECS has adopted a closed-building concept. **All exterior doors are locked. All visitors to the building are required to check into the office/sign-in at the front desk to report their purpose for being in the school. Visitors will wear a visitor badge so they can be identified.** We encourage everyone to cooperate in providing a safe learning environment for the children.

Possession of Use of Weapons or Look Alike Weapons in School

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Peoria teach and uphold the sanctity of human life. Virtues such as respect for others, peacemaking, and self-discipline are foundations of Catholic education. Furthermore, a safe academic and social environment is essential for learning and Christian formation. The possession or use of weapons not only disrupts the school's learning environment, it fundamentally violates the sanctity of human life by threatening the very health and safety of teachers and students.

It is strictly forbidden for any student to possess, use, attempt to use, manufacture, distribute, purchase, trade or sell (or seek the sale or trade of) any weapon on school premises or at any school-related activity or function, including but not limited to travel to and from school and/or school-related functions. Possession means having a weapon on one's person or in an area subject to the student's control such as desks, lockers, backpacks, and vehicles. Any student possessing, using, attempting to use, manufacturing, distributing, purchasing, trading or selling (or seeking the sale or trade of) weapons at school or any school-related function shall, at the discretion of the pastor and principal, be subject to immediate expulsion.

Weapons are defined as any object, device, or instrument that has been designed, created, adapted or used for the purpose of intimidating, threatening, and/or inflicting physical injury (including but not limited to anything which resembles such items). Any student found to be in possession of a weapon shall be immediately suspended from school. The weapon will be confiscated and police officials contacted. The student's parents will be notified, and there will be an administrative review. The normal consequence shall be expulsion from school.

The complete Diocesan Policy may be found on the Catholic Diocese of Peoria website.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Purpose

ECS supports the use of computers, the Internet, and other technological devices in its instructional programs in order to facilitate access to information, research, collaboration, and interpersonal communications. The use of computer hardware and software shall be consistent with the Catholic identity of our school, reinforce the curriculum, and reflect the varied instructional needs and learning styles of our students.

Responsibility

ECS shall make every effort to ensure that students and staff use this educational resource responsibly. Teachers have a professional obligation to help students develop the moral foundation and intellectual skills necessary to discriminate among sources, to identify appropriate information, and to evaluate and use information to meet their educational needs.

ECS has implemented an Internet filter and anti-virus software to assist in preventing users from accessing objectionable sites. However, no filtering software is entirely effective and we cannot guarantee that your child will not gain access to inappropriate material. Teachers and staff will make every effort to monitor usage. Ultimately, parent(s) are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their child should follow.

The electronic information available to students and staff does not imply endorsement of the content by ECS, nor do we guarantee the accuracy of information received on the Internet. We believe the advantages of Internet resources outweigh the risks associated with such use.

ECS shall not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the Internet. We reserve the right to log network use and to monitor files saved on the school network and computers. **The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right; inappropriate, unauthorized, and/or illegal use will result in the cancellation of those privileges and appropriate disciplinary action.**

Computer Access

Students are allowed to use the school computers after both of the following criteria are met:

- A parent or guardian acknowledges that they have read the Acceptable Use Policy in the handbook on the school website and gives permission for their student(s) to use ECS's computers. A parent or guardian signature indicates parental permission for students to use Epiphany's school computers.
- The student signs a copy of the Network/Online Safety Pledge. This form is handed out and discussed at school. A parent signature is not required but a copy of the pledge is available at the end of the handbook for review.

Guidelines

All network accounts shall be used only by the authorized owner of the account for its authorized purpose. All communications and information accessible via the network shall be assumed to be private property and shall not be disclosed. Network users shall respect the privacy of other users on the system. Students must maintain safe and secure strategies when using the devices.

Unacceptable Use of School Technology

Students and staff are expected to act in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the moral principles espoused by the Catholic Church, accepted rules of network etiquette, and federal and state law. Specifically, the following uses of computer hardware and software, the Internet, e-mail, and/or the network are strictly prohibited:

- To facilitate illegal activity.
- To retrieve or send material likely to be offensive or objectionable to recipients, including but not limited to: obscene or pornographic material, hate mail, discriminatory remarks, and offensive or inflammatory communication.
- Inappropriate language or profanity.
- To intentionally obtain, modify, or tamper with files, passwords, and data belonging to other users.
- For commercial purposes, product advertisement, political lobbying, including lobbying for student council, or other non-school related work.
- Unauthorized or illegal modification, reproduction, distribution, or use of copyrighted materials.
- Quoting personal communications in a public forum without the author's prior consent.
- To plagiarize. All sources must be cited.
- To load or use unauthorized games, programs, files, or other electronic media.
- To share, publish, or e-mail content created at school or for school purposes without consent from a teacher. This includes but is not limited to: uploading audio, video, and pictures to sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, etc.
- Destruction, modification, or abuse of hardware and/or software.
- The use of social networks, including but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Unauthorized use of Internet or network connections to live and or pre-recorded communications, including voice and or video.
- Engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.

Unacceptable Uses of Personal Devices

The use of personal electronic devices during the school day (7:55 AM to 3:15 PM), including lunch and recess, is strictly prohibited. This includes all personal devices such as cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches (e.g., Apple Watch, Fitbit), MP3 players, video and digital cameras, tablets, and handheld gaming systems.

Students are not permitted to use, display, or access any of these devices at any time during the school day.

Failure to follow this policy may result in the device being confiscated. The device will only be returned when a parent or guardian comes to retrieve it.

Consequences for Unacceptable Use

All users shall be held responsible for damages to equipment, systems, and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts. Anything not explicitly covered in this document will be left to the discretion of school Administration. Consequences for violating the guidelines provided in the acceptable use policy may be subject to any or all of the following:

- Loss or restricted use of computer and/or network privileges
- Monetary reimbursement for damages
- Detention
- Suspension from school
- Expulsion from school
- Police notification

Disclaimer

ECS shall not be held responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable when using its computers. ECS and its employees shall be held harmless from any cause of action relating to a student obtaining access to materials or software which is inappropriate. ECS reserves the right to change the acceptable use policy at any time.

Care of School Property

Students are expected to respect and care for all school property. This includes textbooks, workbooks, library books, desks, chairs, tables, lockers, and any shared spaces or equipment.

- Each student will be issued one set of books for use throughout the year. Textbooks are provided on a loan basis and must be handled responsibly. Book bags should be used to help prevent damage.
- Students are financially responsible for the replacement or repair of any lost or damaged items, including textbooks, workbooks, and library books.
- Desks, tables, and lockers must be treated with care. Sitting on desks or tables, overfilling lockers, or otherwise using furniture inappropriately may result in damage and repair charges. Students may be asked to remove excess items.
- Students may not hang from doors, pipes, or basketball rims, or misuse windows or any other school fixtures. Such actions are considered unsafe and may be treated as damage to school property.
- Any misuse of school property beyond normal wear and tear will result in a referral to the school office. Consequences may include detention, referral to the pastor, and/or monetary compensation.

- Desks and lockers are the property of Epiphany Catholic School. School personnel reserve the right to inspect them at any time. Students are expected to follow all guidelines for the use and care of desks, lockers, and school-issued materials. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
- Writing on or defacing desks, lockers, or any school property is considered vandalism and will not be tolerated.

Academics

Differentiated Instruction

ECS offers a school-wide support system to try to meet all students' academic needs. To ensure that our students succeed, a high-quality, research-based curriculum and instruction is provided through differentiated instruction that is matched to student needs. The use of research-based interventions and strategies, problem solving, ongoing progress monitoring, and evaluation of outcomes will ensure that **all students** will be provided the opportunity to succeed to their full potential.

Outcomes

- A common vision of teaching and learning will be evident in all classrooms.
- The curriculum will be aligned with the Common Core Standards.
- Classroom instruction will be differentiated to meet the needs of all students.
- Research based interventions, strategies, and assessment tools will be utilized and documented.
- The school culture will promote trust, collaboration, and a shared responsibility for student learning across all grade levels and stakeholders.
- The school staff will systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the core curriculum and make adjustments, as needed, based on an analysis of data.

Academic Testing

MAP Assessment

The MAP(Measure of Academic Progress) Growth Test Assessment are grade independent and adapts to each student's instructional level. Every item on a MAP Growth Assessment is anchored to a vertically aligned equal interval scale, called the RIT scale for **Rasch UNIT**. RIT scores serve as an essential data point in a student's learning plan.

Students in Grades K – 8 take the MAP Assessment three times a year (Fall, Winter and Spring). All students are assessed in Reading and Mathematics. Students in Grades 2 – 8 also are tested in Language Usage.

ARK

The ARK (Assessment of Religious Knowledge) is a tool used across Catholic schools in the Diocese of Peoria to help measure students' understanding of the Catholic faith. Administered in select grade levels, the ARK provides insight into how well students are growing in knowledge of Church teachings, Scripture, sacraments, prayer, and moral formation. Results help schools celebrate strengths, identify areas for growth, and support efforts to form students as disciples of Christ.

Students in Grades 2-8 take the ARK once a school year.

Grading and Report Cards

Report Cards

Report Cards will be available online at the end of each trimester for students in Grades K-8. A printed copy of the report card will be distributed to each student at the end of the year. Student grades are posted by teachers to the RenWeb Student Management system, accessible to parents.

Grades K – 2

S+ = Exceeds basic requirements

S = Satisfactory progress; consistent with ability

S- = Having difficulty meeting basic requirements

= Does not apply this grading term (blank)

Grades 3 – 8

Letter grades will be assigned to students in grades 3 – 8. The Principal must approve adjustments to this grading scale. Grade Cutoff % are as follows:

A= Excellent A+ 99.5, A 95.5, A- 93.5

B= Very Good B+ 90.5, B 87.5, B- 84.5

C= Satisfactory C+ 81.5, C 78.5, C- 75.5

D= Below Average D+ 73.5, D 71.5, D- 67.5

F = Below 67

I = Incomplete

Learning Skills and Behavior

E = Excellent – Consistently Demonstrates/Applies/Grasps with minimal prompting

S = Satisfactory – Demonstrates Understanding; meets expectations

P = Progressing – Student is progressing; displays appropriate learning behaviors most of the time

N = Needs Improvement – Student does not display learning skills and behavior that lead to success

(blank) = Does not apply this grading term

Honor Roll Recognition

Grades 6 - 8 use an "A" and "A-B" Honor Roll system. "A" Honor Roll students must receive all A's in all graded subjects. "A-B" Honor Roll includes students with A's and B's in all graded subjects.

Promotion and Placement

ECS places students in grade levels for which their level of maturity and learning skills are appropriate. Retention and promotion are recommended on an individual basis with the goal to best meet the student's needs. Retentions are made only after thoughtful consideration and possible alternatives have been explored by the teacher, parent(s), and Principal. Determination of a student being promoted or retained is a function of the teacher(s) and the Principal after consultation with the parent(s). The Principal assumes final responsibility for grade placement.

There are a variety of factors and guidelines that are considered in promotion and retention. These factors include but are not limited to: academic performance (performance data, work completed, effort and purpose), chronological age, social growth, physical development, emotional status and student attendance. Chronic student absence may be cause for retention.

It is the teacher's responsibility to keep parents informed of student progress throughout the year. The teacher will inform the Principal and parents of the possible need for retention prior to the beginning of the second trimester, providing both parents and Principal with student data indicating a need for retention. Parents may also request or discuss retention with the teacher at any time.

The Pastor is kept fully informed during this process. The final decision regarding retention will rest with administration.

Inclusion of Students with Special Needs

Students enrolled in local private schools and parochial schools are included in local public school district efforts for *Child Find* through a consultation and collaboration model. When a student is believed to have deficits in the areas of learning, social-emotional development, or speech and language, assistance is offered through the local public school district in which the private/parochial school is located. ECS works directly with McLean County Unit 5 School District for these services. The private-parochial school administrators, teachers, and counselors are able to communicate with designated Unit 5 staff on the degree and type of assistance being sought on behalf of the students.

When parents have concerns about their child in any of these areas they should communicate with the classroom teacher to address these concerns. The teacher will work with the ECS Principal and the appropriate Epiphany staff members to address the needs and when needed begin the CARES process (Collaboration, Analysis and Response for Educational Services) with Unit 5 staff. If parents desire to have their child evaluated for special education during or prior to the CARES process, they should submit their request for a special education evaluation in writing to the ECS Principal.

The school will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodation within the confines of its limited staffing resources. If a child with a disability persistently disrupts the educational setting, requires an extraordinary amount of individualized time, or places risks on the education of others, then ECS reserves the right to terminate enrollment of the child. Additionally, if something happens to a child while enrolled in ECS, such as a serious accident and more than reasonable accommodations are necessary for the education of the child, ECS reserves the right to review and discuss the continued enrollment of the child. If a child is found to be a danger to him/herself or to others, the school reserves the right to terminate enrollment of the child. In both situations, the Principal will determine what constitutes a disruption.

Homework Philosophy and Purpose

Homework is an important part of the learning process at Epiphany Catholic School and serves as a natural extension of classroom instruction. Students should expect to have regular homework assignments across all grade levels. These assignments are intended to:

- Practice newly taught skills
- Review and reinforce previously mastered skills
- Develop strong independent study habits and time management
- Extend and enrich the curriculum beyond what is covered in class

Homework is expected to be of good quality, age-appropriate in length, and gradually increase in volume and complexity from year to year. This progression helps students build stamina, responsibility, and academic independence over time.

General Homework Time Guidelines

The average amount of time students should expect to spend on homework each day is as follows:

- **Grades 1–3:** 10–30 minutes
- **Grades 4–5:** 30–50 minutes
- **Grades 6–8:** 60–90 minutes

These guidelines are **grounded in research and best practices**, including the recommendation of approximately 10–15 minutes of homework per grade level per night. In the early grades especially, the purpose of homework is not to increase academic rigor, but to help students build responsibility, confidence, and independent work habits over time.

If a student is consistently spending **significantly more time** than the recommended amount—despite working diligently and staying focused—parents should contact the classroom teacher to discuss concerns and explore strategies.

Nightly reading is **always** encouraged at all grade levels and may be included in or in addition to the above time estimates.

Homework Responsibilities

The following outlines the responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and the administration regarding homework at Epiphany Catholic School.

Students' Responsibilities

- Obtain and clarify homework assignments as needed.
- Record assignments and due dates in the planner (Grades 3–8); Junior High students also use Google Classroom.
- Set aside dedicated time each day for homework.
- Use in-school work time effectively when provided.
- Complete assignments carefully and honestly; strive for personal best.
- Bring all necessary materials (books, notes, study guides) to and from school.
- Submit homework on time and make up missed work after absences.
- Return any borrowed resources in good condition.

Parents' Responsibilities

- Promote a positive attitude toward homework as part of learning.
- Reinforce expectations for effort and quality of work.
- Provide a quiet space and needed materials to complete homework.
- Offer guidance and encouragement **without** doing the work for the child.
- Monitor whether the time spent on homework seems appropriate.
- Contact the teacher (via email, copying the principal) if the workload becomes a concern.

Teachers' Responsibilities

- Clearly explain the purpose of each homework assignment.
- Set expectations and timelines, especially for larger projects.
- Communicate assignments to students clearly (Grades 6–8: also post on Google Classroom).
- Provide time/guidance for students to record assignments in planners.
- Teach and model effective homework and study skills.
- Return and record homework in a timely manner.
- Ensure students have access to materials they need.
- Establish and maintain proactive communication with families to share successes or address concerns.

- Collaborate with colleagues to ensure a balanced overall workload.

Administration Responsibilities

- Ensure that homework practices align with the school's academic and developmental goals.
- Support communication between teachers and the Learning Specialist when needed.
- Encourage the use of homework as a meaningful learning and skill-building tool.
- Help foster a strong partnership between school and home in support of homework.

Grades 5th – 8th Late Homework

Junior High

Homework is due at the beginning of the period for which it was assigned. If homework is not complete or not available when due, the homework may be turned in by 3:15 pm the NEXT school day for a late grade. A late grade includes a 20% deduction of the amount earned. In order to build responsibility, any homework brought to the student after the school day has begun will be considered as a late assignment. Students are not allowed to call for someone to bring forgotten work. Homework turned in two (2) or more days late may receive a "0".

5th Grade

A late grade is figured on a point value that is one letter grade down from the original point value. Therefore, the highest grade a late assignment may receive is a B+. In grades 6 through 8 the late work will be reduced 20% of the points earned.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

It is the policy of ECS that cheating by students in any form will not be tolerated and that work submitted for grading must be the independent work of the student (or the students in a collaborative learning situation).

Plagiarism, or the copying and use of someone else's work without proper acknowledgment, is not permitted nor is it permissible for any student to allow another student to copy their work.

Assignments or projects found to be plagiarized will earn a grade of zero (0). At the discretion of the teacher, these assignments might be made up and accepted for partial credit. Students are reminded that if they allow another student to copy their work, they will receive the same penalty.

Student Affairs

Educational Field Trips

Field trips are carefully planned, aligned with learning objectives, and approved by the administration. These trips serve as valuable extensions of classroom instruction and contribute meaningfully to students' educational experiences.

Participation in field trips requires a signed permission form from a parent or guardian. All diocesan policies regarding insurance, driver qualifications, and safety trainings must be followed by volunteer drivers and chaperones, including proof of valid driver's license, insurance, completion of the Catholic Mutual *Drive Safe, Drive Smart* program, and Safe Environment certification. Please Note: Per Illinois Law, all children 8 years of age and under, must sit in a booster or carseats.

While field trips are integral to the curriculum, students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior and academic engagement consistent with school expectations. When concerns arise, the school will work collaboratively with families and students to address any issues and support participation. In rare cases where participation must be denied, the school will strive to provide alternative learning experiences—such as virtual field trips or in-school projects—so that all students continue to benefit from the educational content.

For details on diocesan insurance and driver policies, please visit www.cdop.org

Fundraising

Students are not permitted to collect money or sponsor moneymaking projects without the permission of the Administration. Money contributed to the missions should be free-will offerings on the part of the student. Students are encouraged to carry only the necessary amount of money needed for a specific school activity and must assume responsibility for its safekeeping.

Student Phone Calls

Telephones are available for student use in the school lobbies. Students must receive permission from the office or staff before using the phone. The school teaches and expects all students to use the phone responsibly. Consistent or inappropriate phone usage may result in the loss of this privilege.

Cell Phones and Portable Electronic Devices

The use of personal electronic devices during the school day (7:55 AM to 3:15 PM), including lunch and recess, is strictly prohibited. This includes all personal devices such as cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches (e.g., Apple Watch, Fitbit), MP3 players, video and digital cameras, tablets, and handheld gaming systems.

Students are not permitted to use, display, or access any of these devices at any time during the school day.

Failure to follow this policy may result in the device being confiscated. The device will only be returned when a parent or guardian comes to retrieve it.

Unauthorized use of personal electronic devices by students during the school day (7:55 AM to 3:15 PM), including lunch and recess, is strictly prohibited. This includes all personal devices such as cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches (e.g., Apple Watch, Fitbit), MP3 players, video and digital cameras, tablets, and handheld gaming systems. *Cell phones will remain off and will be in student lockers until dismissal.* Failure to follow this policy may result in the device being confiscated. The device will only be returned when a parent or guardian comes to retrieve it.

School Dances

School dances for Junior High students at ECS are permitted as a positive social experience. They are held

under the following circumstances and ground rules:

1. Parent Volunteers sponsor a dance in the fall and CCHS sponsors one in the spring.
2. Only students in ECS JH School are participants at its dance.
3. ECS dances must be well-monitored with at least eight (8) to ten (10) parent chaperones under the direction of the School Club. Failure to have volunteers will result in cancellation of the dance.
4. ECS dances will be held from 7:00 pm – 9 pm in the Lyceum gym.
5. Dress for all dances should reflect modesty. Strapless dresses or dresses with spaghetti straps are prohibited. Attire should adhere to the standards set forth by the dress code.
6. If any disciplinary issues arise during the dance — including disrespectful behavior or possession/use of lighters, tobacco, or alcohol — the student(s) involved will be separated and supervised by an adult. Parents will be contacted to pick up their child, and the incident will be addressed according to the school's disciplinary policies.

Parties and Treats

- **No edible treats of any kind** (including birthday snacks, Valentines or Halloween) are allowed to be brought into the school buildings for student celebrations.
- **Gum and soda pop are strictly prohibited** on school grounds.
- School parties for special occasions may only be scheduled and organized by Epiphany School Club volunteers.
- **Students may not exchange material gifts during the school day.**
- Private birthday party invitations may only be distributed in the classroom if **every student in the class is invited**, or if **all students of the same gender are invited**.

The School Day

Arrival and Dismissal

7:55 a.m. — School begins promptly with Morning Meeting. Students should be ready and in the Lyceum Gym at this time.

3:15 p.m. — Dismissal for all K–8 students.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Morning Drop-Off

Families should enter the school grounds via the Rectory Drive and proceed to the rear of the Elementary Building. This traffic pattern helps reduce confusion and ensures safety in the parking lot. Students should be dropped off in the **north parking lot**, located between the Lyceum and the Elementary Building. Upon arrival, students are to go directly into the Lyceum to wait for the first bell. Staff will be on duty to supervise from **7:30 a.m. to 7:55 a.m.** After dropping off, drivers should continue forward and exit the church lot using the KMAELC drive.

Afternoon Pick-Up

Afternoon pick-up begins by entering through the Rectory Drive for junior high or the east elementary entrance for elementary students.

- **Junior High students** will be dismissed directly to their designated pick-up person in the back parking lot. The back parking lot will be barricaded until 3 p.m. Parents arriving before 3 p.m. may line up around the Rectory Drive.
- **Parents of K–5 students** may park in the front parking lot outside the elementary school.
- K–5 students will be dismissed by their teachers from designated class areas outside the front of the elementary school. Teachers will not release a student until they have seen their designated pick-up person.
- Parents may request younger siblings of junior high students to reunite with their junior high student in the junior high building. They may then pick up all of their students in the back parking lot.

Dismissal & Pick-Up Expectations

To ensure a **smooth and safe dismissal process**, pick-up should be handled promptly and efficiently. Families are expected to arrive on time, **pick up students promptly** once they are released, and **leave the school grounds shortly thereafter**.

If you need to meet with a teacher, please schedule appointments for 3:30 PM or later. For casual gatherings with other families, we ask that these take place after dismissal and in another location, such as the playground by the Lyceum, and once the parking lot has cleared.

Parents/guardians are responsible for supervising their children during this time and are expected to discourage any misuse of school property, including climbing on trees or rocks, or other unsafe or disrespectful behavior.

Absences and Appointments

Parents are expected to contact the school offices daily *before 9:00 a.m.* whenever a student will not be attending school.

In the event of prolonged illness or absence, arrangements for class assignments should be made by contacting the classroom teacher or school office. All student illnesses must be reported to the office.

Every effort should be made to avoid scheduling appointments during school hours, particularly during times of school Mass. A note should be sent to the child's teacher explaining when, where, and why a child is leaving, and estimated time of return. Parents will pick up the child in the lobby of the K-5 building.

Students who arrive at school after 10:00 AM are not allowed to practice or compete that day in co- or extra-curricular activities. If a student misses classes due to a previously scheduled medical appointment, he/she may practice or compete. Absences due to funeral attendance or family obligations do not affect participation in co-curricular activities.

Late Arrivals (Tardies)

Students are expected to arrive on time, by **7:55 a.m.** A tardy will be recorded for any student arriving after attendance is taken. While extreme circumstances will be considered, repeated tardies will be tracked.

Junior High students who arrive late to a class during the school day without a valid, excused pass from a faculty or staff member will also be marked tardy. All tardies are tracked and reported through **RenWeb**.

Before and After Care

Epiphany Catholic School offers Before and After Care for students in grades **Pre-K through 8** during the following times:

- **Before Care:** 6:30 a.m. – 7:55 a.m.
- **After Care:** 3:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

The program operates on all regular school days and on select non-school days as determined by the Care staff. On scheduled **half-days**, After Care is available from the early dismissal time until 5:30 p.m.

Please note: **Before and After Care is not an impromptu or drop-in service. Families must register in advance, prior to the start of the school year**, in order to participate.

Lunch and Recess Procedures

Lunchroom Expectations

All teachers (and/or classroom assistants) accompany their classes to the lunchroom. Students are expected to demonstrate polite, respectful behavior—both while waiting in line and while seated. Conversation should remain quiet and courteous. Students are responsible for cleaning up their own areas before being dismissed.

Parents Taking Students Out to Lunch

Parents may sign out only their own child for lunch, and only during that child's scheduled lunch period. Parents must check in at the school office when doing so.

Recess Guidelines

- Recess is an important part of the school day. Students should expect to be outdoors whenever possible and come prepared for varying weather conditions. This includes bringing labeled coats, hats, gloves, and scarves in colder months and wearing weather-appropriate clothing in warmer weather.
- Indoor recess is a last resort, reserved for days when weather conditions truly prevent safe outdoor play.
- Students must remain in their assigned recess areas unless given permission by a supervisor.
- All injuries should be reported immediately to the nearest staff member.
- Disrespect, inappropriate language, rough play (e.g., tackling, tripping, wrestling), fighting, or throwing objects (e.g., rocks or sticks) will result in disciplinary action.

Requests to Stay Indoors

Remaining indoors during recess is permitted only in rare and necessary circumstances. In such cases, a written note or email should be submitted to both the homeroom teacher and the principal. Approval is granted at the principal's discretion.

Communication between School and Home

Chain of Communication: Academic or Policy Concerns

Epiphany Catholic School values open, respectful communication between home and school. To support strong partnerships with families, the following process should be followed when questions or concerns arise regarding academic issues, classroom practices, or school policies:

1. First Contact the Teacher or Staff Member Directly Involved

Most concerns are best addressed at the source. Families should first reach out to the teacher, coach, or staff member most directly involved in the situation. Contact can be made via school email or by leaving a message with the school office.

2. If Further Support Is Needed, Contact the Principal

If the concern remains unresolved after speaking with the appropriate staff member, families may reach out to the principal for further discussion and support. The principal is responsible for the overall direction of the school and will support both parties in resolving concerns. After hearing from both the parent and the staff member, the principal will act as a facilitator and help move toward resolution.

3. Conferences and Meetings

Conferences may be requested by either the teacher or parent at any time. Meetings will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time.

Our faculty and staff are committed to responding in a timely, professional manner and to working in partnership with families for the good of each student.

Emergency Notification System

Epiphany Catholic School uses a voice and phone notification system through RenWeb to send important messages to families.

- All parents listed in RenWeb will receive general information calls. By default, these calls are sent to the cell phone number on file.
- To change the number that receives general calls to a home phone, parents can update their preferences by logging into RenWeb > Family > Preferences.
- In the event of an emergency, calls will be made to all phone numbers listed for each family to ensure timely notification.
- The text of all phone messages sent from the school office can also be viewed in RenWeb.

Please keep your contact information up to date at all times to ensure you receive important communications promptly.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences play a vital role in strengthening the partnership between home and school to support each child's education. These conferences complement report cards by providing detailed insights into students' strengths, challenges, and overall development across subjects.

In Junior High, students will lead student-led conferences in October, guided by a junior high teacher. Parents who wish to schedule an individual conference outside of this may do so upon request.

All parents have the opportunity to schedule a conference with their child's teacher in October. Additional conferences in February are available only by request from a parent or teacher.

Website Information

The ECS Website is found on-line at epiphanyschools.org. Parents can find resources about school-related matters on this page.

Social Media

The school recognizes the importance of the Internet in forming public opinion. Therefore, it is essential that administration, faculty/staff, parents, students and volunteers join together and help shape the way the school is perceived in the community via interaction in social media. The following guidelines will help everyone make appropriate decisions about utilizing various social media.

- Parents , students, employees and volunteers are personally responsible for the content that they post, share and respond to online.
- Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information, internal school discussions, or specific information about students, staff or other parents.
- Never discuss sensitive school matters using social media outlets.
- Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about students, parents or staff nor the school in general.
- Social media sites using the school name may not be created without permission.
- Do not use any school logo or image without permission.
- Public postings on social media should not be used to challenge or ridicule Church teachings.

The school reserves the right to require parents, students, employees or volunteers to remove content or comments posted on social media for any reason, including but not limited to the administration's opinion that the comments violate this policy. The core values of the school apply to behavior both on and off campus including the online environment. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the school and/or termination of employment and/or volunteer activities.

RenWeb

ECS uses a web-based school Administration system called RenWeb to enhance communication among teachers, parents, and students. RenWeb is the primary source for school information, and should be checked by all school families on a regular basis. Parents and students utilize a component of RenWeb which is called ParentsWeb. The ParentsWeb component of RenWeb provides parents and students password-secure access to ECS student information such as the following: Attendance, Grades, Progress Reports, Report Cards, Homework, and Missing Assignments..

RenWeb will be used to send a broadcast message to all families via email and/or telephone in the event of an emergency situation or in the event of any school closings or early dismissals. ECS will confer with the Bloomington-Normal Catholic Partner Schools to coordinate the dismissal times and closing of school due to inclement weather. Please also refer to the local radio and television stations for information about school closings and early dismissals.

Accessing RenWeb

The best way to access RenWeb is through the ECS web site at epiphanyschools.org. Then click on the 'RenWeb Parent Login' link under the "Quick Link" menu. If you are new to RenWeb, you can view a brief tutorial at www.RenWeb.com, then click on the ParentWeb Demo button.

Parish Website

The parish website is found at epiphanyparish.com. This resource contains Parish related information.

Texting

Policy: ECS allows texting between faculty/staff and students *only* through the use of the school-approved platforms (i.e. Team Reach). Faculty/Staff should not be texting students through personal cell phone numbers. "Faculty/staff" includes coaches, employees, and other volunteers providing services to the ECS community.

Confidentiality in Communications

Faculty/staff will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is compromised. Parents will be notified of teacher concerns if the above conditions exist.

Publicity

Policy: For the purpose of this policy, “staff” also includes coaches, scout leaders, parent volunteers and other individuals who lead student activities at ECS. The school policy regarding publicity is stated below.

On occasion, ECS takes photographs or makes an audio or video recording of children and/or adults involved in school or parish activities. Such photographs or video records may be used by staff and participants to remember the activities or participants. In addition, such photographs and audio/visual recordings may be used in school or parish publications or advertising materials to let others know about the school or parish. Also, local news organizations may learn about the school’s activities or events, and the school or parish may invite or allow them to photograph or record such events to be used, distributed, or displayed as the agents of the school or parish see fit.

Unless parents submit a signed *Publicity Opt Out Form*, they expressly grant to ECS, its affiliated parish(es), and/or the Diocese of Peoria the right, privilege and license to use the picture or likeness of their child/children in any photograph, movie, video production or any other forms of media publication and to use the verbal or written statements or declarations of their child/children for the purpose of publicizing, fostering and promoting the school and its programs, or for any other purpose in furtherance of the mission of ECS, its affiliated parish(es), and/or the Diocese of Peoria. *A copy of the Publicity Opt Out form can be obtained by contacting the school office.*

Use of Student Information/Pictures

ECS strives to insure the privacy and safety of our children. To that end, we make every attempt to follow the points below:

- When a student’s name is used on the Internet, they will be identified by first name only unless more than one student shares the same name. In those cases, we may include the first letter(s) of the last name of each student. This includes publishing information such as the honor roll, recognition for special accomplishments, and team/club lists and accomplishments.
- When we include names with student photographs, audio/video recordings, or work on the Internet, we will do it in a manner that does not single out or identify a child without written consent from a parent or guardian. We will include the full name of a child with his or her photograph, audio/video recording, or work only with written consent from a parent or guardian. Emails from a parent or guardian can be accepted as written consent.
- Any Epiphany student may appear anonymously in group photographs and audio/video recordings or in the background of photographs and audio/video recordings of other children.

In the event a mistake is made, please notify the appropriate staff member and the problem will be rectified as soon as possible.

Student Records

Examination of Records

A parent who requests to examine records of their child(ren) may do so by contacting the Principal. The Principal will be present during the examination of records by the parent. Upon completion of the examination, the parent and Principal sign a form indicating that such a review has taken place. This form is then placed on file.

Transfer of Student Records

School records are transferred between schools. Elementary schools use the student transfer form when transferring student records. Parents sign a release form and records ordinarily are mailed to the new school

immediately. Official records may be retained until outstanding fees have been paid to the school/church. Transfer of records cannot be completed if the previous parish/school is withholding records.

Rights of Non-Custodial Parents

Our 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 to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with *access to the academic records* and other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that no information be given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. *Any changes made in custody agreements should be promptly reported in writing to the Principal.* It is the parent's responsibility to provide a copy of the custodial agreement in the divorce decree to be kept (confidentially) in the school's files.

Uniform Dress Code

The importance of proper dress for ECS students and the demonstrated commitment to it by parents and school cannot be over-emphasized. The uniforms and the traditions they convey demonstrate our commitment to quality in Catholic education. It is an expression of unity that eliminates materialistic competition and strengthens our academic focus and discipline. It assists students in feeling they belong and are accepted by others. Students are to dress and groom themselves in a manner that is modest, clean, and appropriate to a Catholic School academic environment. While parents and students have the primary responsibility for personal appearance, the Administration is responsible for interpreting dress code standards. Students must adhere to the following dress code while in the building during school hours by arriving in dress code and remaining in code throughout the day.

The Principal may adjust the dress code during the school day for special events or celebrations. If an item is not included in the dress code guidelines, it is not considered part of the approved attire and should not be worn at school.

Dress Code Enforcement

Dress code violations are addressed promptly to maintain a respectful and orderly school environment. For students in grades K–5, teachers will notify families of any uniform infractions. Junior High students who incur uniform infractions will be issued a notice. Multiple infractions may lead to a detention.

In cases of serious or repeated violations, parents may be contacted and asked to bring appropriate clothing for their child or to take the student home to resolve the issue promptly.

Dress Code / Uniform Policy Overview

Shirts/Tops

- Polo-style shirts with plain collars in solid white or navy blue only. Shirts must be tucked in.
- Undershirts/camisoles must be solid white.
- Sweaters, vests, cardigans (navy, white), and crewneck sweatshirts or quarter-zips (navy, white, grey) are allowed.
- Hoodies are **not** permitted.
- Only ECS or CCHS logos are allowed on any top layer.

Socks & Shoes

- Socks/tights must be solid white, black, or navy.
- Tennis/gym shoes required daily; closed toes/heels and rubber soles for safety.
- No embellishments like rhinestones, glitter, lights, or wheels allowed.

- Weather boots allowed but must be changed out for uniform shoes indoors.

Bottoms – Girls

- ECS plaid skirts/jumpers with fingertip length minimum.
- Cartwheel shorts or leggings (white, navy, or black) must be worn under skirts/jumpers.
- Navy blue or khaki pants or shorts allowed; shorts follow the same, fingertip length rule.
- Junior High students must wear belts (no novelty buckles).
- No cargo, denim, joggers, or overly tight styles.
- **Leggings Policy** - Leggings are considered a **layering garment only** and **may not be worn as pants**. When worn, they must be covered by a skirt, dress, or jumper that meets the **fingertip-length rule** (the hem must reach the student's fingertips when arms are resting at their sides). Oversized sweatshirts or sweaters are considered tops, **not bottoms**, so they do not meet the coverage requirement and are not considered appropriate.
- [Quick Reference Dress Code Guide](#)

Bottoms – Boys

- Navy blue or khaki shorts/pants with waistband and zipper.
- No sweatpants, cargo, flared, or non-uniform styles
- Shorts must meet fingertip length rule.
- Junior High students must wear belts (simple, solid colors only).

Accessories, Hair & Grooming

- Religious jewelry allowed but minimal and discreet.
- Girls may wear one pair of post-style earrings; boys may not wear earrings.
- Hair must be the child's natural (God-given) color—no dyes. Hair accessories should be limited to school colors or ECS plaid.
- Boys' haircuts above eyebrows and ears; all students keep hair neat and eyebrows visible.
- Minimal makeup (blemish cover-up, clear/translucent lip balm); clear or no nail polish only; no nail enhancements. Boys may not wear nail polish.
- No tattoos or body art (permanent or temporary).
- Hats/head coverings are not allowed indoors except religious headwear during Mass or Adoration.
- Traditional watches are allowed; smart watches are not.
- Belts must have simple, plain buckles; no flashy or oversized buckles.

Casual Dress Days

- Jeans are permitted but must be free of holes, rips, or frays.
- Tops and dresses must have sleeves (at least short sleeves); shoulders must be covered at all times.
- Midriff or crop tops of any kind are not allowed.
- The principal reserves the right to make adjustments to Casual Dress Days or guidelines as needed.

Please note: Students with ongoing or repeated dress code violations may lose the privilege of participating in Casual Dress Days.

Spirit Days (Mondays)

- On Spirit Days, students may wear ECS or CCHS logo shirts with standard uniform bottoms.
- Spirit Days will take place each Monday unless otherwise noted.
- All other dress code expectations still apply.

Student Discipline Policy

The primary purpose of discipline at Epiphany Catholic School is to educate all of our children in a Christian atmosphere, to ensure the safety of our children, and to act with respect to all. We believe that in order for our students to meet the challenges that he/she will face in our society, the development of self-discipline and individual responsibility are essential. In order to learn in the excellent climate each student deserves, Epiphany Catholic School has discipline policies in place. Students are expected to respect these rules as well as the people responsible for carrying them out. Our goal is for each student to learn to be responsible for their own actions. Appropriate behavior is expected of every student at ECS.

The parent is expected to cooperate with the school and support its corrective measures and to notify the school of any unusual behavior pattern on the part of the child that might lead to serious difficulties. It should also be understood that since we view the education of a student as a partnership between the school and the parents, the school has the right just as the parents have the right to require withdrawal of a student if the Administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

The discipline policies will be enforced at school, during any function or activity involving ECS or parish, regardless of the location or time of the event. A student's behavior reflects on our school. Any student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school and/or inconsistent with the mission, philosophy, or teachings of the Catholic Church may be subject to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion. Parents/guardians of students involved in behavior that is inappropriate, disrespectful or harmful to themselves or others shall be notified as soon as possible. Additional disciplinary action may be imposed, if deemed necessary, by the administration in accordance with the Diocesan policy.

Unacceptable Behaviors

Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in behavior that disrupts the teaching/learning environment.
- Engaging in any unacceptable physical contact as determined by the teacher or principal.
- Flagrant or habitual disregard for school policies, including the uniform code.
- Eating candy or chewing gum during school hours unless specifically permitted.
- Disrupting the quiet of the school, including classrooms, hallways, lunch, and recess.
- Leaving the classroom without permission or failing to arrive at all scheduled classes (considered skipping).
- Inappropriate behavior on field trips or school activities.
- Disrespect toward any school personnel, including volunteers.

These behaviors are generally addressed by teachers, with support and oversight from the administration as needed.

Disciplinary action may include notifying parents to remove their child from the school setting. The administration investigates all matters brought to their attention promptly, confidentially, and thoroughly.

Behaviors that pose a risk to the safety or well-being of others are more serious and will be handled directly by the administration. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Exhibiting hostile actions or threats, whether physical, written, or electronic.
- Using profane, obscene, or offensive language or gestures.

- Possessing pornography or indecent material.
- Serious or persistent disobedience or disorderly conduct.
- Damaging or defacing school, parish, or student property.
- Discrimination, intimidation, or coercion against any student or school personnel, including volunteers.

These serious offenses require administrative intervention and may result in suspension, expulsion, or notification of law enforcement authorities.

Search and Seizure

Catholic school officials may conduct periodic inspections of all or a randomly selected number of lockers, desks, and other storage spaces owned by the school and provided as a courtesy to students. The furnishings of lockers, desks, and other storage spaces provided as a courtesy to students shall not give rise to an expectation of privacy. Schools shall contact the Office of Catholic Schools prior to conducting any search.

The administration of the school is free to enter a student's locker, desk, or other storage spaces owned by the school at any time. Therefore the school reserves the right to search them without prior notice. If illegal and/or inappropriate items are found in a student's locker, desk, or other storage space (e.g., non-prescription drugs, stolen property), they will be turned over to law enforcement. Any items (i.e., personal possessions) that violate school rules will be kept by the school administration and returned to the parents.

The school reserves the right to have law enforcement assist in conducting searches of lockers, desks, or other storage areas and the contents contained therein.

Students shall not lock or otherwise impede access to any locker, desk, or storage area except with a lock provided by or approved by the administration. Unapproved locks will be removed and may be damaged or destroyed in the search process.

Response Procedures and Communication with Families (General)

At Epiphany Catholic School, we are committed to handling all disciplinary and behavior concerns with fairness, compassion, and clear communication. Whether the situation involves a classroom incident, unsafe behavior, or a more serious infraction, our approach is rooted in our mission as a Catholic school to support both accountability and dignity. In all cases, we aim to partner with families to address situations in a way that reflects our shared values to form students in character, virtue, and responsibility.

When an incident occurs:

- **Administration will talk with all students involved** to hear verbal accounts and gather written statements as part of due process before determining next steps.
- **Parents/guardians of students involved**—whether directly or indirectly—will be contacted by a teacher or administrator as soon as possible.
- **Each student's safety and well-being are our top priority.** We work to provide timely support, redirection, and care in the moment.
- **The nature of the incident will guide the next steps**, which may include a phone call, parent meeting, written documentation, or other communication.
- **Follow-up and monitoring** of students involved—whether directly or indirectly—may be implemented to ensure resolution and growth moving forward.

- In all cases, we aim to **partner with families** to address the situation in a way that reflects our shared commitment to forming students in character, virtue, and responsibility.

Bullying Prevention

All elementary and secondary schools in the Catholic Diocese of Peoria shall actively seek to provide a supportive, caring environment in which all persons are safe from all forms of intimidation including bullying, which is unacceptable, unchristian, and strictly prohibited.

Although religious schools are exempt from the Illinois law and its application to bullying situations, for the purpose of *this* policy, Illinois law shall be used to define bullying in our diocesan schools:

Bullying, including cyber-bullying, is any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; and/or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7b).

Bullying conduct covered under this policy is conduct that occurs on school property or at school sponsored activities or events, while students are being transported or walking to and from school or school sponsored activities or events, while students are waiting at bus stops for transportation to and from school, or cyberbullying as defined hereinafter.

Any reported bullying issue shall be promptly brought to the attention of the appropriate party, the pastor or principal or their designee, and thereafter investigated. Any student who engages in bullying and/or cyberbullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion and referral to local law enforcement. Behavioral interventions may be included as a component of the disciplinary actions. This may include but is not limited to mandatory counseling.

Retaliatory behavior by a student accused of bullying will also incur consequences. False accusations of bullying will result in disciplinary action taken against the accuser.

Types of Bullying

1. Relational: ostracizing another student, psychological manipulation, and systematic actions to isolate, shun, or exclude.
2. Verbal: name calling, put downs, and/or the spread of rumors.
3. Physical: aggressive acts such as hitting, slapping, choking, kicking, spitting, or pushing, as well as the destruction of property or the writing of offensive notes/graffiti.
4. Cyberbullying: actions associated with one or more types of bullying utilizing email, instant messaging, social networks, text messages, or other means of electronic communications.

Bullying conduct may include but is not limited to:

- Physical acts such as inappropriate, unwanted, uninvited, or injurious physical contact with another; stalking; sexual assault; or destruction or damage to the property of another.

- Written or electronic communication of any type that incorporates language or depictions that would constitute bullying, using any medium including but not limited to cell phones, computers, websites, electronic networks, instant messaging, text messages, and emails.
- Verbal threats made to another; blackmail or demands for protection money.
- Non-verbal threats or intimidation such as aggressive or menacing gestures.
- Direct or indirect relationally aggressive behavior such as social isolation, rumor spreading, or damaging someone's reputation.
- Blocking access to school property or facilities.
- Stealing or hiding or otherwise defacing books, backpacks or other personal possessions.
- Repeated or pervasive taunting, name calling, belittling, mocking, putdowns, or demeaning humor related to a student's race, color, sex, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics, whether or not the student actually possesses them, that could reasonably be expected to result in the disruption of school activities or create a hostile educational environment for the student.
- Any of the preceding conduct which occurs off school grounds when such conduct creates, or reasonably can be expected to create, a substantial disruption in the school setting and/or at school sponsored activities and events.

Not All Conflicts Are Bullying

While all inappropriate behavior is addressed seriously, not every conflict rises to the level of bullying. A one-time verbal disagreement, physical altercation, or social misunderstanding may not meet the criteria for bullying unless it is **repeated, targeted, and intended to cause harm**. These incidents will still be investigated and addressed through the school's discipline procedures to ensure safety and restore respect among students.

Response Procedures and Communication with Families (Bullying)

In general, when a behavioral concern or suspected bullying incident is brought to our attention, the school administration will:

- Take initial steps to ensure student safety and well-being.
- Listen to and document concerns from students, staff, or families.
- Follow up with relevant students and adults to understand the situation.
- Determine appropriate next steps, which may include restorative conversations, conflict resolution, and/or disciplinary action.
- Communicate with parents/guardians of the students involved, particularly when serious concerns arise or action is needed.
- Monitor the situation moving forward to ensure a positive and safe environment.

Co-Curricular Activities

There are a variety of co-curricular activities available for students. The mission of the co-curricular activities program at ECS is to serve as an extension of the academic learning process within our classrooms.

Co-curricular activities teach the attributes of Christian attitudes, teamwork, sportsmanship, diligence, and accepting loss and winning graciously, while building self-esteem, school pride, and respect for others. Our program offers all interested students the opportunity to participate. The *Co-Curricular Handbook* is located on the school's website. For each activity, the Activity Participation Agreement must be signed by each custodial parent and student.

School Organizations

Education Commission

The Education Commission supports the Pastor and Principal and promotes the mission of the school. Meeting dates and minutes can be found on the school website. Education Commission members, who are Catholic, must be active and practicing. It is the responsibility of parents, teachers, the Education Commission, and Administration to recognize parents as the primary educators of their children. The Education Commission assists the school in achieving its goals to provide quality Catholic education. It shall be the goal of parents, teachers, the Education Commission, and administration, through Gospel teaching and an excellent program of academics, to direct students toward a conscious choice of living a responsible Catholic life. A list of Board members and the Board statutes are available on the school's webpage.

School Club

All parents are considered members of Epiphany's School Club. Meetings will be held and parents will be notified via email. Parents are always welcome to attend meetings and are encouraged to help with any School Club activities. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the president for more specific options to help, or sign up to volunteer for activities on the website. School Club programs and contact information are available on the school's webpage.

Booster Club

The Booster Club provides financial support and volunteer assistance to the co-curricular programs.

Request for Appeal and Review

A review or appeal of any decision concerning policies, procedures, or other serious matters made by the competent authority of any of the schools of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria may be requested by any member of the diocese under the following conditions only:

1. The decision violates or is in conflict with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church; or
2. The decision violates or is in conflict with an applicable diocesan policy;
3. The decision violates or is in conflict with a policy or procedure of the parish, the school, or other entity that takes precedence over the decision in question, or,
4. The decision violates or is in conflict with an applicable federal, state or local civil law.

It is to be noted that dissatisfaction with a decision is not a sufficient condition for appeal.

Appeal Letter

The individual or group desiring the appeal or the review must make that known to the governing pastor or pastors' board responsible for that school in the form of a letter. As a matter of record, a copy of that letter is to be forwarded to the local Vicar and to the Superintendent of Schools.

This letter must clearly cover each of the following points:

1. The decision that is being questioned and which competent authority made it;

2. The grounds for the appeal or the review with specific reference to one or more of the four (4) conditions listed above, and,
3. The proposed resolution.

The pastor, having received the request for appeal or review, is to respond to those making the request within thirty (30) days of receiving the request. A copy of the response letter is to be forwarded to the local vicar having jurisdiction over the particular parish/school and to the Superintendent of Schools.

In most cases, the decision of the governing pastor is final. However, those who have requested the appeal or review may further appeal the decision of the governing pastor to the local vicar within thirty (30) days. The local vicar has the authority to summarily dismiss the appeal or he may forward the appeal to the Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria and the Office of Catholic Schools. The Vicar General shall make a final decision on the appeal in such cases. If the local vicar decides to dismiss the case he must, as a matter of record, forward a copy of such decision to the Vicar General and the Office of Catholic Schools.

Diocese of Peoria Harassment Policy

Harassment, including but not limited to, sexual harassment, of any employee or other person is unethical, is illegal and is prohibited. This policy is intended to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Diocesan or parish personnel who have administrative responsibility involving the diocese, a parish, a parish institution, school or organization in situations involving possible sexual harassment. It sets forth the Diocesan response to victims.

The term "harassment" includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, or any other form of verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct or advances which reflect adversely on an individual's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, marital status, veteran status, or physical or mental handicap. Harassment under this policy includes sexual harassment which means any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment; or (4) such other conduct or actions as are defined as "harassment" under the Illinois Human Rights Act as amended from time to time. Further, retaliation against a complainant or witness who initiates a case under this policy is included within the term "harassment" as used herein and shall be handled under this policy.

Diocese of Peoria Sexual Abuse Policy

In accord with the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People", the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops promulgated "Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with the Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons" as approved by the Apostolic See. The Charter addresses the Church's commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, and other church personnel (i.e., employees and volunteers).

The Bishops of the United States have promised to reach out to those who have been sexually abused as minors by anyone serving the Church in ministry, employment, or a volunteer position, whether the sexual abuse was recent or occurred many years ago. They stated that they would be as open as possible with the people in

parishes and communities about instances of sexual abuse of minors, with respect always for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. They have committed themselves to the pastoral and spiritual care and emotional well-being of those who have been sexually abused and of their families. In addition, the Bishops will work with civil authorities, parents, educators, and various organizations in the community to make and maintain the safest possible environment for minors. In the same way, the Bishops have pledged to evaluate the background of seminary applicants as well as all Church personnel who have responsibility for the care and supervision of children and young people.

The Diocese of Peoria will implement these Norms diligently, compassionately, and fairly. This Policy and the procedures set forth herein will be reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually, by competent Diocesan authorities and Diocesan legal counsel. The following policies and procedures are intended to implement these goals.

The complete Diocesan Policy may be found on the Catholic Diocese of Peoria website.

Absenteeism & Truancy Policy

Addendum: January 13, 2023

Attendance Procedures

When a student is absent from school, the student's parent/guardian is requested to contact the school between 7:45am-9:00 am to inform the elementary or junior high secretary of the student's absence.

Leaving School Early

Students who need to leave school early for medical purposes (doctor or dental appointments) must contact the office before leaving school. Parents are encouraged to communicate any dismissal changes no later than 2:00pm.

If a student is ill during the day, the student/parent must check out in the office before leaving the building.

Absences

Epiphany Catholic School recognizes three (3) categories of absences:

- Excused absences
- Unexcused absences
- Truant absences (after the 9th unexcused absence)

Excused Absence: An excused absence is recognized as:

- A student's personal illness, including mental or behavioral health
- A death in the immediate family
- A family emergency
- Medical visits
- Family vacations (up to 5 school days)
- Other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's safety or health
- Other situations beyond the control of the student (such as court appearances)
- Other reasons approved by the Principal.

A health care provider's note may be required to excuse a student and/or for returning to school after the third consecutive day of being reported ill. If medical documentation is not provided, the absence may be marked "unexcused." Students who have 9 or more days of absences due to being sick may be required to provide a doctor's note to excuse the absences.

Unexcused Absence: An unexcused absence is defined as an absence from school for a reason other than those listed above as an excused absence and/or an absence not authorized by the student's parent/guardian or the Principal. When a student's absence is unexcused, the parent/guardian may recognize the absence as being valid or legitimate; however, the school does not. School officials will identify causes for unexcused absences through contacting or interviewing students/parents/guardians. The following are unexcused absences (even with parent/guardian consent):

- Family vacations that are 6 or more school days
- Other avoidable absences.

Truant Absences: Truancy is defined as absence without valid cause for one or more periods of the student's school day. Parents/guardians may be notified following 3, 5, and 9 days of absence or tardies within a school year, and a school intervention may be initiated. After the 9th school day (5% of regular attendance days) on which a student is absent without valid cause, he/she is deemed to be truant under Illinois law. Interventions to address truancy may include attendance letters, parent/teacher/principal conferences, student counseling, and/or involvement of the county truancy officer and/or local law enforcement. No punitive action, including out-of-school suspensions or court action will be taken against a chronically truant student unless available support services and other resources have been provided to the student, or offered to the student and refused. The school shall collect and review its chronic absence data and determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students and their families to encourage the habit of daily attendance and promote success.

Any person who has custody or control of a child subject to compulsory attendance who knowingly or willfully permits the child to persist in truancy, if convicted, is guilty of a Class C misdemeanor and may be subject to up to 30 days imprisonment and/or fine up to \$1,500.

Family Vacation Absences: Family travel during the school year does interrupt a student's regular progress; however, we recognize the educational value of these trips. Therefore, five (5) vacation days per school year will be allowed as excused. Any days after five (5) school days will be unexcused. Early notice of travel will help school personnel to accommodate parents and students during that period. It will be the student's responsibility to obtain all missing work from their teachers during their absence. Some assignments may not be available until the student returns to school. Work shall be completed and returned to the teacher within three (3) days for the child to receive credit.

Tardiness: Students are expected to be in class on time so they may maximize their learning opportunities. Teachers and the Principal will monitor student tardies. Students may be considered tardy if they arrive after the bell has rung. Students may receive consequences for excessive tardies.

Make Up Work

Students who have excused absence(s) from school will be allowed to make up work for equivalent academic credit. In the event of prolonged illness or absence, arrangements for class assignments should be made by contacting the classroom teacher or school office. All student illnesses must be reported to the office.

The time allowed for makeup work will generally be one school day for every day missed, starting with the first day the student returns to school. In extenuating circumstances, a student may ask his/her teacher or the Principal for additional time to make up work. It is the responsibility of the student (and his/her parent/guardian), not the teachers, to get the assignments, complete them, and turn them in, and to arrange a time with the teacher to make up any missed quizzes or tests. Incomplete work or failure to do the work may result in a lowering of grades.

Attendance at Extracurricular Activities

Students who stay home from school past 10 a.m. due to illness are not allowed to practice or compete that day in co-curricular activities. If a student misses classes due to a previously scheduled medical appointment, he/she may practice or compete. Absences due to funeral attendance or family obligations do not affect participation in co-curricular activities.

School Employee Code of Professional Conduct (C-411, P-CDOP)

Pursuant to Illinois's Faith's Law requirements, the Diocese of Peoria adopts this Code of Professional Conduct for School Employees. Each of the provisions below is contained in existing policies and rules of the Diocese of Peoria, but are restated as a Code of Conduct

for School Employees to comply with the law. Each school is required pursuant to Faith's Law to post this Code of Professional Conduct for School Employees on the school's website and to publish this document in the school's parent/family/student handbook, if the school has one.

I. Educator Code of Conduct

Pursuant to recent Illinois law, the Diocese adopts the relevant portions of the Illinois Educator Code of Conduct, as follows, which applies to school employees who are certified or working toward certification or whose certification has been waived:

Principle 1: Responsibility to Students. Educators are committed to creating, promoting, and implementing a learning environment that enables students to achieve their highest academic potential, and to succeed as a responsible member of society. They are committed to embodying standards of professionalism in the learning environment; respecting the inherent dignity and worth of each student by assuring that the learning environment is characterized by respect for each student; maintaining a professional relationship with students at all times; providing a curriculum based on high expectations for students; and fostering in each student the development of attributes that will enhance skills and knowledge necessary to be a contributing member of society.

Principle 2: Responsibility to Self. Educators are committed to establishing high professional standards and striving to meet these standards through their performance. They are committed to assuming responsibility and accountability for their performance and striving to demonstrate proficiency and currency in both content knowledge and professional practice; developing and implementing personal and professional goals with attention to professional standards through a process of self-assessment and professional development; representing their professional credentials and qualifications accurately; and using sound professional judgment.

Principle 3: Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession. Educators are committed to collaborating with school and Diocesan colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning and to meet state educational standards; working together to create a respectful, professional and supportive school climate for educators to maintain their individual professional integrity; seeking out and engaging in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession; encouraging promising candidates to enter the education profession; and supporting the preparation, induction, mentoring and professional development of educators.

Principle 4: Responsibility to School Parents and Families. Educators are committed to collaborating, striving to build trust, and respecting confidentiality with school parents and families striving to develop and maintain professional relationships with school parents and families; and promoting collaboration and supporting student learning through communication with parents and families.

Principle 5: Responsibility to the ISBE. Educators are committed to supporting the Administrative and School Codes as applicable to Catholic schools, state and federal laws and regulations as applicable to Catholic

schools, and the Illinois State Board of Education's standards for highly qualified educators, as applicable to Catholic schools. They are committed to providing accurate communication to the Illinois State Board of Education concerning all certification matters; maintaining appropriate certification for employment; and complying with the state and federal codes, laws, and regulations that apply to Catholic schools.

Any employee who sexually harasses a student, willfully or negligently fails to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/), engages in grooming as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25, engages in grooming behaviors, violates boundaries for appropriate school employee student conduct, engages in sexual misconduct as defined in 105 ILCS 5/22-85.5, or otherwise violates an employee conduct standard will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. The Catholic Diocese of Peoria and its associated schools have no tolerance for any unprofessional conduct.

II. Sexual misconduct

The Diocese's Norms for the Prohibition of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Sexual Misconduct with Adults: Education, Prevention, Assistance to Persons making a Report, Investigation, and Procedures for Determination of Fitness for Ministry/Employment, prohibits sexual abuse of minors by its employees, clergy members, and volunteers. Pursuant to Faith's Law, the Diocese has amended its Norms to add additional description of acts constituting sexual abuse of a minor:

- I. Sexual misconduct, defined by Faith's Law as any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity directed toward or with a minor for the purpose of establishing a romantic or sexual relationship with the minor, including but not limited to a sexual or romantic invitation; dating or soliciting a date; engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog; making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a minor; self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature; and/or a sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the minor (Illinois' Faith's Law, Public Act 102- 0676, (105 ILCS 5/22-85.5).
- II. Grooming behavior, defined by Faith's Law and the Illinois Criminal Code as knowingly using a computer online service, internet service, local bulletin board service, or any other device capable of electronic data storage or transmission, or performs an act in person or by conduct through a third party, or uses written communication to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, or attempt to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, a child, or another person believed by the person to be a child, to commit any sex offense as defined in Section 2 of the Sex Offender Registration Act, to distribute photographs depicting the sex organs of the child, or to otherwise engage in any unlawful sexual conduct with a child or with another person believed by the person to be a child.

III. Expectations of School Employees

School employees are expected to maintain professional relationships and boundaries, recognizing the age and the developmental levels of the students with whom they interact.

1. Employees are strictly prohibited from using any form of communication with students (e-mails, letters, notes, text messages, phone calls, conversations) that includes any subject matter that would be deemed unprofessional and/or inappropriate between an employee and student.
2. Employees are not permitted to transport students in the employee's privately owned vehicle, unless the employee has obtained the prior permission of the Principal to do so.
3. Employees are not permitted to take or possess a photo or video of a student on their private devices that would be construed as inappropriate.
4. Employees are expected to maintain a professional relationship in all interactions, both in and out of school.

IV. School employees are mandated reporters

The Diocese restates here the Diocese's requirement that its employees, including employees who work at diocesan elementary schools and high schools, shall report suspected child abuse and suspected child neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Pursuant to the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, (325 ILCS 5/4), school employees are required to make a report suspected child abuse and suspected child neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services by calling the hotline number at 1-800- 25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873) whenever the employee has reasonable cause to believe that a child known to the employee in the employee's professional or official capacity may be abused or neglected.

V. Employee training related to child abuse and educator ethics

The Diocese requires its employees be trained annually in their obligations as mandated reporters and every three years to be trained in preventing, detecting and responding properly to sexual harassment. The trainings are entitled *DCFS's Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters*; and the *State of Illinois' Prohibition of Sexual Harassment training*. Those requirements are set forth in the *Diocese's Employee Handbook* and in the *Diocese's Safe Environment Requirements for Clergy, Adult/Teen Employees and Volunteers* whose role involves direct contact with minors. The Diocese will require its school employee educators to receive training in educator ethics. When those resources are completed, they will be shared with educators. Effective 7/1/2023

Faith's Law, Faith's Law Mandate Against Sexual Abuse in Schools

On December 3, 2021, Governor Pritzker signed Faith's Law, P.A. 102-0676 (HB 1976), into law. Faith's Law expands the criminal definition of grooming beyond electronic communications to include written communications and acts committed in person or by conduct through a third party. The law also makes it clear that mandated reporters must report suspected grooming to DCFS under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. In addition to expanding the criminal definition of grooming, Faith's Law includes several new requirements for schools and educators intended to prevent sexual abuse and misconduct in schools.

The law specifically provides that any violation of the employee code of professional conduct or failure to report a violation may subject an employee to discipline, up to and including dismissal from employment. As part of this law, we are posting a copy of the resource guide to support you and your family should you need it. [RESOURCE GUIDE LINK](#)

PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

2025–2026 EPIPHANY CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

I HAVE READ AND REVIEWED THE 2025–2026 EPIPHANY CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK. I UNDERSTAND THE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND EXPECTATIONS OUTLINED WITHIN AND AGREE TO SUPPORT AND ABIDE BY THEM.

I RECOGNIZE THAT THIS HANDBOOK IS UPDATED ANNUALLY, AND IT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY TO BE FAMILIAR WITH ITS CONTENTS EACH YEAR.

BY SIGNING BELOW, I ACKNOWLEDGE MY COMMITMENT TO PARTNERING WITH THE SCHOOL IN UPHOLDING ITS MISSION, VALUES, AND COMMUNITY STANDARDS.

STUDENT NAME(s): *(PLEASE PRINT)*

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME(s): *(PLEASE PRINT)*

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE(s):

DATE: _____