LIFESTYLE POLICY FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS – Governance No. 36

September 2011		
Date Approved	Date Amended	Date Deleted

Introduction

The Catholic Church has a ministry of educating the faithful. One of the primary means of fulfilling this ministry is through Catholic Schools. Code of Canon Law, Canons 794 and 796.
"Instruction and education in a Catholic School must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and the teachers must be outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life." Canon 803.

In addition, the Vatican II decree Apostolicam Actuositatem provides that Pastors can entrust to lay faithful certain offices and roles that are connected to their pastoral ministry, such as the teaching of Christian doctrine. Indeed, Catholic laity "carry out their own part in mission to the whole Christian people with respect to the Church and the world." Vatican II, Lumen Gentium 31.

Lifestyle Considerations

In view of the Church's teaching ministry, we become acutely aware of the importance of the Catholic school employee's witness to the students and to the total parish and school community. In view of this influence, it is essential that all employees and volunteers in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Biloxi model in every way the Gospel values.

Therefore, all Catholics in the education ministry of the Diocese of Biloxi must be in good standing with the Catholic Church and be aware that support of the mission statement of the Church is to be reflected in their behavior. Non-Catholics who witness in Catholic schools, although they do not necessarily have a commitment to Catholicism, must behold in their teaching and lifestyle basic Catholic teachings and practices so as not to misdirect any students.

To take a position directly contrary to the Church's teaching, whether by lifestyle or speaking publicly against Church teachings, has serious consequences, in view of the impact on the students. Should any situation arise that is contrary to or at variance with this policy, a pastoral approach shall be taken to insure the best possible benefit to the children and to foster the spiritual well-being of the individual in question. However, all employees and volunteers of any Catholic School in the Diocese of Biloxi should be aware that words, conduct or action contrary to or at variance with this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

Certain specific acts that violate the spirit of the Gospels and the Church's teachings for which discipline (including termination) may be imposed include but are not limited to the following:

1. Contracting a marriage in violation of the rules of the Catholic Church.
   CCC Nos. 1603; 1614; 1631; 1650-51; 2384. *

2. Living with another as though husband and wife without the benefit of a valid marriage. CCC Nos. 2350; 2353; 2390, 2391.

3. Conviction of a felony or any crime which involves moral turpitude. CCC Nos. 2268; 2284-2285; 2297 ff; 2353-56; 2387-89.

4. Obtaining, coercing or assisting another to obtain an abortion. CCC Nos. 2271; 2272.

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5. Engaging in any homosexual activity, including sexual relations. CCC Nos. 2357-59.

6. Immoral or dishonest conduct that adversely impacts the teacher's witness to Gospel values. CCC Nos. 1952; 2039' 2284-85; 24087.

7. Engaging in sexual relations out of wedlock, regardless of whether, if the employee is a female and pregnancy out of wedlock results, or if the employee is a male and he fathers a child outside of wedlock. CCC Nos. 2363; 2378; 2380.

8. Membership in any organization which is anti-Catholic or whose philosophy is racist and/or in any way contrary to the Church's teaching on social justice. CCC Nos. 1935; 1947; 2284-85.

9. Engaging in any activity, immoral or illegal, which would show a bad example to or injure the students (e.g. illicit use of drugs, illegal use of alcohol, pornography, indecent behavior, sexual contact with a minor regardless of consent, or abuse of any kind). CCC Nos. 2284-85; 2354; 2355.

10. Maintaining by word or action a position contrary to the teaching standard, doctrines, laws or norms of the Catholic Church. CCC Nos. 2030; 2032; 2044; 2072-73.

11. Abdicating responsibility for Sunday obligation of Mass/church attendance. For Catholics, also abdicating responsibility for mass attendance during all holy days of obligation. CCC Nos. 1389; 2042

The foregoing is not an exhaustive list of the ways in which words, conduct or action contrary to or at variance with the Church's teaching may occur but is meant to exhibit examples of such instances. The Bishop, Pastor or Principal reserves the right to make a determination in each case whether or not an employee's actions or lifestyle violate the moral or religious doctrines or teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Before a teacher is hired in any school within the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi, compliance with the above must be documented. Every year, subsequent to issuing a contract, a compliance form (see Appendix C) must be signed by the prospective teacher and their pastor. This form will be maintained in the teacher's personnel file.

* References are to the Catechism of the Catholic Church

(Standard 3)