



**Diocese of Little Rock
Office of Catholic Schools**

Policy and Procedure Manual

6.00 CURRICULUM - INSTRUCTION

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RIGHT TO AMEND

The Diocese of Little Rock Office of Catholic Schools reserves the right to amend at any time this policy manual, which is not a contract. School principals will be given prompt notification of any amendments.

6.01 SCHOOL CALENDAR AND HOURS OF INSTRUCTION

The Office of Catholic Schools develops a school calendar. Any modifications to this calendar must be approved by the Superintendent.

1. Holiday and Early Dismissal - No holiday or early dismissals other than those designated in the approved calendar may be given without prior approval of the superintendent of schools.
2. Required Clock Hours - The instructional time in each school day will not be less than six (6) hours. Any time less than (6) six hours will not be counted for a full day of instruction; nothing less than three (3) hours will be counted as one-half (1/2) day of instruction.
3. Days of Instruction - All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock will use the state required 1068 hours as a minimum standard.

6.02 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Schools will follow the Diocesan requirements regarding courses offered and time allotments. The elementary schools will utilize the *In Spirit and Truth* curriculum guide.

6.03 TEXTBOOKS IN SCHOOLS

All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock will use approved texts in the instructional program.

1. Religion Texts - The pastor and principal will concur on the choice of texts from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) conformity list.
2. Secular Subject Texts – The curriculum committees and Office of Catholic Schools will recommend textbooks to be utilized in the schools.

6.04 LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER

The Library-Media Center should ensure that students and staff have access to materials and information that will be a fundamental part of the educational programs.

Each school should have an instructional materials policy that describes the process and the criteria for the selection or deletion of instructional materials to be included in the Library-Media Center. The following areas should be defined:

- Materials for selection
- Responsibility for selection
- Criteria for selection/withdrawal
- Procedures for selection
- Challenged materials procedures
- An inventory of all library-media center materials will be kept at the school

6.05 MATERIALS SECURED THROUGH FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Materials placed in the schools through federal programs are the property of the local school district. These materials are to be kept at the school. The local school district office should be contacted for removal when the materials are no longer in use.

- An inventory of the materials will be maintained in the school.
- The materials may not be used in the religion program of the school.

6.06 RELIGION, TEACHING, AND PRACTICE

- Catholic liturgy, sacraments, traditions, and prayer shall be taught as an integral part of the school's curriculum. The liturgy should be celebrated regularly for the school and Catholic traditions celebrated according to the liturgical season. Prayers are an active part of the school day.
- Liturgical formation shall be directed toward fostering active participation of the students and their families at Mass.
- School liturgies shall observe the norms of the liturgical books and the local directives of the Bishop. Adaptations of the liturgy may be made for a particular circumstance of the school when approved by the pastor.
- Sacramental preparations for the Sacraments of Initiation: Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and Confirmation shall be conducted according to the parish plan. Ordinarily, the sacraments should be celebrated with local parish communities: exceptions must be approved by the Bishop or his delegate. Participation in school-based sacramental preparation does not substitute for full participation in the parish-based sacramental preparation program.
- The curriculum for religion and all supplementary materials will be consistent with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, conform to the guidelines of the Diocese for curricula of religion, and be developmentally appropriate and relevant to the students' lives.
- Catholic schools will provide opportunities for students to participate in community service projects or service learning that will benefit the community and all people.

6.07 SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Each year the schools are required to teach the Circle of Grace program to all students. After teaching the lessons, a report must be sent to the Diocesan Safe Environment Office.

6.08 ARKANSAS HISTORY

A unit of Arkansas History will be taught at the elementary level with greater emphasis in fourth and fifth grades.

At least one full semester of Arkansas History shall be taught to all students at the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade level.

6.09 ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

The principal will approve all co-curricular activities. Any school-sponsored activity must allow equal

opportunities for the students.

- Speakers - All speakers must have prior approval from the principal. Speakers without Safe Environment training must be escorted by an adult.
- Field Trips - No off-campus field trip will be taken without the approval of the principal. All field trips must have the enrichment of the curriculum as their core purpose and must be carefully planned as an extension of the classroom experience. Before groups of students are taken off the school grounds, written approval will be obtained from the parent/guardian of each child.
- Overnight Trips - Overnight trips are highly discouraged for elementary schools. Requests for exceptions must have approval from the pastor and be submitted to the Diocesan superintendent. Overnight trips must meet guidelines from Catholic Mutual Youth Trips involving overnight stay.

6.10 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

When possible, each elementary school will provide the services of a counselor. Each secondary school will provide a guidance program for students in spiritual, emotional, personal, social, and vocational development.

- Vocational guidance concerning various occupations will be given to students including vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life.
- High schools must employ a guidance counselor with knowledge of graduation credits and the ability to assist students with knowledge of scholarship availability.
- In some instances, the parish priest may be available for assistance in counseling a student.

6.11 TESTING PROGRAM

The testing program is designed for diagnostic purposes and for providing principals, teachers, and parent(s)/guardian(s) with information.

1. Religion Tests - The Diocesan required religion tests are administered to students in grades 5 and 8 annually.
2. Standardized Achievement Tests - Standardized achievement tests are administered to all students in grades K through 8, according to the schedule approved by the Office of Catholic Schools.
3. High schools should offer exams to further the student's education and/or career opportunities.
4. At the request of parents/teachers, a child may be referred for diagnostic evaluation in specialized areas.

6.12 STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO

The following guidelines are recommended for student-teacher ratios.

GRADE LEVEL	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS	STAFF RECOMMENDATION
K	20	1 professional teacher
1-2-3	25	1 professional teacher
4-5-6	28	1 professional teacher
7 thru 12	30	1 professional teacher

In addition to the required professional teachers, other support staff may be employed at the discretion of the principal.

6.13 PRE-KINDERGARTEN STANDARDS

All pre-kindergarten programs are to follow the Arkansas Department of Education minimum licensing requirements for childcare centers.

The pre-kindergarten curriculum is to be developmentally appropriate and include readiness programs, basic skills, and religion.

6.14 SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENTS / GRADES 1-2-3**MINIMUM OF 6 INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS PER DAY****BLOCKS****TIME**

Subject	Daily	Weekly
Religion	30 minutes	150 minutes
English - Language Arts Reading Spelling Handwriting Oral Communication Written Communication Literature	180 minutes	900 minutes
Mathematics	45 minutes	225 minutes
Social Living Citizenship Geography-History- Economics Science Health Safety	60 minutes	300 minutes
Creative-Recreational Art Music Physical Education	45 minutes	225 minutes
TOTAL	360 minutes	1,800 minutes

6.15 SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENTS / GRADES 4-5-6**MINIMUM OF 6 HOURS INSTRUCTIONAL TIME PER DAY****BLOCKS****TIME**

Subject	Daily	Weekly
Religion	30 minutes	150 minutes
English - Language Arts Reading Spelling Handwriting Oral Communication Written Communication Literature	150 minutes	750 minutes
Mathematics	60 minutes	300 minutes
Social Studies Geography-History- Economics	45 minutes	225 minutes
Science: General Science Health Safety	45 minutes	225 minutes
Creative- Recreational Art Music (band) Physical Education	30 minutes	150 minutes
TOTAL	360 minutes	1,800 minutes

6.16 SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENTS / GRADES 7-8
MINIMUM OF 6 HOURS INSTRUCTIONAL TIME PER DAY
BLOCKS **TIME**

Subject	Daily	Weekly
Religion	30 minutes	150 minutes
English - Language Arts: Reading Spelling Handwriting Oral Communication Written Communication Literature	120 minutes	600 minutes
Mathematics	55 minutes	275 minutes
Social Studies: Geography-History- Economics	55 minutes	275 minutes
Science: General Science Health Safety	55 minutes	275 minutes
Creative - Recreational Art Music (band) Physical Education	45 minutes	225 minutes
TOTAL	360 minutes	1,800 minutes

6.17 SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENTS - HIGH SCHOOL

A course which meets for the equivalent of a regular school period each day for a full school year will consist of a minimum of 275 minutes per week for laboratory/vocational courses and 225 minutes per week for all other courses in high school.

Schools that offer seven (7) periods of instruction in secondary school may schedule laboratory/vocational courses in fifty (50) minute periods for a total of 250 minutes.

6.18 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS - HIGH SCHOOL

The secondary school must have a master curriculum schedule that offers 28 credits, 24 of which are offered at least every other year. The minimum requirements for graduation are 22 credits of which 16 credits are mandatory. The school's 28 course offerings are listed in the table below. A credit shall be defined as the credit given for a course which meets for a minimum of 120 hours per year or covers the

intended content (i.e. online courses).

SUBJECT	UNITS	COURSE
Religion	4 credits	
Language Arts	6 credits	4 credits of English 1 credit of Oral Communications or ½ credit of Oral Communication and (½ credit of Drama or ½ unit of Journalism)
Mathematics	5 credits	1 credit of Algebra I or Algebra A & B (grade 7-8 or 8-9) 1 credit of Algebra II 1 credit of Geometry 1 credit of Pre-Calculus Math to include Trigonometry Comparable concurrent college credit courses may be substituted where applicable.
Science	4 credits	Active student participation in laboratory experience is required for a minimum of 20% of the instructional time. 1 credit of Biology 1 credit of Chemistry 1 credit of Physical Science/Physics Other options approved by the school
Social Studies	4 credits	1 credit of American History 1 credit of World History ½ credit of Economics ½ credit of American Government- Civics ½ credit of Arkansas History if not taught in 7 th or 8 th grade Other options approved by the school
Foreign Language	2 credits	2 credits of the same language
Computer Science	1 credit	1 credit of Computer Science
Fine Arts	3 credits	
Physical Education and Health	1 credit	½ credit Physical Education ½ credit of Health Education
Career/Technical Education	2 credits	Drafting, Drivers Ed, Leadership, Accounting, Graphic Design, Computer Application, Web Design, Engineering, Business Courses, etc.

6.18.1 ELECTIVE REQUIREMENTS – HIGH SCHOOL

It is recommended that elective courses be offered at least every two years at the high school level:

Science (Anatomy, Physiology, Geology)

Mathematics (Calculus, Trigonometry, Consumer Math)

Art (including crafts)

Music (such as Music Appreciation)

Foreign Language (third and fourth year)

Social Studies (Anthropology, Sociology, AR History, Global Studies)

Drama

Home Economics (Consumer Education, Parenting Education)

Approved programs including Advanced Placement and college courses

Exploratory, Vocational, or Industrial Arts

6.18.2 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS – HIGH SCHOOL

The mandatory graduation (16 credits) requirements are shown below:

English	(4) credits
Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 credit of Algebra or its equivalent ● 1 credit of Geometry or its equivalent A two-year algebra equivalent or a two-year geometry equivalent may each be counted as two (2) credits of the four-credit requirement.	(4) credits May substitute 1 required credit of mathematics for one credit of approved STEM or Computer Science
Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 credit of Biology or its equivalent ● 1 credit of Physical Science or its equivalent 	(3) credits May substitute 1 required credit of science for one credit of approved STEM or Computer Science
Social Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 credit of World History ● 1 credit of American History ● ½ credit of Civics ● ½ credit of Economics and Personal Finance 	(3) credits
Oral Communication	(1/2) credit
Physical Education	(1/2) credit
Health and Safety CPR Training must be included	(1/2) credit
Fine Arts	(1/2) credit
Religion courses may not be substituted for any of the 16-credits required for graduation. Each student must have one digital learning course.	

6.19 CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES - HIGH SCHOOL

Co-curricular activities will be correlated with the courses of studies and directed to the same general objectives.

- Clubs in High Schools - The foundation of the school program will be scholarship; therefore, clubs closely aligned with school subjects deserve a place in the regular activity schedule. Membership in any club will be voluntary, not compulsory.
- School Publications - Whenever possible, students in the junior high/high school will be encouraged and trained to publish a paper and a yearbook. These will not be published for a profit, and the soliciting of extensive advertising will be avoided. Subscriptions to student publications will be at a minimum rate.
- Scholarships and Contests - High school students will be encouraged to participate in scholarship examinations and contests. Special emphasis will be placed on scholarships to Catholic colleges and universities. Faculty members will prepare and encourage students to apply for scholarships.