

413 Human Sexuality

All members of the Catholic school community are expected to strive to live a life of chastity guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church in all aspects of their lives. Our pastoral policies and regulatory practices are written in fidelity to the moral guidance and teachings of the Catholic Church.

Definition of Terms: *Sex* means the biological condition of being male or female as based upon physical differences at birth. *Gender* is a person's identity as male or female, harmonious with one's biological sex upon birth. (CCC #2333) *Chastity* is the moral virtue by which individuals master and direct their powers of sexual intimacy. Chastity reserves sexual intimacy to marriage. (CCC #2337-#2365) *Marriage* is a covenant by which one man and one woman unite in a lifelong partnership and commitment for the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children through the sacrament of Matrimony. (CCC #1601)

Offenses against chastity and marriage, including those described in the CCC, cannot be accepted or ignored. Behaviors that are contrary to Catholic morality and the expectations of the Catholic school include, but are not limited to, vulgar language and gestures of a sexual nature, sexual harassment or abuse, immodest dress or deportment, expressions of lust, masturbation, pornography, sexting, fornication, homosexual behavior, cohabitating in a sexual relationship outside of Christian marriage, adultery, voluntary sterilization, artificial contraception, *in vitro* fertilization, and procuring an abortion.

Outside of normal classroom discussions on the teachings of the Church, members of the school community may not advocate, celebrate, or express same sex attraction, share publications of a prurient nature, or otherwise impede chastity in our Catholic schools. Sincere questioning of the practices of the Catholic faith in order to more deeply understand them is welcome. However, open hostility or public defiance and challenge of Catholic truths or morality may be signs that a student, parent, or employee is not a good fit for a Catholic school's primarily evangelical mission. Students, parents, or employees who are openly hostile or publicly defiant in their violation or opposition to Catholic truths or morality may be denied continued enrollment or asked to leave the school. It is the responsibility of the pastor or high school chaplain and the school administration, in consultation with the Superintendent, to determine the appropriate consequence in each instance.

The moral teachings of the Church are not mere antiquated notions. In fact, Pope Francis has repeatedly stressed the importance of a proper understanding of our sexuality, warning of the challenge posed by "the various forms of an ideology of gender that denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences" (*Amoris Laetitia* ("AL"), #56). Pope Francis further notes that "biological sex and the sociocultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated," and that although we must always be "understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life," that does not require us to "accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality" (*Ibid.*).

Ultimately, "[w]e are creatures, and not omnipotent," and we must accept and respect our humanity "as it was created" (*Ibid.*; see also Gen. 1:27, Matthew 19:4, and Mark 10:6). The Holy Father then stresses that "the young need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created," so that "we

can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator” (AL, #285). [Taken from Diocese of Little Rock, Policies and Procedures Manual]

As Pope Francis notes, we must always respect the sacred dignity of each individual person, but that does not mean the Church must accept the confused notions of gender ideology. We must not demean or deny the sincerity and struggle of those who experience same-sex attraction or who feel their true gender identity is different from their biological sex. Rather, we seek to accompany them on their journey of life, offering them the light of the Gospel as they try to find their way forward. These truths are not merely faith-based; rather, such realities are also knowable through the use of properly functioning senses and right reason (Pope St. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, #22). We do not serve anyone’s greater good by falsifying the truth, for it is only the truth that frees us for the full life that God offers to each of us. Thus, when a person experiences same-sex attraction or some form of gender dysphoria, such struggles do not change the biological fact of how God created that person, and it would be untruthful for the Catholic Church or our Catholic schools to pretend otherwise. The policies of our Catholic schools, therefore, must reflect these fundamental truths. [Taken from Diocese of Little Rock, Policies and Procedures Manual]

413b Gender Dysphoria

Every child is loved by God and therefore deserves respect and protection in a Catholic school. Especially at a young age and in schools, it is important that our children understand the depth of God’s love for them and their intrinsic worth and beauty. Children should always be and feel safe and secure and know they are loved. (See Student Bullying and Harassing Policy 408a). Children, youth, and parents who are struggling with gender dysphoria deserve compassion, sensitivity, and respect. All of these can be expressed without infringing on the legitimate concerns about privacy and security on the part of the other students and parents.

All students are expected to conduct themselves at school in a manner consistent with their biological sex. Schools shall consider the gender of all students as being consistent with their biological sex, including, but not limited to, the following: participation in school athletics; school-sponsored dances; dress and uniform policies; the use of changing facilities, showers, locker rooms, and bathrooms; titles, names, and pronouns; and official school documents

Pastoral care will be available to assist the family in clarifying and defining issues of self (and sexual) identity in accord with Catholic teaching and God’s natural plan. The school will provide or direct the family to appropriate counseling services. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the school, whose primary goal must always be to uphold Catholic truths and principles, then the student may be dismissed from the school, after the parents are first given the opportunity to withdraw the student from the school.

413c Student Pregnancy

Acts of premarital sex or abortion are serious sins and therefore occasions of grave scandal.

When sexual misconduct results in pregnancy, the school's response must be to first reaffirm our respect for the sanctity of all human life. While the charity of Christ moves us to forgive and help a young man and a young woman when a pregnancy results, in no way should our commitment to respond to the priority of life be interpreted as ignoring, treating lightly, or condoning sexual misconduct.

Any student pregnancy requires a careful analysis of a student's status and presents the possibility of unique circumstances that require specific interpretation and application. It is the responsibility of the pastor or high school chaplain and the school administration, in consultation with the Superintendent, to determine the appropriate response in each instance. (See Guideline 318-M for details.)