

# AQUINAS AND ST. MARY'S SCHOOLS



## Staff Handbook

Revised: 7/31/2019

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## **AQUINAS-ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of Aquinas-St. Mary's Catholic schools community is to provide a Christ-centered, learning environment to prepare students for future involvement in church, family, and civic relationships.

### **GOVERNING VALUES**

***The Aquinas-St. Mary's school community will...***

- ...foster a God-centered, Catholic culture to promote a Christ-like outlook on life.
- ...provide a learning environment to promote academic achievement for all students by developing their unique abilities and interests to prepare them for future vocations and challenges.
- ...provide opportunities for individuals to grow spiritually, physically, socially and emotionally.
- ...nurture a life-long commitment to Christian values that promote growth in church, family, and civic relationships.
- ...promote respect for one's self worth and mutual respect for others at all stages of life.

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

Aquinas Catholic Schools admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origins to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

### **FACULTY GUIDELINES**

#### *Preface*

This manual is intended to acquaint Aquinas teachers and staff with the system employed at St. Mary's Elementary and Aquinas Middle School-High School. It is the obligation of all members of the staff (certified & non-certified) to read its contents carefully and to give full support to all policies. The staff has participated in setting up the policies together with the administration; therefore, it is with pride that all do share in the enforcement and support of these policies. Only in that way will Aquinas serve its purpose.

### **Professional Ethics for All Personnel**

The following points apply to all employed by the Catholic Schools in any capacity, as they may be appropriate to their positions, including administrators, teachers, maintenance staff, office personnel, food service, guidance personnel, or others

#### *Responsibilities toward Administration:*

- a) Uphold and implement the Catholic philosophy of the school
- b) Keep confidential any matters which require it
- c) Be accurate and prompt with reports requested by the principal/CAO
- d) Offer constructive criticism on school policies through appropriate mechanisms
- e) Present criticism of the administration to the administration

- f) Make suggestions at faculty meetings and ask for clarifications if needed
- g) Inform the principal of exceptional academic or disciplinary cases
- h) Be receptive to suggestions on ways to improve performance
- i) Enforce and implement school policies
- j) Differentiate between personal views and views of the administration in discussion with parents, students, and other faculty members
- k) Never criticize or ridicule school policies to students and/or parents
- l) Conduct business, grievances, etc., through the established procedures
- m) Follow the instructional program of the school
- n) Assume academic and disciplinary responsibility for the students assigned to the teacher
- o) Attempt to improve the method and content of instruction
- p) Attend all faculty meetings
- q) If ill, follow the procedures outlined by the principal
- r) Give prompt attention to all bulletins and announcements and observe regulations and recommendations
- s) Keep informed on procedures to be followed in case of fire, tornado, or other disaster or emergency
- t) Take proper care of all school property
- u) Participate in professional in-service and institutes when recommended
- v) Be constantly aware of the legal requirement that all students must be supervised at all school related activities, in regular class, in groups, or after school hours
- w) **From the Diocese of Lincoln Lay Teacher Contract – “That when a just cause (\*) exists, the Employer may immediately terminate this contract and the Employer shall be released of all obligations and liabilities of this contract. The Employer shall notify in writing the Employee of the cause or causes for the termination. The opportunity for a hearing before the Diocesan Superintendent for the purpose of reviewing the termination shall be provided if the Employee makes a written request for such hearing within five days of the notice of termination. If the decision to terminate the contract is reversed by the Diocesan Superintendent, then this contract shall be reinstated.**

\* A just cause as used herein may include any one of the following: *Contradiction or rejection, by word or action, of doctrines, laws or norms of the **CATHOLIC CHURCH**; incompetence; immorality; cruelty; neglect of duty; general neglect of the business or policies of the **SCHOOL**; unprofessional conduct; physical or mental incapacity; any violation of law involving moral turpitude; any conduct tending to reflect grave discredit upon the school or the Catholic Church; or any conduct which interferes substantially with the continued performance of duties; or any breach of this **AGREEMENT**.”*

*Responsibilities toward Fellow Faculty Members*

- a) Conduct all business in a professional way as a member of a Christian community
- b) Settle personal grievances through face-to-face dialogue before talking to another teacher or the administrator
- c) Never discuss with students or parents any grievances one has with another faculty member
- d) Keep confidential matters about other teachers or students which require confidentiality
- e) Never compromise the reputation of a student

*Responsibilities toward Oneself*

- a) Cultivate a pleasing and pleasant personality imitating Christ
- b) Maintain a pleasant expression and good posture
- c) Give evidence of both physical and mental vigor
- d) Manifest a genuine pride in one's profession and school
- e) Dress in a professional and modest way at all times; you always represent the school
- f) Be aware of current educational thought
- g) Grow professionally through continuing education and reading

*Responsibilities toward Parents*

- a) Show an appreciation for the choice parents have made for a Catholic education
- b) Give parents specifics of their child's progress, avoiding generalizations
- c) Inform parents of both their child's improvements and problems
- d) Help parents appreciate and exercise their role in the student's life
- e) Help parents appreciate the role of the school in the student's life

*Responsibilities toward Students*

- a) Emphasize the need and importance of religious Faith
- b) Safeguard the reputation of a student in the school community
- c) Work positively to better one's rapport with students
- d) Approach a student without preconceived ideas
- e) Be fair and just in grading and assessing achievements
- f) Set an example of leadership modeling Christian living
- g) Assist each student in terms of academic guidance and counseling
- h) Vary instruction style to meet the various learning styles of the students

## A STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

### *Professional Activities*

- 1) All faculty members are to have on file in the principal's office:
  - a) An up-to-date transcripts of all college credits
  - b) State of Nebraska Teaching Certificate signed by the school CAO
- 2) Faculty members are encouraged to belong to and to participate in professional organizations in their field of concentration.
- 3) Any required reports, records or questionnaires are to be completed accurately and promptly.

## ORIENTATION AND DAILY WORKING PROCEDURES

### 1. Faculty Meetings and Orientation Days

- a) **Faculty orientation** meetings will precede the opening days of school in August.
- b) **Faculty meetings** shall be held on a regular basis.
- c) Faculty meetings help determine school policies, recommend changes and/or perpetuate whatever is necessary for smoother operation of the system; therefore, **all members are expected to attend unless excused by the principal.**
- d) The principal prepares the agenda; any faculty member is free to request issues of discussion.

### 2. Academic Deficiency (AQ)

#### **There are three levels of the deficiency:**

- a) The student and parents will be notified at any time that the student's average drops below 77%.
- b) If the student's average drops below 70%, the student and parents are notified and the student has from Monday to Monday to raise the average to 70% or above.
- c) If, by the following Monday, the student's average is still below a 70%, the student will be ineligible to compete in extracurricular activities for a minimum of one calendar week. The student will remain ineligible until the average is raised to 70% or above.

*Mid-quarter reports are sent home at the approximate middle of each quarter. Students who are not achieving success in the classroom may need extra time with the teacher. Teachers in each class will explain the deficiency conditions that would place a student on the Deficiency List.*

### **3. Faculty Hours, TACs, Homerooms, Correspondence and Other Procedures**

- a) **Teachers are to be in the building by 7:45 and in their teaching or supervisory areas by 7:50 a.m. (St. Mary's begins at 7:30.)**
- b) Teachers are to be **in the building throughout the day**, and, in **rare** instances, if they need to leave the campus for a brief period of time, they should notify the office.
- c) In case of **illness** or other emergencies whereby the teacher will be absent all day, it is imperative that he notifies the principal by **6:30 a.m.**
- d) When seeking coverage for a personal day or absence, teachers should fill out Substitute Request Form and get the approval of the administration.
- e) The principal assumes the responsibility to provide a substitute for an absent teacher; therefore, it is necessary that the teacher give the principal a lesson plan.
- f) Teachers who wish to inform the entire school of something must use the morning announcements, **but these must be typed on the form by 7:50 a.m.**
- g) **Faculty members are on duty until 4:00 p.m. (St. Mary's ends at 3:45 p.m.)**
- h) An official absentee list will be issued each day to teachers after the first period. This list is to be used to check absentees in classes and record absentees and tardies. **AQ Teachers must take attendance in each class and report any discrepancies to the office immediately.**
- i) Parties are not to be held in the classrooms or any part of the building, nor food brought in other than legitimately authorized by the administration. Occasional TAC parties are held.
- j) **To ensure consistency, teachers must use the demerit system adopted by Aquinas and the ticket system at St. Mary's.**

### **4. Field Trips**

- 1) Class/Organization's trip must be cleared in the office by the principal in advance.
- 2) Care should be taken to avoid schedule conflicts.
- 3) Faculty and kitchen staff must be alerted to the trip and a list of those students involved submitted to the office and faculty prior to the trip.
- 4) Provision must be made to pay for the gas and bus driver. Check with the principal.
- 5) Before each trip, a school release form must be signed by parents and returned, or the student may not attend. A school release form should include the itinerary, approximate cost, mode of transportation, and a place for the parent's signature.

- 6) None of the students leaving may be academically ineligible.
- 7) All chaperones must have Diocesan background check and Safe Environment completed before the date of the trip.
- 7) The instructor/moderator must accompany the group and is responsible for the care and safety of the group to and from. **Students are expected to represent Aquinas-St. Mary's in a positive manner in behavior and dress.**

## **5. Resource Program, Academic and Psychological Referrals, SCIP Program and Special Education Procedures:**

- 1) To help resource students to achieve at the highest possible levels, it is very important that faculty members make every effort to attend any student assistant team (SAT) meeting or multi-disciplinary staff meetings that are scheduled for their students. All of the student's teachers must attend Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings. If they are unable to attend a SAT or an IEP, they must meet with the administrator that will be in attendance at the meeting and give the administrator a written summary of the student's performance.
- 2) Teachers noticing continued behavior that is unusual for the student should bring this information to the administration. You may also refer the student to the **SCIP Team** for consideration. (SCIP is School Community Intervention Program)

## **6. Faculty Lounge and Office Policy**

The lounge is intended for the private use of the faculty. Students are not to be in this area unless supervised by a faculty member. Mailboxes are for mail and messages.

## **7. Lunch in School**

Faculty members may eat their lunches during any of the lunch periods according to their schedules. Lay teachers are to buy their meals; price is set at the beginning of each year.

## **8. Building Security**

Keys to your rooms, closets, file cabinets, etc., can be obtained through the CAO.

**Teachers are reminded to never lend keys to students.** Coaches may designate a manager for temporary use of keys for equipment/medical reasons. Never allow them to enter the office area. Teachers who are in the building after the janitors leave are expected to see that the building is secure and the lights are off.

***When you leave your classroom at the end of the school day, close & lock all windows and lock the door.***

## **9. Emergency Situations**

**FIRE/TORNADO DRILL** Rules are to be posted in a visible place in every room.

Go over drill rules with the students. We will have fire drills at various times in the school day. Impress on students the serious nature of these drills-do not tolerate any horse play and absolutely no talking.



**RESPONSE TEAM** – Aquinas and St. Mary’s have trained response teams which will deal with any crisis situation.

## **10. Student Handbook Policies**

Please refer to the Student Handbook for further policies which pertain to students but which, obviously, affect the teacher's work as well.

## **11. Teacher Observation and Evaluation**

Our primary goal for observation and evaluation is to **improve instruction** using a variety of methods that take into account differences in teaching styles and teachers' personalities. Teachers shall be formally observed at least twice by the administration. The teacher may have a pre-visitation conference where goals, objectives and practices would be discussed. The visitation would follow and the teacher would then have a post-observation meeting with an administrator to discuss comments and propose possible improvements. Each teacher, in conjunction with the principal, will design his own professional growth plan each year.

\*Teachers, as professionals, know that their main objective is to provide the best possible instruction for students. Teachers are expected to follow the guidelines in this handbook and strive to improve their instruction.

## **12. Teacher Termination**

Over and above extraordinary circumstances, the teacher will be notified by January whether due process proceedings have started on possible contract termination.

## **13. Parent Teacher Organizations**

- a) **BOARD OF ADVISORS:** The Aquinas and St. Mary’s Board of Advisors shall include the school administrators, pastors and at least two committee members from the Finance, Facilities, Intentional Discipleship, and Outreach Committees. They shall advise and assist the Chief Administrative Officer (C.A.O.) and Administration in the successful operation and growth of the schools.
- b) **AQUINAS AND ST. MARY’S SCHOOL COUNCIL:** The Aquinas and St. Mary’s School Councils deals with issues pertaining specifically to Aquinas Middle School-High School and St. Mary’s School. This organization meets on a designated Wednesday evening of September, November, February, and April.
- c) **BOOSTER CLUB:** The Aquinas Booster Club is an organization of Aquinas parents who work to support and finance the athletic, music and drama programs at Aquinas Middle School - High School. Their main function is to promote spirit and raise funds.
- d) **HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION:** The Home and School Association at Aquinas Middle School - High School consists of Aquinas parents and school personnel who work together to encourage communication between the home and the school. They also work to promote a clearer understanding of the educational responsibilities of parents.

- e) **SM SPIRIT CLUB Parent-Teacher Organization:** The St. Mary's Spirit Club is an organization to support and finance student activities at St. Mary's. Their main function is to promote school spirit and raise funds for large school projects as well as student awards and activities.

## 14. LEAVE POLICIES

**SICK LEAVE:** A teacher shall be granted leave for personal illness, accident or surgery. In the first year of employment, a teacher shall be entitled to 10 days of paid sick leave. Seven days of paid sick leave will be earned for each additional year. Unused sick leave will accumulate to 60 days. Each day's absence in excess of the teacher's accumulated sick leave shall result in the loss of 1/185th of the salary. **Accumulated days are for emergency only. These days are not to be used as personal or vacation days.**

\*Sick leave may be granted for personal illness or the illness of a member of the immediate family that requires the presence of the employee. For the purpose of sick leave, immediate family is defined as a spouse, child or parent. Confirmation of illness from a qualified physician may be requested.

**MATERNITY LEAVE:** Diocesan Maternity Leave Policy

- All pastors, superintendents and other administrators in the Diocese of Lincoln should take note of the following diocesan policy for Maternity Leave Compensation for the Diocese of Lincoln, which takes effect on August 1, 2000. They are also to inform their employees about this policy. Lay women who are full-time employees of any parishes, schools, institutions, agencies or other diocesan entities in the Diocese of Lincoln are to receive a minimum of four continuous weeks (twenty working days) \* compensation maternity leave immediately upon the birth of their children. Aquinas-St. Mary's lay women are to receive six continuous weeks compensated maternity leave which begins immediately upon the birth of their children.
- Daily compensation will be based on the working days for the employee's contract. Costs for substitutes or temporary personnel are not to be taken from the employee's benefit package during the four-week leave. The schools, parishes, institutions, agencies, or other diocesan entities affected may expand, if they wish, upon these requirements, which are to be considered the basic minimum requirements. At present this policy does not include new fathers. Any employer of more than 50 employees must also be cognizant of federal regulations regarding maternity leaves. The usual deductions for taxes, insurance and any other voluntary withholdings will be withheld, as usual, from these benefits.
- This language is understood to provide financial protection to the employee if any of the weekdays during the 4 weeks of leave happen to be workdays. No deductions will be made for these days. By the same measure, no additional wages or benefits will be given to the employee if maternity leave days happen to coincide with vacation days, summer days or other official days off from work.

**EXTENDED MEDICAL SITUATIONS:** If in the case of an extended personal illness, maternity, or adoption, a teacher does not have sufficient accumulated sick leave, he/she may borrow up to 40 days. If employment is terminated with Aquinas/St. Mary's Schools prior to the "earning" of this leave, the school system will be reimbursed for the unearned days at the rate of 1/185th of the employee's salary for each day. This will be subtracted from the employee's remaining paychecks or paid directly by the employee unless other arrangements have been made with the superintendent.

**PERSONAL LEAVE:** Two days of paid personal leave may be granted each year to the employee when all provisions of the guidelines are met. Additional personal leave will be without pay.

The following guidelines will be followed, unless waived by the administration:

1. The employee's previous attendance record and performance records are satisfactory as determined by the principal.
2. A minimum of two days notice must be given.
3. A suitable substitute teacher must be available.
4. Paid personal leave may not be granted during the first two weeks and the last two weeks of the school year, nor on parent-teacher conference days, in-service days, or semester/final exam days.
5. Bereavement leave may be cause to waive certain restrictions.
6. Paid personal leave is charged to the employee's available sick leave.

**PROFESSIONAL LEAVE:** Professional leave may be granted to employees at the discretion of the administration for purposes that are deemed to benefit the school and/or the teacher in a professional manner. Paid professional leave is not chargeable to the employee's sick leave.

## 15. DRESS CODE and GROOMING STANDARDS

- The objective of our dress code is to create the best possible image for Aquinas Catholic Schools and its personnel through professional appearance and dress. You personify Aquinas and St. Mary's for our students and visitors, so the personal appearance of our teachers is an important part of our overall image. Any clothes that are not acceptable in the student dress code because of inappropriateness should not be worn by faculty and staff, as we are the models.
- The following policy reflects the traditional, conservative dress and appearance required throughout the educational community. The guidelines are not at all inclusive; other forms of dress/appearance that are not listed may not be appropriate for our industry. In addition, some job requirements and safety factors may generate exceptions to this policy. For these reasons, we recommend that you consult with the principal before investing in clothing that may be questionable for work.
- As fads and extremes of dress and appearance tend to attract improper attention to the individual, Aquinas Catholic Schools requires its personnel to conform to standards that avoid extremes and exemplify personal cleanliness. Faculty and staff shall be well groomed and expected to dress in a professional and appropriate manner. Adherence to

these standards is the responsibility of the employee. The enforcement of these standards is the responsibility of the administration.

- Clothing must be clean, neat and modest (no underwear, midriff showing). Please dress in business casual attire. Jeans, exercise wear (\*except for PE classes) cargo pants, sleeveless shirts, shorts, t-shirts, low cut or other revealing clothing is not acceptable.
- Shoes should also reflect professionalism; flip flops or other casual shoes are not acceptable.
- \*P.E. teachers not participating in drills should wear at least a polo shirt and exercise pants.

#### ***MEN'S DRESS CODE:***

- Dress shirts and ties are highly encouraged. Socks and shoes must be worn at all times. Flip-flop shoes are not allowed.
- Acceptable shirts are collared shirts, such as polo style, oxford, or dress shirts. All shirts should be worn tucked in. Acceptable sweater styles include pullover and cardigans.
- Student Council uniform pullover and 10<sup>th</sup> grade fundraiser sweatshirts may be worn.
- Hair must be clean, neat, of a natural color, and professionally styled. Excessive and unkempt facial hair is not acceptable. Facial hair must be well-groomed and maintained. Body or ear piercings and visible tattoos are not acceptable.

#### ***FEMALE DRESS CODE:***

- Skirts with coordinated tops are acceptable if professional in appearance and falling at or just above the knee. Slits should be no more than three inches above the knee. Skirts or any clothes that are too tight, too short, or too revealing are not appropriate for the workplace.
- All slacks and capri pants (that are below the knee) should be professionally looking. Pants should not have the appearance of leggings or yoga pants and must be covered past finger tips if they are tight.
- Professional sweaters and blouses. Use discretion in necklines. Midriffs and shoulders should not be visible. All pants and skirts should be worn with a professional blouse or similar top.
- Student uniform pullover and Student Council-issued sweatshirts may be worn.
- Flip-flop shoes are not allowed. Sandals should have back strap.
- Hair must be clean, neat, of a natural color, and professionally styled. Body piercing or multiple ear piercings (no more than two in ear lobe; cartilage piercings are not acceptable.) No visible tattoos.

## 16. Supervisor's Alcohol Policy

Our schools are committed to providing an environment that is free of illicit drugs and the use of alcohol. This policy deals specifically with those persons assigned supervisory duties by the school(s).

- a) Supervisors will be provided information about the possible consequences of alcohol use.
- b) No alcohol will be consumed by any employee or supervisor while on duty.
- c) Alleged violation is to be reported as soon as possible by the witness to the administration.
- d) The alleged violator is entitled to due process.
- e) The consequences are at the discretion of the administration and will include one or more of the following: a written reprimand, an alcohol abuse evaluation, suspension of supervisory duties, or termination.

## 17. School Property Alcohol Use Policy

Our schools are committed to providing an environment that is free of illicit drugs and the use of alcohol. This policy deals specifically with the use of alcohol on school property.

- a) No alcohol will be consumed on school property without the permission of the CAO.
- b) Alleged violation is to be reported as soon as possible by the witness to the administration.
- c) The alleged violator is entitled to due process.
- d) The consequences are at the discretion of the administration and will include one or more of the following: a written reprimand, an alcohol abuse evaluation, suspension of supervisory duties, or termination.

## 18. Sexual or Other Harassment Policy

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in any school in the Diocese of Lincoln.

Harassment may involve:

- 1) Persistent verbal abuse, ridicule, or demeaning comments
- 2) Verbal or physical threats, or coercion
- 3) **Sexual Harassment\***

\*Sexual Harassment includes:

- a) Verbal harassment or abuse including unwelcome sexually oriented communication.
- b) Pressure to engage in sexual activity.
- c) Unwelcome physical contact of a provocative nature, including physical contact in circumstances which render such actions inappropriate.
- d) Requesting or demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment or student's status or by promise of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment or student's status.
- 4) **Sexual assault:** Any person subjected to harassment should do the following:

- a) Keep a carefully written record of the incident(s) and the actions that were taken.
  - b) The teacher, employee or student should directly inform the person engaging in the harassing conduct or communication that such conduct or communication is offensive and must stop. The offending person can be contacted in person or in writing.
  - c) If the aggrieved teacher or employee does not wish to communicate directly with the person whose conduct or communication is offensive or if direct communication with the offending person has been ineffective, the teacher or employee should contact his or her superintendent, principal, or pastor.
  - d) If an aggrieved student does not wish to communicate directly with the person whose conduct or communication is offensive or if direct communication with the offending person has been ineffective, the student should contact any teacher or other adult in the school whom he or she trusts. That person is then to contact the superintendent, principal, or pastor.
- 5) All **allegations of harassment** shall be investigated by the school's administration and if substantiated, corrective or disciplinary action taken, up to and including dismissal from employment if the offender is a teacher or employee, and suspension or expulsion, if the offender is a student.
  - 6) If appropriate and timely action is not forthcoming on the local level, the aggrieved person is to communicate with the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools.

## **Aquinas/St. Mary's Catholic Schools Faculty Acceptable Use Policy (July 2017)**

- Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, the school is pleased to make available to students and staff access to computers and the Internet. In order for the school to continue to make its computer network and Internet access available, all users must take responsibility for appropriate and lawful use of this access. Users must understand that one person's misuse of the network and Internet access may jeopardize (e.g. viruses) the ability of all users to enjoy such access. The Diocesan Education Technology staff will make reasonable efforts to supervise the network and Internet access, and must have the cooperation of all users in exercising and promoting responsible computer use.
- It is important that users of the network not only follow all school policies in this regard, but also report any misuse of the network by other individuals to the local school administrator. Misuse means any violation of this policy or any other inappropriate use that is harmful. All employees will use all technology properly, and all digital communications will adhere to Internet etiquette ("netiquette").
- New technology is always on the horizon. An attempt to identify all technologies and list possible misuses of them is impossible. Therefore, throughout this document, the term

“technology” references all existing and new devices or systems that are used or that will be used in the future.

- All technology is provided primarily for school-related work. Personal use of computers and Internet should be kept to a minimum. Professional educators are expected to use technology during contract hours for planning, teaching and evaluating student learning as well as reading or researching aimed at professional growth and development. Any serious misuse of technology may result in appropriate discipline, including the non-renewal of contract or termination.
- If one has doubts about whether a contemplated activity is educational, one must first consult with the local administrator. If further guidance is needed, the Diocesan Education Office and/or the Education Technology Administrative Coordinator can be consulted by the principal.

***Unacceptable use for Faculty/Staff includes, but is not limited to:***

- 1) Allowing students to access the Internet without direct faculty/staff supervision.
  - 2) Visiting Internet sites that contain immoral content.
  - 3) Breaking this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- If the user receives a notebook (laptop) computer, it is the property of the school and is loaned to the faculty member. Borrowers agree to protect it from damage and theft. The borrower is monetarily responsible for any hardware or software damage inflicted to the laptop due to his/her negligence. Negligence would include leaving the computer in an unlocked location or vehicle.
  - Network or Diocesan administrators have a right to access materials sent, received, or stored in diocesan school-owned computers or on the school network. All communications (including email) and information accessible via the network are school property. As such, no user should have any expectation of privacy rights concerning this use.
  - Normal protocol of an administrative inspection of email is to view the communication in the presence of the user, after the user logs on and opens pertinent messages.”
  - Computers are provided for faculty to complete work-related duties. Therefore, personal computers are not to be brought to school. Cell phones and other technologies should be used only in emergencies and should never interfere with the learning environment.
  - No software, including freeware or shareware, may be installed on any computer until approved by the Education Technology Office by request of the principal. The network or administrative coordinator will verify the compatibility of the software with existing software and hardware, and prescribe installation and de-installation procedures.
  - Because digital communication, particularly one-to-one, with students is subject to misinterpretation and unintended consequences, electronic and/or digital communications with students may be conducted for educationally appropriate purposes and only if it is a school-sanctioned means of communication. The normal school sanctioned communications methods include: teacher’s school web page (i.e., Blackboard), teacher’s school email, teacher’s school phone and school websites. Unacceptable types of electronic and digital communications include, but are not limited

to: social networking sites, student cell phones, text messaging, internet phone, chat rooms and instant messaging.

- No web content or digital communication, outside of Blackboard or Diocesan approved school websites, may contain personal information such as personal phone numbers, addresses, e-mail addresses or other specific information.
- Any online based activity, outside of Blackboard, *involving student participation*, must be with the direct approval of the school principal and under the direct supervision of the teacher. It is to be used only for educational purposes. Unacceptable web content/ digital communication includes, but is not limited to: cell phones, web pages, blogs, wikis, text-messaging, social networking and instant messaging.
- Any behavior of a teacher/staff member who chooses to identify him/her self with the school on any *social network* must reflect positively upon the Catholic faith, the Diocese of Lincoln and the school. It is best to avoid giving employment information on these networks.
- The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Lincoln cooperate fully with the Children's Internet Protection Act. Since July 1, 2002 (when the Diocese began participating in the E-Rate program), the technology office has enforced the following strategies to keep students safe on the Internet. Student Appropriate Use Policies
  - Adult supervision of all use of the Internet by students
  - i-SAFE® curriculum/strategies ([www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org)) or any appropriate curricula, approved by the local administrator
  - Websense Internet filtering
  - Employee failure to abide by school policies may result in disciplinary action based on the teacher contract and faculty handbook.