

Catholic Educational Mission and Community Policies

The Mission of Catholic Education

Catholic education is an expression of the Church's mission of salvation and an instrument of evangelization: to make disciples of Christ and to teach them to observe all that He has commanded.¹ Through Catholic education, students encounter God, who in Jesus Christ reveals His transforming love and truth.² Christ is the foundation of Catholic education;³ He is the Master who journeys with students through school and life as the genuine Teacher and perfect Man.⁴

As a faith community in communion with the Church, all members give witness to Christ's teachings as set forth by the Magisterium and especially as articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. With a Christian vision, Catholic education fulfills its purpose of the critical transmission of culture in the light of faith⁵ and integral formation of students in body, mind, and spirit.⁶

Evangelization. OLWA assists in the salvific mission of the Catholic Church by preparing all students to seek and proclaim the Good News through education and formation in the Catholic faith.⁷

Encounter with Christ. Through daily educational instruction, prayer, liturgies, and participation in the sacraments,⁸ all members of OLWA's community encounter Christ and His transforming love and truth and in so doing are drawn to proclaim and fulfill His calling for them and for the Christian community.⁹ Through this encounter, students are moved toward the fullness of their humanity, becoming more aware of the gift of Faith given them at Baptism,¹⁰ to mature into adults who will bear witness to the Mystical Body of Christ, respect the dignity of the human person, provide service, lead apostolic lives, and build the Kingdom of God.¹¹

Community of faith. As members of a Catholic educational community, we are all called to model confident and joyful public witness in both word and deed and to live by the moral demands of the Gospel¹² in order to model for students the integration of faith and life and to assist in the development of virtues characteristic of the Catholic Christian.¹³ We do this by living in communion with the Church and its teachings.

¹ [Matthew 28: 19-20](#).

² Pope Benedict XVI, *Meeting With Catholic Educators, Washington, DC*, 2008; Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, ___, 2007, #4.

³ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 1977, #34.

⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 1988, #25.

⁵ Congregation for Catholic Education, [Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on Religious Education in Schools](#), 2009 #1.

⁶ *The Catholic School*, 1977, #54, 55.

⁷ *The Catholic School*, 1977, #5.

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⁹ Pope St. John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 1979, #23.

¹⁰ *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, #98.

¹¹ *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, #95; *The Catholic School*, #7.

¹² Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 1982, #6.

¹³ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, 2007, #24.

Faculty and staff, in particular, are expected to abide by the Church's official teachings and by the vision of education set forth in *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*. Accordingly, OLWA will hire for the Catholic mission as described in the same document.¹⁴

Believing in the mercy and forgiveness of Christ, we acknowledge our sinful and fallen nature and look to Christ and the Sacraments He has given us as sources of grace and strength, particularly when striving to live according to the Ten Commandments given to us in the Old Testament and the Beatitudes given to us by Christ in the New Testament.

Authority for teaching. We profess that all authority for our moral and spiritual teaching is based on the Gospels of Jesus Christ¹⁵ and the traditions of the Catholic Church as taught by its ordinary and extraordinary Magisterium, and especially as contained within the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Transmission of Culture. Permeated by an evangelical spirit of authentic freedom and charity,¹⁶ OLWA provides a unique setting where everyone is aware of the living presence of Jesus Christ as evidenced throughout the daily rituals of prayer and Sacraments, harmonious and friendly relationships,¹⁷ and curricular selections where faith and culture are intertwined in all areas of school life.¹⁸ Cultivating within students their intellectual, creative, and aesthetic faculties in order to develop the right use of reason, promote a sense of values, and encouraging just attitudes and prudent behavior,¹⁹ OLWA strives to hand down the cultural patrimony of previous generations, in particular a Christian anthropology which teaches that man was made in the image and likeness of God.

Just as God entered creation through the spoken Word, his son, Jesus Christ, so too does OLWA rely upon the spoken word in transmitting its culture and Catholic traditions to its students.²⁰ OLWA seeks to lead its students to the truth of the dignity of the human person rooted in the creation of humanity in the image and likeness of God. "The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God...It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfillment."²¹ OLWA's education is one of human formation that is accomplished, primarily, through communication. Verbal communication forms students in the ways of the "spoken word,"²² which is central to OLWA's educational mission.

Catholic Teaching and Human Sexuality

All members of OLWA community, including faculty, staff, parents, guardians, and students, are expected to strive to live a life of virtue guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church in all aspects of their

¹⁴ Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, Secretary, Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*, Section 5, "Sustained by a Gospel Witness" relating to religious hiring, is included as an appendix to this document.

¹⁵ [The Catholic School](#), #34.

¹⁶ Pope Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965, #8.

¹⁷ [The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School](#), #26, 27.

¹⁸ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, 2005.

¹⁹ [Gravissimum Educationis](#), #5; [Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith](#), #8

²⁰ "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him and without him was not anything made." John 1:1.

²¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, N. 1700.

²² We are called to "be imitators of God, as beloved children." Ephesians 5:1.

lives. OLWA's pastoral and policy practices are written in fidelity to the moral guidance and teachings of the Catholic Church in all areas that touch on human flourishing. OLWA establishes an environment of encouragement, mercy, healing, and love to accompany its members as we journey on the path toward holiness.

At the heart of a Catholic school's unique educational charism is integral formation of the whole human person. The Church instructs us:

Since true education must strive for complete formation of the human person that looks to his or her final ends as well as to the common good of societies, children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life.²³

Because our efforts at integral formation include the integrity of body, spirit, and moral development, OLWA has a proper concern for each student's behavior and development in the complex area of human sexuality. As a Catholic institution, we believe that human bodies are gifts from God and temples of the Holy Spirit.²⁴ All men and women are called to a life of chastity appropriate to their vocation as single, married, or consecrated religious. The Church defines chastity as "the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being."²⁵

The Church also teaches that "sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman."²⁶ We believe that human sexual behavior is only properly oriented to the ends of love and life in the context of Holy Matrimony.²⁷

The proper understanding of human sexuality requires personal integrity and full integration of body and soul as created by God. According to the Church, "the chaste person maintains the integrity of the powers of life and love placed in him. This integrity ensures the unity of the person; it is opposed to any behavior that would impair it. It tolerates neither a double life nor duplicity in speech."²⁸

We believe that the body and soul are intimately united: the body does not contain the soul like water in a glass, but the two are intimately dependent upon each other to express man as the highest order of creation.²⁹ We believe that the sexes are complementary and that as "male and female he made them."³⁰ Our given biological sex is part of the divine plan.³¹ The Church teaches that sexual identity is "a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman,"³² it constitutes but is more than one's

²³ Libreria Editrice Vaticana, [Co de of Canon Law](#), Canon 795.

²⁴ [1 Cor 6:19](#).

²⁵ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2337.

²⁶ [Ibid.](#) See also [Canon 20 of the Code of Canon Law for the Oriental Churches](#): "The Christian faithful since they are called by baptism to lead a life in conformity with the teaching of the gospel, have the right to a Christian education by which they will be properly instructed so as to develop the maturity of a human person and at the same time come to know and live the mystery of salvation."

²⁷ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2360.

²⁸ [Ibid.](#)

²⁹ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #358, 365; [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2332

³⁰ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #369-373; [Gen 1:27](#).

³¹ [Gen. 1:27](#); [Matthew 19:4](#); [Mark 10:6](#).

³² Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, [Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Woman in the Church](#)

biological identity,³³ and a person “should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity”.³⁴ One’s biological sex and gender expression are not to be disaggregated,³⁵ but should be seen in harmony, according to God’s plan.

As a Catholic educational institution, we understand truth to be the correspondence of mind to reality,³⁶ a reality which is created by and held in existence by God and which entails the fullness of God’s creation and divine plan. We also affirm that reality is knowable through the use of properly functioning senses and reason, as well as through the aid of divine revelation and the teaching of the Church.³⁷

We believe that man and woman share the same humanity³⁸ and “inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator.”³⁹ We believe “they are equal as persons (“bone of my bones...”) and complementary as masculine and feminine.” Therefore they are deserving of respect, and no harassment, violence, or discrimination because of one’s sex will be tolerated. Offenses against chastity and marriage, including those described in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, will not be tolerated. Members of OLWA community may not advocate for such behaviors, share conversations or publications of a prurient nature, or otherwise impede chastity in the context of our Catholic school classes, activities, or events.

Behaviors that are contrary to Catholic morality and the expectations of this school include but are not limited to: vulgar language and gestures of a sexual nature, immodest dress or deportment, expressions of lust, masturbation, pornography, fornication, homosexual activity, expressing a gender that is discordant with one’s biological sex, adultery, cohabitating in a sexual relationship outside of marriage, voluntary sterilization, artificial contraception, in vitro fertilization, procuring an abortion, and sexual harassment or abuse.

OLWA has adopted the following terminology and policies in fidelity to its Catholic educational mission as described above:

[and the World, 2004, #8.](#)

³³ [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2332-2333](#); [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2361](#); Pontifical Council for the Family, [Family, Marriage and ‘De Facto’ Unions, 2000, #8.](#)

³⁴ [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2393.](#)

³⁵ [Family, Marriage and ‘De Facto’ Unions, #8.](#)

³⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, [Summa Theologica](#), First Part, Question 16.

³⁷ Pope St. John Paul II, [Fides et Ratio](#), 1998, #22.

³⁸ [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #371.](#)

³⁹ [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #369.](#)

Definition of Terms

“Sex” means the biological condition of being male or female as based upon physical differences at birth.⁴⁰ “Gender” is a person’s identity as male or female, harmonious with one’s biological sex upon birth.⁴¹ “Chastity” is the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being.⁴² “Marriage” is the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, by which one man and one woman unite in a lifelong partnership for the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children.⁴³

Bullying Policy

The common good and Christian justice and charity demand a school environment that is safe and affirming of the dignity of all persons. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.

Chastity

All members of this Catholic school community are called to a life of chastity appropriate to their vocation as single, married, or consecrated religious. This requires modesty in language, appearance, and behavior.

Dance Policy

In keeping with the Christian mission and moral standards of OLWA, student dress and behavior is to conform to those characteristics of a virtuous and Christ-centered person at all times, including dances and social activities. Consistent with these expectations, students are to refrain from any sexually suggestive behavior both on and off the dance floor. Because the Church teaches that same-sex attractions are disordered,⁴⁴ advocating for or expressing same-sex attractions, including same-sex couples at dances, is not permitted.

Dress Code/Uniform Code

In order to maintain uniform appearance and proper comportment throughout the school day and at school events, all students, staff, and faculty must follow the dress code expectations of their biological sex while on campus and while representing OLWA at outside functions. Modesty is expected at all times.

⁴⁰ Physical differences at birth include chromosomal levels. In the unlikely event that a biological sex determination made at birth is uncertain or inaccurate (a situation affecting less than .1% of the human population) chromosomal levels may need be taken into consideration.

⁴¹ [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2333.](#)

⁴² [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2337.](#)

⁴³ [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1601.](#)

⁴⁴ [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2357.](#)

Facilities Use Policy

Chaste behavior and modesty in dress and deportment is expected at all times on school property and at school events. All students, staff, faculty, and visitors are to observe modesty when using changing facilities, locker rooms, showers, and restrooms and may only use facilities that conform to the individual's biological sex. The latter policy applies in any state of undress in front of others.

School facilities are dedicated to the mission of Catholic education and may not be used by any member of OLWA community or any external organization or individual for any purpose or cause that is contrary to Catholic teaching or otherwise opposed to the Catholic Church.

Formal Titles and Names

Students will address all adults by their proper titles as based on OLWA's employment documents (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr., Sr., Brother, etc.) and surname (last name). School personnel will address students by the original name with which the student was registered (or its common derivative) and correlating pronouns.

Gender Identity

OLWA will interact with students according to their biological sex as based upon physical differences at birth. A member of OLWA community who wishes to express a gender other than his or her biological sex is understood as operating outside of the "reality deeply inscribed"⁴⁵ within. Assisting the person in his or her disconnect with this reality, however sincerely experienced, by agreeing to participate in any efforts to change natural gender expression is contrary to the pursuit of the truth. Authentic love, a gift of the self for the good of the other, requires that we compassionately dwell in the truth and assist those we love to do the same.

OLWA recognizes that occasionally there may be instances where young people experience dissonance between their biological sex and the roles and norms advocated by society.⁴⁶ Some young people might feel drawn to dress, act, and even manipulate their physical bodies in ways contrary to God's plan. OLWA advocates that young people, working with their parents, bring these types of issues to their pastor as well as to other trained professionals who might best assist them in clarifying and defining issues of self (and sexual) identity in accord with Catholic teaching and God's natural plan.

Mission Integrity

OLWA joyfully exercises its responsibility to teach Catholic faith and morals in all fullness and especially as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Parents or guardians and non-Catholics whose religious practices and beliefs run counter to Church teaching might experience possible conflicts as we maintain mission integrity. Sincere questioning of the practices of the Catholic faith in order to more deeply understand them are welcome, but openly hostile, public defiance and challenge of Catholic truths or morality, are signs that a student, parent, staff or faculty member may not be a fit for OLWA's primary evangelical mission and, thus, may be denied admission or may be asked to leave OLWA.

⁴⁵ [Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and the World](#), #8.

⁴⁶ Pontifical Council for the Family, [Family, Marriage and 'De Facto' Unions](#), 2000, #8.

Public Displays of Affection

In order to maintain a professional atmosphere of learning, romantic displays of affection, such as romantic hugging, kissing, hand-holding, sitting on laps, etc., are not permitted at school or at school-sponsored events.

Same-Sex Attraction

Because the Catholic Church teaches that same-sex attraction is inherently disordered⁴⁷ and that sexual activity is only appropriate for the purposes of love and life within Holy Matrimony,⁴⁸ individuals experiencing this disordered inclination may not advocate, celebrate, or express it in the context of our Catholic school classes, activities, or events.

The use of the term “same-sex attraction” in discussing homosexual inclinations is preferred, since there is only one proper sexual orientation: that which orients a man to a woman in the bonds of matrimony. Because labels can falsely promote a lasting identification or enduring notion of self, OLWA avoids labeling individuals with such terms as “gay,” “lesbian,” “bisexual,” or “queer,” even when the individual might desire such identification. The Church encourages individuals experiencing same-sex attraction to pursue the virtues of chastity, self-mastery, and friendship instead of acting upon those inclinations romantically or sexually.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2357.](#)

⁴⁸ [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2360.](#)

⁴⁹ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Persona Humana*, 1975, #8; Synod of Bishops, *The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization: Instrumentum Laboris*, 2014, #110-112.