

THE CARDINAL NEWMAN SOCIETY'S CATHOLIC EDUCATION REPORT



HUMAN SEXUALITY POLICIES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

by Denise Donohue, Ed.D., and Dan Guernsey, Ed.D.
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Summary

A school's specific policies related to human sexuality should be consistent with Church teaching and should be tied into the school's overall mission. This guide provides examples of policy material at three levels: 1) a sample broad school vision/mission statement in which to situate human sexuality policies, 2) a statement regarding the school's intent and interest in establishing policies related to human sexuality, and 3) examples of specific policies related to human sexuality. A series of appendices includes additional resources, Church teachings on human sexuality, and examples of handbook and entry agreements.



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Promoting and Defending
Faithful Catholic Education

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by Denise Donohue, Ed.D., and Dan Guernsey, Ed.D.

Introduction

This resource guide responds to the need for clarity, charity, and integrity in policy issues related to human sexuality in Catholic schools. A school's specific policies related to human sexuality should be consistent with Church teaching and should be tied into the school's overall mission. Human sexuality policies should, to the degree possible, not single out any particular group or behavior but be placed in the larger context of assisting all members of the school community in virtue formation, furthering of the common good, and the Catholic evangelical mission of the school.

This guide provides examples of policy material at three levels:

1. A sample broad school vision/mission statement in which to situate human sexuality policies.
2. A statement regarding the school's intent and interest in establishing policies related to human sexuality.
3. Examples of specific policies related to human sexuality.

A series of appendices includes additional resources, Church teachings on human sexuality, and examples of handbook and entry agreements.

These materials are not offered as legal or theological advice. Schools should run all policy statements through their legal counsel and theological advisors, including (when possible) the local bishop. The Cardinal Newman Society has worked with the pro bono attorneys at Alliance Defending Freedom and highly recommends them to school leaders for a review of your policies and governing documents.

Any use or adaptation of this material is permitted without attribution, although references to material from Church documents should be retained to those particular documents if used.

Part One: Sample Broad Vision/Mission Statements for Catholic Schools

Example A: A General Belief Statement

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the World” (MT 28: 19-20).

With this statement, Christ sent forth His apostles on a mission of evangelization. Catholic education promotes and fosters the teaching and values of the Catholic Church as professed by the Magisterium of the Catholic Church and articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic*

Church.¹ Catholic schools, through their educational efforts, provide an essential ecclesiastical ministry, the primary purpose of which is evangelization through a critical transmission of culture in the light of faith and the integral formation of the human person, mind, body, and spirit, to fulfill God's calling for all to a fullness of Christian living in this world and the next.

Example B: A More Specific Belief Statement With Core Principles²

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.³ Through Catholic education, students encounter God, who in Jesus Christ reveals His transforming love and truth.⁴ Christ is the foundation of Catholic education;⁵ He is the Master who journeys with students through school and life as genuine Teacher and perfect Man.⁶ As a faith community in communion with the Church, all its 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 faith⁷ and integral formation of students in body, mind, and spirit.⁸

Evangelization. Our school 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.⁹

Encounter with Christ. Through daily interaction, prayer, liturgies, and participation in the sacraments,¹⁰ all members of the school 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.¹¹ Through this encounter, students are moved toward the fullness of their humanity, becoming more aware of the gift of Faith given them at Baptism,¹² 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.¹³

¹ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), 1993.

² Legal experts have recommended to The Cardinal Newman Society belief statements and policies that are specific, because they help employees and courts understand the rationale for the policies and identify particular practices that are prohibited before they occur.

³ [Matthew 28: 19-20](#).

⁴ Pope Benedict XVI, [Meeting With Catholic Educators, Washington, DC](#), 2008; Pope Benedict XVI, [Spe Salvi](#), 2007, #4.

⁵ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, [The Catholic School](#), 1977, #34.

⁶ Congregation for Catholic Education, [The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School](#), 1988, #25.

⁷ [The Catholic School](#), #49.

⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education, [Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on Religious Education in Schools](#), 2009, #1.

⁹ [The Catholic School](#), 1977, #5.

¹⁰ [The Catholic School](#), 1977, #54, 55.

¹¹ Pope St. John Paul II, [Catechesi Tradendae](#), 1979, #23.

¹² [The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School](#), #98.

¹³ [The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School](#), #95; [The Catholic School](#), #7.

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 Gospel¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ We do this by living in communion with the Church and its teachings.

Believing in the mercy and forgiveness of Christ, we acknowledge our sinful and fallen nature and look to Christ and to 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.

Authority for teaching. We profess that all authority for our moral and spiritual teaching is based on the Gospels of Jesus Christ¹⁶ 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,¹⁷ our school 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,¹⁸ and curricular selections where faith and culture are intertwined in all areas of school life.¹⁹ 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,²⁰ our school environment 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.

Part Two: Sample Statement Declaring a Catholic Foundation for Human Sexuality Policies

All members of the school community are expected to strive to live a life of virtue guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church in all aspects of their lives. Our school'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. The school establishes an environment of encouragement, mercy, healing, and love to accompany its members as we journey on the path toward holiness.

¹⁴ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 1982, #6.

¹⁵ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, 2007, #24.

¹⁶ *The Catholic School*, #34.

¹⁷ Pope Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965, #8.

¹⁸ *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, #26, 27.

¹⁹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, 2005.

²⁰ *Gravissimum Educationis*, #5; *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, #8.

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 end 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.*²¹

Because our efforts at integral formation include the integrity of body, spirit, and moral development, our school 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.²² 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".²³

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".²⁴ We believe that human sexual behavior is only properly oriented to the ends of love and life in the context of Holy Matrimony.²⁵

The proper understanding of human sexuality requires personal integrity and full integration of body and soul as created by God.²⁶ 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."²⁷

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.²⁸ We believe that the sexes are complementary and that as "male and female he made them".²⁹ Our given biological sex is part of the divine plan.³⁰ The Church teaches that sexual identity is "a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman,"³¹ it constitutes but

²¹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana, [Code of Canon Law](#), Canon 795.

²² [1 Cor 6:19](#).

²³ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2337.

²⁴ [Ibid](#); John Paul II, *General Audience*, 9 & 16, January 1980 in *Insegnamenti*, 3,1; 88-92 and 148-52.

²⁵ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2360.

²⁶ See discussion on dualistic anthropology in "*Male and female he created them*": *Towards a path of dialogue on the question of gender theory in education*. Congregation of Catholic Education, (2019), par. 20.

²⁷ [Ibid](#).

²⁸ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #358, 365; [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2332.

²⁹ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #369-373; [Gen 1:27](#).

³⁰ [Gen. 1:27](#); [Matthew 19:4](#); [Mark 10:6](#): "Male and female he created them", par. 32.

³¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, [Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Woman in the Church and the World](#), 2004, #8.

is more than one's biological identity,³² and a person "should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity".³³ One's biological sex and gender expression are not to be disaggregated,³⁴ 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:³⁵ 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.³⁶

We believe that man and woman share the same humanity³⁷ and "inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator."³⁸ 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.³⁹

Offenses against chastity and marriage, including those described in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, will not be tolerated. Members of the school 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.

Part Three: Examples of Specific Policies Related to Human Sexuality

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

³² [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.

³³ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2393.

³⁴ *Family, Marriage and 'De Facto' Unions*, #8.

³⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, [Summa Theologica](#), First Part, Question 16.

³⁶ Pope St. John Paul II, [Fides et Ratio](#), 1998, #22.

³⁷ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #371.

³⁸ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #369.

³⁹ "Male and female he created them", par. 15-16.

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. "Male and female he created them", par. 24.

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

Athletic Policy

Students are only eligible to participate on our school’s sport teams consistent with their biological sex. In order to maintain dignity, modesty, and respect for forms of physical contact between members of the opposite sex, at no time will members of the opposite sex wrestle each other in intra-school or inter-school activities.

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 our school, 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 the school at outside functions. Modesty is expected at all times.

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

⁴¹ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2333; “Male and female” par. 25.

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

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

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

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 the school 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 school 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

The school will interact with students according to their biological sex as based upon physical differences at birth. A member of the school 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.

The school 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. The school 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. The school's pastoral and counseling services are available to all members of the school community.

Mission Integrity

The school 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,

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

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

parent, staff or faculty member may not be a fit for our school's primary evangelical mission and, thus, may be denied admission or may be asked to leave the school.

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 Matrimony⁴⁸, 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, the school 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 The school offers its pastoral and counseling services as sources of comfort and direction for any member of the school community.

A Note on Other Policies

This document does not address student pregnancies under the assumption that the school has already articulated a policy that assists the student-parents to re-establish a life of chastity, prohibits abortion, and supports them in their affirmation of the gift of life under all circumstances. This document also does not address specific policies related to sexual harassment and discrimination, because such policies are often complex and crafted together with legal counsel.

Regarding issues of human sexuality as applied to faculty and staff, a series of best practices advice and examples is contained in two publications from the Cardinal Newman Society: [*Faith and Morals Language in Catholic School Teacher Employment Documents*](#) and [*Faith and Morals Language in Catholic School Teacher Employment Documents: A Compilation from Diocesan Statements, Handbooks and Contract.*](#)

Since most Catholic schools exercise their constitutional right and Church-mandated responsibility to hire faithful Catholic faculty and give preference to serving Catholic students, schools should ensure that their non-discrimination clauses are not overly broad or stretch

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.

beyond the requirements for faith-based institutions in our country. An example of language in a non-discrimination statement might include in part:

Our school recognizes the inherent value and dignity of all members of the human family and values equal opportunity for members of all races, cultures, and ethnicities. Our school prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or status as a veteran or disabled veteran. Our school reserves the rights and protections granted to it in the areas of admissions and employment practices by applicable laws and constitutional provisions to act in furtherance of its religious objectives.

About the Authors

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: Select Church Teachings on Sexuality

Bodily Integrity

“The human body shares in the dignity of ‘the image of God’: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit:

“Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator. For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.”⁵⁰

“Sexuality affects all aspect of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concern affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.”⁵¹

“By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.”⁵²

“In [St.] Paul’s eyes, it is not only the human spirit...that decides the dignity of the human body. But even more so it is the supernatural reality [of] the indwelling and continual presence of the Holy Spirit in man—in his soul and in his body—as the fruit of the redemption carried out by Christ. It follows that man’s body is no longer just his own. It deserves that respect whose manifestation in the mutual conduct of man, male and female, constitutes the virtue of purity.”⁵³

“A sexual education that fosters a healthy sense of modesty has immense value, however much some people nowadays consider modesty a relic of a bygone era. Modesty is a natural means whereby we defend our personal privacy and prevent ourselves from being turned into objects to be used. Without a sense of modesty, affection and sexuality can be reduced to an obsession with genitility and unhealthy behaviours that distort our capacity for love, and with forms of sexual violence that lead to inhuman treatment or cause hurt to others.”⁵⁴

“The profound falsehood of this theory and the anthropological revolution contained within are obvious. People dispute the idea that they have a nature, given by their bodily identity, that serves as a defining element of the human being. They deny their nature and decide that it is not

⁵⁰ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #364.

⁵¹ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2332.

⁵² [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2393.

⁵³ Pope St. John Paul II, General Audience, [The Virtue of Purity is the Expression and Fruit of Life According to the Spirit](#), February 11, 1981, #3.

⁵⁴ Pope Francis, [Amoris Laetitia](#), 2016, #282.

something previously given to them, but that they make it for themselves. According to the Biblical creation account, being created by God as male and female pertains to the essence of the human creature. This duality is an essential aspect of what being human is all about, as ordained by God. This very duality as something given is now disputed. The words ‘male and female he created them’ (Gen 1:27) no longer apply. No, what now applies is this: it was not God who created them male and female—hitherto society did this, now we decide for ourselves.”⁵⁵

“Yet the contemporary way of exalting the body is deceptive. Eros, reduced to pure ‘sex’, has become a commodity, a mere ‘thing’ to be bought and sold, or rather, man himself becomes a commodity. This is hardly man’s great ‘yes’ to the body. On the contrary, he now considers his body and his sexuality as the purely material part of himself, to be used and exploited at will.”⁵⁶

“...human sexuality [is] being regarded more as an area for manipulation and exploitation than as the basis of the primordial wonder which led Adam on the morning of creation to exclaim before Eve: ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’ (Gen 2:23).”⁵⁷

“Frequently, sex education deals primarily with ‘protection’ through the practice of ‘safe sex’. Such expressions convey a negative attitude towards the natural procreative finality of sexuality, as if an eventual child were an enemy to be protected against. This way of thinking promotes narcissism and aggressivity in place of acceptance. It is always irresponsible to invite adolescents to toy with their bodies and their desires, as if they possessed the maturity, values, mutual commitment and goals proper to marriage. They end up being blithely encouraged to use other persons as a means of fulfilling their needs or limitations. The important thing is to teach them sensitivity to different expressions of love, mutual concern and care, loving respect and deeply meaningful communication. All of these prepare them for an integral and generous gift of self that will be expressed, following a public commitment, in the gift of their bodies. Sexual union in marriage will thus appear as a sign of an all-inclusive commitment, enriched by everything that has preceded it.”⁵⁸

Sexual Complementarity

“Man and woman have been created, which is to say, willed by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman. ‘Being man’ and ‘being woman’ is a reality which is good and willed by God: man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator. Man and woman are both with one and the same dignity ‘in the image of God’. In their ‘being-man’ and ‘being-woman’, they reflect the Creator’s wisdom and goodness.”⁵⁹

“Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is not something simply biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an

⁵⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, [Address on the Occasion of Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia](#), December 21, 2012.

⁵⁶ Pope Benedict XVI, [Deus Caritas Est](#), 2005, #5.

⁵⁷ Pope St. John Paul II, [Letter to the Families](#), 1994, #19.

⁵⁸ Pope Francis, [Amoris Laetitia](#), 2016, #283.

⁵⁹ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #369.

integral part of the love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another until death.”⁶⁰

“Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament.”⁶¹

“Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.”⁶²

“Homosexuality refers to relations between men or women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. It’s psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which present homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that ‘homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.’ They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.”⁶³

“Connected with de facto unions is the particular problem concerning demands for the legal recognition of unions between homosexual persons, which is increasingly the topic of public debate. Only an anthropology corresponding to the full truth of the human person can give an appropriate response to this problem with its different aspects on both the societal and ecclesial levels. The light of such anthropology reveals ‘how incongruous is the demand to accord ‘marital’ status to unions between persons of the same sex. It is opposed, first of all, by the objective impossibility of making the partnership fruitful through the transmission of life according to the plan inscribed by God in the very structure of the human being. Another obstacle is the absence of the conditions for that interpersonal complementarity between male and female willed by the Creator at both the physical-biological and the eminently psychological levels. It is only in the union of two sexually different persons that the individual can achieve perfection in a synthesis of unity and mutual psychophysical completion’. Homosexual persons are to be fully respected in their human dignity and encouraged to follow God’s plan with particular attention in the exercise of chastity. This duty calling for respect does not justify the legitimization of behaviour that is not consistent with moral law, even less does it justify the recognition of a right to marriage between persons of the same sex and its being considered equivalent to the family.”⁶⁴

“The complementarity of man and woman, the pinnacle of divine creation, is being questioned by the so-called gender ideology, in the name of a more free and just society. The differences

⁶⁰ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2361.

⁶¹ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2360.

⁶² [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2333.

⁶³ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), #2357.

⁶⁴ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church](#), 2004, #228.

between man and woman are not for opposition or subordination, but for communion and generation, always in the ‘image and likeness’ of God.”⁶⁵

“The Christian vision of man is, in fact, a great ‘yes’ to the dignity of persons called to an intimate filial communion of humility and faithfulness. The human being is not a self-sufficient individual nor an anonymous element in the group. Rather he is a unique and unrepeatable person, intrinsically ordered to relationships and sociability. Thus the Church reaffirms her great ‘yes’ to the dignity and beauty of marriage as an expression of the faithful and generous bond between man and woman, and her no to ‘gender’ philosophies, because the reciprocity between male and female is an expression of the beauty of nature willed by the Creator.”⁶⁶

“Femininity in some way finds itself before masculinity, while masculinity confirms itself through femininity. Precisely the function of sex [that is, being male or female], which in some way is ‘constitutive for the person’ (not only ‘an attribute of the person’), shows how deeply man, with all his spiritual solitude, with the uniqueness and unrepeatability proper to the person, is constituted by the body as ‘he’ or ‘she’.”⁶⁷

Social Ideology

“These words lay the foundation for what is put forward today under the term ‘gender’ as a new philosophy of sexuality. According to this philosophy, sex is no longer a given element of nature that man has to accept and personally make sense of: it is a social role that we choose for ourselves, while in the past it was chosen for us by society. The profound falsehood of this theory and of the anthropological revolution contained within it is obvious. People dispute the idea that they have a nature, given by their bodily identity, that serves as a defining element of the human being. They deny their nature and decide that it is not something previously given to them, but that they make it for themselves.”⁶⁸

“In this perspective [i.e., that of gender ideology], physical difference, termed sex, is minimized, while the purely cultural element, termed gender, is emphasized to the maximum and held to be primary. The obscuring of the difference or duality of the sexes has enormous consequences on a variety of levels. This theory of the human person, intended to promote prospects for equality of women through liberation from biological determinism, has in reality inspired ideologies which, for example, call into question the family, in its natural two-parent structure of mother and father, and make homosexuality and heterosexuality virtually equivalent, in a new model of polymorphous sexuality.”⁶⁹

“Yet another challenge is 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, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology

⁶⁵ Pope Francis, [Address to the Bishops of Puerto Rico](#), June 8, 2015.

⁶⁶ Pope Benedict XVI, [Address to the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum”](#), January 19, 2013.

⁶⁷ Pope St. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. M. Waldstein, 2006, #10:1.

⁶⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, [Address to the Roman Curia](#), December 21, 2012.

⁶⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, [Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World](#), 2004, #2.

leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time'. It is a source of concern that some ideologies of this sort, which seek to respond to what are at times understandable aspirations, manage to assert themselves as absolute and unquestionable, even dictating how children should be raised. It needs to be emphasized that 'biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated'. ...It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality. Let us not fall into the sin of trying to replace the Creator. We are creatures, and not omnipotent. Creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift. At the same time, we are called to protect our humanity, and this means, in the first place, accepting it and respecting it as it was created."⁷⁰

"The crisis of the family is a societal fact. There are also ideological colonializations of the family, different paths and proposals in Europe and also coming from overseas. Then, there is the mistake of the human mind—gender theory—creating so much confusion."⁷¹

"Faced with theories that consider gender identity as merely the cultural and social product of the interaction between the community and the individual, independent of personal sexual identity without any reference to the true meaning of sexuality, the Church does not tire of repeating her teaching: 'Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral and spiritual difference and complementarities are oriented towards the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life....' According to this perspective, it is obligatory that positive law be conformed to the natural law, according to which sexual identity is indispensable, because it is the objective condition for forming a couple in marriage" (emphasis in original and internal citation omitted).⁷²

"In the process that could be described as the gradual cultural and human de-structuring of the institution of marriage, the spread of a certain ideology of 'gender' should not be underestimated. According to this ideology, being a man or a woman is not determined fundamentally by sex but by culture. Therefore, the bases of the family and inter-personal relationships are attacked."⁷³

⁷⁰ Pope Francis, [Amoris Laetitia](#), 2016, #56.

⁷¹ Pope Francis, [Pastoral Visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Pompeii and Naples](#), March 21, 2015.

⁷² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church](#), #224.

⁷³ Pontifical Council for the Family, [Family, Marriage and "De Facto" Unions](#), 2000, #8.

APPENDIX B: Sample Letter for Prospective Employee or Parent⁷⁴

Dear Prospective Parent/Employee:

Thank you for your interest in our school. Ours is a faith-based school, and as such we hope to attract those individuals, students, and families who are like-minded spiritually or who are open and willing to explore life in the Catholic Church. Our mission is one of evangelization and sanctification—to form disciples for Christ within a supportive academic community.

Before applying to our school, please read our School Handbook (Employee Policy), which you will find online. This will introduce you more fully to the mission of our school, our school philosophy, our Church teachings, and other policies and expectations for those working and learning in our school environment.

Please note that our Catholic faith as explained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and as taught by the Magisterium of the Church is the foundation for all subjects and activities at our school. Students and teachers, whether or not of the Catholic faith, are expected to participate in all religious activities to the extent deemed applicable by the Church. All adults employed at our school are expected to be witnesses and role models of Catholic morality.

If your beliefs and lifestyle choices are not in agreement with our Church teachings, becoming a part of our community might prove difficult. Non-Catholics exposed to Church teachings might exhibit internal conflict. When this is in line with sincere and arduous searching for the Truth, we joyfully will assist in your acquisition of a deeper understanding and embrace into the Catholic Church.

Our school is committed not only to academic excellence, but also forming students into mature young 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. If you are in agreement with these objectives, this school will complement the beliefs and ideals of your life and home.

We look forward to partnering with you in this wonderful apostolate of Catholic education.

⁷⁴ Adapted from Alliance Defending Freedom, [Protecting Your Ministry from Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity Lawsuits: A Legal Guide for Churches, Christian Schools, and Christian Ministries](#), 2015.

APPENDIX C: Sample Handbook Agreement⁷⁵

Parents: Please read the following statements carefully and sign below to indicate your agreement.

I hereby affirm that I have read the Student Handbook and discussed its policies with my student.

I certify that I consent to and will submit to all governing policies of the school, including all applicable policies in the Student Handbook.

I understand that this school exists to further the mission and objectives of the Catholic Church, in its entirety, and those causing public scandal by actively promoting a moral or doctrinal position contrary to Catholic teaching may be asked to leave.

I understand that the standards of the school do not tolerate profanity, obscenity in word or action, disrespect to the personnel of the school, or continued disobedience to the established policies of the school.

I understand that the services of the school are engaged by mutual consent, and that either the school or I reserve the right to terminate any or all services at any time. I understand that the Student Handbook does not contractually bind [School] and is subject to change without notice by decision of [School]’s governing body. Admission to the school is a privilege, not a right, and admission for one school year does not guarantee automatic admission for future school years.

Signature of Mother Date

Signature of Father Date

Students in Grades 7-12: Please read the following statement carefully and sign below to indicate your agreement.

I hereby affirm that I have read the Student Handbook. I certify that I consent to and will submit to all governing policies of the school, including all applicable policies in the Student Handbook.

I understand that this Handbook does not contractually bind [School] and is subject to change without notice by decision of [School]’s governing body.

I understand that admission to the school is a privilege, not a right, and that any behavior, either on or off campus, which is not consistent with the school’s standards could result in the loss of that privilege.

Signature of Student Date

⁷⁵ Adapted from Alliance Defending Freedom, [Protecting Your Ministry from Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity Lawsuits: A Legal Guide for Churches, Christian Schools, and Christian Ministries](#), 2015.

APPENDIX D: Select Resources

Policy Development

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