**Title: 5010 RIGHT TO A CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

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| Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990 | **5010 Right to a Catholic Education**  The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown encourages all its Catholic schools to operate in a manner that makes a Catholic education available to all students whose parents sincerely see a faith-based education to foster spiritual growth in their children. Because every Catholic child has a right to religious instruction and formation in the Catholic faith, preference should be given to Catholic students. Students should not be refused admission to Catholic schools based on gender, race, color, or ethnic origin.   1. Qualifying students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) should be welcomed to any Catholic school community provided they agree to support the school's mission and philosophy. 2. Enrolled families should be required to agree and abide by the educational policies and regulations of the Diocesan Education Office andCatholic school to which their children have been admitted. 3. Catholic and non-Catholic students should be required to participate in religion classes and attend the religious celebrations conducted at school. 4. A student entering school, who is not fluent in English should not be denied admission based solely on limited English language skills. However, appropriate assessment of the child's academic and language levels should be determined. 5. Each Catholic school in the Diocese has the right to set its own admission criteria. The admission criteria for each school should be made public and clearly stated in the local parent/student handbook and family contract. These criteria should include:    * A student should not be formally admitted until all previous requested school records have been received and reviewed;    * Only enrolled full time students as defined in local Catholics school handbooks may participate in academic, athletic, and social activities at Diocesan high schools. 6. A student may not be admitted to a Catholic school until all financial obligations to previous Catholic schools have been received.   **5010.1 Opportunity for students with Special Needs to**  **Receive a Catholic Education**  Catholic schools collaborate with parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide both spiritual and academic educational development for children. Parent(s)/guardian(s) who have a child with a disability should be afforded the opportunity to have a Catholic education for their child.  “A person with a disability is any person, who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment or is regarded as having such impairment.”  A principal shall evaluate on a case-by-case basis whether or not the Catholic school can meet the needs of the student. If the school can make reasonable accommodations to meet the student’s needs, then the school should offer the child the opportunity of a Catholic school education.  Students with special needs may be admitted if the school can reasonably accommodate the student's needs consistent with the school environment and resources available under the following suggested conditions:   1. Personal assessment of the student should be conducted by the school; 2. Any previous assessments conducted should be reviewed; 3. School records should be reviewed; 4. Appropriate school faculty and administration should consult regarding possible placement. |
|  | **5010.2 Right to a Catholic Education for a Child**  **Whose First Language is not English**  Catholic schools collaborate with parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide both spiritual and academic development for children. Parents/guardians should be afforded the opportunity to have a Catholic education for their child/children.  A principal shall evaluate on a case-by-case basis whether or not the Catholic school can meet the needs of children who are English Language Learners. If the school can offer education to meet the language needs of the child/children, then the school should offer the opportunity of a Catholic education. The child/children should be considered for admission to school on the same basis as any other student applying for admission.  Upon admission of the child/children who are English Language Learner, the school should administer or contact their local public school district to request administration of a PA approved screening assessment to determine the student’s English language proficiency level and the availability of Title III support services.  **5010.3 Admission of Students of Other Faith Traditions**  Recognizing the unique role of the Catholic school as an agency for carrying out the educational mission of the Church, Catholic schools are designed for Catholic students whose parent(s)/guardian(s) express a desire for the Catholic school’s program and environment.  However, the Diocese encourages schools to welcome students of other faith traditions. In accepting students of other faith traditions, Catholic schools shall be directed by the guidelines for admission contained within Diocesan regulation.  Since the Catholic school is defined by its religious character, enrollment in a Catholic school assumes involvement in the religious life of the school. Therefore, students of other faith traditions shall participate in religion classes, attend liturgical and prayer services, and take part in the school’s program of service. However, such participation shall not belie the fundamental religious principle of the individual person’s freedom and dignity.  Students shall participate in the religious life of the school. How they will participate, must be made especially clear to parent(s)/guardian(s) and students at the time of registration. During the pre-admission interview, parent(s)/guardian(s) and students should be informed about the school’s mission, beliefs, programs, and expectations for parent(s)/guardian(s) and students. |