

FAQs on the Gender Policy for Schools

The purpose of this document is to respond to anticipated questions that may be asked of curia employees and school leaders. This document can be used for front desk employees, people who will respond to the public, and may be distributed to parents.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- 1) What is the reason for creating a policy on Gender?
 - a) The Archdiocese developed *Pastoral Guidelines on Gender Identity* in 2020. Many schools have been using those guidelines in response to needs presented by families in schools.
 - b) The Archdiocese and school leaders determined that an Archdiocesan-wide policy with consistent language would provide clarity on how to respond to situations in their schools.
- 2) Why were the original policies pulled back and revised?
 - a) The scope of the policies was too broad. The policies reached into areas that were outside of the scope of gender identity, and asked school administrators to monitor areas of concern outside their responsibilities.
 - b) The policies were publicly and prematurely shared before educators could formulate their implementation plans.
- 3) Who contributed to the revised Gender Policy for Schools?
 - a) The revision of the Gender Policy for Schools was led by the Superintendent of Schools and included archdiocesan leadership with the final approval of Archbishop Lucas.
 - b) Up to 150 individuals with varying levels of professional backgrounds, demographics and competencies contributed to the revised policy. This group included school leaders, priests, deacons, mental health professionals, professors, pediatricians, community leaders, parish leaders, and individuals with first-hand experience with gender dysphoria. The consultation process occurred in small groups, and one-on-one meetings. Many of the reviewers have relationships with people who have experienced or are currently experiencing gender dysphoria.
- 4) What resources were utilized in the development of the revised Gender policy?
 - a) The revision committee reviewed over 40 different documents, policies, and guidelines about gender identity from other dioceses and professional organizations.
- 5) How is the revised policy different from the initial policy released in August 2022?
 - a) The revised policy only addresses students in schools and gender.
 - b) The policy balances the pastoral needs of parents, guardians, students, school leaders and the Archdiocese's responsibility to uphold Church teaching.

- c) The policy emphasizes the family-school partnership that exists in Catholic educational settings. The Catholic education experience is defined primarily by the truths of the Catholic faith. If parents choose that which is not in God's plan for their child, the family-school partnership suffers.
- 6) If my child questions their gender, will they be accepted in a Catholic school?
 - a) Children will not be denied admission into a Catholic school based solely on their experience of gender dysphoria. If a child experiences gender dysphoria, school leaders and pastors will partner with parents to establish an accompaniment plan that follows the teaching of the Catholic faith.
 - 7) What if a family wants an accompaniment plan that is contrary to church teaching?
 - a) Students will not automatically be asked to transfer; however, the school and the family must work together in a manner that upholds Church teaching.
 - b) It may be necessary to begin the school transfer process for the good of the child and the school community, if the school and the family are no longer in agreement on the best way to accompany the child.
 - 8) Why was the reference to employees removed from the policy?
 - a) Staff sign contracts or follow handbook policies that require employees' commitment to follow the teachings of the Church. This policy is only meant to address how a school will work with students and families.
 - 9) When will this policy go in effect?
 - a) This policy will go into effect for the 2023-24 school year.
 - 10) What formation resources are you going to provide schools and parishes?
 - a) Various workshops have been offered and presented for the past two years when the Pastoral Guidelines for Gender Dysphoria were first released. Accompaniment workshops have provided formation opportunities for school and parish leaders; these sessions will continue.
 - b) Podcasts, articles and books about gender theory have been made available to school and parish leaders.