



# ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND

## IN OREGON

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to acknowledge that this is a time of fear and anxiety for many, especially in our immigrant community in western Oregon. As I shared in a statement two weeks ago, while we do not yet fully understand all the repercussions of the executive orders on immigration, it hurts me to know that members of our parishes and schools are living with fear as they imagine the worst-case scenario. For those who are feeling this way, I want you to know that the Church is with you and loves you.

I also recognize that there are many questions surfacing around how our Catholic schools interact with law enforcement officials and what our policies are on this subject.

Our Catholic Archdiocesan and Parish Schools, as educational apostolates of the Catholic Church in western Oregon, are Catholic institutions founded to support families in their mission to educate their children by providing Mission Passionate Catholic Education. To those families who have entrusted their children to our Catholic schools, we commit to providing an environment and community rooted in our Catholic mission to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ with fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Church teaching calls us to be institutions “subsidiary to the family,” which the Church views as a domestic church. We live this belief by maintaining environments that are in support of the family and home, ensuring that the physical, spiritual, and moral well-being of our students is safeguarded in all moments. As such, all our families can expect that our schools and school personnel will always strive to provide secure and safe environments for all students according to their dignity as beloved sons and daughters of God.

As non-public civil institutions that seek to contribute to the common good of society, our Catholic schools do seek to maintain healthy relationships with law enforcement officials. This includes cooperating with lawful orders presented by law enforcement officials or courts, according to our Archdiocesan policies and procedures.

Per existing Archdiocesan policy for Catholic Schools:

- If law enforcement officials were to arrive on school property for any reason, school leadership or their delegates would be the main point of contact to interact with them. As non-public spaces, Catholic schools would exercise their right to request necessary documentation and consult Archdiocesan officials and policy before permitting law enforcement to enter any part of the building, interact with students or staff, or carry out any action. Should law enforcement arrive with lawful orders (e.g. warrants) school officials will work with Archdiocesan officials to ensure proper understanding of said orders and cooperate with law enforcement to the best of their ability.

- Catholic schools will not disclose any records on students and families that contain personally identifiable information unless for a request from the parents or guardian of a student or a lawful, court order.
- Families would be advised of any requests made by law enforcement concerning their children, unless otherwise noted by lawful order.

We believe maintaining school environments that support families and work cooperatively with civil servants is necessary for the common good of our communities. We do not believe these are mutually exclusive matters. It is accomplished with a proper understanding of and respect for our Catholic mission to serve families, and a proper respect for applicable law, by all parties involved.

Should you have any ongoing questions or concerns, I would encourage you to talk to your school leadership further.

Let us put our confidence in the Lord. In these times, I invite you to ask the Lord to help you not fall into despair and to trust in God's love and mercy. He is with us. Additionally, I would invite us to be agents of unity in these times. We need for our Catholic schools to be communities grounded in unity as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Our Catholic faith and the love of Jesus Christ must be our most important source of unity, over anything else.

Know of my closeness in prayer to you and all members of our Catholic school communities.

Sincerely yours,



Most Rev. Alexander K. Sample  
Archbishop of Portland