

Our Lady of Peace School: A Safe Environment for Every Child

Creating a safe and healthy environment for our children, faculty and staff is a primary goal for Our Lady of Peace School. Protecting God's Children is not only a critical goal reflected in our Diocesan Child Protection Policy, but it is a fundamental principle that is the starting point for understanding Catholic education. Being who we say we are remains a challenge for us all, but one that will enable the credibility of our Catholic schools in our time and history. Any parent choosing a Catholic education at Our Lady of Peace may expect that their children are being entrusted to a community environment and climate that fosters an authentic Catholic identity. This means that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the foundation on which the school's identity is built, and enhancing the dignity of the human person is a non-negotiable of our Catholic identity. Therefore, every parent and guardian, faculty and staff, must share the value of this principle without compromise.

We all know that "children will be children." We all deal with this reality as we watch our children grow into the people that God intends them to become. However the choices and decisions that our children make must be guided by those who have the primary responsibility for educating their children— the parents and guardians. Our task as a Catholic school is to assist and support parents in their responsibility – we are not meant to be a substitute for the parents.

It is imperative that parents of our school children are striving for the quality of life that enable all our children at Our Lady of Peace to grow into the awareness of their dignity as the beloved sons and daughters of God. When we are all working toward the same goal in helping our children discover their individuality within community, then the uniqueness of each child's is given room to develop, while protecting the dignity of each child's distinctiveness.

For us at Our Lady of Peace this means that the environment and climate of the school is guided by expectations that align themselves with a way of life that distinguishes the Catholic school. Concretely, this means that aggressive behavior toward another student cannot be tolerated. Behavior that reflects any mode of bullying which jeopardize another's safety or creates a climate of intimidation whereby the self-esteem and self-worth of another is diminished is not acceptable. When the safe environment or climate of the school community is compromised, then a key principle of the school is compromised.

While knowing full well the developmental stages of a child's life, the expectation for Our Lady of Peace School is that parents / guardians seek integrity for their children's lives. When this integrity is shared by all the stakeholders within the learning community, an environment of mutuality, respect, and reciprocity of relationship can be more readily attained. This is an ideal and a goal toward which we work – living in the promise of the Gospel of Jesus Christ - here at Our Lady of Peace School.