

DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG
DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC FORMATION AND EDUCATION
OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND CENTERS

**STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY FOR GUIDANCE SERVICES IN THE
SCHOOLS AND CENTERS OF THE DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG**

Guidance services in the schools and centers of the Diocese of St. Petersburg incorporate a variety of functions that enhance the student's holistic development in the educational environment. It is understood that any reference to guidance services excludes all clinical and/or psychotherapeutic services. It is the responsibility of the guidance counselor to generate, and have available, referral information for these specific services.

The foundation of the relationship between guidance counselor and each school's administration is consultation, cooperation, collaboration and counseling. It is the professional responsibility of the counselor and the administrator to respect the privacy of those students with whom they form a relationship. The relationship by its nature requires an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. The main purpose of confidentiality in the school is to offer students a relationship in which they can share their concerns without fear of disclosure. Counselors and administration share responsibility in protecting the information received through confidential relationships with teachers and parents

This confidentiality must not be compromised except in the following situations:

- Student is a danger to self or others
- Parent and/or student request and sign a Release of Information to a particular third party including the sharing of information with any medical, mental health and or professional who is providing treatment (according to the stipulations outlined in the Release)
- A court order's release of information
- A third party is present in the room
- Suspected child abuse, neglect or endangerment
- Services delivered in small group and/or classroom format

In such cases, the counselor and administrator are responsible for informing the student of the disclosure, depending on the situation and/or the developmental level of the child. The counselor and administrator should work in confidence and collaboration to provide the child with a confidential setting when appropriate.

It is recommended that should a counseling situation cause sufficient concern regarding possible legal complication, the administrator should contact the Office of Catholic Schools and, as appropriate, seek advise from the Diocesan Legal Counsel.

February 14, 2002

