

The Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight
Bishop of Jefferson City

DECREE

Implementing Policy on Inactive Catholics and Tuition in Catholic Schools

“The duty and right of educating belongs in a special way to the Church, to which has been divinely entrusted the mission of assisting persons so that they are able to reach the fullness of the Christian life.” Canon 794 §1

In the course exercising my vigilance over Catholic schools according to canon 806 §1 and during the implementation of the Stewardship Model throughout the Diocese of Jefferson City the need to implement a consistent rule on inactive Catholics and tuition in Catholic schools has become apparent. Having considered all the relevant factors, consulted the Presbyteral Council, the Diocesan Finance Council, the Diocesan Finance Officer, the Director of Stewardship, the Superintendent of Schools and all other interested parties, I now wish to introduce this new policy on *Inactive Catholics and Tuition*.

I therefore,

DECREE

that this Policy shall be promulgated by being published on the Diocesan website, and that it will take effect on 1 July 2022, *ad experimentum*, for a period of one year. All things to the contrary notwithstanding. At the end of the *ad experimentum* period this Policy will be reevaluated. I furthermore order that a copy of this Policy be sent to all concerned parties.

Given at the Chancery on the 13th day of May in the Year of Our Lord 2022.



The Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight, S.T.D.
Bishop of Jefferson City



Mr. Benjamin Roodhouse, J.D., J.C.L.
Chancellor

Inactive Catholics and Tuition

The Diocese of Jefferson City, in accordance with the diocesan Pastoral Plan, is implementing a pastoral effort to deepen the spirituality of stewardship in our diocese.

The Stewardship Way of Life recognizes the need for clergy and faithful alike to foster an intentional and co-responsible approach to discipleship under the Lord Jesus, answering the call to freely give of themselves to the mission of the Church and others out of gratitude and love for Christ. This spirituality of Christian stewardship is manifested in the Church's partnership with parents in the education and formation of their children in the parish's Catholic School.

Discipleship calls us to more than membership; it calls us to an active stewardship. Thus, all parishioners are asked to support the work and ministry of their local parish.

No more and no less is asked of Catholic school parents and students than of any other parishioner. All parishioners are asked to:

- Commit to ***pray***. That is, actively and regularly attend Mass on weekends and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Commit to ***participate***. That is, offer their talents and a portion of their time to serve the parish community and be a part of its fellowship and opportunities for ongoing Christian formation.
- Commit to ***sacrificially give***. That is, generously and proportionately pledge a portion of the "first fruits" of material treasure to support the operation and ministry of the parish church. The goal for Christians is the Biblical tithe (10%) and all are called to strive toward that goal.

All parish families are expected to enshrine these 3 sacrificial commitments through the completion of annual stewardship forms.

Families who strive to live as active stewards may have their children sponsored through the stewardship of the people of the parish for enrollment in the Catholic school. It is understood that parish sponsored enrollment in a Catholic school is contingent upon the family's practice of their faith.

Catholic families who refuse, after many invitations, to live as active stewards must meet with the Pastor to discuss the following options in order to retain enrollment in the parish school:

1. Begin living as active stewards in the parish by consistently attending Mass on weekends and Holy Days, being active in the life of the parish, and staying current on a pledge of material treasure to support the work of the Church.
2. At the discretion of the pastor, these families would be moved to "tuition status" but only for their children already enrolled in the school prior to the parish's transition to the CSR model. The tuition rate would be set by the pastor, and will likely be comparable to the cost of education at private schools in the area. The bishop recommends this tuition to be at least 110% of the cost of education per pupil. This

income will be considered ordinary income for the parish (as opposed to non-Catholic tuition, which is considered extra-ordinary). Children from inactive Catholic families not currently enrolled in the Catholic school will no longer be eligible to enroll via tuition, only as active stewards.

3. Unenroll from the parish school.

Catholic families who are not living as active stewards and who attend and/or register in another ecclesial community are not eligible for enrollment in the parish school until they begin the process of living as active stewards in the Catholic parish.

In some places, on the borders of our diocese, parishioners from parishes in another diocese also register in our parishes in order to send children to parish schools in the Diocese of Jefferson City. However, we discourage Catholics from registering in more than one parish community at a time. Therefore, families in this situation should either:

1. Enroll and strive to live as active stewards at the parish which is sponsoring their children for enrollment in the parish Catholic school.
2. Contact the pastors of both parishes and ask for a plan to be developed with the home parish to sponsor their child for enrollment.
3. Pay a tuition rate determined by the pastor of the enrolling school.

It is the responsibility of the pastor of the parish to educate and form the faithful of the parish, as well as school administrators and staff, on the difference between a Catholic school and a private school. All parishioners need to understand that the parish school is not separate and distinct from the parish but instead a ministry of it! The Catholic school exists to form and educate the children of active parishioners. While non-Catholic students may be admitted from time-to-time on a tuition basis, and as space allows, the priority is always given to the children of active stewards of the parish or other sponsoring parishes.

It is understood that many different situations may arise which are not explicitly addressed in this document. The addressing of various pastoral situations is left to the discretion of the pastor using this document as a guide and in collaboration with the Offices of Stewardship and Catholic Schools.