

Standards for Episcopal Schools in the Diocese of Texas

All Episcopal schools in the Diocese of Texas must abide by the Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Texas and shall meet the following Standards set forth by the Diocesan Commission on Schools. These Standards may be amended or supplemented from time to time by the Commission. Additionally, each school must submit a completed Annual Report to the Commission.

Each Episcopal school in the Diocese of Texas shall complete and return to the Commission, once every five years, an application for certification or renewal of certification as a school of the Diocese of Texas. Each Episcopal school shall also be visited by a representative of the Commission at least once during that five year period. On the basis of the information supplied in both the application and the report by the visiting member, the Commission shall certify to the Bishop whether or not the school is in compliance with Diocesan Standards.

General Standards:

1. The school shall be affiliated with the Episcopal Church as a parish day school, a school administered by the Diocese or a group of parishes, or a school that practices the faith and worship of the Episcopal Church and operates with the knowledge and written consent of the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas. For a school beginning operations for the first time, it must be affiliated with the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas and shall provide a written plan indicating how it will meet the Standards set forth by the Diocesan Schools Commission.
2. The school shall operate in compliance with the Canons of the Episcopal Church, specifically Canons 38 (schools), Canon 13 (finance, audit: the school must have an annual audit– or financial review for smaller schools- by an independent CPA), and Canon 22 (incorporation: the school shall be incorporated as a Texas non-profit corporation with organizational documents approved by the Chancellor of the Diocese.)
3. The school shall be in compliance with *Safeguarding God's Children* program requirements and record-keeping for staff and volunteers as well as obtain required background checks.

Program Standards:

1. The school shall have a developmental or challenging academic program set in a Christian environment that meets the diverse needs of its students academically, socially, and spiritually.
2. The school shall include regular services of worship, designed as age appropriate, which follow the Book of Common Prayer or are approved by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority of the Episcopal Church, in accordance with the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church.
3. The school shall include a religion component in its curriculum, designed with age-appropriate lessons, more academically engaging for older students, which respectfully acknowledges faith differences among students, and encourages service learning or outreach activities.
4. The school shall publish a non-discrimination admission policy that does not exclude students because of race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, family situation, or economic limitations insofar as possible, and the school shall make every effort to provide financial aid. The school shall file an IRS Form 5578 annually.

5. The school shall have faculty qualified by college degrees and other training appropriate to their assignment and who hold a personal faith commitment consistent with and supportive of the spiritual mission and program of the school.

6. The school shall be an accredited school affiliated with a recognized educational accrediting agency. The following are recommended agencies:

Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES); www.swaes.org

Independent School Association of the Southwest (ISAS); www.isasw.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); www.naeyc.org

American Montessori Society (AMS); www.amshq.org

Administrative and Governance Standards:

1. The school shall have a clearly stated mission and set of objectives adopted by the school's Board of Trustees and, in the case of a parish day school, approved by the Rector and Vestry, and communicated through school literature, handbooks, and other publications.

2. In a parish school, the Rector shall be the chairman of the school's Board of Trustees.

3. The Head of School shall be a communicant member of the Episcopal Church or shall apply for an exemption from the Bishop of the Diocese.

4. The school shall meet all national, state, and local health and safety requirements with confirmation of such compliance on file. The school shall meet the requirements of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services concerning child care, if applicable. The school shall also publish policies to address both security and emergency procedures appropriate to the campus.

5. The school shall adopt an annual budget with anticipated revenue and expenses. The budget should include adequate insurance (general liability, Directors and Officers liability, sexual misconduct coverage, and other insurance as necessary), and evidence of a Memorandum of Understanding between the church and school addressing shared expenses.

6. The school shall provide adequate compensation and benefits for personnel, including professional development funds and funding for benefits prescribed by the Diocese. There shall also be instruments of evaluation for all employees.

7. The school shall provide counseling and pastoral care when needed.

8. In a parish day school the Head of School and Rector shall establish a mutually supportive relationship and uphold each other's respective ministries in the church and school communities.