

Diocese of Sioux City Facilities Use Policy

Effective July 1, 2016



I. Introduction

This policy has been developed to assist in determining whether, and under what circumstances, to permit the use of a parish or school facility, either by a non-parish or non-school group, or by any individual(s) for a non-Church function.

II. Fundamentals

1. Parish and school facilities are sacred religious places and are the product of God's benevolence and the sacrifice of parishioners. All parish and school facilities have a sacred and religious purpose; namely, to worship God according to the rites and intentions of the Catholic faith, to celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ, to teach and explain the Catholic Faith, and in general to serve the needs of our Catholic community. Our parish facilities, including churches, schools, halls, offices, and other facilities, are therefore sacred and religious locations. At all times, we are obliged to respect the principles of our faith in the manner in which we use our facilities.
2. Parish, school, and diocesan groups have priority in the use of parish and school facilities. However, in the spirit of community service, and to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, permission may be given to other persons and groups so long as the use is consistent with this policy and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.
3. Granting the use of a parish facility to a group or organization that is not affiliated with or sponsored by a parish or school does not constitute an endorsement by the parish or school, the Diocese of Sioux City, or the Catholic Church of the group, or of the principles or philosophy of the group, being granted use of the facility. Nevertheless, it is important to present a consistent message to the congregation and community. Every parish and school facilities must only be used in accord with the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith (2 Cor 6:14).
4. The pastor or administrator of the parish or school facility may establish further guidelines on the use of the parish or school facilities, consistent with this Policy and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

III. Policy

1. The pastor of the parish or school facility will determine whether the parish or school facility will be made available for use to groups that are not directly affiliated with or sponsored by the parish or

school, or to any individual(s) for a non-Church function. In making this determination, the pastor will take into consideration the doctrines of the Roman Catholic faith and the needs and operations of the parish or school.

- a. In the event that a pastor's decision is disputed, the Bishop of the Diocese of Sioux City has final authority in making any such determination.
2. In cases where the pastor or administrator has decided to make a parish or school facility available to individuals or groups not affiliated with or sponsored by the parish or school, or for a non-Church function, such facility may be leased to an individual or group. The *Facilities Use Agreement* form must be completed for any arrangement. A standard agreement form is attached to this policy.
 3. The use of a parish or school facility shall not be granted to any individual, group, or organization, whether parishioners or non-parishioners:
 - a. Whose purpose, tenets, acts or omissions, or objective(s) contradict the faith and morals of the Catholic Church or the policies of the Diocese of Sioux City; or if the purpose, tenets, acts or omissions, or objective(s) of the individual, group, or organization are inherently inseparable from the proposed use of the facility, as determined by the Bishop of the Diocese of Sioux City;
 - b. When the activity for which the facility is to be used contradicts the faith and morals of the Catholic Church or the policies of the Diocese of Sioux City, as determined by the Bishop of the Diocese of Sioux City;
 - c. When doing so would involve the Church in partisan politics in support of one candidate or party for civil office and in opposition to other candidates or parties for the same office;
 - i. This prohibition on the use of parish or school facilities shall include use of facilities for caucus events;
 - ii. The use of a parish or school facility as a general election voting site is not excluded.
 - d. When unlawful, unsafe, or hazardous activity may occur as a result;
 - e. Whenever the pastor or administrator or the Diocese determines that the granting of such use will not be in the best interest of the parish, its parishioners, the faithful, or the Diocese; or that the denial of such use is necessary to avoid scandal.
 4. Individuals, groups, or organizations desiring to use a parish or school facility shall obtain a certificate of liability insurance coverage with acceptable coverage limits, and naming the parish or school, and the Diocese, as co-insureds. Special event coverage may be available for purchase from the insurance carrier for the parish or school.
 5. Recognizing the tax-exempt status of parishes, schools, and the Diocese, it is recommended that whenever a donation for use of a parish or school facility is requested, the amount of the donation not exceed the estimated necessary cost of the maintenance of the facility, and that the donation be clearly recorded in the parish's or school's financial records.