



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER
**CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS**

A PARENT GUIDE TO CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER



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It is amazing how time flies, isn't it? It feels like just the other day, you were bringing your newborn home and imagining everything that God might have in store for them, praying that he would guide you in being a good parent. Now, your little baby is in middle school and is preparing for high school. We are so glad that you made the decision to enroll your child in a Catholic school and have allowed us to support the formation of your son/daughter as a person of faith, wisdom, and virtue.

But their formation doesn't end in middle school. In fact, the high school years can be just as critical to their formation as their intellectual abilities become more refined. These are the years they also start to separate themselves from their parents a little bit more, year by year, as they prepare to leave the nest and start their own lives. Their peer group and the opinions of their peers sometimes start to mean more to them than the opinions of their parents. On top of that, there is college to think about. All of it can feel a bit overwhelming for a parent.

We believe that the mission of a Catholic school is fundamentally different to the goal of a secular school. Catholic schools exist to be sanctuaries of education which serve your family, in order that our school might help you as you bring your children into an encounter with Jesus Christ. We desire to serve you as parents and support your desire for your children to be transformed by a relationship with Jesus Christ, grow in wisdom and virtue, and discover their call for their lives as young men and women created in God's image and likeness. This understanding of our mission is vital if we are to properly serve your family for the sake of your child's formation and education. Our schools do not function in our mission to help bring children to Jesus Christ if not for bringing them to Jesus Christ through your family.

That is why we have put together this parent guide to high schools in the Archdiocese of Denver. We want you to make an informed decision about where your child should go to high school. As a part of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Denver, we also believe that a Catholic high school can make a vital contribution to your child's continued formation in the Catholic faith. Therefore, our desire is that this guide helps you make a well-informed decision as a parent about which Catholic high school is the best fit for your child and your family.

Peace and Blessings
The Office of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Denver

5 Things All Parents Need to Consider

1. FAITH FORMATION

Faith formation can become a lot more diverse once a student gets into high school. But how can you know if the faith formation being offered is as robust and thorough as you would hope, especially if you want your child to remain a practicing Catholic once they leave your house?

Start by looking at the theology courses offered. Is theology a required course for all four years of their high school experience? What are the courses in theology that are taught? What will they be learning? What sacraments are made available to the students and how often are they available? Are there opportunities to attend Mass? Is the Sacrament of Reconciliation offered? Are there retreats offered for the students? What are the retreats like? How about opportunities for service? Are service hours required? How does my child complete their service hours? Most importantly, who are the people that will be teaching my child? Are they outstanding witnesses of the faith? Are they knowledgeable and do they appear to live out the Catholic faith as a model for my child? And not just the theology faculty, but is that true of the rest of the faculty?

2. ACADEMIC PROGRAM

High school academic programs can also be diverse. Even if every high school has English classes, the curriculum of those English classes and how it is taught can make a significant difference in what your child learns during high school.

Start by thinking about what you want from the academic program. Does the academic program align with the faith formation of the high school? What are the required courses of study? What are the books that my child will be required to read in high school? Are advanced courses and/or AP courses important to us? If so, are they offered? Does my child need academic support to be successful and, if so, is that available? What fine arts are offered for my child to study? Can this high school program both help form my child and prepare them for life after high school?

3. EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Extracurricular activities are sometimes the best way to make sure that a student remains engaged in their education during their high school years. While the focus on extracurricular activities and high school athletics can sometimes get way out of balance, these things have the potential to make a significant contribution to the formation of your child and become a source of lasting memories from their high school years.

Start by thinking about extracurricular opportunities in their full spectrum. Athletics, fine arts, interest clubs, etc. Are there any particular sports that are important to my child? Is it offered at the high school? Is art, band, choir, dance, or theater important to my child? Is it offered? What kind of interest clubs exist at the school? Is there one that might be of interest to my child? Is there a balanced workload of academic work and extracurricular expectations? Who are the club moderators and fine arts teachers? Who are the coaches? Are they witnesses to the faith that will positively contribute to the formation of my child?

4. SCHOOL CULTURE

This is an often-overlooked component but can be a significant factor in your child's positive or negative experience in high school. If the school culture is a good fit for your child and your family, your child has a much better chance of having a great four years.

What is the school culture like? What does the school community seem to value and promote? Does that align with the values of our family? Who will my child be going to school with? Does this look like it could be a positive peer group for my child? Do I know other parents from this school? What do they say about the school culture? Does the school lead its messaging with faith or with something else? Does that matter to me? What kind of all-school activities does the school engage in?

5. YOU ARE STILL THE PARENT

This is the unspoken rule that, unfortunately, many families have forgotten in recent years. **You are the parent.** At age 12 or 13, does your child deserve to have their opinion heard on where they go to high school? Yes, by all means you should hear them out, providing they have mature, well-thought-out reasons for where they want to go to high school. But, even with that, *you are still the parent and need to make the decision that you think is in the best interest of your child.* Consider all of the factors listed above and anything else that might be important to your family. Your children have been given to you by God the creator. The mission of your family is to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel to your children. Part of this mission is to form a home in which your children can encounter Christ so that your children can grow in wisdom and virtue through everything they encounter in their homes with you. The mission of your family is also to joyfully proclaim the Good News to the world through your words and witness. The school is considered an extension of the home.

Examine your options. Ask your school pastor and/or parish pastor for their opinion on the high schools you are considering. Take the decision to prayer. Then you, as the parent, need to make the decision that you feel is in the best interest of your child. This should not be a decision left to your child alone based upon the influences of their friends or what they saw on social media. Your child was given to you by God as a gift to raise, to form, to nurture, and to educate. Parents remain the primary educator of the child, so you need to be the one to decide who is going to help you to educate your child.

5 Resources to Help You Make an Informed Decision

1. VISIT THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE.

You can find the answers to many of your questions on the school's website, and also see how the school promotes itself and what the school community values.

2. TALK TO THE ADMISSIONS REPRESENTATIVE.

Any questions that you can't find the answer to on the website can be answered by the Admissions Representative. They might also offer to give your family a personal tour of the school.

3. FIND OUT THE 'REAL COST'.

Don't let sticker shock get the best of you. Talk to the Admissions Representative or Financial Aid office to ask about options for scholarships and tuition assistance. In 2003, the American Bishops published a document calling for Catholic school education to be made "available, affordable, and accessible" to all. More often than not, Catholic high schools will work with families to find a tuition rate the family can afford if the posted tuition rate is unreasonable for the family.

4. ATTEND A SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE EVENT.

Most Catholic high schools will host an annual Open House event where they roll out the red carpet and invite potential families to visit and learn about all of their classes and programs. This is a great opportunity to meet administrators, faculty, and other potential families and evaluate whether the school culture will be a good fit for your child and family.

5. ASK YOUR CURRENT SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND SCHOOL PASTOR.

As educators and priests, who better to ask about the spiritual formation and academic formation available at a local Catholic high school? They may have direct or indirect knowledge of some of the schools which can help inform your decision-making process.

Catholic High Schools in the Archdiocese of Denver

ARCHDIOCESAN HIGH SCHOOLS

Our Archdiocesan high schools are run and operated under the jurisdiction and supervision of the Archdiocese of Denver and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The school is governed by the Archbishop and a Board of Members composed of the Vicar General, the Vicar of Clergy, the Judicial Vicar, the Archdiocesan Chief Operating Officer, the Archdiocesan Chief Financial Officer, and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. Locally, each school has a Board of Trustees, appointed by the Archbishop, which assists and advises the Superintendent and High School leadership on matters pertaining to the operations of the school. Our Archdiocesan high schools include:

***Bishop Machebeuf High School**

458 Uinta Way, Denver

***Holy Family High School**

5195 W. 144th Ave., Broomfield



INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

Independent Catholic high schools are **not** run or operated by the Archdiocese of Denver. However, these have all been designated Catholic status via a decree by the Archbishop. The decree allows them to officially operate as Catholic schools. Only those schools noted here operate as legitimately recognized Catholic, independent high schools.

Independent Catholic high schools are either governed by a religious order or an independent lay board, which may or may not include members of the Archdiocese of Denver leadership. The schools might also be affiliated or hold membership with a religious order or a national/regional network or consortium.

Canon law grants the Archbishop the authority and right to watch over and inspect the Catholic schools within the territory of the Archdiocese of Denver, even those established or directed by members of religious institutes (Canons 796-806, and 827.2). The Archbishop also has the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools; these directives apply also to schools conducted by members of a religious institute or independent board of governance, although they retain their autonomy in the internal management of their schools. The Archbishop has sole authority to recognize and designate a school as “Catholic.” All Catholic schools within the territory of the Archdiocese are canonically responsible to the Archbishop pursuant to Canon 806. The Archbishop also exercises his authority by granting approval of teachers of theology and theology curriculum through the Office of Catholic Schools, as well as through establishing a process to review the Catholic mission and identity of all schools to ensure fidelity to the magisterium and the Church’s charter for the education and formation of the human person.

RELIGIOUS ORDER SPONSORED AND GOVERNED SCHOOLS

Arrupe Jesuit High School

(Society of Jesus)

4343 Utica St., Denver

Regis Jesuit High School

(Society of Jesus)

Boys and Girls Divisions

6300 S. Lewiston Way, Aurora

JK Mullen High School

(De la Salle/Christian Brothers)

3601 S. Lowell Blvd., Denver

LAY GOVERNED SCHOOLS

***Chesterton Academy of Our Lady of Victory High School**

6495 S. Colorado Blvd. Centennial

***St. John Paul the Great Catholic High School**

2330 S. Sherman, St. Denver

***St. John Paul II Catholic High School**

1250 7th St., Windsor

(Operating out of Our Lady of the Valley Parish)

St. Mary’s Academy

High School – All Girls

4545 S. University, Blvd., Denver

(Lay run, but founded by — and affiliated with — the Sisters of Loretto)

*(*Denotes schools that have board seats for Archdiocesan Officials/Appointees)*

School Profiles



BISHOP MACHEBEUF HIGH SCHOOL

Bishop Machebeuf High School prepares students to encounter Christ and to respond to God's call in college, career, and beyond. Steeped in the tradition of Catholic and Liberal Arts education, and inspired by the joy of the Gospel, we form students in a rigorous academic environment that integrates each student's life, faith, and culture as they face the challenges of a contemporary, secular society. The school community reflects the universality of the Catholic Church and invites all students to become faithful disciples and citizens. Machebeuf students form a strong community through their desire to be disciples of Christ, their love for one another, and their participation in the life of the school and Church. We invite everyone to come visit Bishop Machebeuf High School and witness firsthand the joy and faith of our community.

Visit: machebeuf.org to find out more.



HOLY FAMILY HIGH SCHOOL

Holy Family High School is a community of parents, faculty and staff, administrators, students, alumni, and friends — all striving together to accomplish a common purpose: to build a faith-filled community dedicated to excellence in education of the whole person: Spirit, Mind, and Body.

Visit: holyfamilyhs.com to find out more.



ARRUPE JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL

Arrupe Jesuit High School is a Catholic, college preparatory school offering students with limited economic resources a premier educational experience through rigorous academics, formation in faith and discernment, and a unique work study program — fostering community, opportunity, leadership, and personal growth.

Visit: arrupejesuit.com to find out more.



REGIS JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL

With more than 145 years of history behind us, we are a Roman Catholic high school serving grades 9-12 in the Denver-metro area rooted firmly in Jesuit educational tradition and leading the way in preparing students for the 21st century. Our unique model offers the best of both worlds — single-gender classroom experience with opportunities for boys and girls to engage socially, spiritually and in co-curricular activities on a shared campus. For almost five centuries, Jesuit education has been universally regarded as a model of excellence.

Visit: regisjesuit.com to find out more.



CHESTERTON ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF VICTORY

Inspired by Saint Pope John Paul II, we take as our motto *Cultura Vitae*, the culture of life. We make it our mission to prepare our students to triumph over the materialism and despair that pervade our culture and to accept our Lord's offer to have life and have it abundantly. Our classical curriculum combines a broad, liberal arts education with a strong emphasis on the development of Christian virtues and an appreciation of beauty.

Visit: ourladyofvictorydenver.com to find out more.



ST. JOHN PAUL THE GREAT CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

St. John Paul the Great Catholic High School exists to form disciples of Jesus Christ. Rooted in truth and joy, we will graduate men and women prepared to witness to the truth and equipped to lead virtuous lives at the service of the Church, our country, and the common good.

Visit: jpthegreatdenver.org to find out more.



St. John Paul II
HIGH SCHOOL

Northern Colorado's Catholic High School

ST. JOHN PAUL II HIGH SCHOOL

St. John Paul II High School offers an integrated classical curriculum, robust spiritual and personal formation, and a strong emphasis on the fine arts. The academic program helps students to learn the skills of logical thought in both the arts and sciences, critical analysis of great works of literature, a deeper knowledge of faith, and clear and creative expression in writing and the arts.

Visit: jp2hs.com to find out more.



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

St. Mary's Academy fosters excellence in young women through academic achievement, spiritual development, and service. The Loretto School Values of faith, community, justice, and respect provide the foundation for students to be powerful agents of change.

Visit: stmarys.academy to find out more.



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