



National Association
of Episcopal Schools
Excellence Through Association

Principles of Good Practice for School Ministry in Episcopal Schools

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Preface

The ministry of a school chaplain, in Episcopal schools, is both a time-honored one, as well as one that currently exists amidst a great deal of change. Given the increasingly fluid and complex religious landscape of our culture, chaplains now minister in a school community that is increasingly diverse: in most schools a variety of religions are represented as well as an increasing number of students, parents, and faculty who come to the school with no experience with any religious tradition. As the role of the school head changes—with increased pressure on the advancement and marketing fronts—the nature of the chaplain-head relationship is changing. As a result of denominational preferences and religious affiliations becoming more interchangeable, the relationship of the school chaplain to the Episcopal tradition of the school can seem increasingly complex.

Amidst these changes, an effective school chaplain can make an extraordinary difference in life of an Episcopal school. As pastor, priest, prophet, and teacher, the chaplain can

serve as a binding, spiritual force, standing at the crossroads of faith and reason, individual and community, tradition and change.

Schools continue to seek in their chaplains a rootedness in faith. That faith is crucial for the important role of spiritual leadership that chaplains provide. The need for chaplains who feel called by God to carry out a ministry in this unique context, and who live exemplary lives supported by prayer and service, has never been greater.

We offer these principles of good practice to highlight the potential for school chaplaincy—based on our experience of seeing good chaplains at work—as well as to serve as a resource for a school in these and a variety of other contexts:

- As a tool for evaluation of the position of chaplain
- As a vehicle through which schools can review their Episcopal identities
- As an aid in formulating a position description for a chaplain as well as in the search for a new chaplain

Because new chaplains come to our schools with a wide variety of previous experience, or lack of experience, the principles set forth here serve as goals for the chaplain's long-term role and place in a school. In some cases they should serve as standards to work toward, as opposed to being immediately in place.