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~~Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Washington~~  
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# WE THE PEOPLE...



## THE PARENTS' PLATFORM

OF

## YOUTH BEHAVIOR

TEN CENTS  
PER COPY

ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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## FOREWORD

*In God's plan of creation it is to parents that there falls the chief responsibility of preparing their children for their adult life and for their life hereafter. Parents can and do make use of agencies such as the school and the church to assist them in fulfilling this obligation but these agencies can never take the place of parents. Indeed it is true that neither the school nor the church can be fully effective in their efforts unless from the earliest years the child has had the benefit of firm parental guidance.*

*In the area of moral training, the parents' task is not an easy one. God's Law does not change yet sometimes practices become socially acceptable that make difficult the observance of God's Law. Both parents and children are faced with the social pressure of "following the crowd" in such practices. To resist this pressure alone is quite difficult. Yet if both parents and children knew that they were not alone in resisting such pressure, if they knew that there were others who thought as they did, then they might gain from such unity added strength in following their convictions.*

*For this reason, it seemed to many parents that a Code of Social Behavior prepared by parents themselves in consultation with representatives of teen-agers would be a most valuable tool. Consequently, through the auspices of the Washington Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women all parents were invited to participate in the preparation of such a Code. This was done first at the parish level. The final product is a synthesis of the recommendations presented by parish groups which took part.*

*Finally, it should be made clear that this booklet contains recommendations and suggestions. It is not a book of rules and regulations. Parents will surely see the reasons that prompted these suggestions and will see the wisdom of accepting them. Yet the application of these suggestions to the lives of one's own children is, of course, left to the responsibility and judgment of each parent.*

*It is the hope of those who joined in preparing this Code that it will be of assistance to parents and that using this as a basis our children can grow up to learn that there can be freedom without license, that consistent discipline helps to mold character and that a well ordered life can be a happy life.*



## MANNERS IN GENERAL -

The true Christian strives in his daily life to imitate the life of Christ. Respect for authority and thoughtfulness of others are among the qualities that Our Lord so beautifully exemplified. If these admirable habits are to exist in an adult, they must first be

formed in the child. Therefore parents agreed that a child should:

1. Be respectful and courteous in attitude and tone of voice to all peoples.
2. Form the habit of saying "please," "thank you," "pardon me," at all times.
3. Express his opinion but, not argue, interrupt, or talk back.
4. Respect the property of others and not abuse it.
5. Practice politeness and consideration within the family toward one another and all outside contacts.
6. Observe telephone manners at all times and keep his own personal conversations short.
7. Learn that as he grows older, thoughtlessness ceases to be an excuse for ill behavior.



## RESPONSIBILITIES IN GENERAL

A sense of responsibility is best learned when a child understands that as a member of a family he must contribute as well as receive. "How can I use the talents God has given me?" and not "The world owes me a living" should become his outlook and attitude.

Therefore parents agreed that a child should:

1. Be responsible for particular duties around the home commensurate with his capabilities.
2. Be responsible for doing his homework on time and limit his extra-

curricular activities so as not to interfere with his studies. Parents must cooperate on this point so as not to abuse the child's time in over-emphasizing sports, baby-sitting, etc.

3. Be responsible for fulfilling his religious obligations.
4. Be responsible if he is allowed to baby-sit. The child should know something about the care of children, the doctor's phone number, and when the parents are returning home. He should never entertain friends while caring for children.
5. Set a good example by obeying all safety rules in the school, the home, and the community.
6. Be responsible for the appearance of his surroundings and help keep his room, desk, classroom and school neat and clean.



## DRESS & APPEARANCE

Christian modesty should be a first principle in the selection and use of clothing. Good manners dictate that appropriateness be a standard too—the proper clothing for a particular time, place or occasion. Clothing should always be clean and neat and should fit properly.

### Parents agreed that Girls should:

1. Not wear short shorts, halters, nor tight skirts nor sweaters.
2. Not use pincurls in public.
3. Dress according to age—no make-up for grammar school except in plays, etc.; light make-up for high school, preferably none in school.
4. Wear proper attire for Church at all times—no handkerchiefs nor scarves.
5. Abide by the regulations of the school for dress in school.

### And that boys should:

1. Not wear skintight jeans or trousers—trousers should be worn around the waist as proper, not on the hips.
2. Should get only a proper style of boy's haircut and avoid extreme styles.
3. Wear coat, shirt, and tie to Church and social functions.



It has been suggested that a recommended timetable would be valuable for parents of teen-agers. Parents propose the following:

### 7th and 8th Grade

1. School nights — bedtime by 9:30 P.M.
2. Bedtimes may vary during weekends and vacations—however, children should be home before dark unless accompanied by an adult.
3. No activities on school nights unless sponsored by school authorities or affiliated organizations, such as CYO basketball practice, special scout meeting, etc. Children should be accompanied by an adult.

### High School—Freshmen and Sophomores

1. Movies and shows 11 P.M.
2. Dances\* . . . . . 11 P.M.
3. Parties . . . . . 11 P.M.

### High School—Juniors and Seniors

1. Movies & shows 11:30 P.M.
2. Dances\* . . . 12:00 A.M.
3. Parties . . . . 12:00 A.M.



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\*Properly sponsored dances should end by 11 P.M. except for the Junior-Senior Prom which has become the highpoint of social life for so many. Midnight would seem appropriate for this dance to end. In all the above times for high school a reasonable time for returning home can be allowed depending on the distance to be travelled.



**Good spiritual and mental balance demands the inclusion of recreation particularly in the lives of young people. Yet good spiritual and mental balance further demand that this recreation be wholesome in nature and adopted to the age of the child.**

### **7th and 8th Grade**

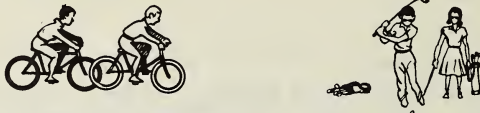
- 1. Parents agreed that mixed parties or dances are not considered the appropriate recreation for this age group but rather family gatherings or just plain girl parties or boy parties which should be properly chaperoned and planned. The fact there has been a trend towards encouraging children to participate in mixed social activities before they are mature enough for them and the fact that such activities tend to distract children from their studies at a time when intellectual development should be stressed have influenced parents to rule out mixed parties until after graduation from the eighth grade.**
- 2. All reading material should be known and good reading encouraged.**
- 3. There should be supervision of television for quantity and quality.**
- 4. Good music should be available and dancing encouraged within the family.**
- 5. The mail of children, both that being received and that being sent, should be known without parents' abusing children's privacy.**

### **High School**

- 1. Friends should be invited into the home and known to the parents.**
- 2. Parties (mixed) should be adequately chaperoned and permitted only occasionally in the 9th and 10th grade. More freedom can be given in the 11th and 12th grades. However a parent should always be nearby. The room set aside for the party should be properly**

lighted, and proper dancing should be required of all guests. Invitations to parties should be controlled and no one should go where he is not properly invited. The host should be reasonably certain that the guests, upon leaving, are properly protected and that they intend to go directly home. Alcohol in any form should be forbidden.

3. Television, reading, music, and mail—same safeguards as for the 7th and 8th grade.



## RECREATION OUTSIDE THE HOME

### 7th and 8th Grade

1. Movie-going should be strictly supervised according to the Legion of Decency listing.
2. Drugstores and other such public places should not become meeting places.
3. Parents should cooperate in organized sports, limiting practice, however, in the evening to one night a week and insisting on good grades.
4. Scouting, CYO, athletics, etc. should provide the recreation in addition to family outings, bowling, sightseeing trips, picnics, etc.

### High School

1. Dating—properly supervised by parents, is a natural, normal, and valuable experience for the growing high school girl and boy. Ideally, it provides the opportunity for a variety of acquaintances and activities to aid in the development of the youngster's social maturity. Having dates, in gradual succession and under parental control, should offer wholesome occasions for a boy and girl to learn and practice the perfections of character which they will need in adult life. Dating should always be considered the formation for later courtship and marriage. Parents should know where their children are going, with whom, and when expected home.
  - a. "Going steady" should not be permitted during the high school



years since such a practice is a preparation for marriage.

- b. "Going steadily" may be permitted as long as permission has been given for a boy and a girl to go to more or less formal affairs together but to go with others in between times.
  - c. School nights should be reserved for study, not for social functions.
  - d. In the 9th and 10th grades, particularly, group dating should be encouraged rather than solo dating.
2. Dances, particularly, dances sponsored by the CYO or school, are permitted for all high school students.
    - a. Formal dances for this group should be held within the limits of moderation, such as seasonal dances—Christmas, Valentine, etc. If, however, an invitation to a formal function is accepted with the permission of the parents, formal clothes would be the appropriate dress.
    - b. Public dances are forbidden.
  3. Summer beach parties held during daylight hours are permissible, but group dating should be encouraged.
  4. Movies—same as 7th and 8th grade. Drive-In movies should not be allowed.
  5. Athletics should be encouraged and parents should be interested.

In view of the recent indications that it is harmful to health, besides being a drain on the pocketbook, young people should be discouraged from smoking. Certainly they should avoid smoking to excess.

**SMOKING •**

**DRINKING •**

Drinking during the high school years should be forbidden to all. The inherent moral hazards alone justify this rule.



# DRIVING •

The operation of automobiles by high school students is a matter which requires continual surveillance by parents. In this regard, the parents can accomplish most by setting proper

example in observing not only the state and city traffic laws, but also the principle of courtesy.

1. Driving is a privilege and involves responsibility.
2. Anyone giving evidence of being irresponsible should be forbidden to drive.
3. Any use of alcohol in the car by the driver or passengers should call for loss of the privilege to drive.
4. The youth should share in the maintenance of the car, etc.
5. To drive without a legal right should bring limitation of the privilege to drive when the proper time comes.
6. Reckless driving, drag racing, etc. should call for the loss of the privilege to drive until evidence is given that would justify restoration of that privilege.
7. Parking for the purpose of indiscreet pleasure should bring the loss of the privilege to drive.
8. Parents should have an understanding that the privilege to drive will be lost for the following reasons:
  - a. Abusing the car.
  - b. Permitting another to drive it.
  - c. Overloading the car.
  - d. Extending the use of the car beyond the precise purpose for which it was asked.
  - e. Using the car without permission.
  - f. Permitting any drinking in the car or transporting any alcohol.
  - g. Driving recklessly or at high speeds.
  - h. Staying out beyond the appointed time.
9. Parents are strongly discouraged from allowing their high school boys and girls to own cars even if they have the money to buy one and maintain it properly. The recent surveys on the relationship between owning an automobile and school grades should be ample reason for this decision even if it were not for the fact that rarely does anything weaken parental control so much as the teenager's owning a car.



