

Religious order vows to end paddling at New Orleans school

by [Gordon Russell](#)

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NEW ORLEANS (RNS) The religious order that runs the last remaining Catholic school in the country to use corporal punishment says it will no longer allow the practice, putting it in line with the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

The new administration of the Josephites order also affirmed the recent decision to transfer the Rev. John Raphael, the former president of St. Augustine Catholic High School, back to Baltimore.

The announcements were made Tuesday (June 21) in a press release. St. Augustine has been embroiled in controversy for months after the Josephites' prior leaders imposed a temporary ban on corporal punishment last July. The ban was supported by New Orleans Archbishop Gregory Aymond, who called paddling inconsistent with Catholic ethics.

Parents and alumni have rallied in support of the practice, and argued that it should be up to the school community to decide how to discipline children.

Earlier this month, the Josephites' former superior general, the Rev. Edward Chiffriller, ordered Raphael to return to Baltimore. Raphael said he believed the directive was improper and declared his intention to stay.

Parents, meanwhile, had hoped that a change in leadership in the Josephites might mean Chiffriller's orders might be reconsidered.

The Josephites recently held new elections and installed the Rev. William Norvel, who taught at St. Augustine in the 1960s, as superior general. The news release suggests the order stands by Chiffriller's

position, and wants to "initiate as soon as possible dialogue with the board of directors" of the school and its principal, Don Boucree.