

Safe Schools – Code of Conduct

SMW.E.4

Adopted: February 4, 2008
Last Reviewed/Revised: January 14, 2019

Purpose

This policy outlines the shared responsibility for creating a positive teaching and learning environment and provides a framework for schools to develop local school based codes of conduct.

References

- Education Act

Forms

- N/A

Appendices

- N/A
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Policy Statement

The Wellington Catholic District School Board fully supports the Behaviour, Discipline and Safety provisions set out in Part XIII of the Education Act and

is committed to full implementation through policy, regulation and procedural handbooks.

The Wellington Catholic District School Board including staff, students, parents, and trustees is committed to the mission of providing a safe and welcoming learning environment that supports academic excellence and is an example of Christian Community. This mission is affirmed in Wellington Catholic District School Board policies, procedures and regulations. All parties share in the responsibility for creating a positive learning and teaching environment that is safe, harmonious, inclusive, accepting and respectful in which every student can reach his or her full potential.

Policy Regulation

1. Regulation

The Wellington Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) including staff, students, parents, and trustees, is committed to the mission of providing a safe and welcoming learning environment that supports academic excellence and is an example of Christian Community. All parties share in the responsibility for creating a positive learning and teaching environment that is safe, harmonious, inclusive, accepting and respectful in which every student can reach his or her full potential.

The WCDSB's Mission is to educate students to their full potential by providing:

- leadership in the shared responsibility for education that exists among schools, students, families, parishes and community;
- a safe and welcoming learning environment that is an example of Christian community;
- role models of Gospel values and Catholic doctrines, teachings and beliefs;
- guidance in what students need to learn;
- instruction in the learning process itself;
- religious, academic and technological instruction;
- integration of Catholic, Christian beliefs into the total learning experience; and
- feedback on students' proficiency and performance.

The Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations represent an integral component

of WCDSB students' character formation. We envision students who are:

- discerning believers formed in the Catholic faith community who celebrate the signs and sacred mysteries of God's presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection and moral living;
- effective communicators who speak, write, and listen honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of gospel values;
- reflective, creative and holistic thinkers who solve problems and make responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good;
- self-directed, responsible, life-long learners who develop and demonstrate their God-given potential;
- collaborative contributors who find meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good;
- caring family members who attend to family, school, parish, and the wider community;
- responsible citizens who give witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

The purpose of the WCDSB Code of Conduct is to further promote the mission of the WCDSB and to provide a framework for individual schools to develop local, school-based codes of conduct that foster a positive school climate and support student academic achievement. In addition, the WCDSB Code of Conduct and local school-based codes of conduct must be modified regularly. The WCDSB Code of Conduct also recognizes the importance of progressive discipline that focuses on prevention and early intervention is the key to maintaining a positive school environment.

2. Legislative Framework

The Education Act requires school boards to establish policies and guidelines with respect to the conduct of persons in schools. School board codes of conduct must address such matters and include such requirements, as the Ontario Ministry of Education requires. School boards are required to consider the views of school councils with respect to those policies and should also consult with a wide variety of stakeholders, including groups such as parents, principals, teachers, students, the Special Education Advisory Committee and community partners as appropriate. School boards are also required to develop a communications plan that outlines how these standards will be made clear to everyone, including parents whose first language is a language other than English or French. The School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees Regulation (O. Reg. 612/00) requires

school boards to solicit the views of school councils with respect to the conduct of persons in schools within the Board's jurisdiction.

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 128, issued December 5, 2012, requires that the standards of behaviour in school board codes of conduct be appropriate for local communities. The memorandum specifically requires school boards to ensure that their codes of conduct:

- include the standards stated in the provincial code of conduct;
- set out standards of behaviour for all members of the school community (e.g. parents, students, staff, visitors, volunteers);
- indicate where and/or when these standards will apply (e.g. in school sports activities, on school buses, in off-site school-sponsored activities, or in circumstances where engaging in an activity could have a negative impact on the school climate);
- include procedures and timelines for review and ensure that reviews are conducted at least every three years; and
- link locally developed standards to the relevant provincial standards (e.g. school board rules for the use of electronic devices such as cell phones could be linked to the provincial standard requiring those at school to "respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching").

In addition to requiring school boards to establish codes of conduct, the Education Act permits school boards to require principals to establish a local code of conduct governing the behaviour of persons in the school. All local codes of conduct must be consistent with the provincial code of conduct and with the WCDSB Code of Conduct. The Education Act contains existing duties and responsibilities for principals, teachers and students that will impact on the creation of local codes of conduct. The WCDSB Code of Conduct is to serve as a guideline for ensuring such consistency in this regard. (see Guiding Principles)

3. Provincial Code of Conduct

The Education Act permits the Minister of Education to establish a code of conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in schools. The purposes of the provincial code of conduct are:

- to ensure that all members of the school community, especially people in positions of authority, are treated with respect and dignity;
- to promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community;

- to maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility;
- to encourage the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict;
- to promote the safety of people in schools;
- to discourage the use of alcohol, non-medicinal cannabis and illegal drugs;
- to prevent bullying in schools.

The Provincial Code of Conduct became policy of the Minister of Education on September 1, 2000. The Education Act provides that every board shall take such steps as the Minister directs to bring the Provincial Code of Conduct to the attention of the entire school community including pupils, parents/guardians of pupils, superintendents, senior board staff, board personnel, trustees and others who may be present in schools or at school related events under the jurisdiction of the WCDSB.

4. Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the Provincial Code of Conduct include the following:

- all participants involved in the publicly funded school system - students, parents or guardians, volunteers, teachers and other staff members, superintendents, senior board staff, board personnel and trustees - are included in the Provincial Code of Conduct whether they are on school property, on school buses or at school-authorized events or activities that may have an impact on school climate;
- all members of the school community are to be treated with respect and dignity, especially persons in positions of authority;
- responsible citizenship involves appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, but, more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others;
- members of the school community are expected to use non-violent means to resolve conflict. Physically aggressive behaviour is not a responsible way to interact with others;
- the possession, use or threatened use of any object to injure another person endangers the safety of oneself and others;
- members of the school community must not be in possession of, or be under the influence of alcohol, non-medicinal cannabis or illegal drugs;
- members of the school community must not provide others with alcohol, cannabis, prescription or illegal drugs;

- insults, disrespect, and other hurtful acts disrupt learning and teaching in a school community. Members of the school community must treat one another with respect and dignity at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- members of the school community must not engage in bullying behaviours (including: physical, verbal, social and cyber);
- members of the school community must not commit sexual assault;
- members of the school community must respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws;
- members of the school community must respect differences in people, their ideas and their opinions;
- members of the community must respect and treat others fairly, regardless of , for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The WCDSB Code of Conduct recognizes that all members of the school community, including pupils, teachers, principals, parents, staff, superintendents, senior board staff, board personnel, and trustees have an obligation to comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy. Each member of the school community has the following roles and responsibilities:

- to work and learn in a safe, orderly and positive environment;
- to access facilities and to participate in programs offered by the school without fear of violence;
- to respect all members of the school community;
- to contribute positively to the Christian climate of the school;
- to respect the property of the school and all members of the school community; and
- to respond positively to the educational environment provided by the school community.

As part of its broader mandate, the WCDSB will (as per the policy on Policy Development B.G.0C4):

- develop policies that set out how its schools will implement and enforce the Provincial Code of Conduct and all other rules developed as related to the provincial standards for respect, civility, responsible citizenship and physical safety;

- seek input from system partners and review these policies regularly with students, staff, parents or guardians, parish priests, volunteers and the community;
- establish a process that clearly communicates the Provincial Code of Conduct to all members of the school community - including parents, students, staff, superintendents, senior board staff, board personnel and trustees in order to obtain their commitment and support;
- ensure an effective prevention-intervention strategy and response to all infractions related to the standards for respect, civility, responsible citizenship and physical safety; and
- provide opportunities for all of the staff to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to promote student achievement and well-being in a safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environment.

Schools

Through the development or refinement of local codes of conduct, schools must communicate provincial and WCDSB standards of behaviour in a variety of languages appropriate for the respective communities.

Schools shall:

- seek input from Catholic School Councils in the development or refinement of local codes of conduct;
- review their local codes of conduct annually with students, staff, parents or guardians, volunteers and the community;
- establish a process that clearly communicates the school code of conduct, the Code of Conduct and the Provincial Code of Conduct to all parents, students and staff in a manner that ensures commitment and support;
- ensure that the local code of conduct is distributed to students at least once per school year, including students admitted during the school year;
- ensure that the local code of conduct is explained to each student and that the expectations in the local code are clearly communicated to each student at least once per school year; and
- ensure that the local code of conduct is enforced in a fair and even-handed manner throughout the school year.

Principals

Under the direction of the school board, principals take a leadership role in the daily operation of the school. Principals provide this leadership by:

- demonstrating care for the school community and a commitment to academic excellence in a safe, inclusive, and accepting teaching and learning environment;
- holding everyone, under their authority, accountable for their behaviour and actions;
- developing and enforcing local codes of conduct;
- communicating the contents and expectations contained in local codes of conduct regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community;
- ensuring the communication of local codes of conduct includes a communication plan that outlines how these standards will be made clear to the entire school community, including school communities who have a significant number of parents whose first language is not English;
- providing an example of respect and civility for all members of the school community;
- empowering students to be positive leaders in their school and community.

Principals have a duty to maintain proper order and discipline within the school. Local codes of conduct are a key component of that duty. Principals shall develop local codes of conduct that are expressly tailored for their schools.

Under the provisions of the Education Act, principals are responsible for suspending students and for referring expulsions to the school board in appropriate circumstances. Principals will conduct investigations in accordance with the Guidelines for Conducting a Disciplinary Investigation.

Teachers and School Staff

Under the leadership of the principal, teachers and staff shall maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their self-worth;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and other members of the school community;

- empower students to be positive leaders in the classroom, school and community;
- prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship; and Teachers shall also assist principals in maintaining close co-operation with the school community and in establishing and maintaining consistent disciplinary practices in the school.

Under the provisions of the Education Act, teachers do not have the authority to suspend students. Teachers must continue to assist the principals by reporting incidents and assisting the principal in conducting inquiries.

Students

Students are to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- comes to school prepared, on time and ready to learn;
- shows respect for himself or herself, for others and for those in authority;
- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others; and
- follows the established rules, policies and local codes of conduct and takes responsibility for his or her own actions.

Students are also expected to fulfill the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations and live the Gospel message by:

- exercising self-discipline;
- accepting such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm and judicious parent;
- being courteous to fellow pupils and obedient and courteous of teachers;
- showing respect for school property;
- complying with all school expectations, procedures and codes of behaviour; and
- giving respect and co-operation to all persons in positions of authority in the school.

Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe, inclusive, accepting, and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents and guardians fulfill this responsibility when they:

- show an active interest in their child's school work and progress
- communicate regularly with the school;
- help their child be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;
- become familiar with both the Provincial Code of Conduct and their local school code of conduct;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour; and
- assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues.

Police and Community Members

Police and community members are essential partners in making our schools and communities safer. Community members need to support and respect the rules of their local schools. Other community agencies are also resources that boards can use to deliver prevention and intervention programs.

6. Standards of Behaviour

Respect, Civility and Responsible Citizenship

The WCDSB does not tolerate any anti-social or violent behaviour that impacts on learning environments. Standards of behaviour must promote respect, civility, responsible citizenship and Catholic values.

All members of the school community must:

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- respect differences in people, their ideas and opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is a disagreement;

- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others within the school community;
- take appropriate measures to help others in need;
- respect all members of the school community, especially persons who are in a position of authority; and
- respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching.
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- not swear at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority or any other person.

Safety

All members of the school community must not:

- engage in bullying behaviours;
- commit sexual assault;
- traffic in weapons or illegal drugs;
- give alcohol, tobacco, vapour products or cannabis to a minor;
- commit robbery;
- be in possession of any weapon, including firearms;
- use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;
- cause injury to any person with an object;
- be in possession of, or be under the influence of, alcohol, non-medicinal cannabis or illegal drugs
- provide others with alcohol, cannabis, illegal or prescription drugs;
- inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias;
- commit an act of vandalism that causes damage to school property or to property located on the premises of the school.

Electronic Communications and Media Devices

Schools shall include provisions in their local codes of conduct to ensure that all personal communication devices such as cell phones are powered off and stored out of view in instructional spaces (unless approved by the teacher

for program use) and washrooms. Use of these devices in other areas of the school, school property, or on school trips shall be subject to the WCDSB's policy on cell phones, audio, video, photographic and other telecommunications devices.

7. Consequences for Inappropriate Behaviours

Local school codes of conduct shall set out consequences that are consistent with the Education Act and the WCDSB Safe School policy. Mitigating Factors and Other Factors set out in the regulations under the Education Act shall be considered.

Suspension

Under subsection 306 (1) of the Education Act, a principal shall consider whether to suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

1. Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person.
2. Possessing alcohol, non-medicinal cannabis or illegal drugs.
3. Being under the influence of alcohol or non-medicinal cannabis.
4. Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority.
5. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school.
6. Bullying.
7. Any other activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under the policy of the board.

If a principal decides to suspend a pupil for engaging in an activity described in subsection (1), the principal will suspend the pupil from his or her school and from engaging in all school-related activities.

The minimum duration of a suspension is one school day and the maximum duration is 20 school days.

In considering how long the suspension should be, a principal will take into account any mitigating or other factors prescribed by the regulations.

Under clause 306 (1) 7 of the Education Act, a pupil may be suspended if he or she engages in an activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under a policy of the board.

Under Board policy, activities for which a principal may suspend a pupil include:

1. Persistent opposition to authority;
2. Habitual neglect of duty;
3. Wilful destruction of school property; vandalism causing damage to school or Board property or property located on school or Board premises;
4. Use of profane or improper language;
5. Use of tobacco, non-medicinal cannabis, medication prescribed to another person or illegal drugs in any form;
6. Theft;
7. Aid/incite harmful behaviour;
8. Physical assault;
9. Being under the influence of medication prescribed to another person or illegal drugs;
10. Sexual harassment;
11. Racial harassment;
12. Fighting;
13. Possession or misuse of any harmful substances;
14. Hate-motivated violence;
15. Extortion;
16. Distribution of hate material;
17. Inappropriate use of electronic communications/media; and/or
18. Other – defined as any conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or to the physical or mental well-being of others.

Suspension Pending Possible Expulsion

Under subsection 310 (1) of the Education Act, a principal shall suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

1. Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm.
2. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person.

3. Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner.
4. Committing a sexual assault.
5. Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs.
6. Committing robbery.
7. Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor.
 - 7.1 Bullying, if
 - i. the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and
 - ii. the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.
 - 7.2 Any activity listed in subsection 306 (1) that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor.
8. Any other activity that, under a policy of a board, is an activity for which a principal must suspend a pupil and, therefore in accordance with this Part, conduct an investigation to determine whether to recommend to the Board that the pupil be expelled.

A pupil who is suspended under this section is suspended from his or her school and from engaging in all school-related activities.

The following infractions may result in a suspension pending possible expulsion in accordance with Board policy:

1. Possession of explosive substance;
2. Serious or repeated misconduct;
3. Refractory conduct; and/or
4. Other – defined as any conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or to the physical or mental well-being of others.

Mitigating Factors and Other Factors

In considering whether to suspend a pupil or whether to recommend to the Board that a pupil be expelled, a principal will take into account any mitigating factors or other factors prescribed by the regulations.

Mitigating Factors

Pursuant to the Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils Regulation, the following mitigating factors shall be taken into account:

1. The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour.
2. The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour.
3. The pupil's continuing presence in the school does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person.

Other Factors

The following other factors shall be taken into account if they would mitigate the seriousness of the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled:

1. The pupil's history.
2. Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil.
3. Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment.
4. How the suspension or expulsion would affect the pupil's ongoing education.
5. The age of the pupil.
6. In the case of a pupil for whom an individual education plan has been developed,
 - a) whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's individual education plan,
 - b) whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
 - c) whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct.

8. Application of Standards of Behaviours

The Board standards of behaviour apply to all members of the school community, including students, parents or guardians, volunteers, teachers, other staff members, superintendents, senior board staff, board personnel, trustees and others who may be present in schools or at school related events under the jurisdiction of the WCDSB.

The standards of behaviour apply:

- on school property;

- while travelling on a school bus that is owned by the Board or that is under contract to the Board;
- in-school or off-site activities;
- at school-related events or activities; or
- in circumstances where engaging in an activity could have a negative impact on the school climate.

9. Review

The WCDSB Code of Conduct shall be reviewed every three years. In conducting such reviews the Board shall seek the input and views of school councils.

10. Local School Codes of Conduct

All WCDSB schools shall have a local school code of conduct which conforms to the requirements of the Provincial Code of Conduct and the WCDSB Code of Conduct. Local codes shall set out clearly what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for all members of the elementary and secondary school community, including principals, teachers and other school staff, students, parents/guardians, volunteers and community partners and the police.

Principals shall consult with and consider the views of the Catholic School Councils and other members of the school community as appropriate. The Principal shall ensure the local code of conduct is communicated to all members of the community.

Local codes of conduct apply to all members of the school community.