



YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

BOARD POLICY	
<i>Policy Section</i> Community	<i>Policy Number</i> 613
<i>Former Policy #</i> 505	<i>Page</i> 1 of 6
<i>Original Approved Date</i> March 1987	<i>Subsequent Approval Dates</i> June 1999 July 6, 2010 February 24, 2015

POLICY TITLE: EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

SECTION A

1. PURPOSE

The York Catholic District School Board recognizes that every human person is a unique and irreplaceable gift created by God and called to be his son or daughter. Created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ, every person possesses an intrinsic dignity which must always be respected. Pope Francis reminds us, “May the church be the place of God’s mercy and love where everyone can feel themselves welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged...”

In partnership with the home and Church, York Catholic District School Board believes in the need to develop students’ character through the teaching of our Gospel values, and to prepare students for their role in society as engaged, productive, and responsible global citizens. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, but more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others.

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and guidance with respect to the implementation of the *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* and the effective oversight of policies, programs, procedures and practices.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the York Catholic District School Board to provide in all operations, an educational and working environment which supports diversity by adhering to the guiding principles outlined in the *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*. These guiding principles provide a foundation and framework to meet individual needs, identify and eliminate barriers, promote a sense of belonging, engage community members, build on and enhance previous and existing initiatives and incorporate the principles of equity and inclusion in our actions.

3. PARAMETERS

- 3.1 Every person shall be entitled to a respectful, positive and Christ-centred learning and working environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.
- 3.2 The guiding principles of equity and inclusive education shall be consistent with Catholic denominational rights and shall be incorporated into all aspects of Board policies, programs, procedures, and practices to ensure an equitable and inclusive learning and working environment for all.
- 3.3 The Board is committed to improving student achievement and well-being and to closing achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing, and removing all barriers and forms of discrimination through the design and implementation of an inclusive curriculum.
- 3.4 School board staff shall be provided with professional learning opportunities through the implementation of the Board and School Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- 3.5 The Board subscribes to a shared leadership philosophy that inspires, empowers, and supports all stakeholders in our Catholic community to join together to implement institutional practices and behaviours that cultivate equity and inclusion.
- 3.6 Board and school leaders shall encourage and promote a collaborative approach to all dimensions of equity and inclusive education, which ensures the participation of students, parents/guardians, parishes, employees, associations, unions, colleges and universities, service organizations and other community partners.
- 3.7 Staff shall assess and monitor the implementation of the *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* through school climate surveys of students, parents and staff.
- 3.8 The Board shall identify, examine, and remove any barriers that exist, that are part of systemic discrimination under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and that prevent full, participatory, school-community relations.
- 3.9 The Board shall investigate, in a thorough and timely manner, any claims of discrimination and take appropriate action consistent with the principles of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- 3.10 All reasonable steps shall be taken to provide religious accommodations to staff, students and families in accordance with the Board's Religious Accommodation procedures.
- 3.11 In the pursuit of greater transparency and accountability, the Board, in respectful collaboration and communication with the whole Catholic school community, will report on its goals and progress in the areas of policy review, school improvement planning and the implementation of the *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*.
- 3.12 The Board's policy review cycle shall result in the alignment and integration of all requirements defined within the Ministry of Education's *Equity and Inclusivity Education Strategy* to ensure the perspectives of the diverse Catholic school

community are reflected in all areas of the teaching, learning and administrative culture.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Director of Education

- 4.1.1 To oversee compliance with the Equity and Inclusive Education policy and procedures.

4.2 Superintendent of Education: Safe Schools

- 4.2.1 To act as the Board liaison with the Ministry and other School Boards in matters related to equity and inclusive education.
- 4.2.2 To support training and resources for school and system leaders (e.g., Administrators, Teachers, Support Staff) to facilitate an awareness and understanding of the Equity and Inclusive Education policy and procedures and the implementation of leadership initiatives.
- 4.2.3 To ensure the prompt investigation and satisfactory resolution of claims of human rights violations in conjunction with the appropriate Superintendent of Education and Superintendent of Human Resources as required.

4.3 Superintendent of Human Resources

- 4.3.1 To establish selection criteria for leadership positions that include demonstrated commitment, knowledge and skills related to equity and inclusive education implementation and inclusive leadership that are consistent with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- 4.3.2 To provide training for school and system leaders to facilitate equitable recruitment and hiring practices.
- 4.3.3 To ensure the prompt investigation and satisfactory resolution of claims of human rights violations in conjunction with the appropriate Superintendent of Education as required.

4.4 Superintendent of Education: Curriculum and Assessment

- 4.4.1 To report to the Board annually on the ongoing implementation of the *Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* and its impact on student achievement and well-being.
- 4.4.2 To ensure that the principles of equity and inclusive education are incorporated and modelled in all professional learning activities and/or programs.
- 4.4.3 To engage stakeholders in Board Improvement planning with particular emphasis on using data to identify and remove barriers to student achievement; raising awareness about discriminatory practices; and, encouraging collaborative dialogue about equity and inclusion actions and/or initiatives.

4.5 Superintendent of Education: Exceptional Learners

- 4.5.1 To ensure that the principles of equity and inclusive education are incorporated and modelled in all professional learning activities and/or programs.
- 4.5.2 To engage stakeholders in the Special Education Improvement planning with particular emphasis on: using data to identify and remove barriers to student achievement and well-being; raising awareness about discriminatory

practices; and, encouraging collaborative dialogue about equity and inclusion actions and/or initiatives to support students with special needs.

4.6 Superintendents of Education: School Leadership

4.6.1 To support schools with the implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education policy and procedures.

4.7 Senior Managers

4.7.1 To expand community efforts to foster new partnerships that engage a diverse cross-section of students, parents/guardians, staff, community agencies, services and business groups to ensure equity and inclusion.

4.8 Principals

4.8.1 To establish a collaborative school culture where the collective capacities and voices of all stakeholders are used to develop and implement School Improvement Plans for student achievement and well-being in compliance with the equity and inclusive education policies and procedures.

4.8.2 To support staff with the implementation of the Board's Religious Accommodation procedures when required.

4.8.3 To promote student leadership opportunities and actively engage students in initiatives with a focus on equity, social justice, inclusion and diversity.

4.8.4 To implement procedures that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination safely and ensure a timely and appropriate response.

4.8.5 To ensure that all required accommodations for students are in compliance with the policy and procedures.

4.9 Teachers

4.9.1 To ensure that instructional resources, strategies, as well as, assessment and evaluation practices are in accordance with the Board's Mission and Vision, Church teachings and the principles of equity and inclusivity.

4.9.2 To develop and promote initiatives that support and promote diversity of student voice and experience.

4.9.3 To encourage and support students in their efforts to promote social justice, equity, inclusion and diversity in schools and classrooms.

4.9.4 To implement religious accommodation practices, in consultation with the Principal, and in accordance with the Board's Religious Accommodation procedures.

4.10 Employees

4.10.1 To be knowledgeable about and comply with the expectations of the Equity and Inclusive Education policy and procedures as required.

4.11 Parents/Guardians & Students

4.11.1 To support the principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education policy and procedures.

4.11.2 To inform the Principal of the need for accommodations (including, but not limited to, medical, educational or religious accommodation requests) as required by this policy.

4.12 Third Party Providers

4.12.1 To comply with the Equity and Inclusive Education policy and procedures in all interactions with agents of the York Catholic District School Board.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 Accommodation

An adjustment made to policies, programs, guidelines, or practices, including adjustments that enable individuals to benefit from and take part in the provision of services and to perform to the best of their ability in the workplace or the educational setting. Accommodations are provided so that individuals are not disadvantaged or discriminated against on the basis of the prohibited grounds of discrimination identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

5.2 Barrier

An obstacle to equity that may be overt or subtle, intended or unintended, and systemic or specific to an individual or group, and that prevents or limits access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society.

5.3 Bias

An opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgements.

5.4 Discrimination

5.4.1 Unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or on the basis of other, similar factors.

5.4.2 Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, has the effect of having a harmful impact on others, and of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits or advantages that are available to other members of society.

5.4.3 Discrimination may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

5.5 Diversity

The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, age, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identify, gender expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

5.6 Equity

A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

5.7 Inclusive Education

Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment where diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

5.8 Religious Accommodation

An obligation under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* to provide reasonable accommodation for students and employees who wish to observe the tenets or practices of their faith, as well as for those non-Catholic students who wish not to participate in any form of religious observance.

5.9 Social Justice

A concept based on the belief that each individual and group within a given society has a right to equal opportunity, civil liberties, and full participation in the social, educational, economic, institutional, and moral freedoms and responsibilities of that society.

6. CROSS REFERENCES

YCDSB Policy 202	Safe Schools (Student Discipline)
YCDSB Policy 208	Student Disability Accommodation
YCDSB Policy 211	First Nation, Metis and Inuit Self-Identification
YCDSB Policy 217	Sexual Harassment (Students)
YCDSB Policy 218	Code of Conduct
YCDSB Policy 219B	Student Dress and School Uniform – Secondary
YCDSB Policy 223	Bullying Prevention & Intervention
YCDSB Policy 309	Assessment and Evaluation of Student Achievement
YCDSB Policy 319	Supplementary Learning Resources
YCDSB Policy 501	Respectful Workplace
YCDSB Policy 601	Accessibility Standards in Customer Service
YCDSB Policy 606	Catholic School Councils
YCDSB Policy 703	Community Use of Schools
<i>Education Act</i>	
Ontario Ministry of Education	Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 “ <i>Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools</i> ”, 2013

Approval by Board	February 24, 2015 _____ <i>Date</i>
Effective Date	February 25, 2015 _____ <i>Date</i>
Revision Dates	February 25, 2015 _____ <i>Date</i>
Review Date	February 2020 _____ <i>Date</i>