



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY: Equity and Inclusive Schools

Date Approved: April 27, 2010

Last Reviewed: 2020-2021

Dates of Amendment: June 10, 2014; May 25, 2021

Cross Reference: This policy informs all the policies and procedures of the Ottawa Catholic School Board, including: [Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools Code of Conduct](#), [Public Consultation](#), [Recruitment and Selection of Employees](#), [Hiring Practices \(Teachers\)](#), [Conflict of Interest](#), [Complaints](#), [PPM 119](#)

Definitions:¹

Accommodation: an adjustment made to policies, programs, guidelines, or practices, including adjustments to physical settings and various types of criteria, that enables individuals to benefit from and take part in the provision of services equally and to participate equally and perform to the best of their ability in the workplace or an 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.

Anti-racism is a process, a systematic method of analysis, and a proactive course of action rooted in the recognition of the existence of racism, including systemic racism. Anti-racism actively seeks to identify, remove, prevent, and mitigate racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups and change the structures that sustain inequities.

Anti-oppression includes strategies, theories, and actions that challenge social and historical inequalities/injustices that have become part of our systems and institutions and allow certain groups to dominate over others.

¹ From Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, Glossary.

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Discrimination: unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of grounds set out in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, has the effect of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society. Discrimination may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

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.

Harassment: engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.² Harassment includes unwelcome attention and remarks, jokes, threats, name-calling, touching, or other behaviour (including the display of pictures) that insults, offends, or demeans someone because of his or her identity. Harassment involves conduct or comments that are known to be, or should reasonably be known to be, offensive, inappropriate, intimidating, and hostile.

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, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

POLICY:

1. The Board recognizes that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and, as such, all people have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. The Board is committed to the life and mission of the Church by providing a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students, staff and trustees, in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability, in accordance with the *Ontario Human*

² Definition from s. 10(1) of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

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Rights Code and Ministry policy.

2. This policy applies to all members of the school board community, including but not limited to trustees, students, employees, parents, guardians and caregivers, Catholic School Council and Parent Involvement Committee members, visitors, volunteers, permit holders (Community Use), contractors and employees of service organizations who work on or are invited onto Board property.
3. The Board recognizes historical and existing systemic barriers students and employees experience, including racism and other forms of oppression.
4. The Board is committed to implementing Ministry and Board developed policies and practices through an anti-oppression, anti-racism and non-discriminatory lens.
5. The Board will continue to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit the opportunities of students and employees. The Board is committed to achieving a school community that reflects the rich diversity of Ontario so that students, employees, and families feel represented and included.
6. The Board values the important role of students, parents, guardians, care givers, and school community partners in ensuring an inclusive school community. The Board will promote a collaborative approach to implement equity and inclusive education, which ensures the active engagement of students, parents, guardians, caregivers, and community partners to sustain a positive school climate that supports student achievement and well-being.
7. The Board is committed to implementing Ministry and Board developed curriculum, content and assessment practices through an anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and culturally relevant and responsive lens.
8. The Board is committed to the values of freedom of religion and freedom from discrimination and harassment based on religion, and will take reasonable measures to provide religious accommodations within the legal rights afforded to the Catholic school system.
9. The Board is committed to promoting a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students and employees. The Board affirms the right for every person to work and/or learn in an environment that is free from harassment and discrimination for

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students and employees.

10. The Board is committed to providing opportunities, resources and support to all students and employees to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours essential to address discrimination and to ensure equity and inclusive education.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

1. Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices

- a. The Board will embed the principles of equity and inclusive education into its spiritual theme, vision, mission, and strategic plan in an effort to address discrimination and foster an equitable and inclusive school board;
- b. Through its cyclical policy reviews, the Board will ensure that the principles of non-discrimination, equity and inclusive education remain an integral part of the Board's operation;
- c. The Board will ensure that policies and practices for the hiring, mentoring, promotion, retention, and succession planning of persons remain non-discriminatory, equitable and inclusive while maintaining denominational rights.

2. Shared and Committed Leadership

- a. The Director of Education will appoint a contact person to liaise with the Ministry and other school boards to share challenges, promising practices and resources.

3. School-Community Relations

- a. The Board will continue building capacity – with the active engagement of parents and school community partners – to create and sustain a positive school climate that supports student achievement and well-being;
- b. The Board will endeavour to expand community outreach efforts to foster new partnerships that engage a cross-section of diverse students, parents, employees, community members and various community organizations;
- c. The Board will look for opportunities to draw upon the expertise of its partners to explore innovative ways of sharing resources that can help the Board meet the diverse needs of its students and provide new and relevant learning opportunities.

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4. Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices

- a. School and system leaders will support teaching staff in identifying and applying equitable and inclusive curriculum, assessment practices and instructional strategies that reflect the lived experiences of students while facilitating a positive school climate;
- b. Teaching staff will support culturally relevant and responsive pedagogical approaches that incorporate diverse histories, cultures and perspectives;
- c. School and system leaders will support culturally relevant and responsive strategies to support student success and to close opportunity gaps;
- d. Board employees involved in the purchases of new curriculum materials shall seek to ensure that the materials are anti-oppressive, non-discriminatory and culturally relevant and responsive.

5. Religious Accommodation Guideline

- a. Reasonable religious accommodations, and any adjustments to the workplace or academic environment that will allow an individual to practice a recognized religion, shall be considered;
- b. The Board will accommodate employees and students for a reason of religious obligation who must miss a work related commitment or miss an academic event;
- c. The Board will provide a process for religious accommodation requests.

6. School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

- a. The Board will collaborate and actively engage with students, parents, employees and other community partners to create and sustain a positive school climate that is consistent with our values and inclusive, accepting and supportive of student success and well-being;
- b. The Board will conduct school climate surveys every two years in an effort to monitor and address barriers to student achievement and well-being.
- c. The Board takes complaints of discrimination and harassment very seriously and will investigate and take appropriate action, in a timely manner, when it receives such complaints as per board policy;

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- d. Entry to schools, Board premises or Board-sponsored activities will be denied to any person, group or association whose intent is to support or promote hatred or discrimination.

7. Professional Learning

- a. The Board will provide ongoing training opportunities, resources and support for employees and trustees to critically examine, develop and strengthen knowledge on anti-oppression, anti-racism, equity and inclusive education;
- b. The Board will seek to ensure that all employees have the capacity to identify and effectively challenge individual and systemic discrimination through ongoing training.

8. Accountability and Transparency

- a. The Board will communicate the equity and inclusive education philosophy and policy through the Boards normal communication channels;
- b. Both the Board Improvement Plan and the School Improvement Plan will identify and prescribe approaches to address barriers to student learning in order to reduce opportunity gaps and provide an equitable and inclusive school climate;
- c. The Director of Education will ensure annual reporting, through regular channels to the community, on the progress the board has made in meeting its strategic objectives in the previous school year and the action the board is taking in those strategic priority areas where goals are not being met;
- d. This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board's review timeline.