

# Questions and Answers Regarding TCDSB's Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education Policy

## 1. Has the curriculum in Catholic schools changed with the approval of the Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education Policy?

The newly approved EIE policy expands upon the Race and Ethnic Relations Multiculturalism policy that was first introduced by the Board in 1983.

The curriculum in TCDSB Catholic schools remains unchanged, and is faithful to Church teachings.

For elementary schools, we continue to employ the *Fully Alive* program endorsed by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, through our Religion and Family Life programs.

At the secondary level, the curriculum continues to support the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations which have been in place for more than 10 years and which have been endorsed by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops:

- *A discerning believer* formed in the Catholic faith community who celebrates the signs and
- sacred mysteries of God's presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection
- and moral living;
- *An effective communicator* who speaks, writes and listens honestly and sensitively,
- responding critically in light of gospel values;
- *A reflective, creative and holistic thinker* who solves problems and makes responsible
- decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good;
- *A self-directed, responsible, life-long learner* who develops and demonstrates his/her Godgiven
- potential;
- *A collaborative contributor* who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects
- the rights of all and contributes to the common good;
- *A caring family member* who attends to family, school, parish, and the wider community;
- *A responsible citizen* who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

## 2. How are students with same sex orientation supported in Catholic schools?

We will continue to support any student who feels bullied or harassed because of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical abilities, or any other reason.

In keeping with our commitment to ensuring that Catholic schools are safe, welcoming, nurturing places, supports for individual students will be provided by administrators, Chaplains, guidance counsellors and other trained staff.

If a student requests a group to address bullying related to sexual orientation, or is seeking pastoral guidance, Catholic school administrators will provide appropriate supports including peer groups that support our Church teaching (Gospel values) with the understanding that a guiding framework is forthcoming. As with all school approved student groups there will be a staff advisor to guide, facilitate and supervise.

Resources such as the Institute for Catholic Education's 2006 document pastoral guideline for students of same sex orientation (need web link here) and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishop's recent letter on pastoral ministry to young people with same-sex attraction ([http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/ministry-ssa\\_en.pdf](http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/ministry-ssa_en.pdf)) also offer guidance to educators.

3. **Does the Toronto Catholic District School Board discriminate against students with same sex orientation?**

Our Board recognizes that social or cultural discrimination is incompatible with our mission and vision. Our Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education policy offers a framework to support our Catholic Mission and Vision, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms within the context of our Catholic denominational rights.

In Catholic schools, we promote the virtue of chastity, and we teach ALL students about the sanctity of the human body and the sacrament of marriage.

4. **Will students be allowed to form support groups in TCDSB schools?**

The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario and Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association are developing a framework to assist Catholic boards in Ontario with providing an opportunity for students, who wish to do so, to gather with staff guidance and supervision for the purposes of addressing bullying. They will likely recommend a common name to be used by all Ontario Catholic school boards for anti-bullying groups, whose focus is to support marginalized students within the context of the Catholic faith and on strategies to combat bullying.

5. **Will the Board's EIE policy be reviewed?**

Congruent with the Ministry of Education's Policy Program Memorandum 119, the regulations and implementation of the Board's EIE policy will be reviewed and reported on an annual basis.