



TCDSB Policy Register

Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education Policy H.M. 24

Date Approved: August 31, 2011 – Board

Policy

'We proclaim that every individual young or old is to be treated with reverence and that we are to see the face of Christ in every person.' - Statement from the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, January 14, 2011.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) recognizes that all people are deserving of dignity and are created equal in the image of God, each with inimitable characteristics (Genesis: 1:27). In accordance with the Catholic Faith and the Church’s moral teachings as found in the Catechism and other teachings of the Magisterium, the Board provides an educational environment which supports and embraces diversity within its Catholic community, demonstrates respect for all, and values each as child of God.

The Board recognizes that social or cultural discrimination is incompatible with Catholic moral principles. The Board recognizes that the mandate of Catholic Education is to instruct students on how to live as followers of Jesus Christ and gives pre-eminence to the tenets of the Catholic faith. The Board further recognizes that we must uphold the protections entrenched in the Ontario Human Rights Code (the “Code”), the Constitution Act, 1867 and confirmed in the Constitution Act of 1982 –the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

As a Catholic school system, the Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009) in a manner which is consistent with the exercise of the Board’s denominational rights under section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867 and as recognized in section 19 of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Where there is an apparent conflict between denominational rights and other rights the board will favour the protection of the denominational rights.



Regulations

1. Consistent with Catholic teachings and denominational rights the Board is committed to serving students, families and staff in its diverse Catholic community by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of its policies, programs, procedures and practices.
2. The Board recognizes the importance of anti-racism and anti-harassment policies in promoting and maintaining a Catholic learning and working environment that fosters racial and ethnocultural understanding.
3. The Board is committed to an informed leadership philosophy that inspires, empowers, and supports all stakeholders in our Catholic community to join together to implement institutional practices and behaviours that cultivates a Catholic understanding of equity and inclusion.
4. The Board is committed to providing informed and shared leadership to improve student achievement, well-being and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing and removing all barriers and forms of discrimination in striving to achieve Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.
5. The Board recognizes that the effective development, implementation and monitoring of equity and inclusive education policies and practices require the involvement of all partners in the Catholic school community.
6. The Board recognizes the critical connection between Catholic student leadership and improved student achievement and will strive to include the student voice in all aspects of the implementation of a Catholic understanding of equity and inclusive education where that voice is in accord with the Catholic faith and the Catholic Church's moral teachings.
7. The Board is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with all members of our diverse Catholic community so that their perspectives and experiences are recognized.
8. The Board is committed to assessing and monitoring its progress in implementing the Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy; to embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education into all Board policies, programs, guidelines and practices; and to communicating these results to the broader community. To that end an annual report will be made to Board on progress made with respect to the Strategy.



Recognizing that the transmission of our Faith and Faith development is integral to every part of Catholic Education, it is the expectation that all staff in Catholic schools will promote and be informed by the teaching of the Catholic Church.

All students should be able to see themselves reflected in age appropriate curriculum materials with the expectation that students will follow a Christ centred pathway as set out in the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations.

9. The Board is committed to the values of freedom of religion and freedom from discriminatory or harassing behaviour based on religion and will take all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodation within the legal rights afforded to the Catholic school system.

10. The Board is committed to the principle that every person within the Catholic school community is entitled to a respectful, positive and Christ-centred school climate where the learning and working environment is free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

The board is committed to the caring of all students in the spirit of the Gospel.

In an effort to support this commitment all school based groups will adhere to the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations.

The board will act to promote vigorously, champion and support the teachings of the Church.

11. The Board, in its delivery of student-centered Catholic educational services, is committed to providing the school community with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the Code. Given these opportunities school communities will make decisions which are discerning and in keeping with our Catholic faith in support of a just society that adheres to the common good.

12. The Board is committed to assessing and monitoring its progress in implementing the Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy; to embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education into all Board policies, programs, guidelines and practices; and to communicating these results to the broader community. To that end an annual report will be made to Board on progress made with respect to the Strategy.

Definitions:

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

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.

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

Catechism: A Church-approved systemic presentation of Catholic faith and of Catholic doctrine issued by the Holy See and updated periodically. Local Ordinaries, taking into account the provisions of the Catechism, may issue local catechisms to be used in their dioceses.

Creed: One of the prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Ontario Human Rights Code, interpreted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to mean "religious creed" or "religion". Creed is "a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship" that is "sincerely held" and includes non-deistic belief systems. Creed does not include "secular, moral, or ethical beliefs or political convictions" or "religions that promote violence or hate towards others or that violate criminal law: Individuals who do not belong to a religion or practise any specific faith are also protected by the Code.

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, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Denomination: A religious organization whose congregations are united in their adherence to its beliefs and practices.

Discrimination: Unfair 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. 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 individual.



Ethnocultural: Relating to or denoting a particular ethnic group

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: A form of discrimination that may include 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.

Ontario Human Rights Code (the “Code”): A provincial law that gives everyone equal rights and opportunities, without discrimination, in specific areas such as education, jobs, housing, and services. The goal of the Code is to address and ultimately prevent discrimination and harassment.

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 who wish not to participate in any form of religious observance.