



Policy: Religious Accommodation

Policy Statement

The Superior North Catholic District School Board believes in the dignity of all people and their equality as children of God. The Board recognizes the importance of freedom of religion and strives to recognize, value and honour the many customs, traditions and beliefs that make up the Catholic community.

Freedom of religion is an individual right and a collective responsibility. The Board commits to work with the community it serves to foster an inclusive learning environment that promotes acceptance and protects individuals from discrimination and harassment on the basis of their religion.

In accordance with the Catholic Church's teachings, it is the policy of the Board to provide, in all its operations, an educational environment which promotes and supports diversity within its Catholic community as well as the equal attainment of life opportunities for all students, staff, parents and other members of that community.

Legislative & Policy Context

All school boards exist within a broader context of law and public policy that protect and defend human rights. At the Board, a number of policy statements have been developed that reinforce both federal and provincial legislation, and also help ensure that the freedoms they set out are protected within the school system.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Section 15) guarantees freedom of religion. The Ontario Human Rights Code (The Code) protects an individual's freedom from discriminatory or harassing behaviours based on religion. Consistent with this legislation is The Education Act, its regulations and policies governing Equity and Inclusion in Schools:

- PPM 108 Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools
- RRO 1990

- Regulation 298 Operation of School-General, s 27-29, under the heading Religion In Schools
- PPM 119 Developing and Implementing Equity & Inclusive Education Policies In Ontario Schools

The Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in this Federal and Provincial legislation in a manner which is consistent with the exercise of its denominational rights under section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and as recognized in section 19 of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Board recognizes, and is committed to, the values of freedom of religion and freedom from discriminatory or harassing behaviour based on prohibited grounds through the Human Rights Code, Student Discipline Policy, Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and curriculum documents. All of these will be informed by, and interpreted in accordance with, the principles of the Code.

This policy reflects the Board's fidelity to Canadian law protecting freedom of religion in accordance with the Catholic Church's teachings.

Approval and Review Dates

Prior Date Approved: November 8, 2010

Revised Date Approved: June 8, 2015

Review Prior To: June, 2020

Reviewed by: Policy Committee, Administrative Council