

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Catholic Schools promote responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted. As a Catholic School Board we believe that this environment is achieved when conduct reflects Gospel values and the Board's Mission Statement. In accordance with the Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools Act, 2007, this pamphlet outlines the Board Code of Conduct Policy II-39 and the Administrative Procedure VI-44 which outlines *Suspension and Expulsion Procedures (revised 2012)*.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & PURPOSES of the CODE of CONDUCT

It is the policy of the Halton Catholic District School Board to provide a safe working and learning environment for staff and pupils. The Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools Policy and the Ontario Code of Conduct apply to pupils, teachers, staff members, parents or guardians, and volunteers, whether they are on school property, on school buses, at school-related events or activities, or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate.

Principals, under the direction of the Board, take a leadership role in the daily operation of a school. They provide this leadership when they:

- demonstrate care for the school community and commitment to academic excellence in a safe teaching and learning environment;
- hold everyone, under their authority, accountable for their behaviour and actions;
- empower pupils to be positive leaders in their school and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community.

Teachers and other school staff members, under the leadership of principals, maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standards of respectful and responsible behaviours. As Catholic role models, staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help pupils work to their full potential and develop their self-worth;
- empower pupils to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all pupils;
- demonstrate respect for all pupils, staff, parents, volunteers, and the members of the school community;
- prepare pupils for the full responsibilities of citizenship as outlined in the ONTARIO CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE EXPECTATIONS.

Pupils are to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a pupil:

- comes to school prepared, on time and ready to learn;
- shows respect for others and for those in authority;
- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others;
- follow the established rules and takes responsibility for his or her own actions.

Parents play an important role in the education of their children, and can support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all pupils. Parents fulfil their role when they:

- show an active interest in the child's school work and progress;
- communicate regularly with the school;
- help their child to be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attend school regularly and on time;
- promptly report their child's absence or late arrival;
- show that they are familiar with the provincial Code of Conduct, the Board's code of conduct and the school rules;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour;
- assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child.

The Police play an essential role in making our schools and communities safer. They:

- investigate incidents in accordance with the protocol developed between the Halton Catholic District School Board and the Halton Regional Police Service. This protocol is based on a provincial model developed by the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Education.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

Progressive discipline is an approach that makes use of a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences when inappropriate behaviours have occurred. The focus of the Progressive Discipline model builds upon strategies that promote positive behaviours for all pupils. For pupils with special education and/or disability related needs, interventions, supports and consequences are consistent with the expectations in the pupil's IEP and/or his/her demonstrated abilities. Progressive discipline includes early and/or ongoing intervention strategies.

SUSPENSION OF PUPILS

The Board also supports the use of suspension and expulsion as outlined in Part XIII of the Education Act where a pupil has committed one or more of the infractions outlined below on school property, during a school-related activity or event, and/or in circumstances where the infraction has an impact on the school climate.

The infractions for which a suspension may be imposed by the principal include:

- uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person;
- possessing alcohol, illegal or restricted drugs/substances;
- being under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal restricted drugs/substances;
- swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority;
- committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school;
- bullying which includes cyberbullying;
- any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the moral tone of the school;
- any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the physical or mental well-being of the members of the school community; or
- any act considered by the principal to be contrary to the Board or School Code of Conduct

A pupil may be suspended only once for an infraction and may be suspended for a minimum of one (1) school day and maximum of twenty (20) school days.

EXPULSION OF PUPILS

The infractions for which the principal shall suspend and may consider recommending to the Board that a pupil be expelled from the pupil's school or from all schools of the Board include:

- possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm or a replica;
- using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;
- committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner;
- committing sexual assault;
- trafficking in weapons or replica, illegal or restricted drugs;
- committing robbery;
- giving alcohol to a minor;
- bullying, if the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and/or the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person;
- any activity listed in subsection 306 (i) that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or any other similar factor.

- an act considered by the principal to be significantly injurious to the moral tone of the school and/or to the physical or mental well-being of others;
- a pattern of behaviour that is so inappropriate that the pupil's continued presence is injurious to the effective learning and/or working environment of others;
- activities engaged in by the pupil on or off school property that cause the pupil's continuing presence in the school to create an unacceptable risk to the physical or mental well-being of other person(s) in the school or Board;
- activities engaged in by the pupil on or off school property that have caused extensive damage to the property of the Board or to goods that are/were on the Board's property;
- the pupil has demonstrated through a pattern of behaviour that s/he has not prospered by the instruction available to him or her and that s/he is persistently resistant to making changes in behaviour which would enable him or her to prosper;
- any act considered by the principal to be a serious violation of the Board or School Code of Conduct.

Note: In accordance with the Police and School Response Protocol, Police will be contacted for but not limited to the above noted infractions. Consequences resulting from criminal charges related to school incidents are independent of those imposed under the Education Act.

MITIGATING FACTORS

During the investigative process leading to a possible suspension and/or expulsion, the principal will consider:

- whether the pupil has the ability to control his or her behaviour;
- whether the pupil has the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour; and
- whether the pupil's continuing presence in the school does or does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any other individual at the school.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the purpose of a suspension?

It is meant to signal to the pupil that the behaviour that caused the suspension must change as it is totally unacceptable to the school community and warns parents/guardians of possible serious problems with their son or daughter.

What are suspended pupils expected to do while away from school?

A pupil who is subject to a suspension of five (5) or fewer school days will be provided with school work to complete at home while serving the suspension. A Pupil Action Plan (SAP) will be developed for every

pupil subject to a suspension of six (6) or more school days. A pupil subject to suspension for eleven (11) or more school days will be provided with both academic and non-academic supports, which will be identified in the pupil's SAP. Pupils subject to a suspension of fewer than eleven school days may be offered non-academic supports where such supports are appropriate and available. Suspended pupils are not allowed on school property, on school buses or at school-authorized events or activities throughout the suspension period.

What is the difference between a suspension and an expulsion?

- **Suspension** is an imposed absence from school to a maximum of 20 days.
- **School expulsion** is an expulsion from the school of the Board that the pupil was attending at the time of the incident.
- **Board expulsion** is an expulsion from all schools of the Board.

A parent, guardian or adult pupil may appeal a suspension or an expulsion.

How are weapons defined in the policy?

Weapons are defined as:

- any object or thing used to threaten or inflict harm on another person and includes, but is not limited to knives, replica knives, guns, replica guns and animals

The decision as to whether an object is a weapon rests with the Principal.

How do school programmes support Safe Schools?

The *Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools Act, 2007* and the Halton Catholic District School Board's Code of Conduct are supported by programmes that provide pupils with academic and non-academic skills. Religion and Family Life, Health and Social Skills and Bullying Prevention programs provide pupils with key learnings that foster healthy relationships and encourage pupils to respect the needs, feelings, rights, and cultures of other individuals.

"You shall love your neighbour as yourself"
(Matthew 22:39)

For further information, please contact your School Principal or School Services of the Halton Catholic District School Board at (905) 632-6300 or from North Halton at 1-800-741-8382

www.hcdsb.org



Code of Conduct and Standards of Behaviour

HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Mission Statement

The Halton Catholic District School Board, in partnership with home and Church, is dedicated to providing excellence in Catholic education by developing Christ-centred individuals enabled to transform society.

September 2013

Achieving Believing Belonging