

POLICY

1. MISSION & VISION

Mission

The mission of Catholic Education in Hamilton-Wentworth, in union with our Bishop, is to enable all learners to realize the fullness of humanity of which Our Lord Jesus Christ is the model.

The Catholic Community of Hamilton-Wentworth believes the learner will realize this fullness of humanity

If the learning process

- begins at home and is part of family life
- is nurtured in the Parish
- is anchored in the Catholic Faith
- takes place within the context of worship, sacraments, and the life of the Church is enhanced by the school community
- is embraced by the learner as a personal responsibility for life.

Vision

If learning takes place in an appropriate and challenging environment

- in which members of the school community exemplify the teachings of Jesus Christ
- which reflects Gospel values and responsible use of human, financial and natural resources which promotes academic excellence and clear indicators of achievement.

Learners from Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Schools will demonstrate

- knowledge and practice of their Catholic Faith
- the capability of nurturing a strong family unit
- esteem, respect and responsibility for self and others
- academic competence

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- the ability to listen accurately and express knowledge clearly
- independence, critical thinking and effective problem solving
- proficiency with technology in order to adapt to a challenging world
- the values, attitudes and skills for effective partnerships
- the ability to transform our society

To enable learners to achieve this vision, the faith community of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will reflect

- the centrality of Jesus Christ in our lives
- the teachings of the Catholic Church
- exemplary role models
- social justice, respect and fairness for all
- a dedicated staff
- a curriculum that is dynamic, practical and relevant
- high standards
- an environment conducive to learning
- effective partnerships
- accountability at all levels

2. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board recognizes that all people are created equal, in the image of God, each with inimitable characteristics deserving of dignity (Genesis: 1:27). In accordance with the Church's teachings, it is the policy of the Board to provide in all its operations an educational environment which supports and enables diversity within its Catholic community.
3. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board recognizes that any form of social or cultural discrimination is incompatible with Catholic moral principles and is in violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Board recognizes that the school system gives pre-eminence to the tenets of the Catholic faith, congruent with the protection afforded in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, the *Constitution Act, 1982* and confirmed in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

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4. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School 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 (the "Ministry") Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, in a manner which is consistent with the exercise of the Board's denominational rights under section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and as recognized at section 19 of the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

REGULATIONS

1. Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2013) "*Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools*"

References:

- Statement from the Catholic Bishops on policy development associated with Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, October 4, 2010)
- Statement from the Catholic Bishops on progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour (Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, January 19, 2010)
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009)
- Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation (2009)
- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009)
- HWCDSB Safe Schools Document (2009)
- HWCDSB Respectful Catholic Workplace Community Policy (2008)
- Shared Solutions (2007)
- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108 (2006)
- Pastoral Guidelines to Assist Students of Same-Sex Orientation (2004)
- Ontario Human Rights Code (1990)
- Constitution Act, 1982

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PROCEDURES

2. The Pastoral Guidelines **and other resources developed by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, the Institute for Catholic Education and other relevant Catholic organizations, shall be used as a reference to ensure a safe school environment consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church, for all students.**
3. In the event of a complaint relating to equity and inclusive education and/or this policy, the relevant resolution procedures, including but not limited to the Ministry of Education's 'Shared Solutions' document, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board's Safe Schools document and the Respectful Workplace Catholic Community Policy, shall be applied.

AREAS OF FOCUS

*Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2013) "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools"* identify eight areas of focus for implementing equity and inclusive education. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board has added a ninth area of focus, i.e. Stewardship.

In accordance with the above policy documents, applicable legislation that outlines the denominational rights of the Catholic school system and with adherence to the *Guiding Principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*, and consistent with the Code, each area of focus will be introduced and anchored by a preamble. This will serve to guide the actions of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board and its schools, in honouring its commitments to Catholic education, the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations, Catholic social teachings and to equity and inclusive education policy development, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

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1. HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

## Preamble:

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board recognizes the importance of antiracism and anti-harassment policies in promoting and maintaining a Catholic educational and working environment which fosters racial and ethno-cultural understanding.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will integrate the requirements of Policy/Program No. 119, Board policies, programs, procedures, and practices. The perspectives of the entire diverse Catholic school community will be reflected in all areas of the teaching, learning and administrative culture. Every effort will be made to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit access to and opportunity for effective employment procedures for individuals from diverse communities and underrepresented peoples within the context of the denominational rights of Catholic school boards.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to serving staff, students, and families in its diverse Catholic community by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education in its policies, programs, procedures, and practices that are consistent with Catholic denominational rights.

2. SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

## Preamble:

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board subscribes 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 cultivate equity and inclusion.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to providing informed shared leadership to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing, and removing all barriers and forms of discrimination.

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The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board recognizes the critical connection between student leadership and improved student achievement and will strive to include the student voice in the implementation of equity and inclusive education.

In accordance with the Ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy, and in keeping with the teaching of the Catholic Church, effective Board and school leaders will encourage and promote a collaborative approach to all dimensions of equity and inclusive education, which ensures the participation of students, parents, unions, colleges and universities, service organizations and other community partners.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with all members of its diverse Catholic community so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized and their needs are met.

### 3. SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

#### Preamble:

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board recognizes that the effective review, development, implementation and monitoring of equity and inclusive education policies and practices requires the involvement of all members of the entire Catholic school community. The Board further recognizes the importance of engaging specialized expertise in developing and implementing its equity and inclusive education policy.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will seek collaboration with and active engagement from students, parents, staff and other Catholic community partners to create and sustain a positive school climate reflective of Catholic values that supports student achievement.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will identify, examine, and remove any barriers that exist, that are part of systemic discrimination under the *Code*, and that prevent full participatory school-community relations.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with all members of its diverse Catholic community so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are recognized.

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4. INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

## Preamble:

Both in content and methodology, inclusive curriculum recognizes the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board's commitment to Catholic values and respect for all students.

Effective evaluation includes researched best practices that truly reflect the current level of achievement of the student. Multiple opportunities for assessment allow for student learning and accuracy of assessment and instruction.

Students must be represented in the curriculum and heard in the assessment and evaluation. Students' voices are fundamental in the planning for instruction and the accuracy of assessment.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to implementing an inclusive curriculum based on Catholic values, the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations and to reviewing resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize her or his learning potential.

Catholic education views human life as an integration of body, mind, and spirit. Rooted in this vision, Catholic education fosters the search for knowledge as a lifelong spiritual and academic quest. The expectations of Catholic graduates, therefore, are described not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but in terms of values, attitudes and actions. The Catholic vision regarding the value of the human person and his/her journey is passed on only through community. Therefore, it is imperative that the entire Catholic community shares the responsibility to educate its young people.

The Graduate is expected to be:

*A discerning believer* formed in the Catholic faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery 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.

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*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, lifelong learner* who develops and demonstrates his/her God-given 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 responsible citizen* who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

5. RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Preamble:

Committed to the mission of the Church, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board provides a learning and working environment 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, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability, in accordance with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and Ministry Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108.

Within the framework of gospel values, traditions of the Catholic Church, and the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board's denominational rights, in recognition of this diversity, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will attempt to provide reasonable accommodation for students' and staffs' religious beliefs and practices, while also protecting its denominational rights.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School 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 accommodations within the legal rights afforded to the Catholic school system.

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

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(a) Undue Hardship

Accommodation will be provided to the point of undue hardship. A determination regarding undue hardship will be based on an assessment of costs, outside sources of funding and health and safety.

(b) Prayer

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board supports freedom of religion and an individual's right to manifest his/her religious beliefs and observances. The right to freedom of religion, however, is not absolute and religious accommodation in the Board is carried out in the larger context of the Catholic education system and denominational rights of Catholic schools.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, at all times, will seek to accommodate an individual's right to freedom of religion in a manner that not only respects the individual's beliefs but the principles of the Catholic Church.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board recognizes the central place of prayer in the Catholic school. Regarding the use of chapels in Catholic schools, they are specifically designed and furnished for prayer and liturgy within the Catholic tradition and are not to be considered multi-faith chapels. Following the general custom of the Church, non-Catholics are welcome to join in prayer services and liturgical celebrations of the Catholic Church community (keeping in mind some restrictions such as sharing in Holy Communion). Such a chapel is open to all people for individual silent prayer or meditation. However, it is not appropriate that non-Catholic liturgies or group prayers be held in this setting.

It is therefore recommended that school administrators designate another appropriate space or classroom, other than the chapel, for religious celebrations celebrated by other Christian denominations or faith tradition.

(c) Religious Dress

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board recognizes that there are certain religious communities that require specific items of ceremonial dress. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board's schools will reasonably accommodate students with regard to religious attire.

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7. SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

## Preamble:

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board recognizes that a safe and welcoming environment is most conducive to learning. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will therefore seek to foster a Christ-centred, positive school climate, free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board acknowledges that a Christ-centered, positive school climate is one where all members of the school community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted. The principles of equity and inclusive education support positive student behaviour.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School is committed to the principle that every person within the school community is entitled to a safe, caring, inclusive and Christ-centred school climate and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

7. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

## Preamble:

The staff of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is an integral part through whom Catholic values, principles and teachings are taught in the classroom and throughout the system. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, therefore, recognizes the importance of ongoing professional learning to support a foundation for Catholic values, ecclesial and cultural identity, human rights education and effective teaching practices.

Professional learning increases the knowledge and skills that teachers bring to the craft and science of teaching, and, thus, engages the student with increasing complexity and precision teaching. Perpetual professional learning is the groundwork for positive changes in our schools. Professional learning must include knowledge creation and knowledge sharing.

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Distributed, deep and sustained changes in practice and structures in school are key elements of professional learning and have impact on student learning, engagement and success in a knowledge society. Professional learning works to engage all learners and strives for student success and includes the following:

- (a) Enhanced thinking and practices of teachers
- (b) Collaborative inquiry at various levels within the school
- © Pursuit of innovation

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to providing the school community, including students, with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the Code.

## 8. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Preamble:

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board acknowledges and assumes the responsibility for its policies, actions, and decisions. In the pursuit of greater transparency and accountability, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, in respectful collaboration and communication with the whole Catholic school community, will report on its goals and progress in the areas of policy review, school improvement planning and the implementation of The Strategy.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to assessing and monitoring its progress in implementing The 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 community.

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9. STEWARDSHIP

## Preamble:

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to stewardship of the sacred gifts that God has entrusted to our care. This includes all employees, students, resources, talents, spiritual gifts, and the entire created order. Stewardship means acting as co-creators with and for God, according to God's plan. Therefore, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board must use these gifts wisely and with reverence for human dignity, and for the spiritual and material well-being of all. Stewardship for the gifts of creation requires the responsible use of resources through all available means.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to the concept of stewardship as a way of life. The life of stewardship is an on-going process of integration whereby we relate our whole person to the whole action of God. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world's peoples and cultures. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is committed to the principle of stewardship at the heart of policy, programs and practices.

BM 20 APR 93, 6 JUN 95, 5 DEC 95, 7 JUN 05, 16 NOV 10, 7 APR 15

RELATED BY-LAW(S):

RELATED BOARD COMMITTEE: Religion, Family Life & Instructional Services

POLICY REVIEW DATE: 5 years