



**DURHAM CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
*Learning and Living in Faith*

## **POLICY – PO517**

### **Catholic Curriculum**

Area: Academic Services  
Source: Superintendent of Education – Academic Services

Approved: April 26, 2010,  
Revised: June 10, 2019; May 11, 2020; May 25, 2026

#### **1. Introduction**

The Durham Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) operates within Ontario’s publicly funded Catholic education system, fulfilling a dual mandate of meeting the academic expectations set by the Ministry of Education and advancing the mission of the Roman Catholic Church. Board schools are distinctive faith communities where Christ is at the center, and His teachings permeate every aspect of school life. Curriculum delivery in Catholic schools does not solely aim to transmit knowledge. Through the integration of beliefs, teachings, and faith traditions of the Catholic Church across the Ontario curriculum, Catholic education within the Board supports the holistic development of students: spiritually, intellectually, and physically. Educators use resources approved by the Bishops of Ontario to deliver Religious Education and Family Life Education.

#### **2. Definitions**

Nil

#### **3. Purpose**

The policy affirms the Board’s commitment to nurturing faith formation alongside academic excellence. It recognizes the critical relationship between learning and believing (i.e., between knowledge and faith) as foundational to the Catholic school mandate. The education of students is guided not only by knowledge and skills, but also by values, attitudes, and actions shaped through reason and faith.

## **4. Application / Scope**

This policy applies to all staff involved in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of Catholic curriculum across the Board. Catholic curriculum encompasses both the Religious Education and Family Life Education curricula and the intentional integration of Catholic perspectives throughout the Ontario curriculum.

## **5. Principles**

5.1 The Board recognizes that:

5.1.1 Parents/guardians who choose to enrol their children in Catholic schools want a spiritual, faith-based learning environment where the teachings of Christ are central to the mission and vision of the educational experience.

5.1.2 At each grade and subject area, the Ontario curriculum is intentionally taught from a Catholic perspective (e.g., through connections to the Religious Education and Family Life Education curricula and Catholic Social Teaching) and serves to promote the God-given gifts and talents of all students and to develop the skills, attitudes and values of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGE).

5.1.3 The implementation of Catholic curriculum is guided by the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE), under the authority of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO), ensuring alignment with Church teachings and Ministry of Education standards.

5.1.4 The OCSGEs provide a framework to guide the journey of learning for all students in Catholic schools by articulating a vision of who the Catholic learner is becoming. They are described not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but necessarily in terms of values, attitudes and action formed by reason and faith.

5.1.5 Catholic education is a unique partnership between the school, home and parish. Together, this partnership seeks to develop a student's whole person by integrating academic excellence, social development, and faith formation.

## **6. Requirements**

6.1 The Director of Education shall issue administrative procedures to support this policy and amend them thereafter as the need may arise.

6.2 The Director of Education or designate(s) shall:

6.2.1 support decision-making processes that recognize the foundational relationship of the school, home, and parish.

6.2.2 ensure that educators have access to resources approved by the Bishops of Ontario to meet the curriculum expectations of Religious Education and Family

Life Education.

- 6.2.3 ensure that educators are supported in selecting supplemental Religious and Family Life Education resources that align with Catholic teachings and values, and in choosing materials that help them integrate Catholicity across all areas of the Ontario Curriculum.
- 6.2.4 ensure that educators are supported in the delivery of the Religious Education and Family Life curricula, and the Ontario curriculum with a Catholic perspective (e.g., by integrating OCSGEs and Catholic Social Teaching).
- 6.3 Students enrolled in a Catholic school are expected to participate in the Religious Education and Family Life Education curricula as well as respect the prayer and liturgical life of the school.
- 6.4 In elementary schools, the Human Development and Sexual Health Expectations of the Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8 Health and Physical Education Curriculum, 2019 are taught through the Family Life Education curriculum and Ontario Bishop approved resources.
- 6.5 In secondary schools, students are expected to participate in the mandatory course of study in Religious Education in each year of their program.
- 6.6 The Board will consider exemption requests related to 6.4 and 6.5 above pursuant to applicable legislation (e.g., Subsection 42(13) of the Education Act; Policy/Program Memorandum 162: Exemption from Instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health Expectations). These requests must follow the procedures outlined in the Catholic Curriculum and Education Administrative Procedure (AP517-1).

## **7. Sources**

- 7.1 [Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario](#)
- 7.2 [Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)
- 7.3 [Education Act Subsection 42\(13\)](#)
- 7.4 [Institute for Catholic Education](#)
- 7.5 [Policy Program Memorandum 162: Exemption from Instruction Related to the Human Development and Sexual Health Expectations in The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8](#)
- 7.6 [Renewing the Promise – A Pastoral Letter of Catholic Education](#)
- 7.7 [The Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 1-8 – Family Life Education](#)
- 7.8 [The Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 1-8 – Religious Education](#)
- 7.9 [The Ontario Catholic School Kindergarten Program](#)
- 7.10 [The Ontario Catholic Secondary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 9-12 – Religious Education](#)

## **8. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures**

- 8.1 [Catholic Curriculum and Education Administrative Procedure \(AP517-1\)](#)
- 8.2 [Family Life Education and the Fully Alive Program Administrative Procedure \(AP517-2\)](#)