

POLICY – 523

Environmental Education

Area: Academic Services
Source: Superintendent of Education

Approved: April 26, 2010
Revised: November 9, 2015; May 6, 2024

1. Introduction

Durham Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) recognizes that environmental education is a vital tool that helps young people understand the nature and complexity of environmental challenges.

This policy reflects, promotes, and guides the implementation of environmental education that: is locally relevant; is culturally appropriate; enhances understanding that local issues often have provincial, national, and global consequences; builds capacity for community-based decision making and environmental stewardship; and supports lifelong learning.

2. Definitions

Nil

3. Purpose

In recognition of the interconnectedness of God’s creation and the role of students and staff as stewards of the earth, the purpose of this policy is to promote environmental literacy and environmentally responsible management practices.

4. Application / Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students. The requirements of this policy and associated administrative procedure(s) will be incorporated into the development and implementation of strategies, programs, and procedures to protect and conserve the environment.

5. Principles

5.1 The Board believes that:

- 5.1.1 stewardship of God's creation and protection of the planet is a fundamental Catholic Social Teaching; and
- 5.1.2 an environmental education framework that consists of themes associated with teaching and learning, student engagement, community connections and environmental leadership will assist students in becoming future stewards of creation.
- 5.1.3 natural and human-built environments can be used as sites for discovery, problem-solving, and active learning, as well as for first-hand experiences that put students in touch with nature.
- 5.1.4 through a variety of learning opportunities, including Indigenous ways of knowing, students are enabled to develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes associated with being an environmentally responsible citizen.

6. Requirements

- 6.1 The Director of Education, or designate, shall issue administrative procedures to support this policy and amend them thereafter as the need may arise.
- 6.2 Each school within the Board shall:
 - 6.2.1 increase student knowledge and develop skills and perspectives that further environmental stewardship and Indigenous ways of knowing;
 - 6.2.2 model and teach environmental education through an integrated approach that promotes collaboration and community partnership in the development of resources and activities;
 - 6.2.3 build student capacity to take action on environmental issues;
 - 6.2.4 provide leadership support to enhance student engagement and community involvement; and
 - 6.2.5 enhance the integration of environmentally responsible practices into management of resources, operations and facilities.

7. Sources

- 7.1 [Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future: Environmental Education in Ontario Schools, Report of the Working Group on the Environmental Education, Ministry of Education, June 2007](#)

- 7.2 [Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow, A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools, Ministry of Education, 2009](#)

8. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 8.1 [Environmental Education Administrative Procedure \(AP523-1\)](#)