



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

POLICY – PO607

Student Protection

Area: Student Conduct and Safety

Source: Superintendent of Education – Student Services

Approved: January 27, 2003

Revised: December 8, 2014; November 5, 2018 (I); February 4, 2019; May 12, 2025

1. Introduction

Creating safe and welcoming school environments is a top priority for the Durham Catholic District School Board (the “Board”). All students have a right to safety and well-being. The Board is committed to ensuring that all students are treated with dignity and respect. Building safe school communities includes promoting students’ awareness of their rights and ensuring students know how to access help when they need it. This policy outlines the Board’s commitment to protecting students from abuse, neglect, and any forms of mistreatment.

2. Definitions

Child (*Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*) – a person younger than eighteen (18).

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy and its related administrative procedures is to promote the safety and well-being of students and to clarify for staff and administrators the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, or other abuse of students, including any allegation of abuse of a student by a school board employee. This policy is also intended to promote co-operation with the staff of the children’s aid societies.
- 3.2 The obligation of all employees of the Board, as well as volunteers, to report suspected child abuse, on or off school property, arises under the *Child Youth and Family Services Act 2017*. A further obligation is imposed on the Board to report sexual abuse of students by teachers to the Ontario College of Teachers in accordance with the *Student Protection Act (2002)*. Beyond the obligations which

arise under statutes, this policy recognizes the moral commitment of all members of the community of the Board, to advocate for students who are at risk.

4. Application / Scope

Statutory reporting obligations in this policy and the reporting processes outlined in its attendant administrative procedure pertain to students in need of protection under Part V of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. This includes children and youth under 16; youth aged 16 and 17, and students 18 or older if they are under the care of a Society, or if there are reasonable grounds to suspect maltreatment that could endanger other children.

The obligation to report under this policy applies to all persons who perform professional or official duties with respect to children (e.g., all employees, volunteers, and service providers) who have reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse.

5. Principles

5.1 The Board recognizes that:

- 5.1.1 each student has the right to belonging and safety. The Board implements this belief through its broader policy of inclusion;
- 5.1.2 student safety and well-being are the shared responsibility of the home, school, and the community;
- 5.1.3 adopting a proactive approach to student protection creates a safe and nurturing environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. The Board's commitment to prevention and support is integral to cultivating student success and well-being;
- 5.1.4 according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, systemic racism has played a role in child welfare and that marginalized populations (i.e., Indigenous, Black) are overrepresented in the child welfare system;
- 5.1.5 school authorities, in providing for the supervision and protection of students for whom they are responsible, must exercise a standard of care of a careful and prudent parent in the circumstances; and
- 5.1.6 Erin's Law (Sexual Abuse Prevention and Reporting), 2024, is legislation aimed at preventing child sexual abuse.

6. Requirements

- 6.1 All employees have a legal and ethical obligation to report any reasonable suspicion or evidence of child abuse or neglect. This duty to report extends to situations where there is a concern that a student is at risk of harm, regardless of

whether the harm has or may occur within the school or elsewhere. There is an ongoing duty to report even if previous reports have been made.

- 6.2 Reports of child abuse or neglect will be treated with confidentiality.
- 6.3 The Board will cooperate with children's aid societies (e.g., Durham Children's Aid Society and Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag Child and Family Services) and law enforcement agencies in any investigations related to reported cases of child abuse or neglect. This includes providing access to relevant information and facilitating interviews with staff and students as necessary.
- 6.4 In accordance with Erin's Law, the Board is committed to implementing child sexual abuse prevention awareness and resources.
- 6.5 Students who are identified as victims of or at risk of abuse or neglect will be offered appropriate support and assistance. This may include access to counseling services, referrals to external agencies, and ongoing monitoring of their well-being.
- 6.6 If the alleged perpetrator is a Board employee, the Board reserves the right to investigate as indicated in the Student Protection Administrative Procedure (AP607-1) and make a report to the employee's professional governing body, as applicable.
- 6.7 All employees will annually read and acknowledge review of this policy and related administrative procedure, so that they understand how to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect, the legal, professional duty to report and when, how and whom to report, and how to manage the consequences of making a report.

7. Sources

- 7.1 [Child Youth and Family Services Act, \(2017\)](#)
- 7.2 [PPM9 – Duty to Report Children in Need of Protection](#)
- 7.3 [Ministry of Community and Social Services, Report Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- 7.4 Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, Protecting Our Students (Robins Report), (2000)
- 7.5 [Bill 101, Student Protection Act, \(2002\)](#)
- 7.6 [Standards of Practice for the Teaching Professions \(Ontario College of Teachers](#)
- 7.7 [Criminal Code of Canada](#)
- 7.8 Police/School Board Protocol, 2016
- 7.9 Durham School Boards and Children's Aid Societies Protocol, 2018
- 7.10 [Ontario College of Teachers – Provincial Advisory – Professional Misconduct of a Sexual Nature](#)
- 7.11 [Teaching Profession Act](#)
- 7.12 [Social Work and Social Services Work Act](#)
- 7.13 [Accepting Schools Act](#)
- 7.14 [Provincial Code of Conduct](#)
- 7.15 [Inquest Touching the Death of Jeffrey Baldwin](#)

- 7.16 [Good Governance – A Guide for Trustees, School Boards, Directors of Education, and Communities](#)
- 7.17 [Framework regarding human trafficking](#)
- 7.18 [Murdered and Missing](#)
- 7.19 [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#)
- 7.20 [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)
- 7.21 [PPM166 - Keeping Students Safe: Policy Framework for School Board Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocols](#)
- 7.22 [Bill 123, Erin's Law \(Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Reporting\)](#)

8. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 8.1 [Student Protection Administrative Procedure \(AP607-1\)](#)
- 8.2 [Code of Conduct Policy \(PO610\)](#)
- 8.3 [Code of Conduct Administrative Procedure \(AP610-1\)](#)
- 8.4 [Student Discipline Policy \(PO611\)](#)
- 8.5 [Student Discipline Administrative Procedure \(AP611-1\)](#)
- 8.6 [Workplace Violence Policy \(PO324\)](#)
- 8.7 [Workplace Violence – General Administrative Procedure \(AP324-1\)](#)
- 8.8 [Workplace Violence – Students Administrative Procedure \(AP324-2\)](#)
- 8.9 [Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy \(PO320\)](#)
- 8.10 [Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment Administrative Procedure \(AP320-1\)](#)