

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE – AP517-1

Catholic Curriculum and Education

Area: Teaching and Learning
Policy Reference: Catholic Curriculum and Education (PO517)

Approved: June 10, 2019
Revised: June 8, 2020

1. Purpose

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide clarity for Board staff, parents/guardians, pastoral teams, students and community members regarding the roles and responsibilities related to Catholic Curriculum and Education which includes, but is not limited to the approved Religious and Family Life Education curriculums. The implementation of Catholic Curriculum will respect the denominational rights of Roman Catholic schools as set up in Section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867 and the Education Act.

2. Definitions

Catholic Curriculum – in its broadest sense is a moral based education, where every student is seen as a gift from God to be nurtured and cherished. It involves a joint effort between parents, teachers, trustees, administrators and our entire Catholic community to educate our children in a manner that is permeated by the Catholic faith. It includes, but is not limited to, Religious and Family Life Education which forms the core of the Catholic curriculum.

Catholic Social Teachings – the Catholic doctrines on matters of human dignity and common good in society. The ideas address oppression, the role of the state, subsidiarity, social organization, concern for social justice, issues with wealth distribution.

Family Life Curriculum – The expectations associated with Family Life are outlined in the Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 1-8 – Family Life Education. The curriculum is based on the vision that the knowledge, skills, attitudes

and values acquired in the Family Life program will benefit students throughout their lives and help them to thrive in an ever-changing world by enabling them to acquire a Christian vision of personhood, relationships, sexuality and to develop the comprehension, capacity and commitment needed to lead fully human lives.

Learning Resources – refers to any material or a person with instructional content or function that is utilized for formal or informal teaching or learning purposes. Learning resources include but are not limited to human resources, print and/or digital materials, artwork, audio/visual, and eLearning resources.

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) – are used as a framework for designing Ontario Catholic curriculum, in the development of youth leadership, teacher education and administrative programs containing seven overall and fifty-two specific expectations.

Religious Education Curriculum – The expectations associated with Religion are outlined in the Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 1-8 – Religious Education and the Ontario Catholic Secondary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 9-12 – Religious Education. This curriculum is rooted in sacred scripture, catechism of the Catholic Church, and creedal statements and is a kind of map of the rich treasury which is the deposit of faith.

3. Procedures

- 3.1 Catholic Education is only fully realized through the support and efforts of the whole Catholic community. School communities must endeavour to include Board staff, parents/guardians, pastoral teams, students and community members in the development of the faith life of the school community. The foundation of this learning is the triad of Home, School and Parish.
- 3.2 Catholic Education is accomplished through a combination of direct teaching and learning through Religious and Family Life Education curriculum, community participation in liturgical celebrations and learning through Gospel values and Catholic Social teachings across the curriculum.

All students are expected to participate fully in the complete Religious Education and Family Life program, the prayer and liturgical life of the school and be respectful of all religious observances.

- 3.3 The Superintendent of Education responsible for Religious and Family Life Education shall:

- a) work collaboratively with Family of Schools Superintendents and Teaching and Learning Consultants to provide resources and supports to schools for the implementation of this administrative procedure.
- b) work collaboratively with Director, Superintendents, Clergy, Principals and Vice Principals, Educators, Chaplains, Support Staff, Managers, Federations, Unions and non-union groups to build capacity of all staff to support this administrative procedure.

3.4 Principals shall:

- a) ensure that all teaching staff are utilizing the most current Religious Education and Family Life Education curriculum documents as referenced by the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) and related resources from the DCDSB Teaching and Learning Department.
- b) ensure that any locally developed curricula and courses of study supplemental to Archdiocesan/Ministry of Education curriculum and/or guidelines, will incorporate an appropriate Catholic dimension.
- c) ensure that students participate in the compulsory Religious and Family Life Education Curriculum that consists of no less than four (4) thirty (30) minute periods of Religious Education per week and one (1) thirty (30) minute period of Family Life Education per week at the elementary level (Grades 1-8) and one hundred and ten (110) hours of Religious Education (i.e., one full credit course) each year at the secondary level (Grades 9-12).
- d) ensure that all Kindergarten students are encouraged, through their play-based learning environment, to appreciate their life in the image of God.
- e) endeavour to meet with the local parish priest at least once per term or semester in order to coordinate masses, liturgical celebrations and faith-based school and church events.
- f) support the program of sacramental preparation in collaboration with the local parish priest, for the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation.
- g) work with staff, the local parish priest and community members to develop an annual pastoral plan in accordance with current guidelines which includes liturgies, masses and other faith-based activities.
- h) receive and process exemption requests in accordance with applicable legislation.

3.5 Consultants responsible for Religious and Family Life Education shall:

- a) Provide leadership in the implementation of the *Ontario Catholic Curriculum Grades 1-8, 9-12 Religious Education and Family Life Education*.
- b) Liaise with Catholic associations (Institute for Catholic Education, Catholic Curriculum Cooperation, Catholic Association of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario) to obtain support and Catholic resources and learning materials.
- c) Partner with Catholic associations in the identification and development of Catholic resources.
- d) Provide support to teachers in the delivery of the *Ontario Catholic Curriculum, Grades 1-8, 9-12 Religious Education and Family Life Education*.

3.6 Teachers shall:

- a) work in collaboration with the school Principal, consultants, staff, parents/guardians, parish and community members to ensure that students receive instruction, participate in faith-based activities and experience an environment that is consistent with PO517 – Catholic Curriculum and Education.
- b) support the catechetical efforts of the parish and the home in guiding student growth and development of their faith journey.
- c) integrate Catholic Social Teachings across all curriculums.
- d) use the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations to guide programming.

3.7 Kindergarten Educators shall:

- a) Utilize the most current related documents which articulate the Catholic dimension of the Kindergarten program in Ontario Catholic schools to support early childhood religious education consistent with the pedagogical processes outlined in the Ontario Kindergarten Program.
- b) support the catechetical efforts of the parish and the home in guiding student growth and development on their faith journey.
- c) work in collaboration with the school Principal, consultant, staff, parents/guardians, parish and community members to ensure that students receive instruction, participate in faith-based activities and

experience an environment that is consistent with PO517 – Catholic Curriculum and Education.

- d) use the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations and Catholic Social Teachings to guide programming.

3.8 Grade 1 - 12 Teachers of Religious Education and Family Life Education shall:

- a) utilize the most current Ontario Catholic Curriculum Policy Documents for planning and instruction.
- b) use the bible and learning materials (teacher guides, textbooks, articles, documents, etc.) approved by Catholic associations to provide students with authentic, meaningful and relevant instruction in Religious and Family Life Education.
- c) carefully review any additional support resources (print, human, online) to ensure that materials are consistent with Catholic faith traditions and respectful of the pastoral role as educators and witnesses of the faith.
- d) deliver the compulsory Religious and Family Life Education Curriculum that consists of no less than four (4) thirty (30) minute periods of Religious Education per week and one (1) thirty (30) minute period of Family Life Education per week at the elementary level (Grades 1-8) and one hundred and ten (110) hours per year at the secondary level (Grades 9-12).
- e) use appropriate and effective instructional strategies to assist students in achieving the expectations found within the Ontario Catholic Curriculum Policy Documents, Grades 1-8, 9-12 Religious Education as well as appropriate methods for assessing and evaluating student learning.
- f) communicate with parents and guardians regarding content and delivery of the Religious Education and Family Life Education Curriculum.
- g) employ a pastoral care approach with students as related to the delivery of the Religious and Family Life Education Curriculums and utilize the school team meeting process to provide additional supports as appropriate when a student is struggling with a sensitive issue.

3.9 Parents/Guardians, as primary educators of their child(ren) shall:

- a) work in collaboration with the school and parish community to nurture and develop their child's God given talents and support their spiritual and academic progress.
- b) engage with school and parish in support of the development of their child's faith journey (e.g., sacramental preparation).

- c) review school communication and online resources to become familiar with the Religious Education & Family Life Education curriculum.

3.10 Clergy and Pastoral teams shall:

- a) endeavour to encourage and support an active participation of children and youth in the life of the parish.
- b) work in collaboration with the home and school in support of the student's faith journey.

3.11 Student shall:

- a) seek to develop their God given talents as they serve with excellence in the light of Christ.
- b) reflect on the value and meaning of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations and how the development of these expectations supports their lifelong personal faith journey.

3.12 Secondary Religious Education Course Exemption Requests

- a) Requests for exemption from the secondary Religious Education Courses and programs pursuant to applicable legislation must be submitted in writing to the Secondary School Principal.
- b) Written exemptions requests from Religious Education courses and programs in Secondary school must be submitted to the secondary school Principal. Subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act* provides for the following exemption from religious courses and programs for "open access" students only:

"[...] no person who is qualified to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board who attends secondary school operated by a Roman Catholic Board shall be required to take part in any program or course of study in Religious Education on written application to the Board of,

- i. The parent or guardian of the person;
- ii. In the case of a person who is 16 or 17 years old who has withdrawn from parental control, the person himself or herself;
- iii. In the case of a person who is 18 years or older, the person himself or herself."
- iv. For clarity, among other indications, "open access" students are students who attend a Catholic Secondary School, but whose parents have been public school supporters.

- c) Students who are not “open access” students are not eligible to obtain a religious exemption under the *Education Act*.
- d) Upon receipt of a parent request for an exemption, the Secondary School principal will review the request with the Family of Schools Superintendent.
- e) Students with exemptions from religious courses and programs shall always be treated with dignity and respect in accordance with our Catholic values.

4. Sources

- 4.1 Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
- 4.2 Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario
- 4.3 Institute for Catholic Education
- 4.4 Ministry of Education
- 4.5 The Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 1-8 – Religious Education (2012)
- 4.6 The Ontario Catholic Secondary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 9-12 – Religious Education (2016)
- 4.7 The Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 1-8 – Family Life Education (2012)
- 4.8 Renewing the Promise – A Pastoral Letter for Catholic Education
- 4.9 PPM162 Exemption from Instruction Related to Human Development and Sexual Health Expectations in the Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8, 2019

5. Appendices

Nil

6. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 6.1 Catholic Curriculum and Education Policy (PO517)

7. Related Forms

Nil