



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

POLICY – PO516

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education

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

Approved: March 22, 2010
Revised: December 8, 2014; May 25, 2026

1. Introduction

The Durham Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) affirms its commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by honouring the rich knowledge, perspectives, histories, cultures, and contributions of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit. In alignment with the Ontario Ministry of Education’s First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007), this policy guides the Board’s efforts to respond effectively to the learning and cultural needs of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students, while ensuring that all students, regardless of ancestry, develop a deeper understanding of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit worldviews, both contemporary and traditional.

Through collaborative engagement, culturally responsive pedagogy, and voluntary self-identification processes, the Board shall provide quality programs, services, and resources that support academic achievement, identity development, and well-being. The Board acknowledges its responsibility for creating safe, inclusive, and affirming spaces for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students, staff, families, and communities, integrating First Nation, Inuit, and Métis knowledge across curriculum areas, supporting professional learning for educators, and establishing advisory structures that reflect First Nation, Métis, and Inuit voices and leadership. Rooted in the beliefs, teachings, and values of the Catholic church, the Board affirms the sacred dignity of every person and the call to live in right relationship with one another and with creation, committing to walk the path of Reconciliation through education.

2. Definitions

Nil

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to affirm the Board's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by ensuring that First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students are supported in their academic achievement, identity development, and well-being. It also aims to nurture understanding and respect for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit perspectives, cultures, and histories among all students and staff.

4. Application / Scope

This policy applies to all the Board's schools, programs, departments, and staff. It guides the development and implementation of curriculum, professional learning, student services, community partnerships, and data collection practices that support Indigenous education. It also applies to all interactions with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and community members.

5. Principles

5.1 The Board recognizes that:

- 5.1.1 Indigenous education is guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, embraces First Nation, Métis, and Inuit knowledge, perspectives, and pedagogies, and emphasizes building and sustaining relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit in community;
- 5.1.2 Prioritizing approaches that recognize the distinct identities and experiences of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit for all learning in Indigenous education honours their unique identities, cultures, and rights:

First Nation(s): Refers to Indigenous peoples who are neither Inuit nor Métis. The term replaces "Indian" in common usage but retains legal significance under the *Indian Act*. First Nations communities may be status or non-status and are recognized as distinct political and cultural persons;

Inuit: Indigenous peoples traditionally inhabiting the Arctic regions of Canada. Inuit are a distinct group under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, with unique cultural, linguistic, and governance traditions;

Métis: Defined by the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Powley (2003)* as a distinct Indigenous people who, in addition to mixed ancestry, developed their own customs, way of life, and group identity separate from First Nations and Inuit ancestors. Métis rights are protected under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*;

Indigenous Peoples: A collective term used to refer to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. While "Indigenous" is widely used in policy and education, a distinctions-based approach is preferred to respect the unique identities and rights of each group ([Ontario Human Rights Commission](#));

- 5.1.3 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students shall have access to culturally relevant programs, supports, and opportunities that affirm their identities and promote academic success and well-being;
- 5.1.4 the voices of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students, families, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community partners, including the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, are valued in shaping program and policies;
- 5.1.5 all First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students and their parents/guardians have the right to voluntarily and confidentially self-identify ancestry as part of a process to develop improved programming, instructional practices, and supports for learners; and
- 5.1.6 Land as teacher is a vital approach to Indigenous education, nurturing spiritual, cultural, and ecological connections that support holistic development and deepen understanding of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit worldviews, and Treaty rights and responsibilities.

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 Board shall provide an ongoing opportunity for self-identification for all students. The *Voluntary Self-Identification for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students* process will be delineated in a supporting administrative procedure.
- 6.3 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples shall serve as foundational documents to implement and inform approaches to the Ontario Catholic curriculum related to Indigenous education.

7. Sources

- 7.1 [Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students \(re: self-identification\)](#)
- 7.2 [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FIPPA\)](#)
- 7.3 [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(MFIPPA\)](#)
- 7.4 [Ontario Education Act, Section 8.1\(1\): Collection and Use of Personal Information](#)
- 7.5 [Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Framework Policy](#)
- 7.6 [Implementation Plan – Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Framework Policy](#)
- 7.7 [Ontario Student Record Guideline](#)

- 7.8 Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- 7.9 The Ontario Human Rights Commission's Guidelines for Collecting Data on Enumerated Grounds Under the Code
- 7.10 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action
- 7.11 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

8. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 8.1 Selection and Reconsideration of Learning Resources Policy (PO508)
- 8.2 Selection and Reconsideration of Learning Resources Administrative Procedure (AP508-1)
- 8.3 First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students Voluntary Self-Identification Administrative Procedure (AP516-1)