

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE – AP521-1

French Language Programs

Area: Academic Services
Policy Reference: French Language Programs (PO521)

Approved: December 8, 2014
Revised: September 15, 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to outline the processes to be followed in Core French and French Immersion programs within the Board.

2. Definitions

Core French (*adapted from A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)*) – All students from Grades 4 to 8 take Core French, unless they are in French Immersion. The Core French program must provide a minimum of 600 hours of French by the end of Grade 8, and one FSL credit (110 hours) is compulsory for high school graduation. The Ontario curriculum documents for FSL provide grade and course specific expectations for the Core French programs.

French Immersion (*adapted from A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)*) – French Immersion is an optional program with a Grade 1 entry point established in the Durham Catholic District School Board. The French Immersion Program must provide a minimum of 3800 hours of French by the end of Grade 8, and a minimum of ten secondary credits in French. The Ontario curriculum documents for FSL provide grade and course specific expectations for French Immersion language programs.

Accommodations (*Growing Success, 2010*) – Students with special education needs may require accommodations to allow them to participate in the curriculum and to demonstrate achievement of the expectations. Accommodations include individualized teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment. In a subject or course identified in the student's IEP as "Accommodated Only", the provincial curriculum expectations are not altered.

Modifications (*Growing Success, 2010*) – Modifications are changes made to the grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student’s learning needs. Modifications may include the use of expectations at a different grade level and/or an increase or decrease in the number and/or complexity of expectations relative to the curriculum expectations for the regular grade level.

3. Procedures

3.1 Instructional Requirements for French Programs

- 3.1.1 In Ontario, the minimum number of hours for French Immersion is 3,800 hours of French instruction by the end of Grade 8. For high school graduation, students must also complete a minimum of ten French Immersion credits (four French language arts and six other subjects taught in French).
- 3.1.2 In Ontario, the minimum number of hours for Core French is 600 hours of French instruction by the end of Grade 8.
- 3.1.3 The Durham Catholic District School Board uses the following requirements of French instruction to meet this eligibility.

French Immersion Grades 1-8

Grade	Percentage of Daily Instruction in French	Annual Hours of Instruction	Accumulated Hours
1	75%	696	696
2	75%	696	1,391
3	75%	696	2,087
4	50%	470	2,557
5	50%	470	3,027
6	50%	470	3,497
7	50%	470	3,967
8	50%	470	4,437

Core French Grades 4-8

Grade	Annual Hours of Instruction	Accumulated Hours
4	120	120
5	120	240
6	120	360
7	120	480
8	120	600

- 3.1.3 The language of instruction for students in French Immersion programs in the Durham Catholic School Board are to be provided according to the chart below:

French Immersion – Subjects in French vs English

Grades	French Instruction	English Instruction
Grade 1	75%: French Language, Math, Social Studies, Arts: Drama and Visual Arts	25%: Religion and Family Life, Sciences, Physical Education & Health, Arts: Dance and Music
Grades 2-3	75% French Language, Math, Social Studies, Arts: Drama and Visual Arts	25% Religion and Family Life; Sciences, Physical Education & Health, Arts: Dance and Music
Grades 4-6	50%: French Language, Sciences, Social Studies, Arts, Physical Education and Health	50%: Math, Language Arts, Religion and Family Life
Grades 7-8	50%: French Language, Sciences, Geography, History, Arts, Physical Education and Health	50%: Math, Language Arts, Religion and Family Life

3.2 Eligibility for entry into French Immersion programs

- 3.2.1 All students entering Gr. 1 will have the option of selecting a French Immersion Program which may or may not be located at their home school. This will allow students to meet the instructional eligibility requirements from the Ministry of Education. Information regarding the French immersion program registration procedure, including deadlines for registration, will be provided annually to all parents/guardians with children in Year 2 of the Kindergarten program.
- 3.2.2 For students registering at a school offering French Immersion and seeking entry into the program beyond the Durham Catholic District School Board's designated Gr. 1 entry grade, the following options upon request shall apply:
- **Review of Academic Enrolment:** The students' academic history in French instruction will be reviewed by the principal of the French Immersion school, with consideration given to past French instruction and program history. Should the principal feel sufficient background and experience in the French language according to age, admission may be granted beyond Grade 1, conditional on availability within the program.
 - **Assessment:** The student's proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing will be evaluated using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) at the grade level of entry (e.g., Grade 3 or Grade 5). The assessment will be conducted by the French Consultant or designate. Following the assessment, the French Consultant will prepare a possible recommendation for consideration by the school principal who will have final approval for registration into the program. This entry is conditional on availability within the program.

- 3.3 This administrative procedure affirms the Ministry expectation that Core French is mandatory for all students in English language elementary schools, while recognizing that a very small number of students may require alternative programming to better support their learning needs.
- 3.4 A student may be considered for exemption from Core French only when all of the following conditions are met:
- a) The student has significant and documented learning needs, including:
 - i. Identified multiple exceptionalities,
 - ii. Complex learning profiles requiring extensive curriculum modification
 - b) The student has received sustained accommodations and/or modifications in Core French, documented through:
 - i. Classroom programming
 - ii. Individual Education Plan (IEP), where applicable
 - iii. In-School Team Meetings
 - c) The exemption is supported by professional recommendations, which may include:
 - i. Board central special education staff
 - ii. Speech-language or psychological assessments
 - d) None of the following, whether considered alone or in combination, shall be considered valid grounds for exemption from Core French:
 - i. Parent/Guardian or student preference
 - ii. Lack of interest or motivation
 - iii. General academic difficulty
 - iv. Attendance or behavioural concerns unconnected to instructional need
 - e) If the conditions outlined in a) through c) above are met, the following process must be followed when considering a Core French exemption:
 - i. School-Based Review
 - The concern is reviewed by an In-School Team, including the Core French teacher
 - Evidence of prior accommodations and interventions is documented over several years

- ii. Consultation with parents/guardians documented through a team meeting
 - Parents/guardians are informed of:
 - The mandatory nature of Core French
 - The implications of an exemption, including potential secondary pathways
 - Consent is required to proceed with an exemption request.
 - iii. Completion of Form AF521-1A, including
 - Rationale for exemption
 - Summary of supports attempted
 - Relevant IEP and/or IPRC documentation
 - A proposed alternative instructional plan outlining how instructional time will be used
 - iv. Superintendent Review
 - The completed request is submitted to the Superintendent of Education - Academic Services (or designate) for review and approval, conditional upon availability of supervision and alternative programming.
- 3.5 Students who have received an exemption in their elementary program before the end of Grade 8, are to be considered for a substitution in the secondary school program (Grade 9 Compulsory FSL credit). Secondary principals will be responsible for determination of exemptions and course substitution decisions for students entering or currently enrolled in Grade 9.
- 3.6 Requests to transfer from the French Immersion program must be initiated by the parent/guardian and considered through a school team meeting. The school team, in consultation with administration, will determine whether a recommendation for a transfer is warranted. Administration will then submit a written request to the Superintendent of Education of Academic Services for review (see Request for French Immersion Transfer Form (AF521-1B)) to ensure they have provided informed consent.
- 3.7 Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to sign the Request for French Immersion Transfer Form (AF521-1B) to ensure they have provided informed consent.
- 3.8 The student should return to their home school unless conditions are met under the Admission of Students Administrative Procedure (AP410-1).

- 3.9 The student will lose eligibility for transportation for their current school if they are no longer enrolled in the French Immersion program. Requests for transportation for students residing outside of the school's attendance area must be consistent with the Board's Transportation Policy (PO429). Should a student transfer out of the program during the school year, they may continue bussing until June at which time this transportation will cease.
- 3.10 All transportation for French programs must be consistent with the Admission of Students Administrative Procedure (AP410-1) and the Student Transportation Policy (PO429).

4. Sources

- 4.1 [A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12](#)
- 4.2 [The Individual Education Plan \(IEP\): A Resource Guide](#)
- 4.3 [The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core French Grades 4-8, Extended French Grades 4-8, French Immersion Grades 1-8](#)

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Request for Core French Exemption (AF521-1A)
- 5.2 Request for French Immersion Transfer (AF521-1B)

6. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 6.1 [French Language Programs Policy \(PO521\)](#)

Appendix 1



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

Request for Core French Exemption

School Name:

Student Name:

Date of Birth:

Status: ELL Other:

Note: Accommodations and/or modifications to the FSL program through an IEP are to be documented and appended to this form before any exemption is requested.

Present Grade Level: 4 5 6 7 8 9

Reason for Exemption/Substitution:

Proposed Instructional Plan for French Time

Student will work on Regular English Program assignments during French with school level supports which will be determined on an individual basis

Student will participate in other school-based programming when and if available

Other

I am aware of the benefits of acquiring a second language listed below:

- In Canada, where French and English have equal status as official languages, there are significant advantages to being able to communicate in both.
- Learning another language can help in the development of interpersonal and social skills.
- Second-language learning provides significant cognitive and academic benefits. It is known to enhance first-language and overall literacy skills.
- French-language skills are an asset in a wide range of occupations.
- Bilingualism is an economic and cultural asset both within Canada and beyond.

I am aware of the implications of this exemption in such that my child will not be able to get the mandatory Core French credit needed to receive the Ontario Secondary School Diploma and an alternative approved substitution will be needed.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

Principal Signature:

Date:

Superintendent of Academic Services Signature:

Date:

Appendix 2



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

Request for French Immersion Transfer

School Name:

Student's Name:

Grade:

Date of Birth:

Reason for Transfer:

Proposed Transition Plan to ensure student success upon transfer:

I am aware of the implications of this transfer in such my child will no longer be eligible for the *French Immersion Certificate* upon graduation. I am also aware that once my child is transferred into the English stream, he/she will not be able to re-enter the program. I also understand that upon transfer, my child may need a transition plan in order to ensure his/her success as they may continue to experience difficulty.

I am aware the benefits of acquiring a second language listed below:

- In Canada, where French and English have equal status as official languages, there are significant advantages to being able to communicate in both.
- Learning another language can help in the development of interpersonal and social skills.
- Second-language learning provides significant cognitive and academic benefits. It is known to enhance first-language and overall literacy skills.
- French-language skills are an asset in a wide range of occupations.
- Bilingualism is an economic and cultural asset both within Canada and beyond.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

Principal Signature:

Date:

Superintendent Signature:

Date: