

CODE OF CONDUCT

POLICY

CODE: J 5.5

CODE OF CONDUCT “For The Good Of All”

*“This is what Yahweh asks of you;
only this, to act justly, to love tenderly,
and to walk humbly with your God.”*
Micah 6

Statement

The London District Catholic School Board believes that:

- The following principles form the cornerstone of all school discipline and that their practice must be evident to all in this Catholic school system:

Respect for the dignity of the individual

Justice with love

Freedom with responsibility

- All system personnel share responsibility with parents, the parish team and the community for creating an environment and attitude conducive to the academic, spiritual, social, aesthetic, and physical development of students to enable them to live and contribute as responsible Catholics.

This belief is affirmed in Board policies, including the Safe Schools Policy. The Board is committed to fostering safe, caring, inclusive, Christ centred learning environments and safe schools. The purpose of the Board’s Code of Conduct is to further promote the mission of the Board and to provide a framework for individual schools to develop a local school based Code of Conduct that fosters a positive school climate and supports student academic achievement.

The Board’s Code of Conduct recognizes that all members of the school community including principals, teachers, other staff members, students, parents, visitors and volunteers have an obligation to comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy.

The Board empowers the Director of Education to establish Regulations and Procedures regarding the Code of Conduct.

Adopted: January 28, 2008

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1. Legislative Framework

The *Education Act* requires school boards to establish policies and guidelines with respect to the conduct of persons in schools. School board codes of conduct must address such matters and include such requirements, as the Ontario Ministry of Education requires. School boards are required to consider the views of school councils with respect to those policies, and should also consult with a variety of stakeholders, including parents, principals, teachers, students, the LDCSB Safe Schools Committee, LDCSB District School Council, their Special Education Advisory Committee, community partners, community agencies, members of Aboriginal Communities (e.g. Elders), and those groups that are traditionally not consulted.

The School Councils Regulation requires schools to solicit the views of school councils with respect to the development of implementation plans for the Board's Code of Conduct.

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 128, issued on October 4, 2007, requires that school boards revise their board code of conduct to incorporate changes in the Provincial Code of Conduct. The memorandum specifically requires school boards to ensure that their codes of conduct:

- include the standards stated in the Provincial Code of Conduct;
- set out standards of behaviour for all members of the school community, (e.g., parents, students, staff, visitors and volunteers);
- link locally developed standards to the relevant provincial standards (e.g., school board rules for the use of electronic devices such as cell phones could be linked to the provincial standard requiring those at school to “respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching”);
- indicate where and/or when these standards will apply (e.g., in school sports activities, on school buses, in off-site school sponsored activities, or in circumstances where engaging in an activity could have a negative impact on the school climate);
- include procedures and timelines for review (reviews must be conducted at least every three years).

In addition to requiring school boards to establish codes of conduct, the *Education Act* permits school boards to require principals to establish a local code of conduct governing the behaviour of persons in the school. All local codes of conduct must be consistent with the Provincial Code of Conduct and with the Board's Code of Conduct.

The *Education Act* contains existing duties and responsibilities for principals, teachers and students which will impact on the creation of local codes of conduct.

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The Board's Safe Schools Policy reflects the Board's commitment to safety in our schools. The Board's Safe Schools Policy provides the foundation for this policy. All local school codes of conduct must be consistent with the legislative framework and the principles and standards established in the Safe Schools Policy. The Board's Code of Conduct is to serve as a guideline for ensuring such consistency.

2. The Provincial Code of Conduct

The *Education Act* permits the Minister of Education to establish a code of conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in schools. The purposes of the Provincial Code of Conduct are:

- to ensure that all members of the school community, especially people in positions of authority, are treated with respect and dignity;
- to promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community;
- to maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility;
- to encourage the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict;
- to promote the safety of people in schools; and
- to discourage the use of alcohol and illegal drugs.

The Provincial Code of Conduct became policy of the Minister of Education on October 4, 2007. The *Education Act* provides that every board shall take such steps as the Minister directs to bring the Provincial Code of Conduct to the attention of the entire school community, including pupils, parents and guardians of pupils, superintendents, senior board staff, board personnel, trustees, and others who may be present in schools or at school related events under the jurisdiction of the board.

3. Standards of Behaviour

Respect, Civility, and Responsible Citizenship

Under the Provincial Code of Conduct, all members of the school community must:

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity;

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- respect differences in people, their ideas, and their opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- respect all members of the school community, especially persons in positions of authority;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching; and/or
- not swear at any person in a position of authority.

Safety

All members of the school community must not:

- engage in bullying behaviours;
- commit sexual assault;
- traffic weapons or illegal drugs;
- give alcohol to a minor;
- commit robbery;
- be in possession of any weapon, including firearms;
- use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;

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- cause injury to any person with an object;
- be in possession of, or be under the influence of, or provide others with alcohol or illegal drugs;
- inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias; and/or
- commit an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property or to property located on the premises of the school.

Electronic Communications and Media Devices

All personal communication devices shall be powered off and stored out-of-sight and not used on school premises or during school sanctioned events, unless otherwise authorized by the principal. Reference: London District Catholic School Board "Use of Personal Electronic Devices and Online Social Networking" Policy Code: J 3.7

Modification of School Day / Alternative Learning Environment

Under some circumstances it may be appropriate for the Principal and parent (or adult pupil) to agree to either a modified school day or the re-direction of the pupil to an alternative learning environment that could include the pupil's home. These intervention strategies will point out the seriousness of the situation while providing an opportunity for either behaviour modification or a cooling off time, avoiding the use of the suspension strategy.

Suspension

Under subsection 306 (1) of the *Education Act*, a principal shall **consider** whether to suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

1. Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person;
2. Possessing alcohol or restricted drugs;
3. Being under the influence of alcohol;

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4. Swearing at any person in a position of authority;
5. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school;
6. Bullying;
7. Any other activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under the policy of the board.

If a principal decides to suspend a pupil for engaging in an activity described in subsection (1), the principal will suspend the pupil from his or her school and from engaging in all school-related activities.

The minimum duration of a suspension is one school day and the maximum duration is 20 school days.

In considering how long the suspension should be, a principal will take into account any mitigating or other factors prescribed by the regulations.

Under clause 306 (1) 7 of the *Education Act*, a pupil may be suspended if he or she engages in an activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under a policy of the board.

Under Board policy, a principal may consider whether to suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

1. Persistent opposition to authority;
2. Habitual neglect of duty;
3. Wilful destruction of school property; vandalism causing damage to school or Board property or property located on school or Board premises;
4. Use of profane or improper language;
5. Use of tobacco;
6. Theft;
7. Aid/incite harmful behaviour;

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8. Physical assault;
9. Being under the influence of restricted drugs;
10. Sexual harassment;
11. Racial harassment;
12. Fighting;
13. Possession or misuse of any harmful substances;
14. Hate-motivated violence;
15. Extortion;
16. Distribution of hate material;
17. Inappropriate use of electronic communications/media; and/or
18. Other – defined as any conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or to the physical or mental well-being of others.

Suspension Pending Possible Expulsion

Under subsection 310 (1) of the *Education Act*, a principal shall suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

1. Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm;
2. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;
3. Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner;
4. Committing a sexual assault;
5. Trafficking in weapons or in restricted drugs;
6. Committing robbery;
7. Giving alcohol to a minor;

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8. Any other activity that, under a policy of a board, is an activity for which a principal must suspend a pupil and, therefore in accordance with this Part, conduct an investigation to determine whether to recommend to the Board that the pupil be expelled.

A pupil who is suspended under this section is suspended from his or her school and from engaging in all school-related activities.

Under Board policy, a principal shall suspend a pupil pending possible expulsion if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

1. Possession of explosive substance;
2. An act considered by the principal to be significantly injurious to the moral tone of the school and/or the physical or mental well-being of others and/or;
3. An act considered by the principal to be in serious breach of the Board's Code of Conduct.

Mitigating Factors and Other Factors

In considering whether to suspend a pupil or whether to recommend to the Board that a pupil be expelled, a principal will take into account any mitigating factors or other factors prescribed by the regulations. The Board interprets the provisions of the Education Act and Regulations in a broad and liberal manner consistent with the Human Rights Code.

Mitigating Factors

Pursuant to the *Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils* Regulation, the following mitigating factors shall be taken into account:

1. The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour;
2. The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour;
3. The pupil's continuing presence in the school does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person.

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Other Factors

The following other factors shall be taken into account if they would mitigate the seriousness of the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled:

1. The pupil's history;
2. Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil;
3. Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment;
4. How the suspension or expulsion would affect the pupil's ongoing education;
5. The age of the pupil;
6. In the case of a pupil for whom an individual education plan has been developed,
 - (i) whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's individual education plan,
 - (ii) whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
 - (iii) whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct.

4. Application of Standards of Behaviour

The Board standards of behaviour apply to all members of the school community, including students, parents and guardians, teachers or other school staff members, volunteers and visitors.

The standards of behaviour apply:

- on school property;
- while travelling on a school bus that is owned by the Board or that is under contract to the Board;
- in-school sports activities;
- in off-site school-sponsored activities; or

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- in circumstances where engaging in an activity could have a negative impact on the school climate.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The LDCSB Code of Conduct recognizes that all members of the school community, including pupils, teachers, principals, parents, other school staff, board personnel, superintendents, and trustees have an obligation to comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy. Each member of the school community has the following roles and responsibilities:

The Board

The Board will provide direction to its schools that ensure opportunity, excellence and accountability in the education system.

The Board is committed to the principles and standards established by the Safe Schools policy. The Board will not tolerate behaviour that jeopardizes the emotional well being or physical safety of members of the school community.

As part of its broader mandate, the Board will:

- develop policies that set out how their schools will implement and enforce the Provincial Code of Conduct and all other rules that they develop that are related to the provincial standards that promote and support respect, civility, responsible citizenship, and safety;
- review these policies regularly with students, staff, parents, volunteers, and the community;
- seek input from Catholic School Advisory Councils, the London District Catholic School Council, the Special Education Advisory Committee, parents, students, staff members, and the school community;
- establish a process that clearly communicates on an on-going basis the Provincial Code of Conduct and local codes of conduct to all parents, students, staff members, and members of the school community in order to obtain their commitment, support and understanding of their respective roles in maintaining a safe school environment;
- develop effective intervention strategies and respond to all infractions related to the standards for respect, civility, responsible citizenship, and safety; and
- provide opportunities for all of the staff to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to develop and maintain academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment.

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Principals

Under the direction of the Board, principals take a leadership role in the daily operation of a school. They provide this leadership by:

- demonstrating care for the school community and a commitment to academic excellence in a safe teaching and learning environment;
- holding everyone under their authority accountable for his or her behaviour and actions;
- empowering students to be positive leaders in their school and community;
- communicating regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community;
- ensuring the communication of local codes of conduct includes a communication plan that outlines how these standards will be made clear to the entire school community, including school communities who have a significant number of parents whose first language is not English; and
- providing an example of respect and civility for all members of the school community.

Principals have a duty to maintain proper order and discipline within the school. Local codes of conduct are a key component of that duty. Principals shall develop local codes of conduct that are expressly tailored for their schools.

Under the provisions of the *Education Act*, principals are responsible for suspending students and for referring expulsions to the school board in appropriate circumstances. Principals will conduct investigations in accordance with the *Guidelines for Conducting a Disciplinary Investigation*.

Teachers and Other School Staff Members

Under the leadership of their principals, teachers and other school staff members maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and school staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;

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- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and the members of the school community;
- prepare students for the full responsibility of citizenship and followers of Christ.

Teachers shall also assist principals in maintaining close co-operation with the school community and in establishing and maintaining consistent disciplinary practices in the school. Under the provisions of the Education Act, teachers do not have the authority to suspend students for one school day. In addition, teachers must assist the principals by reporting incidents and assisting the principal in conducting an investigation.

Students

Students are to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- comes to school prepared, on time, ready to learn, and with assignments completed;
- shows respect for himself or herself, for others, and for those in authority;
- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others; and
- follows the established rules and takes responsibility for his or her own actions.

Students are also expected to fulfill the Ontario Graduate Expectations and live the Gospel message by:

- adhering to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church;
- exercising self-discipline;
- accepting such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm and judicious parent;
- being courteous to fellow pupils and obedient and courteous of teachers;
- showing respect for school property;
- complying with their school dress code/and uniform policy; and
- understanding and complying with the Board's Code of Conduct, "For the Good of All".

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Parents

As primary caregivers and original role models for their children, and as partners in Catholic Education, parents play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the school community in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all members. Parents fulfill their role when they:

- Are actively engaged in their child's learning, social development and faith development;
- Regularly engage in two-way communication with their child's teacher(s) and support staff;
- Read and familiarize themselves with information provided by the school regarding Ministry, Board, and School Policies;
- Support and model behaviour outlined in the Provincial, Board and School Code of Conduct;
- Help their child to be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- Promptly report to the school their child absence or late arrival;
- Work with the school community to prevent, address, and correct discipline issues involving their child.

Parents also play a supportive role through representation on local Catholic School Councils and participation in establishing and maintaining the school's Code of Conduct and Safe School's Policy.

Community Partners and the Police

Police and community members are essential partners in making our schools and communities safer. Community agencies are resources that the Board uses to deliver prevention or intervention programs. Protocols are effective ways of establishing linkages between the Board and community agencies and of formalizing the relationship between them. Community partners need to support and respect the rules of their local schools. Police will investigate and respond to incidents in accordance with the Police/School Board Protocol.

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6. Review

The Board's Code of Conduct will be reviewed for possible revisions to be conducted every three years. The Board will continue to solicit input from school councils, parents, staff and students in the review process.

*“Take up the challenge of growing into
a sense of who you are as Christians
so that you can develop the talents
you have been given and bring the best
of yourself to the society in which
you will be living”.*

**This Moment of Promise
Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops**