

Opening and Closing Exercises

Adopted:

February 20, 1987

Last Reviewed/Revised:

November 19, 2024

Next Scheduled Review: 2027-2028

Associated Policies & Procedures: N/A

Purpose

To provide direction to all members of schools under the Halton Catholic District School Board's (HCDSB) jurisdiction with respect to requirements on opening or closing exercises as stated in the *Education Act*, the *Safe Schools Act, 2000*, O. Reg. 298, and O. Reg 435/00, and to promote the distinctiveness, values, and mission of the HCDSB.

Application and Scope

This policy applies to all schools under the jurisdiction of the HCDSB.

References

[Education Act](#)

[O. Reg. 298](#)

[O. Reg. 435/00](#)

[Safe Schools Act, 2000](#)

Principles

- HCDSB, in partnership with home and Church, is an inclusive and equitable learning community, dedicated to providing excellence in Catholic education by developing Christ-centred individuals enabled to transform society.
- The religious environment and climate of the Catholic School System permeates throughout the whole of school life.
- Catholic schools endorse and promote the mandate, values, traditions, and distinctiveness of the Catholic School System.

- Catholic schools instill in students respect, loyalty, allegiance, and pride in their country.

Requirements

- The Principal shall ensure that opening and/or closing exercises are delivered in a manner that is inclusive and accessible for all students (e.g., via video, posting announcements, etc.).
- Formal prayer shall form part of every opening and/or closing exercise and shall include the Our Father prayer.
- Land acknowledgements shall form part of every opening or closing exercise.
- Scriptural/spiritual readings may form part of every opening or closing exercise.
- Secular readings or recitations may form part of every opening or closing exercise but may not replace scriptural/spiritual readings.
- The singing of *O Canada* shall form part of every opening or closing exercise. Students and staff shall participate in the singing of *O Canada*.
- A student is not required to sing *O Canada* in the following circumstances:
 - In the case of a student who is less than 18 years old, if the student's parent or guardian applies to the Principal to be exempted from doing so.
 - In the case of a student who is at least 18 years old, if the student applies to the Principal to be exempted from doing so.

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Board

AUTHORIZED BY: _____
Chair of the Board