

Progressive Discipline & Safety in Schools Code of Conduct – Suspension and Expulsions

Adopted:

January 15, 2008

Last Reviewed/Revised:

November 19, 2024

Next Scheduled Review: 2027-2028

Associated Policies & Procedures:

[**VI-44** Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools](#)

[**I-11** International Student Admission Requirements \(Fee Paying Students\)](#)

[**I-14** Smoking/Vaping Ban](#)

[**I-30** Video Surveillance](#)

[**VI-83** Video Surveillance Procedure](#)

[**I-43** Use of Technology and Digital Citizenship](#)

[**VI-62** Use of Technology and Digital Citizenship](#)

[**VI-63** Social Media](#)

[**II-03** Principal Designate in Schools](#)

[**II-10** Releasing Students from School](#)

[**II-12** Management of Aggressive Student Behaviours Within Our Schools](#)

[**II-26** Managing Student Risk in Interschool Sports](#)

[**II-28** Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping, and Drug Education and Abuse in Schools](#)

[**II-40** Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#)

[**II-41** School Uniform Dress Code – School Dress Code](#)

[**II-45** Equity and Inclusive Education](#)

[**VI-54** Equity and Inclusive Education](#)

[**VI-60** Student Groups in Catholic Schools](#)

[**II-48** Violent Threat Risk Assessment](#)

[**III-15** Workplace Violence](#)

[**III-16** Workplace Discrimination and Harassment](#)

[**II-20** Child Abuse and Protection of Students](#)

Purpose

This policy supports and encourages a safe school environment through the application of progressive discipline, intervention and consequences within the framework of human rights and equity for student actions not in compliance with the HCDSB's Code of Conduct and the *Standards of Behaviour* described in the *Ontario School Code of Conduct*.

This policy authorizes the creation of procedures for implementation, which shall be considered guidelines in the best interest of equitable outcomes for students pursuant to the *Education Act*, as amended and Ministry of Education Policy Program Memoranda (PPMs) included in the references below.

Application and Scope

This policy applies to all students over their full academic enrollment with the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) on school property, virtual learning environments, at school/HCDSB authorized activities, while using school authorized transportation services, or in other venues or locations, digitally and in-person where an inappropriate act is considered by the principal to be harmful or detrimental to the moral tone, physical or mental well-being of the school community.

References

[Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms](#)

[Education Act](#)

[Ontario School Code of Conduct](#)

[PPM 119 Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools](#)

[PPM128 Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct](#)

[PPM 141 School Board Programs for Students on Long Term Suspension](#)

[PPM 142 School Board Programs for Expelled Students](#)

[PPM 144 Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#)

[PPM 145 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour](#)

[Reg. 472/07 Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils – Mitigating Factors](#)

[Statutory Powers Procedure Act](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

Principles

- HCDSB recognizes that student conduct within our schools shall be rooted in Gospel values and the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Ontario Human Rights Code, principles of equity and inclusion, the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, and the HCDSB's Mission, Vision and Governing Values.

- HCDSB acknowledges the disproportionate impact of disciplinary practices on historically underserved demographic groups including Black, Indigenous, racialized students, students with disabilities and students with low economic status households.
- HCDSB recognizes that students have a responsibility to resolve conflict and differences in a respectful, civil and non-violent manner.
- HCDSB recognizes that injurious conduct includes, but is not limited to, verbal, physical and sexual assault, defiance, vandalism, harassment, intimidation, bullying, verbal, written or cyber bullying, threats, racist and/or hate-based language or behaviour. Appropriate consequences will be applied in accordance with the *Ontario School Code of Conduct Standards of Behaviour, (as amended)* and provisions of the *Education Act (as amended)*.
- HCDSB recognizes and affirms that the Principal, subject to the authority of the appropriate Supervisory Officer, is in charge of the school and may take specific disciplinary action as outlined in the *Education Act*, Regulations and respective HCDSB Policy and Procedures.
- The *Provincial Code of Conduct* and the Halton Catholic District School Board Code of Conduct include the following Standards of Behaviour:

Standards of Acceptable Behaviour

Respect, Civility and Responsible Citizenship

All members of the school community must:

- comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws;
- comply with all Ministry of Education, school board and school policies;
- promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students and upholds human rights for all students, including students of any age, ancestry, colour, citizenship, creed, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, place of origin, race, sex, or sexual orientation;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity in words and actions;
- respect the uniqueness of each individual, their ideas and their opinions, beliefs and values, framed within the Ontario Human Rights Code and Catholic Social Teaching;
- treat one another with dignity and respect, both in person and online at all times, especially when there is disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly while upholding human rights and human dignity, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, disability, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or socioeconomic status;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;

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- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- refrain from using abusive language or swearing at another person;
- 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;
- promote the prevention of bullying;
- not use student personal mobile devices during the instructional time except under the following circumstances:
 - for educational purposes, as directed by an educator
 - for health and medical purposes
 - to support special education needs
- use images and language in compliance with the Code of Conduct when posting opinions, critiquing others, or when chatting on social media platforms or within virtual learning environments.

Safety

All members of the school community must not:

- engage in bullying behaviours, including cyberbullying;
- commit sexual assault or sexual harassment;
- traffic in weapons or illegal and/or restricted drugs;
- give alcohol illegal/restricted drugs, or cannabis to a minor;
- commit robbery or theft;
- be in possession of any weapon or replica, including firearms;
- use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;
- cause injury to any person with an object;
- be in possession of alcohol, cannabis) and illegal drugs;
 - for students, this would also include being in possession of electronic cigarette, tobacco and nicotine products
- use, or be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, electronic cigarettes, illegal drugs or related products;

- provide others with alcohol, illegal/restricted drugs, tobacco, electronic cigarettes, cannabis and related products;
- inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- film and/or post images of physical altercations or any other infractions of the School Code of Conduct;
- record, take or share non-consensual recordings or photos of members of the school community;
- commit an act of vandalism that causes damage to school property or to property located on the premises of the school;
- engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias; and,
- engage in any action that threatens the safety of another person in the school community.

Requirements

- The *Provincial Code of Conduct*, the Halton Catholic District School Board Code of Conduct and the *Education Act* create expectations for behaviour for all persons on school property including virtual learning environments or other environments that have nexus to the school
- It is important that all students have a safe, caring and accepting school environment in order to maximize their learning potential and to ensure a positive school climate for all members of the school community.
- Pursuant to the *Education Act*, principals are required to maintain proper order and discipline using progressive discipline interventions and strategies in schools, and students are responsible to the principal for their conduct and are required to accept such discipline as would be exercised by a reasonable, kind, firm, and judicious parent.
- To meet the goals of creating a safe, caring, and accepting school environment, the Halton Catholic District School Board supports the use of positive proactive practices as well as consequences for inappropriate behaviour, including interventions that are part of the progressive discipline continuum, which includes suspension and expulsion where necessary. The HCDSB considers homophobia, gender-based violence, and harassment on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, ancestry, origin, religion, creed, family status, socio-economic status, disability and/or any other immutable characteristic or grounds protected by the *Human Rights Code*, as well as inappropriate sexual behaviour unacceptable. Every effort is made to prevent this unacceptable behaviour, including the use of positive practices to prevent such behaviour. The Halton Catholic District School Board authorizes principals, or their delegates, to foster resolutions and positive outcomes in appropriate circumstances, up to and including a referral to the Discipline Committee of the HCDSB for expulsion from all schools. Principals,

in consultation with HCDSB staff, will review all mitigating factors to determine whether the behaviour is within the student's control.

- HCDSB does not support discipline measures that are solely punitive or the use of exclusion as a disciplinary measure, rather focuses on restorative practices based on compassion, reflection, dignity, equity and Gospel values.
- Schools are encouraged to implement proactive practices and corrective supportive practices when possible. However, before applying disciplinary measures, the principal/designate and Discipline Committee of the HCDSB shall consider the disproportionate impacts of disciplinary decisions on students with disabilities, Indigenous, Black and racialized students as protected by the *Human Rights Code* and whether or not accommodation is required.
- This policy authorizes the creation of procedures for implementation, which might include requirements described in Ministry of Education PPMs as matters of policy, and any such procedures shall be considered guidelines pursuant to the *Education Act* and other relevant and/or related Ministry of Education materials and all of which will be sufficient for the purposes of implementing the requirements of Ministry of Education Policy Program Memoranda.
- At the start of each term, and throughout the school year, the principal shall promote a positive, safe and caring environment by communicating expectations proactively and respectfully to students with the support of teachers in accordance with the Halton Catholic District School Board's Student Code of Conduct and Standards of Behaviour. Principals will consider the capacity, characteristics and developmental level of individual students when communicating these expectations.
- Principals, shall, as soon as reasonably possible, notify the parent or guardian of the student who the principal believes has been harmed as a result of an activity described in subsection 306(1) or 310(1) in the *Education Act* and the parent or guardian of any student in the school who the principal believes has engaged in the activity that resulted in the harm.
- The principal or designate will proactively communicate to students and parents/guardians information about the Safe Schools Committee, parent engagement opportunities and student leadership groups.
- Principals must contact the parents or guardians of victims of such incidents unless:
 - the victim is 18 years old or over;
 - the victim is 16 or 17 years old and has withdrawn from parental control; or
 - in the opinion of the principal, doing so would put the victim at risk of harm from the parent at which point a report will be made to the Children's Aid Society as per Duty to Report (Policy II-20 Child Abuse and Protection of Students).

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- Principals must develop a safety support plan to support and protect the victim(s). The Safety Support Plan must include, but is not limited to, consideration of additional in-school counselling such as Child and Youth Counsellor, Social Worker, etc.
- HCDSB employees, who work directly with students, or who are witness to language or behaviour that contravenes the Code of Conduct, shall respond to and report incidents that may have a negative impact on school climate.
- All HCDSB employees shall report to the principal as soon as reasonably possible if they become aware that a student may have engaged in an activity, for which the students must be considered for suspension or expulsion.
 - A principal of a school can delegate their powers under Part XIII of the *Education Act* (Behaviour, Discipline and Safety) to a vice-principal of the school or a teacher employed in the school, per Ministry policy.
 - See *Procedure VI-44 Progressive Discipline & Safety in Schools* for associated procedures, and reporting forms.
 - See *Policy III-15 Workplace Violence* and *Policy III-16 Workplace Harassment* for related requirements.
 - See *Policy II-40 Bullying Prevention and Intervention* for related requirements.
 - See *Policy II-45* and *Procedure VI-54 Equity and Inclusive Education* for related requirements.

Positive Practices

In order to promote and support appropriate and positive student behaviours that contribute to creating and sustaining safe, caring and accepting learning and teaching environments that encourage and support students to reach their full potential, the HCDSB directs the consistent use of positive practices for: (1) prevention, (2) positive behaviour management, (3) intervention and support, and (4) advocacy.

The following preventative practices shall be considered:

- Catholic Social Teaching;
- Indigenous Education;
- Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations;
- Awareness of rights and responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- Anti-bullying and violence prevention programs;
- Healthy lifestyles and Mental Health Literacy;
- Anti-Indigenous Racism, Anti-Black Racism, Anti-Asian Racism, Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Ableism, Homophobia, Transphobia, and Anti-oppression education and training; Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy;

- Mentorship programs;
- Restorative Practices;
- Student leadership; and,
- Student success strategies.

Positive behaviour management practices may include:

- Class placement;
- Effective supervision;
- Conflict resolution;
- Restorative practice;
- Individual, peer and group counselling;
- Mentorship programs;
- Positive encouragement and reinforcement;
- Program modifications or accommodations;
- Safety Plans;
- School, HCDSB and community support programs;
- Anti-racism, anti-oppression education and training; and,
- Student success strategies.

HCDSB recognizes that, in some circumstances, positive practices might not be effective or sufficient to address inappropriate student behaviour. In such circumstances, the HCDSB supports the use of restorative practices and a progressive discipline approach.

In circumstances where a student will receive a consequence for their behaviour, it is the expectation of the HCDSB that the principle of progressive discipline, consistent with *Ministry of Education* direction and *PPM 145*, will be applied, if appropriate.

Progressive Discipline:

The goal of this policy, with respect to progressive discipline, is to support a safe, inclusive and respectful learning and teaching environment in which every student can reach their full potential. Appropriate action must consistently be taken by schools to address behaviours that are contrary to Provincial and HCDSB Codes of Conduct.

Progressive discipline is a whole-school approach that makes use of a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences, building upon strategies that promote positive behaviours. The range of interventions, supports, and consequences used by the HCDSB and all schools must be clear and developmentally appropriate, and must include learning opportunities for students in order to

reinforce positive behaviours and help students make good choices. For students with special education and/or disability related needs, interventions, supports and consequences must be consistent with the expectations in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or their demonstrated abilities.

HCDsB, and school administrators, must consider all mitigating and other factors, as required by the *Education Act* and as set out in *Ontario Regulation 472/07*.

Progressive discipline may include early and/or ongoing intervention strategies, such as:

- Conflict mediation and resolution;
- Restorative practices, where possible;
- Consultation;
- Parent/teacher communication early in the term/semester;
- Contact with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
- Peer mentoring;
- Referral to counselling with Child Youth Counsellor and/or Social Worker;
- Referral to counselling with a provider in the community;
- Review of expectations;
- Verbal reminders;
- Volunteer service to the school community; and/or,
- Written reflection with a learning component and/or the completion of learning modules.

Progressive discipline may also include a range of interventions, supports and consequences when inappropriate behaviours have occurred, with a focus on improving behaviour, such as one or more of the following:

- Detentions;
- Meeting with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), student, vice-principal and/or principal;
- Referral to a community agency for anger management or substance abuse counselling;
- Restitution for damages;
- Restorative practices including contributions to the life of the school;
- Transfer;
- Withdrawal from class; and/or,
- Withdrawal of privileges.

When addressing inappropriate behaviour, school staff should consider the particular student and circumstances, including any mitigating and other factors including trauma, marginalization, bullying,

etc., as set out in the HCDSB's *Procedure VI-44 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools*, the nature and severity of the behaviour, and the impact on the school climate.

HCDSB also supports the use of suspension and expulsion as outlined in *Part XIII* of the *Education Act* where a student has committed one or more of the infractions outlined below on school property, during a school-related activity or event, and/or in circumstances where the infraction has an impact on the school climate (either in in-person and/or virtual learning environments)

Suspension:

The infractions for which a suspension may be imposed by the principal include:

1. Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person;
2. Harmful language or behaviour towards members protected under the Human Rights Code (racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, Islamophobia, etc.)
3. Possessing alcohol, illegal drugs/substances or, unless the student is a medical cannabis user, cannabis;
4. Being under the influence of alcohol or, unless the student is a medical cannabis user, cannabis and/or illegal/restricted drugs/substance;
5. Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority;
6. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the student's school or to property located on the premises of the student's school;
7. Bullying which includes Cyberbullying (see *Procedure VI-44*);
8. Any other activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a student under a policy of the HCDSB:
 - a) Any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the moral tone of the school;
 - b) Any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the physical or mental well-being of members of the school community; or
 - c) Any act considered by the principal to be contrary to the HCDSB or School Code of Conduct including but not limited to the following:
 - academic dishonesty – attempting to deceive by cheating, copying or plagiarizing
 - defiance – opposition to authority
 - disorderly conduct – persistent opposition to authority, conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school
 - explosive devices – use of or possession of explosive devices
 - extortion – to take money, homework, or property under threat of harm or duress

- fire setting, bomb threat, fire alarm – setting a fire or an act that places individuals, property, or community at risk
- harassment – repeated comments or conduct that is known or ought to be known as unwelcome
- hate-based incidents – words or actions considered offensive with reference to human dignity and the Ontario Human Rights Code, such as a person's age, culture, disability, gender, race, religion or appearance
- smoking/vaping on school property
- theft – taking, possessing property without the permission of the owner
- trespass – unauthorized presence on school property
- truancy – persistent unexplained absence
- vehicle use – reckless or dangerous use of a vehicle, e.g., car, bicycle, motorcycle, etc.

A student may be suspended only once for an infraction and may be suspended for a minimum of one (1) school day and a maximum of twenty (20) school days.

Mitigating and Other Factors:

Before imposing a suspension under section 306 of the Education Act, the principal, as required by the *Education Act*, must consider any mitigating and other factors as set out in the Student Discipline Procedures. For the purpose of the Student Discipline Procedures, the HCDSB interprets the provisions of the *Education Act* and Regulations consistent with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Expulsion:

In the case of suspension pending expulsion, mitigating and other factors shall be considered in determining the duration of the suspension.

A principal shall suspend a student and shall consider whether to recommend expulsion if they believe that the student 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 or a replica;
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. Uttering hate-based language – words or actions considered offensive with reference to human dignity and the Ontario Human Rights Code such as a person's age, culture, disability, gender, race, religion or appearance
5. Committing sexual assault;
6. Trafficking in weapons or replica, illegal or restricted drugs;
7. Committing robbery;
8. Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor;
9. Bullying, if,
 - i. the student has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and/or
 - ii. the student's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.
 - iii. any activity listed in the Education Act, subsection 306(i) that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor.
10. Any other activity that, under a policy of the HCDSB, is an activity for which a principal must suspend a student and conduct an investigation to determine whether to recommend to the HCDSB that the student be expelled:
 - a) An act considered by the principal to be significantly injurious to the moral tone of the school and/or to the physical or mental well-being of others;
 - b) A pattern of behaviour that is so inappropriate that the student's continued presence is injurious to the effective learning and/or working environment of others;
 - c) Activities engaged in by the student on or off school property that cause the student's continuing presence in the school to create an unacceptable risk to the physical or mental well-being of other person(s) in the school or HCDSB;
 - d) Activities engaged in by the student on or off school property that have caused extensive damage to the property of the HCDSB or to goods that are/were on HCDSB property;
 - e) The student has demonstrated through a pattern of behaviour that they have not prospered by the instruction available to them and that they are persistently resistant to making changes in behaviour which would enable them to prosper; or
 - f) Any act considered by the principal to be a serious violation of the HCDSB or School Code of Conduct.

Mitigating Factors and Other Factors:

Where a principal imposes a suspension and conducts an investigation to determine whether to recommend expulsion, the Principal must consider any mitigating and other factors as set out in the Student Discipline Procedures in determining whether to recommend an expulsion from the student's school or from all schools of the HCDSB, as required by the *Education Act*. If the principal determines it is not appropriate to recommend an expulsion, the principal must consider mitigating and other factors in deciding whether to 1) confirm the suspension and its duration; 2) confirm the suspension but shorten the duration; or 3) withdraw the suspension and expunge the record of suspension.

For the purpose of the Procedure for Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools, the HCDSB interprets the provisions of the *Education Act* and Regulations consistent with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Principal Investigation:

Before recommending an expulsion from the student's school or from all schools of the HCDSB, the principal must complete an investigation, as required by the *Education Act*, which is consistent with the expectations for principal investigations outlined in the HCDSB's Procedure VI-44 *Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools*.

Suspension Appeal

Where a student's parent/guardian or the student, if 18 or older or 16 or 17 and has removed themselves from parental control, disagrees with the decision of a principal to suspend the student that student's parent/guardian or the student, if 18 or older or 16 or 17 and removed from parental control, may appeal the principal's decision to suspend the student, in accordance with the HCDSB's Procedure VI-44 *Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools*.

Suspension appeals will not be conducted in accordance with or be subject to the *Statutory Powers Procedure Act*.

Appeal of the HCDSB Decision to Expel

The adult student or the student's parent/guardian may appeal a HCDSB decision to expel the student to the Child and Family Services Review Board.

The Child and Family Services Review Board is designated to hear and determine appeals of school - HCDSB decisions to expel students.

The decision of the Child and Family Services Review Board is final.

Superintendent Responsible for Student Discipline

The Superintendent Responsible for Student Discipline shall have the powers and duties outlined in the HCDSB's Procedure VI-44 *Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools*.

Discipline Committee:

HCDSB authorizes the creation of a Discipline Committee of no fewer than three (3) Trustees to decide appeals of suspensions and recommendations for expulsion. For these purposes, the

Discipline Committee will conduct the suspension appeals and expulsion hearings in accordance with the Student Discipline Procedures, Suspension Appeal Guidelines, Expulsion Hearing Guidelines and Rules, and within the framework of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

In all cases where consequences might be recommended or applied, teachers, administrators and the HCDSB will consider the safety and dignity of all students, and the impact of the activity on the school climate.

The Discipline Committee shall have the powers as set out in the *Education Act* and any other powers to implement any appropriate order.

Programs for Suspended and Expelled Students:

Programs will be provided for all students suspended for a period of 6 – 20 days. A program will be provided for all students expelled from all schools of the HCDSB (see *Procedure VI-44*).

In continuing to promote Gospel values, all programs must include a spiritual/Catholic component, at the appropriate level of student need and understanding.

Reporting of Violent Incidents:

HCDSB shall report the total number of violent incidents on an annual basis to the Ministry of Education through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS).

HCDSB will collect and analyse data on the nature of violent incidents, suspension and expulsions to support the development of HCDSB policies and to inform HCDSB and school improvement plans.

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Board

AUTHORIZED BY: _____
Chair of the Board