

Equity and Inclusive Education	
Adopted: June 7, 2011	Last Reviewed/Revised: May 6, 2024
Next Scheduled Review: 2026-2027	
Associated Policies & Procedures: II-45 Equity and Inclusive Education VI-60 Student Groups in Catholic Schools I-43 Use of Technology and Digital Citizenship VI-62 Use of Technology and Digital Citizenship II-34 Participation in Programs and Courses of Study in Catholic Religious Education II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools Code of conduct – Suspensions and Expulsions VI-44 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools II-40 Bullying Prevention and Intervention II-43 Voluntary Confidential Self-Identification of First Nation Metis and Inuit Students V-01 Use of School Grounds and Community Use of School Facilities VI-64 Community Use of School Facilities V-03 Photography, Advertising and Sales Representatives V-18 Community Engagement and Public Consultation Policy III-11 Hiring and Promotion – Academic and Non-Academic Personnel VI-99 Hiring Practices for Teachers and Occasional Teachers VI-04 Complaints Resolution Process Workplace Discrimination Harassment Violence VI-102 Responding to Hate or Bias Motivated Incidents Involving or Impacting Students	

Purpose

To meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education's Equity and Inclusive Education *Strategy* (2010), Ontario's Equity Action Plan (2017) and the Ontario *Human Rights Code Accepting School Act* to support and provide direction for the Halton Catholic District School Board's Policy II-45 Equity and Inclusive Education and to support the HCDSB's Strategic Plan 2024-2028. As well, this procedure is written in recognition of fundamental rights and freedoms including those set out in the Constitution Act 1867, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Constitution Act 1982.

Application and Scope

This procedure applies to all students, staff and trustees, volunteers and stakeholders of the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB). In specific sections, where indicated, there are responsibilities incumbent on various HCDSB level service areas.

References

[Anti-Racism Act 2017](#)

[Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act \(2012\) Subsection 169.1](#)

[Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops: Discovering the Unity of Life and Love: A reflection on the Foundations for a Theology of Human Love](#)

[Constitution Act, 1982: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
[Education Act](#)

[Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation \(2014\)](#)

[OCSTA: "Respecting Difference: A Resource for Catholic Schools in the Province of Ontario](#)

[Ontario's Anti-Black Racism Strategy](#)

[Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan \(2017\)](#)

[Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009 – Reflective Tool](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code: Gender Identity and Gender Expression](#)

[Nostrae Aetate](#)

[PPM 108 Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)

[PPM 119 Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools \(2013\)](#)

[PPM 165 School Board Teacher Hiring Practices](#)

[Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy \(2009\)](#)

Principles

In accordance with the Catholic Church's Teachings and Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, the following principles of equity and inclusive education will be upheld in all Halton Catholic District Board operations. Equity and inclusion:

- is a foundation of excellence;

- meets individual needs;
- identifies and eliminates barriers;
- promotes a sense of belonging and acceptance;
- involves the broad community common good;
- builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives; and
- is demonstrated throughout the system.

As outlined in Ontario's Anti-Black Racism Strategy the impact and consequences of our history have created systemic barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all parts of society, including education. Black Ontarians of all backgrounds and intersectional identities live a shared present-day experience of anti-Black racism. The enduring legacy of anti-Black racism in education and in HCDSB is evidenced through HCDSB's data collection and analysis, which highlight disparities in outcomes for Black students and staff in relation to their achievement and wellbeing.

Requirements

Requirements in this procedure are organized to correspond to the same sections as outlined in HCDSB Policy II-45 Equity and Inclusive Education. Specifically, requirements for both boards and schools are grouped as follows:

1. HCDSB Policies, Programs, Procedures and Practices
2. Shared and Committed Leadership
3. School Community Relationships
4. Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices
5. Religious Accommodation
6. School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment
7. Professional Learning
8. Accountability and Transparency
9. Data Collection, Integration and Reporting

1. HCDSB POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

HCDSB WILL:

- Incorporate human rights and equity principles and measurable goals in the HCDSB's Strategic Plan and HCDSB Improvement Plan.

- Create an HCDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Steering Committee to include representation from a cross section of the HCDSB to guide the HCDSB's vision for equity and inclusive education.
- Review existing policies, programs, guidelines, operations, practices, and HCDSB improvement plans to ensure that principles of human rights, equity and inclusive education are explicitly embedded and systemic barriers are identified and addressed.
- Ensure all future policies, guidelines and practices are drafted and implemented in accordance with the HCDSB's Equity and Inclusive Education policy.
- Develop and maintain policies and organizational structures that promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students.
- Ensure that requirements of students based on their membership in a Code protected ground are assessed when applying policies and developing accommodations.
- Ensure all persons with disabilities are accommodated appropriately and in a manner consistent with the Code.
- Provide training for school and system leaders to facilitate equitable recruitment and hiring to reflect Ontario's diverse society and remove barriers to recruitment of underrepresented communities.
- Provide opportunities for the diverse school community, including students, staff, parents/guardians, trustees, and community members to provide active input into HCDSB policies and improvement plans on a bi-annual basis.
- Review Human Resources Services practices to ensure compliance with equity and inclusive education and human rights requirements.
- Ensure that the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy is widely disseminated among all staff and training is provided on key aspects of the policy and associated procedure to all staff.

OUR SCHOOLS WILL:

- Implement HCDSB equity and inclusive education policies, programs and school improvement plans consistent with the Code and that reflect the needs of their diverse Catholic school community.
- Ensure that all information about new and revised procedures are communicated to all students, staff, and others in the school community.

2. SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP**HCDSB WILL:**

- Designate human and financial resources to coordinate the implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and Procedure.
- Identify and appoint a contact person to liaise with the Ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices and resources.

- Provide extensive and ongoing education and training for students, administrators, staff and trustees in implementing equity and inclusive education and leadership initiatives.
- Establish selection criteria for leadership positions that prioritize demonstrated commitment, knowledge and skills related to human rights, equity and inclusive education implementation and inclusive leadership.

OUR SCHOOLS WILL:

- Create an Equity and Inclusive Education Team.
- Promote equity minded student leadership related to issues of social justice.
- Develop student leadership opportunities in equity with student facilitators representing diverse identities and experiences under supervision of appropriate staff.

3. SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**HCDSB WILL:**

Review and/or initiate tools, for example, school climate surveys, to determine stakeholders' views on school environment and act upon relevant next steps.

- Expand community efforts to foster new partnerships that engage a cross-section of diverse students, parents, staff, community members and various community organizations, including business groups, to ensure inclusion.
- Establish processes to identify and address systemic barriers that limit or prevent all sectors of the school community from benefiting from enhanced opportunities for HCDSB representation and greater access to HCDSB initiatives.
- Identify under-represented communities and facilitate their participation and involvement in HCDSB activities.
- Develop an advisory committee of parents/guardians and community stakeholders to guide the HCDSB's work on equity and inclusive education.
- Provide ongoing reports to Catholic School Council Chairs on equity and inclusive education initiatives and training.
- Establish Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee to provide input, review and make recommendations to dismantle anti-Black racism and promote wellbeing of Black students and staff.

OUR SCHOOLS WILL:

- Invite and support representation of diverse groups, including students from diverse social identities, on school committees, including school improvement planning.
- Actively encourage engagement of parents/guardians who previously may not have been active in the school community (e.g., engage settlement workers in outreach).
- Ensure that parents/guardians and community members are valued as important resources in creating and maintaining inclusive and equitable school communities.

4. INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

HCDSB WILL:

- Review student assessment and evaluation policies and practices to identify and address systemic bias that may exist in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated in order to reduce the achievement gap. The principles of such a review will be consistent with the *Code*.
- Ensure schools meet the equity and inclusive education requirements in their School Improvement Plans and the HCDSB Improvement Plan.
- Promote culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy as a key strategy for fostering inclusive schools and curriculum.
- Support learning about the perspectives and cultures of Indigenous peoples to help students better understand Canada's past, present and potential for the future.
- Integrate learning about the history of residential schools, treaties and the legacy of colonialism in curriculum.
- Integrate the experiences of Black Canadians into the curriculum.
- Develop an HCDSB wide plan for the celebration of Black History Month.

OUR SCHOOLS WILL:

- Promote grade team planning and use of Teaching Learning Critical Pathways; including teacher moderated marking to ensure a collaborative approach to student assessment.
- Promote and encourage enrolment in educational opportunities in Indigenous Education.
- Ensure that assessment and evaluation support growth and learning, with the belief that each and every student can achieve and be successful given the appropriate time and support.
- Use a variety of assessment strategies and instruments to inform short- and long-term planning to reduce gaps in student achievement and improve student learning.
- Support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and procedures.
- Ensure consistent monitoring of the growth of students who are on Individual Education Plans and/or are English Language Learners to ensure that the specific needs of students are addressed through the accuracy of programming based on best practices in assessment; all needed accommodations and modifications must be in place to assist the student in accessing the curriculum.
- Ensure all students who have English language learning needs receive an education program that closely aligns with their specific needs and that ensures equity of access to the curriculum.
- Ensure access and use of assistive technologies for students who require accommodations to support achievement and success.

- Improve student learning and achievement through the use of differentiated product (e.g. an oral response for a reading comprehension task or a mind map in lieu of an essay or a dramatic performance that demonstrates the student's learning).
- Support teaching, learning and assessment practices that are reflective of and responsive to students' lived experiences and identities.
- Ensure that resources and instructional strategies are in accordance with Catholic Teachings and values; are in compliance with the provisions of the Code with respect to the prohibited grounds of discrimination; show people with diverse dimensions of identities in non-stereotypical settings, occupations, and activities; explore the roles and contributions of all peoples in Canada, and the factors that shaped these roles; encourage open discussion of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Code in society, the community, and the school.
- Support Grade 9 students in achieving their maximum potential in choosing pathways to work, college, apprenticeship or university.

5. RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

HCDSB WILL:

- Provide a religious accommodation guideline in keeping with the Code, and consistent with its denominational rights, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of creed, and other Code protected grounds, and provides a duty to accommodate.
- Provide in-service for all administrators on Religious Accommodation.

OUR SCHOOLS WILL:

- Revise/implement their religious accommodation practices to align with the HCDSB's religious accommodation guideline.
- Inform students and their parents/guardians and staff of their right to request accommodation for religious beliefs and practices.

6. SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

HCDSB WILL:

- Promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all identities based on the Ontario Human Rights Code protected grounds.
- Promote Black student affinity groups and/or unions in elementary and secondary schools to enhance school climate for Black students.
- Promote awareness of rights and responsibilities with respect to human rights in order to prevent discrimination and harassment.
- Establish human rights complaints procedures that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely and that will also enable the HCDSB to respond in a timely manner.

- Investigate in a thorough and timely manner any claims of discrimination and/or racism and take appropriate action consistent with the principles of the Code and Safe and Accepting Schools Act, Bullying Prevention and Intervention and Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour policies and procedures including Responding to Hate or Bias Motivated Incidents Involving or Impacting Students.
- Use school climate surveys to collect information from its pupils, staff and parents/guardians of its pupils at least once every two (2) years.
- In an effort to alleviate the negative impact of suspensions and exclusions on students, proactive programs will be initiated or expanded to decrease the number of suspensions and expulsions.
- Communicate that administrators are expected to use progressive discipline and professional discretion, understand the duty to accommodate students with disabilities and consider the disproportionate impact of discipline on Indigenous, Black and other equity deserving groups.
- Support students who want to establish and lead activities and organizations that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, the acceptance of and respect for others and the creation of a positive school climate, including activities or organizations that promote gender equity, anti-racism, awareness and respect for people with disabilities, awareness and respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities including organizations with the name gay-straight alliance or another name. (see *Procedure VI-60 Student Groups in Catholic Schools*)
- Provide relevant resources and in-service for staff, students, and other individuals supporting student groups in Catholic schools.
- Provide ongoing, mandatory training consistent with Catholic teaching for all staff to ensure that all members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Catholic education feel welcomed, valued and respected.
- Develop and publish a list of Catholic support agencies and other related support agencies to address equity and inclusive education requirements.

OUR SCHOOLS WILL:

- Ensure the use of progressive discipline including peer mediation and restorative justice.
- Welcome, respect and validate the contributions of all students, parents/guardians, and other members of the school community.
- Investigate in a thorough and timely manner any claims of discrimination and/or racism and take appropriate action consistent with the principles of the Code and Safe and Accepting Schools Act, Bullying Prevention and Intervention and Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour policies and procedures.

- Support students who want to establish and lead activities that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment for students of all backgrounds and diverse dimensions of identity (See *Procedure VI-60 Student Groups in Catholic Schools*).
- Develop and promote age and stage appropriate resources to ensure that all members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Catholic education feel welcomed, valued and respected consistent with Catholic teaching.
- Ensure that all information about the new or revised procedures involving equity and inclusive education is communicated to all students, staff, and others in the school community.

7. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

THE HCDSB WILL:

- Allocate adequate resources to provide ongoing opportunities that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices.
- Assist in critical conversations on Indigenous Education that will deepen understanding of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and contemporary realities.
- Provide annual and ongoing training on human rights, mandatory anti-racism training, anti-discrimination training, with a focus on prevention and early intervention strategies.
- Provide resources and professional development supports to educators and system leaders to combat anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, ableism, homophobia and trans-phobia, anti-oppression education and training, Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy consistent with Catholic teaching.
- Ensure that training promotes a deeper understanding of exceptionalities in progressive discipline practices and how to consider mitigating factors for students with disabilities.
- Incorporate human rights and equity content in the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP).
- Provide ongoing opportunities for students, administrators, teachers, support and HCDSB staff, as well as trustees, to participate in equity and inclusive education training and leadership initiatives.
- Establish and provide annual professional development programs to educate teachers and other staff of the HCDSB about progressive discipline, bullying prevention and strategies for promoting positive school climates.
- Provide opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and skills in promoting respect for human rights, diversity, understanding differences in relation to the Catholic faith.

OUR SCHOOLS WILL:

- Promote collaborative teams that learn together through job embedded learning, implement their learning and reflect together on best practices.
- Encourage and support students in their efforts to promote social justice, equity, antiracism, and antidiscrimination in schools and classrooms.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

THE HCDSB WILL:

- Seek and use feedback from surveying parents/guardians, staff, and students once every two years through the School Climate Survey data collection initiative which includes a section on equity and inclusion.
- Engage HCDSB and school teams in student achievement planning with particular emphasis on using data to identify and remove barriers to student achievement, to raise awareness about discriminatory practices and to encourage conversations and collaborative actions about racism and other equity issues.

Communicate key indicators of progress of the goals identified in this procedure.

OUR SCHOOLS WILL:

- Review and establish self-reflection and self-assessment tools to determine the effectiveness of the school's equity and inclusive education plans and procedures.

9. Data collection

THE HCDSB WILL:

- In compliance with the Anti-Racism Act 2017, develop a consistent and comprehensive approach to collection and application of voluntarily provided student identity data (e.g., Indigenous identity, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, full range of options for gender identity and sexual orientation) and analyze data to inform policies.
- Collect data on suspensions, expulsions and exclusions and analyze data to ensure that no particular group of students is overrepresented, and address disparities that may be revealed through data collection.
- Collect disaggregated demographic data on student achievement to identify and eliminate disparities in streaming, graduation rates and post-secondary pathways.
- Collect and analyse demographic data related to the workforce to ensure equitable representation of school communities within the framework of the HCDSB's denominational rights.

OUR SCHOOLS WILL:

Analyze and use data in school improvement planning to close achievement gaps and/or address disparities revealed by the data.

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Administrative Council

Procedure No. VI-54 | Equity and Inclusive Education

AUTHORIZED BY: _____

Director of Education and Secretary of the Board