

<h2>Student Groups in Catholic Schools</h2>	
Adopted: November 20, 2012	Last Reviewed/Revised: June 9, 2022
Next Scheduled Review: 2024-2025	
Associated Policies & Procedures: <a href="#">II-45 Equity and Inclusive Education</a> <a href="#">VI-54 Equity and Inclusive Education</a> <a href="#">I-43 Use of Technology and Digital Citizenship</a> <a href="#">VI-62 Use of Technology and Digital Citizenship</a> <a href="#">II-40 Bullying Prevention and Intervention</a> <a href="#">V-01 Use of School Grounds and Community Use of School Facilities</a> <a href="#">VI-64 Community Use of School Facilities</a> <a href="#">VI-63 Social Media</a>	

## Purpose

The Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) recognizes that all people are created equal, in the image of God, each with inimitable characteristics deserving of dignity (Genesis 1:27). In accordance with the Church’s teachings, the HCDSB commits to provide in all its operations an educational environment which supports, enables, and fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion within its Catholic community. The goal of a Catholic school is to create a positive learning environment. The HCDSB encourages and supports students to establish and lead student groups to foster a sense of belonging and acceptance.

The HCDSB supports the establishment of student groups in creating a positive, loving learning environment consistent with Catholic teaching and free from violence, harassment and/or bullying on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, ancestry, origin, religion, creed, family status, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, disability and/or any ground protected by the *Human Rights Code* or any other immutable characteristic.

## Application and Scope

The objectives of such student groups and activities are as follows:

- To strengthen and promote student leadership, equity, social justice, critical connections, student achievement and well-being, and create a positive school culture;
- To promote and support the diversity of student voice and experience;
- To support and affirm the inherent dignity and diverse lived experiences of all students in all aspects of school life;

- To support students in on-going development of the values, attitudes, and actions expressed in the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations and Catholic Social Teaching;
- To access resources consistent with the Catholic faith and explore ways in which the Catholic faith can permeate all aspects of student life;
- To provide opportunities for pastoral and/or spiritual guidance for students. Staff advisors may seek the support of School Administrators or Chaplaincy Leaders to support students from other faith traditions.

## References

[Christus Vivit: Apostolic Exhortation, His Holiness Pope Francis, 2019](#)

[Directory for Catechesis, 2020](#)

[Education Act](#)

[HCDSB Code of Conduct and Standards of Behaviour](#)

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

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

## Principles

All student groups and activities are to support positive, loving learning environments consistent with Catholic teaching and shall comply with the following principles:

- Activities and groups shall be open to students who wish to participate;
- To protect and promote safe spaces, membership may be reserved for individuals from equity seeking groups and/or historically underrepresented communities;
- The activities and groups must be respectful of and consistent with Catholic teaching and the HCDSB Code of Conduct and Standards of Behaviour;
- All mentors and supervisors of student groups and activities must acknowledge and understand that the work of student groups will be undertaken within the framework of a Catholic school system;
- All outside speakers invited to speak to a group or to provide a school activity must respect and be consistent with Catholic teaching;
- Students and/or participants must uphold each person's dignity and respect the privacy, confidentiality, safety, and emotional well-being of group members.

## Requirements

### Procedure for Approval of a Student Group

1. One or more students who desire to establish a student group must submit a written proposal in the form attached (Student Groups in Catholic Schools – Appendix A) for the review and consideration of the principal. The nature, purpose and mandate of the student initiated group shall be clearly communicated.
2. If a student approaches an Administrator to establish a student group, the Administrator or staff advisor shall provide the student(s) with a copy of Appendix A to complete and provide assistance in completion of the form where necessary.
3. The principal, in consultation with other school staff, as appropriate, shall review and consider the written proposal with respect to the following:
  - a) The purpose and goal(s) of the group;
  - b) The allocation of student supervision, school space, and other resources needed;
  - c) Whether or not the proposal is consistent with the principles identified in this procedure.
4. The principal shall provide written communication to approve or decline a proposal for a student group and provide rationale should the proposal be declined.
5. The principal is responsible for ensuring that each approved student group and their activities are supervised and supported by an HCDSB staff member.
6. The principles and procedures shall be reviewed annually with student group leader(s) and staff advisor.
7. Prior to an initial meeting of the student group, the principal shall:
  - a) Carefully consider which staff volunteer is most appropriate to supervise and support the group and its activities. The staff advisor must be an individual who is knowledgeable about and committed to Catholic teaching;
  - b) Invite the Chaplaincy leader to participate in group meetings where appropriate;
  - c) Clarify the objectives of the group with the staff advisor and provide any necessary in-service.
8. The principal must ensure that all students in the group have access to information and support from Social Workers, Child Youth Counsellors, and/or Chaplaincy Leaders, when needed and/or where deemed necessary by the principal or staff advisor.
9. All materials for group use and/or school/community awareness must be reviewed and approved by the staff advisor and, when necessary, administration.
10. All students involved must agree to respect the personal privacy, safety, and emotional well-being of student participants. Restrictions may be placed on the use of personal electronic devices during meetings, posting personal information on social media sites, or disclosure of personal information in any other manner. Failure to comply may result in the suspension of the group and/or one or more group members.
11. The staff advisor must be present for each meeting in its entirety.



APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Administrative Council

AUTHORIZED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Director of Education and Secretary of the Board*

## Student Groups in Catholic Schools - Proposal

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Student Name(s):

Student Grade(s):

**Request for Student Group:**

Identify the nature of the group, its purpose and objectives:

Identify the estimated number of participants:

Identify the frequency with which the group wishes to meet. (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, once each semester, etc.)

Do you have a possible Staff Advisor? If yes, please provide their name and whether they are aware of this proposal.

(Optional) Provide any other information that would assist the principal in supporting the request: