

## Administrative Procedure 160

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# COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES IN EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

### Background

*God saw everything that was made, and indeed, it was very good. Genesis 1:31*

Edmonton Catholic Schools recognizes that we are all created in the image and likeness of God. As such, all human beings are inherently sacred and must be treated with dignity and respect. All efforts to support the inclusive, safe, and caring learning and working communities within our Division must be in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church and shall be grounded in the understanding of the person as a whole.

A nurturing inclusive community is one in which each person is welcomed, accepted, and supported as a child of God, therefore any discrimination is unacceptable and will be addressed.

All students, staff, and families of Edmonton Catholic School Division will be provided with an inclusive, welcoming, caring, respectful, safe, and Catholic environment that promotes the well-being of all and fosters community support for achieving this goal.

### Definitions

Parent is an individual defined as such pursuant to the provisions of the *Education Act*, S.A. 2012, c.E-0.3 as amended from time to time.

Independent student is any individual who is defined as such pursuant to section 1(n) of the *Education Act*, S.A. 2012, c.E-0.3 as amended from time to time.

### Procedures

The Division is committed to building nurturing Catholic learning and working communities that are inclusive and welcoming to all of their members. All efforts to support the inclusive, safe, and caring learning and working communities within our Division must be in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church and shall be grounded in the understanding of the person as a whole. As part of that commitment, the employees and students of the Division will conduct themselves in a manner which is consistent with the following:

#### 1. Building A Culture of Acceptance

1.1 Superintendents, principals, and other staff as designated from time to time shall:

1.1.1 Communicate, monitor, and address all aspects of this procedure with their staff, students, and parents/guardians on an annual basis;

- 1.1.2 Provide regular messaging on inclusivity/ discrimination prevention;
  - 1.1.3 Develop a resource pool/network with current and varied information on promoting inclusive, safe, caring, and nurturing learning/working environments;
  - 1.1.4 Ensure that school conduct procedures, if applicable, are reviewed annually with staff and students and that they explicitly address expectations for inclusive behaviours and language;
  - 1.1.5 Take ongoing action to create and maintain an inclusive, safe, caring, and nurturing learning/working environment;
  - 1.1.6 Provide access to training on diversity and sensitivity;
  - 1.1.7 Identify staff leaders for appropriate training on diversity and sensitivity; and,
  - 1.1.8 Support the establishment of school clubs/groups/committees (*Education Act*, s.35.1(1)(a)), supervised by a teacher or administrator (*Education Act*, s.35.1(1)(b)), that focus on equality and non-discrimination, social justice, peer support and human rights concerns from a Catholic holistic approach as outlined in the *Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta's Living Inclusion Faithfully for Everyone (LIFE) Framework*.
- 1.2 Staff are expected to:
- 1.2.1 Explore and model the theological understanding of inclusivity, that everyone is to be welcomed as they are, and of trending issues in a comprehensive and appropriate way, calling upon our Division Chaplains and other resources to inform themselves;
  - 1.2.2 Support students to help them develop an understanding of themselves as children of God, therefore fostering a sense of self-worth;
  - 1.2.3 Model inclusive language and behaviours at all times; and,
  - 1.2.4 Hold each other accountable for their language and behaviours, and report instances of language and behaviour that result in exclusion or discrimination to their immediate supervisor.
2. Reporting Discriminatory Language and Behaviour
- 2.1 In the event that individuals become aware of or are party to incidents of discriminatory language or behaviour, reference should be made to [Administrative Procedure 172 Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism: Reporting of and Responding to Discrimination and Racism](#) for direction as to the appropriate response.
3. Student Gender, Gender Identity and Gender Expression
- 3.1 Staff shall:
    - 3.1.1 Share information about students and/or parents only with staff involved with providing service to that student, always respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the student and/or parents;

- 3.1.2 Involve key advisors with consent (i.e. consultants, mental health providers, medical providers, Family School Liaison Workers, classroom teachers, School Operations Services personnel) as needed in a family-centred case conference approach to programming for students who need special considerations;
- 3.1.3 Provide the agreed upon special considerations for students in a caring, pastoral and inclusive manner;
- 3.1.4 Provide for the needs and physical privacy of students in a pastoral manner, with a view at all times to maintaining their dignity and safety;
- 3.1.5 Provide the option of single use washroom/change-room facilities for staff and students whenever possible;
- 3.1.6 In consultation with Division department supports when required, consult with students and families with respect to accommodating individual needs, protecting the privacy and confidentiality of students, and allowing students to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities, including field trips or overnight field trips, without the requirement to disclose personal information to determine the best practice and rationale for all individuals involved;
- 3.1.7 Follow [Administrative Procedure 308 Fairness and Safety in Sport](#) to determine student eligibility for participation in amateur competitive sports;
- 3.1.8 Ensure that activities or practices that segregate or differentiate children based on ability, gender, or other characteristics are reduced to the greatest extent possible.

#### 4. Student organizations and activities

- 4.1 The Division is committed to supporting the establishment of student organizations and activities that intend to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects the diversity and fosters a sense of belonging for students. In that regard, the *Education Act* provides:

35.1 (1) If one or more students attending a school operated by a board request a staff member employed by the board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall:

- (a) permit the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and;
- (b) designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), an organization or activity includes an organization or activity that promotes equality and non-discrimination with respect to, without limitation, race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, including but not

limited to organizations such as gay-straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs and anti-bullying clubs.

(3) The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization including the name “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”, after consulting with the principal.

(4) The principal shall immediately inform the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in subsection (1), and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school

(5) If a staff member indicates to a principal a willingness to act as a staff liaison under subsection (1),

(a) a principal shall not inform a board or the Minister under subsection (4) that no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison, and

(b) that staff member shall be deemed to be available to serve as the staff liaison.

#### 4.2 Parent notification of student participation in student organizations or activities must:

4.2.1 Be limited to the fact that an organization is being established or an activity is being held; and,

4.2.2 Be consistent with the usual practices relating to notification of other voluntary student organizations or activities.

In this regard, Principals shall provide a general notice to the school community that students may be organizing groups or clubs at the school in the future based on interest or need, for example by including a notice in the student handbook.

In the event that a new student organization or activity is undertaken in a school, notification of the establishment of the student organization or activity shall be sent to all parents. Students participating in the student organization or activity shall not be identified. This notification should include a statement regarding the responsibility of parents to discuss with their child the purpose and nature of the club, whether their child wishes to become a member and their child’s obligation to contribute to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. At all times, parents are invited to converse with the school regarding the intention of student organizations, clubs, and activities.

#### 4.3 The disclosure of personal information of any student, staff member, parent or other individual in Alberta by the Division is governed by the *Access to Information Act* and *Protection of Privacy Act*.

4.3.1 In circumstances where the disclosure of personal information, including that of a student involved in a student organization or activity, is contemplated, the Principal shall contact the General Counsel for assistance.

## 5 The Role of Students and Families

5.1 As part of the membership of the Division inclusive community, the expectations for students and their families in all interactions that pertain to the Division are that they:

5.1.1 Conduct themselves in a manner which upholds the dignity and worth of all members of the school community;

5.1.2 Be aware of and adhere to their school's Student Conduct procedure; and,

5.1.3 Report instances of language or behaviour that is in contravention of this Administrative Procedure to their Principal immediately.

6 Nothing in this Administrative Procedure is to be interpreted so as to limit or be a waiver of the Board's or Division's rights and powers pursuant to the *Constitution Act, 1867* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to maintain the denominational character of Catholic schools. If any of the provisions in this Administrative Procedure conflict with the Board's or Division's rights and powers pursuant to the *Constitution Act, 1867* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to maintain the denominational character of Catholic schools, the Board's and Division's rights and powers pursuant to the *Constitution Act, 1867* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to maintain the denominational character of Catholic schools will govern.

Adopted: January 5, 2015

Reviewed/Revised: March 17, 2016, May 31, 2016, September 21, 2016, June 30, 2017, March 21, 2018, June 8, 2018, December 9, 2019, February 5, 2021, August 27, 2025

Reference: Education Act, Sections 3, 11, 31, 33, 35.1, 36, 37, 42, 43, 44, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58.1, 196, 197, 222  
Administrative Procedure 172- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism: Reporting of and Responding to Discrimination and Racism  
Administrative Procedure Fairness and Safety in Sport Alberta Bill of Rights  
Alberta Human Rights Act  
Access to Information Act  
Protection of Privacy Act Occupational Health and Safety Act  
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms  
Criminal Code  
Catechism of the Catholic Church  
Episcopal Commission for Doctrine (2011) – Pastoral Letter to Young People on Chastity  
Council of Catholic Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA), a Pastoral Approach to Supporting and Guiding Students in Inclusive Communities – Gender Identity and Expression.