

SECONDARY SCHOOL RELIGIOUS EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS - LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT -

TO BE COMPLETED UPON INITIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL REGISTRATION IN DUFFERIN-PEEL

Thank you for choosing to enroll your son/daughter in one of our Catholic secondary schools. The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) is committed to providing a quality Catholic education which views human life as an integration of body, mind and spirit. Rooted in this vision, Catholic education fosters the search for knowledge as a lifelong spiritual and academic quest. The expectations of Catholic school graduates, therefore, are described not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but in terms of values, attitudes, and actions. The Ontario Catholic School Graduate is expected to be: a discerning believer; an effective communicator; a reflective, creative and holistic thinker; a self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner; a collaborative contributor; a caring family member; and, a responsible citizen.

The Board supports freedom of religion and an individual’s right to manifest his/her religious beliefs and observances. The right to freedom of religion, however, is not absolute and religious accommodation in the Board is carried out in the larger context of the Catholic educational system and denominational rights of Catholic schools.

The Board recognizes that any form of discrimination is incompatible with Catholic moral principles and is in violation of the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. The Board recognizes that the school system gives pre-eminence to the tenets of the Catholic faith, congruent with the protection afforded in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, the *Constitution Act, 1867* and confirmed in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, in a manner which is consistent with the exercise of the Board’s denominational rights under section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* and as recognized in section 19 of the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

The historical mandate of the Catholic school system in Ontario is to infuse the entire syllabus, and related activities of the school on the life and teaching of Jesus. As such, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board has the expectation that all students admitted to the Catholic system will benefit from these values and teachings and be formed into responsible, reflective and well-rounded citizens.

Our religious expectations and requirements for the duration of a student’s tenure are as follows:

1. All students will enroll in a Religion course in each of the four years. All Religion courses are approved by the appropriate Catholic authority. The Government of Ontario recognizes that Religion credits count towards a secondary graduation diploma.

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2. All students will participate in an annual retreat for the first four years that they are in a secondary school. The retreat normally takes place during the school day at a site off school property. The chaplaincy leader organizes the annual retreat based on spiritual themes appropriate for adolescents.
3. All students will participate in the prayer and liturgical life of the school. Catholic students are expected to participate fully as mandated by their sacramental Baptism. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate to the extent that they can. It is not the intention of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board to proselytize. However, for supervision, safety and community reasons, the entire school participates in all religious events that occur during the school year. At a minimum, non-Catholic students will attend and maintain respectful silence at all religious observances. All students are encouraged to get involved.
4. Students requesting accommodations must present written notice from their parent(s)/guardian(s) specifying their accommodation needs relating to religious observances, including holy days on which they will be absent from school. This notice should be made in advance (preferably at the beginning of each school year) to ensure that scheduling of major evaluations, such as tests, assignments or examinations, takes the religious observances into consideration.
5. The Catholic District School Boards of Ontario follow approved provincial curriculum. Given the distinctiveness of Catholic schools, the Government of Ontario recognizes parallel curricula for our system. All courses in all subject areas in our Catholic secondary schools are infused with core Catholic values and teachings. Regardless of the subject matter, the Catholic ethos, and moral value system is reflected throughout the curriculum, and as such, is inextricable from delivery.

In order to complete your child's registration package, we ask that upon review of the expectations outlined in this letter, you acknowledge its receipt.

We know your child will find their experiences in our Catholic secondary schools rewarding and we look forward to joining with you in supporting your child during these formative years.

School: _____

Name of Student (please print): _____

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Religious Expectations and Requirements for secondary school registration.

Signature of Parent/Guardian/Adult Student: _____

Signature of Student: _____

Date: _____