Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board

BOARD DIRECTIONAL POLICY	
DIRECTIONAL POLICY TITLE **Safe and Accepting Schools**	DIRECTIONAL POLICY NUMBER **900**

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Title of Directional Policy:

Safe and Accepting Schools

Date Approved:

April 30, 2024

Projected Review Date:

2029

Policy:

The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board believes that all students need to feel safe, secure and able to express when they feel at risk to benefit from the advantages of being part of a Catholic education community. To that end, every school shall strive to be a welcoming, safe, respectful, equitable, inclusive and accepting learning and teaching environment, rooted in the Gospel values.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy is to create a shared understanding and systematic approach to the implementation of Safe and Accepting School procedures and protocols. The Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy responds to legislative requirements for school boards in the areas of equity and inclusive education; bullying prevention and intervention; progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour; codes of conduct; suspension/expulsion; anti-sex trafficking; emergency preparedness; safe arrivals; and visitors to schools.

The Board recognizes that creating safe and accepting school environments requires the collective effort and engagement of the entire system: trustees, staff, students, parents/guardians, parishes, and the community. As a result, system and school level safe and accepting school strategies will focus on the process of ongoing development and continuous assessment of effectiveness of current practices - implementing practices and strategies to ensure a positive school climate, free from discrimination and harassment, where all members of the community feel safe, included and accepted.

PVNC Catholic Administrative Procedures that specify system-wide practices for Safe and Accepting Schools, operationalize this directional policy.

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

The Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy supports the vision and mission to accompany our students as we strive for excellence in Catholic education under the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, Vision and Mission: Building a Community that Accompanies. In particular, this policy informs and supports the following priorities of Valuing Relationships, Providing Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Nurturing Mental Health & Well-Being and Ensuring Equity.

Responsibilities:

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- defining, articulating and directing the PVNC Catholic District School Board mandate to support student achievement and well-being in a Catholic learning community supported by the Multi-Year Strategic Plan;
- reviewing, and considering for approval, the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy recommended for consideration by the Policy Development Committee;
- understanding, and communicating with members of the community, the content of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;
- assigning responsibility to the Director of Education for operationalizing and managing the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;
- monitoring and holding the Director of Education accountable respecting the implementation and operational details of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- providing leadership regarding implementation and operational details in the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;

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- providing direction to staff in the development of administrative procedures and practices to ensure implementation of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy.

Superintendents of Schools and System Portfolios are responsible for:

- collaboratively leading the development of administrative procedures and practices aligned with the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;

- managing and providing leadership in developing the supports and resources to ensure the implementation of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;

- providing leadership and working collaboratively with the Director and Superintendents, Managers, Supervisors, Principals and Vice-Principals, Federations, Unions, and non-union groups, to build capacity of all staff in their knowledge and understanding and implementation of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;

- developing strategies for supporting parents/guardians at the system level in their knowledge and understanding of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;

- working collaboratively with central staff to develop administrative procedures that align with the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;

- providing updates to the Board on the implementation and impact of the Safe and Accepting Directional Policy.

Managers/Supervisors are responsible for:

- providing leadership, management and support for the members of their departments in the knowledge, understanding, and the implementation of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;

- working collaboratively with Senior Administration to develop administrative procedures that align with the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy.

Communications Services is responsible for:

- working collaboratively with the Senior Administration to develop a system-wide communications plan focused on building knowledge and understanding with PVNC Catholic school communities and partners of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy, to support its effective implementation.

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Principals and Vice Principals are responsible for:

- providing leadership, management, and support for the members of their school communities in the knowledge, understanding, and the implementation of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;

- developing strategies to engage students, staff, parents/guardians and wider school community their knowledge and understanding of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;

- implementing practices and strategies to ensure a positive school climate, free from discrimination and harassment, where all members of the community feel safe, included and accepted.

Teachers and Staff are responsible for:

- working collaboratively with all members of the school community to successfully implement the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;
- adhering to the administrative procedures that support the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy;
- being proactive and self-directed in building their knowledge and understanding of the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy, by engaging in professional learning opportunities provided both within the school and centrally;

- implementing practices and strategies to ensure a positive school climate, free from discrimination and harassment, where all members of the community feel safe, included and accepted.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for:

- contributing to a positive school climate through healthy relationships, and positive interactions with all members of the school community;

- collaborating with and supporting the efforts school staff in maintaining a safe, inclusive and accepting learning environment;

- supporting their child in developing healthy relationships and interactions with others to foster a positive school climate;

- providing parent/guardian voice bi-annually through school climate surveys.

Students are responsible for:

- contributing to a positive school climate through healthy relationships, and

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positive interactions with all members of the school community;

- participating and engaging in programs and activities which promote a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment;

- providing student voice bi-annually through school climate surveys.

Progress Indicators:

- All employees are aware of, and implement, their roles in the Safe and Accepting Schools Directional Policy and in the related administrative procedures.

- Bi-annual School Climate Survey indicates that students feel safe and welcome in their school environments.

- Review and development of Administrative Procedures for Safe and Accepting Schools, responding to system and legislative needs.

Definitions:

Discrimination: unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of grounds set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g., race, sexual orientation, disability) or on the basis of other factors. Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, has the effect of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society. Discrimination may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

Harassment: engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment is a form of discrimination that may include unwelcome attention and remarks, jokes, threats, name-calling, touching, or other behaviour (including the display of pictures) that insults, offends, or demeans someone because of their identity. Harassment involves conduct or comments that are known to be, or should reasonably be known to be, offensive, inappropriate, intimidating, and hostile

Positive school climate: the school climate may be defined as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect.

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References:

- Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2
- Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19
- Policy/Program Memorandum 9, Reporting of Children in Need of Protection - 2019
- Policy/Program Memorandum 119, " Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies In Ontario Schools" - 2013
- Policy/Program Memorandum 120, "Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education" - 2011
- Policy/Program Memorandum 123, "Safe Arrivals" - 1999
- Policy/Program Memorandum 128, "The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct" - 2019
- Policy/Program Memorandum 141, "School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspension" - 2012
- Policy/Program Memorandum 142, "School Board Programs For Expelled Students" - 2012
- Policy/Program Memorandum 144, "Bullying Prevention and Intervention" - 2021
- Policy/Program Memorandum 145, "Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour" - 2018
- Police Record Checks: Ontario Regulation 521/01, Collection of Personal information
- Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario's Schools, Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 2014
- Police/School Board Protocol - 2016

Related Administrative Procedures:

- PVNC Administrative Procedure 901: Safe Arrivals
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 902: Visitors to Schools
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 903: Police School Board Protocol
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 904: Lockdown Procedures
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 905: Bomb Threat Procedures
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 906: Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 907: Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocol
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 908: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 909 : Code of Conduct
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 910: Suspension, Expulsion, and Appeal
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 911: Mandated Alternate Educational Settings

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- PVNC Administrative Procedure 912: Supporting Positive Student Behaviour: Safety for All
- PVNC Administrative Procedure 913: Delegation of Authority
- PVNC Directional Policy 700: Equity and Inclusive Education

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