

Fort McMurray Catholic Schools Operating Policies and Procedures

OP 333 – Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments

Policy

The board is committed to providing all students and staff with a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and inclusive learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

Fort McMurray Catholic Schools affirms the rights, as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, of each staff member employed by the board and each student enrolled in a school operated by the board. Staff members employed by the board and students enrolled in a school operated by the board will not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Background:

The Catholic Board of Trustees believes, and is called by vocation to provide all students with a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and inclusive learning environment. We are called by God, Our Father, Jesus, his Son, to “Love one another as I have loved you.”

Procedures:

1. All staff of Fort McMurray Catholic Schools will act and teach, as Jesus would do, rejecting and confronting behaviours that cause harm to the student, physically, verbally or by action.
2. The Principal, as the school leader, operating within a Catholic framework, is responsible for promoting/maintaining a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and inclusive environment for all students regardless of their actual or perceived differences.
3. The Principal in conjunction with the Superintendent will support student groups or activities in accordance with Section 16.1 of the School Act.

4. 16.1(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) immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and (b) subject to subsection (4), within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request 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.
5. (3) The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”, after consulting with the principal.
6. (3.1) For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”.
7. (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.
8. (6) The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection (1) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.
9. Notification, if any, of student organizations or activities established under Section 16.1 of the School Act is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations or activities.
10. Fort McMurray Catholic Schools is a public body under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Disclosure of any personal information must be in accordance with this Act.
11. The staff advisor and group members, through a collaborative team approach, will promote inclusivity in the school through a variety of projects/activities that promotes critical consciousness, respect, understanding, care and love for all.

12. The Principal will ensure all students have access to the restroom that allows for appropriate privacy and that individual solutions to restroom access are implemented with respect and discretion.
13. The Principal is responsible to ensure that all staff, students and families are aware of and clearly understand this policy.
14. Nothing in this policy is to be interpreted so as to limit or be a waiver of the Fort McMurray Roman Catholic Separate School District's rights and powers pursuant 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 policy conflict with the Fort McMurray Roman Catholic Separate School District'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 Fort McMurray Roman Catholic Separate School District's rights and powers pursuant the *Constitution Act, 1867* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to maintain the denominational character of Catholic schools will govern.

<p>References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta School Act: Sections 16.1 and 45.1(1) • "Guideline for Best Practices: Creating Learning Environments That Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions." Government of Alberta. • "LIFE Framework – Lived Inclusion For Everyone". Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta. • Supporting Transgender and Transexual Students in K-12 Schools "A Guide for Educators". Canadian Teachers Federation. • 	<p>Approved by Board: March 21, 2016</p>
<p>Cross References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OP 102, 108, 201, 330. • FMCS D Core Values, "A Call to Discipleship" • FMCS D "Student Discipline and Discipleship". 	<p>Revisions: June 25, 2018</p>