



BOARD DIRECTIONAL POLICY	
<small>DIRECTIONAL POLICY TITLE</small>	<small>DIRECTIONAL POLICY NUMBER</small>
Equity & Inclusive Education Policy	700

Title of Directional Policy:

Equity and Inclusive Education Policy

Date Approved:

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May 2027

Policy:

This Policy applies to all members of the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board (PVNCCDSB) community including trustees, employees, students, parents/guardians, caregivers, consultants, contractors and vendors, permit-holders, visitors, volunteers, and community partners. It applies to all schools or circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate. This Policy applies to all Board policies, practices and procedures and other measures.

The Board is committed to embedding equity and inclusive education throughout the school board in accordance with Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009) and the Ontario Ministry of Education Policy Program Memorandum No. 119. The Board will ensure that this Policy is consistent with the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the *Education Act* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to achieve equitable and inclusive education that identifies and removes systemic barriers to student achievement, participation and well-being, and that fosters a learning and working environment free from oppression, discrimination and harassment. This policy reflects the seven guiding principles [of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy](#), namely that equity and inclusive education:

- is a foundation of excellence;
- meets individual needs;
- identifies and eliminates barriers;
- promotes a sense of belonging;
- involves the broad community;
- builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives;
- is demonstrated throughout the system.

The Board recognizes that all people are created equal, in the image of God, each with inimitable characteristics deserving of dignity. The Board acknowledges that the foundation of all Catholic Social Teaching is the inherent dignity of the human person, as created in the image and likeness of God. Discrimination and oppression are incompatible with Catholic moral principles.

The Board recognizes systemic inequities that operate through biases, discrimination and oppression – all of which function as barriers that students, employees, parents/guardians, caregivers and community groups experience. The Board is committed to achieving equitable and inclusive learning and working environments, to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to embed equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and Indigenous education into all its policies, procedures, programs, operations, and practices.

The Board acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Nishnabeg who have lived with this land since time immemorial. Many treaties exist in this area: the Gun Shot, the Dish with One Spoon, Treaty 20, Williams Treaty. The Board recognizes the distinct right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples under the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples have distinct legal rights protected under s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* which, among other aspects, recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights. The Board is committed to establishing and strengthening relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, and incorporating the history and world views of Indigenous Peoples throughout the Board. It is committed to truth and reconciliation and will implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action as they relate to education.

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

This Policy informs priorities under the [2021-2025 Strategic Plan, Vision and Mission: Building a Community That Accompanies](#), particularly the goals of Ensuring Equity,

Valuing Relationships, Mental Health & Wellbeing and Inspiring Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Requirements:

Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines, and Practices

The Board recognizes that equity and inclusive education is an integral part of its operations and should permeate the system. The Board values the perspectives of and engagement with employees, students, parents/guardians, caregivers, and community partners to inform the implementation and review of board policies, programs, guidelines and practices, and to achieve equity and inclusive education.

The Board will:

- Ensure the development, implementation and review of all its policies, programs, guidelines, and practices in a manner consistent with equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation.
- Actively consult with employees, students, parents/guardians, caregivers, and community members on equity and inclusive education to include their perspectives. The Board is committed to ensuring the voices of those who are marginalized as a result of systemic oppression and will identify and remove barriers these groups face throughout the system.
- Ensure that implementation of this Policy leads to continued progress towards achieving equity and inclusive education. To this end, the Board will monitor and evaluate its progress in implementing this Policy and will share the results of such a review with employees, students, parents/guardians, caregivers, and the community. The Board will take into account their feedback on the progress of this Policy to help inform its review and update. The Board will use the results from the review to improve policies, programs, and practices.
- Ensure hiring, retention, talent development, mentorship, promotion, and succession planning of individuals from diverse communities, in particular, Indigenous, Black and racialized people. The Board will identify and remove barriers that limit hiring, retention, talent development, mentorship, promotion, and succession planning of these individuals. The Board will collect disaggregated demographic data to inform its progress in these areas.
- Communicate its expectations around equity and inclusive education throughout the school board community and will ensure that this Policy is available in [accessible formats](#).

Shared and Committed Leadership

A collaborative approach to equity and inclusive education is central to support student participation, achievement and well-being. The Board is committed to working with

schools and education partners to ensure leadership is responsive to, and reflective of, the diversity of Ontario's communities, and demonstrates a commitment to equity and inclusive education.

The Board will ensure that:

- Senior leaders work with department employees and school administrators to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning, and to ensure anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation.
- Board and school improvement plans include goals and anticipated outcomes for achieving equitable and inclusive schools across all areas of the board's strategic pillars and priorities.
- Students, parents/guardians, and caregivers whose voices and lived experiences are marginalized as a result of systemic oppression, are represented on school board committees.
- Existing community partnerships support the principles of equity and inclusive education and reflect the diversity of the broader community.

School–Community Relationships

The Board recognizes that school-community relationships that enable representation and active engagement of parents/guardians, caregivers and school community partners, and that are based on trust and mutual respect, are integral to creating and sustaining a positive school climate.

The Board will:

- Develop and sustain partnerships with, and outreach to, parents/guardians, caregivers, and communities, namely those that are marginalized as a result of systemic oppression. In doing so, the Board will identify and remove barriers that limit or prevent parents/guardians, caregivers and community groups to be engaged and represented in board activities and in the school community.
- Consult and engage with individuals and groups who are marginalized as a result of systemic oppression to develop, implement, and review policies and procedures.
- Review the structures of existing committees and partnerships to ensure they reflect the principles of equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation.
- Ensure that information for parents/guardians, caregivers and communities about instructional activities, school and board policies, programs, procedures and services is provided in a timely manner, in [accessible formats](#), and translated where necessary into the diverse languages of the community.

Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices

The Board recognizes that a culture of high expectations for all students should permeate all aspects of learning and assessment. Students must see themselves

positively reflected in their educators and learning environments. They must feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, and they must be supported by teachers and staff.

The Board will:

- Review curriculum and resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices to identify and remove stereotypes, discriminatory biases, and systemic barriers.
- Ensure that all teaching and learning activities and materials reflect equitable and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation.
- Collaborate with schools to review classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices specifically addressing areas of discrimination under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.
- Ensure that educators apply culturally relevant teaching to assist students to access content and learning opportunities.
- Implement the principles of universal design for learning and differentiated instruction across subjects and strands.
- Provide classroom and school resources and learning materials, in [accessible formats](#), that reflect diverse histories, cultures and identities, in particular Indigenous, Black and racialized people, disabled people, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people.

Religious Accommodation

The Board acknowledges each individual's right to exercise their religious or creed beliefs or practices, free from discrimination or harassment. The Board will provide religious accommodations, in accordance with the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, as set out in the Board's [Religious Accommodation Guide](#).

The Board will:

- Support understanding and acceptance for diverse religious and spiritual observations, practices and related accommodations by offering professional learning to employees and trustees.

- Ensure that the Religious Accommodation Guide is implemented and reviewed in consultation with students, parents/guardians, caregivers, employees, and community members.

School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

The Board believes that a positive school climate is one in which all members of the school community feel safe, included and accepted, and actively promote and support positive behaviours and interactions. The Board is committed to achieving a working and learning environment free from discrimination and harassment.

The Board will:

- Ensure a positive school climate that is free from discrimination and harassment, and that is inclusive and accepting of all students, including Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQQIA+ students.
- Establish transparent and accessible processes for students, employees, parents/guardians, caregivers and community groups to raise concerns about inequitable treatment within the board, and to report incidents of racism, discrimination, and harassment without fear of intimidation or reprisals. The Board will investigate and respond to all concerns and complaints fairly and in a timely manner.
- Establish a procedure to receive and track incidents and complaints related to racism, discrimination, and harassment.
- Analyze school climate data and demographic census data to identify barriers, to measure success of prevention programs and to prioritize areas of focus for Board and school improvement plans.
- Support students and employees who request to establish or participate in groups, such as Black Student Associations, Muslim Student Associations, and groups to support 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, including groups with the name Gay-Straight Alliance.

Professional Learning

The Board recognizes that professional learning activities that are ongoing, based on evidence, and focused on positive outcomes can contribute to equitable and inclusive education. Changing individual and collective behaviour, as well as organizational and institutional practices can contribute to an education system that is free from discrimination.

The Board will:

- Provide ongoing professional learning and resources for employees to acquire the knowledge, competencies, and behaviours to identify and remove systemic barriers and discriminatory practices, and to effectively implement equitable and inclusive education.
- Provide ongoing education, professional learning, and leadership initiatives to employees and trustees related to equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation.
- Provide education and resources to students, parents/guardians and caregivers and other members of the PVNCCDSB community to increase their knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation.

Accountability and Transparency

The Board values ongoing and open communication to ensure students, employees, parents/guardians, caregivers and communities are informed of the Board's goals and progress in implementing this Policy.

The Board will:

- Ensure that Board and school improvement plans, and the board's multi-year strategic plan reflect the principles of equity and inclusive education, and are developed in consultation with students, parents/guardians, caregivers, employees, and community members.
- Develop performance indicators, compliance and reporting mechanisms, data collection and tracking to monitor progress of this Policy. The Board will use school climate data and census data to identify and remove systemic barriers.
- Ensure that annual progress reports, including results on the implementation of this Policy, are made publicly available in accessible formats to students, employees, parents/guardians, caregivers and communities. The Board will post this Policy and progress reports on its website.

Responsibilities:

The Board of Trustees and employees of PVNCCDSB are responsible for:

- Executing their role in a manner that is consistent with and supportive of this Policy.
- Identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning and working.
- Reporting regularly on the implementation and review of this Policy, including how they have identified and removed barriers faced by employees, students, parents/guardians, caregivers, and community groups. The Board will make these reports publicly available in [accessible formats](#).

- Complying with Board processes for students, employees, parents/guardians, caregivers and community groups to raise concerns about unfair or inequitable treatment, and to report incidents of racism, discrimination, and harassment.
- Completing ongoing professional learning on equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, residential schools, Treaties, and the historical and contemporary contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples to Canada. Employees will include these topics in their respective performance appraisals.

Responsibilities related to other established roles within the Board

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring that every student can succeed, regardless of their background or social identity, and ensuring that education programs and services are responsive to the diverse communities it serves.
- Setting direction and policy that prioritize and embed equity and inclusive education, human rights, anti-racism, and truth and reconciliation.
- Ensuring that equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation inform boardroom deliberations and decisions. Trustees will ensure their decisions are consistent with this Policy.
- Holding the Director accountable for implementing this Policy.
- Including student trustees in deliberations and in decision-making.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Overseeing compliance with this Policy.
- Ensuring that performance appraisals include goals related to equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation.
- Providing the Board of Trustees with regular progress reports on the implementation of this Policy across the system.
- Publishing the Director of Education's annual report to inform the Ministry of Education and the local community about the Board's progress in meeting its strategic goals.

Superintendent of Faith and Equity is responsible for:

- Providing direction and support for equity and inclusive education across the system and ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy.
- Providing regular updates to the Board on the implementation and impact of this Policy on student participation, achievement and well-being.
- Acting as the contact person to liaise with the Ministry of Education and other school boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.
- Collaboratively leading the development, implementation and review of administrative procedures and practices aligned with this Policy.
- Providing leadership and resources to the Faith and Equity Advisory Committee.
- Ensuring the prompt investigation and satisfactory resolution of discrimination and harassment complaints in conjunction with the appropriate Family of Schools Superintendent and Superintendent of Human Resources as required.

The Superintendent of Leadership and Human Resources is responsible for:

- Ensuring a working environment free from discrimination and harassment.
- Establishing selection criteria for leadership positions that include demonstrated commitment, knowledge and skills related to the implementation of equity and inclusive education.
- Providing ongoing training to school and system leaders on equitable approaches to hiring, recruitment, talent development, promotion, mentoring, sponsorship, performance appraisal and succession planning.
- Ensuring the prompt investigation and satisfactory resolution of discrimination and harassment complaints in conjunction with the appropriate Family of Schools Superintendent as required.

The Superintendent of Special Education is responsible for:

- Engaging stakeholders in Special Education Improvement planning with particular emphasis on using data to identify and remove barriers to student participation, achievement and well-being; raising awareness about discriminatory practices; and, encouraging collaborative dialogue about equity and inclusion actions and/or initiatives to support students with special needs.

Superintendents Schools and System Portfolios are responsible for:

- Ensuring all school and system leaders have the competencies, skills and knowledge to implement this Policy and administrative procedures.
- Supporting employees to implement and review this Policy and assess its impact on student participation, achievement and well-being.
- Engaging students, parents/guardians, caregivers and community members in Board Improvement planning with particular emphasis on using disaggregated demographic data to identify and remove barriers to student participation and achievement.
- Ensuring that the principles of equity and inclusive education are incorporated and modelled in professional learning activities and/or programs.
- Raising awareness about discriminatory practices and encouraging collaborative dialogue about equity and inclusion actions and/or initiatives.
- Including in their performance appraisals at least one performance goal related to eliminating systemic inequities in relation to student variables (e.g., suspension, expulsion, graduation rates) as revealed by student demographic data collection, and at least one performance goal related to attending to workforce issues of diversity and fairness in recruitment, hiring and placements, as revealed by workforce demographic data collection.

Managers are responsible for:

- Providing leadership, management and support for the members of their departments in the knowledge, understanding, and implementation of this Policy.

- Working collaboratively with the Superintendent of Faith and Equity to develop administrative procedures that align with this Policy.

Communication Services is responsible for:

- Working collaboratively with the Superintendent of Faith and Equity to develop a system-wide communications plan focused on building knowledge and understanding of this Policy among students, employees, parents/guardians, caregivers and community members to support its effective implementation.

Principals and Vice Principals are responsible for:

- Establishing goals and plans to implement this Policy, in consultation with employees, students, parents/guardians, caregivers and the community.
- Embedding equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation into the school improvement plan.
- Developing strategies to engage students, parents/guardians, caregivers, and communities in the school community who are marginalized as a result of systemic oppression.
- Promoting student leadership opportunities and actively engaging students in initiatives with a focus on equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation.
- Ensuring that accommodations for students and employees are consistent with this Policy, and the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

Teachers and Staff are responsible for:

- Teaching age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and the historical and contemporary contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples to Canada.
- Ensuring that instructional resources, strategies, as well as assessment and evaluation practices, are in accordance with the Board's Mission and Vision, Church teachings, equity and inclusive education, anti-racism, human rights, and truth and reconciliation.
- Developing and promoting initiatives that support and promote diversity of student voice and experience, especially students who are marginalized as a result of systemic oppression.
- Encouraging and supporting students in their efforts to promote Catholic social justice, equity, inclusion and diversity in schools and classrooms.
- Providing religious accommodation, in consultation with the principal and in accordance with the Board's [Religious Accommodation Guide](#).
- Complying with *Ontario Regulation 437/97: Professional Misconduct*, in particular s. 1(28), that states that professional misconduct includes "Making remarks or engaging in behaviours that expose any person or class of persons to hatred on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination under Part I of the *Human Rights Code*."

Employees are responsible for:

- 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.

Parents/Guardians and Caregivers are responsible for:

- Familiarizing themselves with and supporting this Policy.
- Informing the Principal of the need for accommodations.

Students are:

- Responsible for familiarizing themselves with and supporting this Policy.
- Responsible for informing the Principal of the need for accommodations.
- Encouraged to provide input and share student voice for school and board decisions.
- Encouraged to act as a positive peer influencer by facilitating discussions about Faith and Equity with their classmates
- Encouraged to actively communicate their ideas/concerns to their teachers and peers

Progress Indicators:

- Implementation of Administrative Procedures for this Policy.

Definitions:

2SLGBTQIA+: an acronym for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual Plus.

Accommodation: an adjustment made to policies, programs, guidelines, or practices, including adjustments to physical settings and various types of criteria, that enables individuals to benefit from and take part in the provision of services equally and to participate equally and perform to the best of their ability in the workplace or an educational setting. Accommodations are provided so that individuals are not disadvantaged or discriminated against on the basis of the prohibited grounds of discrimination identified in the Ontario *Human Rights Code* or other factors.

Accommodations for students with special education needs: the term accommodations has a specific meaning in special education. Accommodations for students with special education needs include special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment that help the student learn and demonstrate learning.

Anti-racism: a proactive course of action to identify, remove, prevent, and mitigate the racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between dominant and disadvantaged groups and the structures that sustain these inequities. It recognizes the historic nature and cultural contexts of racism, and focuses critically on systemic racism. Anti-racism aims to ensure the absence of unfair treatment, which includes exclusionary or discriminatory practices.

Anti-racist education: an approach that integrates the perspectives of Indigenous and racialized communities into an educational system and its practices. Anti-racist education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that may foster racism, as well as the racist attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. It provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to critically examine issues related to racism, power, and privilege. Anti-racist education promotes the removal of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers based on race.

Anti-oppression: strategies, theories, and actions that challenge social and historical inequalities/injustices that have become part of our systems and institutions and allow certain groups to dominate over others.

Barrier: an obstacle to equity that may be overt or subtle, intended or unintended, and systemic or specific to an individual or group, and that prevents or limits access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society.

Bias: an opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgements.

Caregiver: an individual involved in a caring and commitment relationship that may be ongoing, long-term, significant and where responsibilities have shifted to a non-family member (Ontario Human Rights Commission, [Defining Family Status](#)). The meaning of caregiver must be consistent with how First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples conceptualize caregivers.

Culturally relevant teaching: teaching that integrates a student's background knowledge and prior home and community experiences into the curriculum and the teaching and learning experiences that take place in the classroom. There are three central tenets underpinning this pedagogy: (1) holding high expectations for all students, (2) assisting students in the development of cultural competence and (3) guiding students to develop a critical cultural consciousness. In this student-centred framework, the uniqueness of each student is not just acknowledged, but nurtured.

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.

Diversity: the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Equity: a condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

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.

Inclusive education: education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

Intersectionality: the overlapping, in the context of an individual or group, of two or more prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, or other factors, which may result in additional biases or barriers to equity for that individual or group.

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.

Progressive discipline: a whole-school approach that uses a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour, as well as a variety of strategies to promote and foster positive behaviours. Disciplinary measures are applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive.

Racialized group: a group of people who may experience social inequities on the basis of race, colour, and/or ethnicity, and who may be subjected to differential treatment.

Racism: a set of erroneous assumptions, opinions, and actions stemming from the belief that one race is inherently superior to another. Racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs,

as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

Religious accommodation: an obligation under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to provide reasonable accommodation for students and employees who wish to observe the tenets or practices of their faith, as well as for those who wish not to participate in any form of religious observance.

References:

- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#), S.O. 2005, CHAPTER 11.
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- Government of Ontario, [Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan](#) (2017).
- [Human Rights Code](#), R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19
- O. Reg. 437/97: Professional Misconduct under *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 12.
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