



Peterborough Victoria  
Northumberland and Clarington  
Catholic District School Board

BOARD POLICY	
<i>Policy Section</i> <b>PUBLIC RELATIONS/ COMMUNICATIONS</b>	<i>Policy Number</i> <b>704</b>
<i>Administrative Procedure Number</i> <b>AP-PRC-704</b>	<i>Page</i> <b>1 of 3</b>

## POLICY TITLE

Confidential Communication Between Students and Staff

### 1.0 PURPOSE

The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board is committed to encouraging communication between staff and students. The Board recognizes that staff members are in positions of trust *vis a vis* their students, and that students may disclose confidential information to staff.

This Policy provides guidelines with respect to the fundamental expectation that communication between students and staff will be held in confidence and outlines specific exceptions where a communication will not be kept confidential.

### 2.0 POLICY

It is the policy of the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board to protect, to the extent legally and reasonably possible, the confidentiality of sensitive and private communication between staff and students.

### 3.0 GUIDELINES

- 3.1 Staff need to balance the right of a student to an expectation of confidentiality and the rights of parents and others to disclosure of confidential communication between staff and students.
- 3.2 Communication between students and staff, including guidance counsellors, pastoral care workers, social workers, and psychologists/

psychometrists, are not protected by any legal privilege and, as such, may be compellable as evidence in legal proceedings.

- 3.3 Priests on staff will be held to the same obligations as outlined in section 3.2, with the exception of information that is considered to fall under the "Seal of Confession".
- 3.4 Students will be advised that, while staff members are willing to discuss personal issues with students, staff cannot guarantee that the information will not be disclosed to anyone; the staff member may have a professional and/or legal obligation to disclose the information to the student's parents/guardians or other appropriate authorities.
- 3.5 Employees have an obligation to disclose information that would constitute a duty to report suspicions of child abuse and neglect to the children's aid society in their school area.

#### **4.0 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

##### **4.1 COMMUNICATIONS**

Communications refers to those communications of a personal and sensitive nature which originate from students to staff members, and in respect of which there is an expectation, either implied or expressed by the student, that the communications be held in confidence.

##### **4.2 SEAL OF CONFESSION**

Seal of Confession refers to the injunction placed on a priest to maintain absolute silence about matters discussed within the Sacrament of Reconciliation, except when disclosure is required by law.

#### **5.0 REFERENCES/RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act  
Child and Family Services Act  
Health Protection and Promotion Act  
Communications Department for "The Advocate" - the O.A.S.B.O.'s Newsletter  
Student Personal Information - A Guide to the M.F.I.P.P.A. and the Release of Students' Personal Information

**6.0 RELATED POLICIES**

Old Policy 905, Access to and Management of Information

**7.0 RELATED FORMS**

**8.0 APPROVED BY BOARD**

September 26, 2006

**9.0 EFFECTIVE DATE**

November 3, 2009

**10.0 POLICY REVIEW DATE**

November 2014

**11.0 REVIEW BY**

Communication Services