

# NIPISSING-PARRY SOUND CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## THE CATHOLIC ATMOSPHERE AND PHILOSOPHY OF OUR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

C 13.0  
NPS 5-99

### **POLICY:**

“The special function of the Catholic school is to develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by the spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel.” (Gravissimum Educationis, 8)

This statement from the Second Vatican Council highlights the distinctive characteristics of our Catholic schools that are found in

- a) the educational climate,
- b) the personal development of each student,
- c) the relationship established between culture and the Gospel, and
- d) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith. (The Religious Dimension of Education in Catholic School)

Challenged by the words of Christ to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:31), our Catholic schools must be open and accepting of others and respect their ways of thinking and living. “The Catholic school is particularly sensitive to the call from every part of the world for a more just society, and it tries to make its own contribution towards it.” (The Catholic School, 58).

“The 1971 Synod of Bishops in Rome reminded us that justice is a constitutive element of the gospel...justice must also be part of a child’s formation to lead children to the heart of the gospel.

The activities are designed to increase students’ awareness of the relation of the gospel message to justice and concrete action.” (‘‘May We Be One’’, Gr. 5 Born of the Spirit Program, 155)

“Needless to say, children learn far more by example and witness than by words.” (Today’s Catholic School, 14). Christ asks us to not only teach the Gospel message found in the Beatitudes, but to bear witness as well. As we incorporate these values into our lives, we also enhance our relationship with God and our neighbour. Our Catholic schools must be places where one has presented an array of values which are actively lived.

“Children also have their own apostolic work to do. In their own way, they can be true living witnesses to Christ among their companions...

Young people ought to become the prime and direct apostles of youth...” (Vatican II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, No. 12).

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Thus, it is the policy of the Board that our Catholic schools will provide a safe, secure environment based on the Gospel values and an attitude of non-tolerance for unacceptable behaviour.

More and more of our students are being touched by family and societal violence. Every opportunity shall be taken to recognize that for some of our students, school may be one of the few refuges from the violence they are exposed to. School is often the one constant in their lives. "They come to school every day, with high expectations, seeking a place where they can feel secure, where they are respected, and where they can concentrate on the business of learning." (A Safe, Secure School and Community, Boston 1992). The curriculum in our Catholic schools must teach non-violent ways of resolving conflict. Students need strategies to help them to live as responsible Canadian citizens who will make our world a better place.

Measures must be taken to establish preventive procedures, appropriate early intervention procedures and disciplinary procedures that will nurture our Catholic environment. The Board strives to:

- promote a school culture based on Gospel values;
- recognize the individual needs of students facing issues such as alcohol, drugs, pregnancy, aids, etc.;
- respond to incidents involving violence;
- support curriculum and staff development initiatives that promote non-violent means for students to resolve conflict.

It is the responsibility of our Catholic School system to provide a safe, secure environment that supports the growth and development of each student.