



School Parish Planning Guidelines

#400.26

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Adopted: | October 1, 2010 |
| Last Reviewed/Revised: | December 4, 2023 |
| Responsibility: | Lorrie Temple, Superintendent of Education |
| Next Scheduled Review: | December 2027 |

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to provide a guideline for school-parish-home relations.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE:

At our Baptism, we are called to work together in a spirit of mutual trust and co-operation for the common good, empowering all members to contribute their unique gifts. In a Catholic educational community, collaboration involves both personal growth within a larger faith community and engagement in our communal journey towards a just and loving society. It takes two or more individuals or groups to engage in and sustain a relationship. Below is a guide to support ongoing dialogue and communication between home, school, and parish.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

School Administrator:

to initiate contact with Pastor and develop an ongoing mutually respectful and open relationship.

Pastor:

to assist school administrator(s) and staff with the faith formation of students and adults, and to provide sacramental ministry for the school community.

School Staff:

to welcome pastor visits in the classroom and to assist with school Masses, sacramental preparations, and school events, as required.

REFERENCES:

<https://hamiltondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Sacramental-Guidelines-2022.pdf>

<https://dol.ca/pastoral-care-of-our-catholic-schools>

<http://saintcd.com/userfiles/Final-Criteria-for-the-Sacraments-July-2014.pdf>

<https://iceont.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Elementary-Religious-Ed-2012.pdf>

https://iceont.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/MG_Curr_Issue_4_Grace4All_Final-1.pdf

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

Pastor/Administrator Meetings

Exchange email addresses and phone numbers for contact and forward this information to the Director's Office.

Contact the Pastor to schedule a meeting in June to prepare for the next school year. Where two or more schools belong to the same family of parishes or are connected to the same parish, Administrators may wish to coordinate a single meeting for the pastor. Part of this discussion should include the role of the Pastor within the school, for example:



- Will the Pastor visit classes? What help does the pastor need in creating a schedule for class visits?
- Share the specific guidelines and expectations and clarify roles for the preparation and celebration of the sacraments* (see below).
- Is there a designated staff and parish member to fulfill the following roles of Music Ministry? Choir Coordinator Liturgical Coordinator?
- Will a parish representative sit on the School Council and act as a liaison between the school and parish?
- Can the Administrator address the Parish Team/Parish Council at one of their meetings?
- Are there parish events where school staff could be invited to attend?

Sacramental Preparation:

In Diocese of Hamilton, the Office for Catechesis guides the sacramental preparation of children in parishes supported by Catholic schools. In the Diocese of London, sacramental preparation of children in Catholic schools is guided by principles outlined in the document, “Pastoral Care of Catholic Schools” and guidelines for the sacramental preparation of children in the Diocese of St. Catharine’s are contained in the document, “Criteria for the Sacraments: The Initiation of Children.” Additionally, the Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document for Religious Education clarifies the roles parishes and schools play in providing sacramental preparation:

“It should be noted that preparation for the reception of sacraments takes place on two levels, initial preparation, which involves an ongoing education in the sacramental life of the Church, and immediate preparation, which involves catechetical and practical preparation in the weeks and months leading up to the reception of a particular sacrament. The former, in Ontario, is primarily the responsibility of Catholic schools. The latter, immediate preparation, is parish based and is usually coordinated by the parish priest and parish catechists. This does not mean that home, school and parish work in isolation. In the best-case scenario, cooperation between home, school and parish under the direction of the priest and local bishop, leads to the best results.” (34)

The religious education resource, Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ (Pearson) is used in the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic DSB and is approved by the Catholic Bishops of Ontario. All three Dioceses assure schools and parishes of the excellent foundational catechesis for Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation contained in the Grades 2 and 7 and 8 (Diocese of London) programs respectively. Parishes are encouraged to refer to this material as they supplement with their own programming in the parish for immediate preparation for the Sacraments.

With the Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ series, school resources are full and complete. Schools do not need extra materials to meet the curriculum and are not encouraged to use materials outside of the program that has been approved by our bishops. Upon request or when needed, the Student Achievement Consultant for Religious Education and Family Life can provide in-service training to parish pastoral teams on the use of the resources, for example, the Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ parish portal.

Immediate preparation for the Sacraments continues to be the responsibility of the parish. Parishes may choose a variety of resources and methods for immediate preparation that may include classroom visits, meetings at the parish and/or parish retreats. Parishes may access resources, including the Models for Sacramental Preparation through their respective Dioceses.

Resources to support the sacramental preparation of students who have special needs are available through the Institute for Catholic Education (see monograph entitled, Grace for All: Sacraments and Children with Special Needs in Our Catholic Schools).



Schedule all applicable dates for the school year with the Pastor; for example:

- School Masses (consider Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Year End, Graduation)
- Reconciliation (during Advent and Lent)
- First Reconciliation, including introductory parent meeting.
- First Holy Communion, including introductory parent meeting.
- Confirmation, including introductory parent meeting.
- Stations of the Cross
- Other devotions (specify)

Discuss and determine the location of liturgical celebrations. While it is preferable to celebrate Eucharist in the parish church at least two times per school year, this may not always be possible due to distance, church capacity, inclement weather and/or financial constraints due to transportation costs. In the end, the school administrator decides the place for school worship in consultation with the local pastor.

Communication

Give the Pastor a school calendar and highlight pertinent dates for him. Collect pertinent dates regarding parish activities for the school website and school newsletters.

Invite Pastor to participate/attend school events/meetings and provide him with applicable dates. Please provide as much advanced notice as possible. Events to consider include:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| - staff prayer services | - staff celebrations |
| - School Council meetings | - career night |
| - Kindergarten orientation | - opening day assembly |
| - Meet the Teacher Night | - Grade 8/9 parent meetings. |
| - Catholic Leadership Awards Night | - Christmas dinner |
| - Catholic Education Week | - Skills Canada events |
| - retreats | - school-based faith development days |
| - others, as needed. | |

Include school events information in the church bulletin; send it to the church two weeks prior to the bulletin being published.

Identify opportunities for school involvement in parish Masses.

Identify ways that the parish and school can help each other in acts of charity.

Designate a section in your school newsletter for Parish News. Information about Children's Liturgy programs at the parish could be shared in school newsletters for the benefit of families.

Verify that "our parish" section of the school website is up to date and includes a link to the parish website, if applicable.

Where a problem arises between the school and the parish, it is best for the administrator to first call the pastor (or parish team member), or vice versa, directly and speak to him/her about it.