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## **Admissions to Elementary Catholic Schools**

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January 2015, May 2015, October 2017, April 2019, September 2021

**Memo To:** All Administrators, Executive Council  
**From:** Director of Education

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### **ACCESSIBILITY:**

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### **PURPOSE:**

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) is truly the heart of the community, offering success for each and a place for all. As such, the following Administrative Procedure is designed to provide direction to Elementary Principals, Vice Principals, and Superintendents with respect to admission to Catholic elementary school.

### **REFERENCES:**

- The Education Act and Regulations
- WCDSB Mission & Vision Statements
- Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

### **FORMS:**

- 2129K (97-12): [Application for Direction of School Support](#)
- APA001-03F: [Non-Catholic Student, Admission Request](#)
- APA001-04F: [Student Registration, Elementary School](#)
- APA001-05F: [Student Documentation Verification](#)
- ESL001F: [English as a Second Language/Literacy Development - Pupil Eligibility Confirmation](#)
- [Student Registration – ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY](#) (WCDSB Online Registration Form)

### **REPORTS:**

- N/A

### **APPENDICES:**

- Appendix A: [Elementary Admissions Flowchart](#)
- Appendix B: [Letter to Catholic Parent\(s\)/Guardian\(s\) of an Elementary Student without Roman Catholic Baptism or Reception into the Church](#)
- Appendix C: [Letter for Non-Catholic Admission Acceptance](#)



## COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

### Admission to Elementary Schools for Roman Catholic Students

1. Subject to the provisions of the Education Act (Ontario), all elementary school-aged students having the right of attendance shall be admitted to the geographically appropriate school under the jurisdiction of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. The right of attendance defined in the Education Act (Ontario) means that all elementary school-aged children of parent(s)/guardian(s) who direct their taxes in support of a Separate School Board are eligible to attend a Catholic school. Registration is required for students who are new to WCDSB using the online registration form which is found on the [WCDSB web page](#) (**Register** button). After logging in, the [Student Registration – Elementary & Secondary](#) form will be used to complete the registration. Alternatively, in special circumstances, the hardcopy [Student Registration, Elementary School](#) (Form APA001-04F) may be completed.
2. A student shall be allowed to enroll in Junior Kindergarten in September of that calendar year during which the student becomes four years of age.
3. A student shall be enrolled in Senior Kindergarten in September of that calendar year during which the student becomes five years of age.
4. A student shall be admitted by the Principal of an elementary school when the parent(s)/guardian(s) submit(s) the following evidence that a student has the right to attend a Roman Catholic School.
  - All elementary students who have a Catholic parent(s) and who is an elector of the WCDSB have a legal right to attend. The right of attendance shall be determined by the parent's proof of eligibility to be an elector of the school board. A copy of the parent's baptismal or confirmation certificate shall be considered proof of right to direct taxes to the Separate School Board (copies of all documentation to be filed in student OSR). Principals shall ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) complete the [Application for Direction of School Support](#) (Form 2129K (97-12)).
  - The school shall complete the [Student Documentation Verification](#) (Form APA001-05F) for registration purposes upon admitting a student to a Roman Catholic School. The following documentation is required as proof (no copies of documentation shall be reproduced; documentation is for verification only):

To verify the legal name and date of birth of the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall produce proof of age of the student through one of the following documents:

- Birth Certificate
- Certificate of Canadian Citizenship
- Certificate of Registration of Birth Abroad
- Passport
- Permanent Resident Card
- Record of Landing

If entering as Immigrant status, one of the following documents must be provided to confirm confirmation of date of entry and status in Canada:

- Permanent Resident Card
- Record of Landing
- Confirmation of Permanent Residence
- Other (must specify)

An [English as a Second Language/Literacy Development - Pupil Eligibility Confirmation](#) (Form ESL001F) must be completed for **all** students who have entered Canada for the **first** time within the past four (4) school years, **and** who were born in a qualifying country (a country other than Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand and Australia). One of the following documents must be provided to confirm country of birth and date of first entry into Canada:

- Foreign Passport

- Confirmation of Permanent Residence Status
- Permanent Resident Card
- Canadian Passport or Canadian Citizenship Card
- Work/Study Permit
- Refugee Claimant or Eligibility for Interim Federal Health Benefits
- Other (must specify)

For verification of address of the parent(s)/guardian(s), one of the following documents must contain proof of current address:

- Utility Bill
- Property Tax Bill
- Cable/Phone/Internet Bill
- Purchase/Rental/Lease Agreement
- Bank Document
- Other (must specify)

- Current Immunization Record indicating that all required immunizations have been received to date.
  - Completed [Student Registration-Elementary & Secondary](#) (Online Registration Form) or hardcopy [Student Registration, Elementary School](#) (Form APA001-04F).
5. Catholic parent(s)/guardian(s) whose children have the right of attendance and children are lacking Roman Catholic Baptism will be provided with information outlining the philosophy of Catholic schools and expectations of Religion and Family Life programs, along with encouragement for Catholic Baptism; refer to the [letter to Catholic Parent\(s\)/Guardian\(s\) of an Elementary Student without Roman Catholic Baptism or Reception into the Church](#) (APA001-BX: Appendix B.)
6. As outlined in the Joint Protocol for Student Achievement (October 2015), the Principal of an elementary school shall admit a student who is a Crown Ward or Society Ward. In these cases, the CAS/F&CS Point Person should contact the school to arrange for the student's registration. Where appropriate, the CAS/F&CS Point Person can, with written consent, delegate this action to the caregiver/foster parent.

## Consideration for Registering Elementary Children of Other Faiths

In this age of ecumenism and sensitivity to other religious traditions, the contemporary Catholic school can perform a service, if it is able, to admit children of other faiths. It enables the Catholic students to learn about the religious beliefs, attitudes and practices of other faiths. It also enables the non-Catholic students to understand the religious beliefs, attitudes and practices of the Catholic community. Each admission request presents a unique set of circumstances that need to be reviewed and explored.

- We acknowledge that all students are at varying stages of development. In order to integrate into the school environment more easily, the non-Catholic student ideally needs to be able to appreciate, to a reasonable extent, the distinctive expectations of the Catholic curriculum of the school.
- We acknowledge that all students who wish to attend Catholic schools must be willing to work toward the achievement of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations as outlined on our Board website.
- We realize that students function at varying levels of maturity, but those who wish to attend Catholic schools must be willing to accept its purpose and goals. If non-Catholic students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) wishing admission can assure the school's administration of their willingness to make their best effort to demonstrate this attitudinal consideration, the admission request deserves support. This includes, but is not limited to, participation in all activities and programs in support of the faith life of the school community.

It is essential that the Principal explore with non-Catholic parent(s)/guardian(s) their reasons for the application and their expectations for their student if enrolled in a Catholic school. During this discussion, the Principal is able to explain significant issues that relate to the nature and purpose of the Catholic school. These issues should be

shared frankly, but with respect for the convictions of the non-Catholic parent(s)/guardian(s). It may be particularly important, where applicable, to discuss issues around Sacramental preparation. As well, at this time, the non-Catholic parent(s)/guardian(s) should have the opportunity to express their views and to ask clarifying questions. After this discussion, both parties will be better able to determine whether the student should or should not be enrolled.

The non-Catholic parent(s)/guardian(s) must understand that the Catholic school participates in the pastoral/educational and evangelizing/catechizing mission of the Church. It is a setting within which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, explained and experienced. During the interview, the principal will describe to the non-Catholic parent(s)/guardian(s) the status of their child(ren) with regard to the reception of the Sacraments.

## **Conclusion**

The Catholic school is called to fulfill an invaluable function within contemporary society. Those who are privileged to exercise a leadership role within the school must create and cultivate an environment within which the goals of Catholic education can be achieved.

The nature, purpose and goals of the school can be enhanced by welcoming non-Catholics who have expressed their willingness to join the community. The school can and must be a community of faith in which an evangelizing and catechizing ministry is being fulfilled.

The Catholic school must be a truly pastoral setting in which all of the participants (adults and students, Catholic and non-Catholic) are invited, comforted, challenged, enriched, renewed, strengthened and supported. In doing so, the spiritual lives of all concerned are enhanced. We learn from and about one another and we are better for that experience.

## **Admission to Catholic Elementary Schools of Children of Other Faiths**

1. The Principal of an elementary school is empowered to admit students of another faith who do not enjoy a statutory right to attend, subject to the provisions of this Administrative Procedure.
2. Requests for admission of a non-Catholic student shall be made by the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student, by completing the [Non-Catholic Student Admission Request](#) (Form APA001-03F) and submitting the completed form to the Principal in sufficient time to allow for thoughtful consideration of the request.
3. The Principal will then conduct an interview with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine to his/her satisfaction that the request is motivated primarily by the desire for an education within a Catholic educational tradition.
4. The Principal shall provide the parent(s)/guardian(s) with information outlining the philosophy of Catholic schools and the expectations of the Religion and Family Life programs which can be found on the Board Website.
5. In considering a request for admission, the Principal shall attend to the following areas:
  - The reasons given by the parent(s)/guardian(s) for their request to register the child(ren) in a Catholic school.
  - The level of support which the parent(s)/guardian(s) can provide to the student to foster the practice of their own faith and the support they are willing to provide in relation to Catholic values and beliefs presented at school.
  - The age of the child(ren) and particular grade levels involved.
  - An understanding that permission given to a student to attend under the provisions of this policy may be subject to annual review.

- If a decision is made to admit the student, the Principal will send a welcome letter to the parent(s)/guardian(s) (refer to the [Letter for Non-Catholic Admission Acceptance](#), APA001-CX: Appendix C), and send a copy of the letter to the Family of Schools Superintendent, along with a copy of the completed [Non-Catholic Student Admission Request](#) (Form APA001-03F).
6. Where a Principal is planning to deny a request or has other concerns about a particular admission request, the Principal shall first consult with the Family of Schools Superintendent. If the final decision is to deny the request, the Principal will communicate the decision to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
  7. Siblings of students admitted under this provision who reach school age in a subsequent year will be permitted to attend without the need for additional interviews.

### **Reflective Question to Guide Administrators**

When reflecting upon the question of the non-Catholic student in the Catholic elementary school, one should remember that the Catholic school is called to be a community of faith within which an evangelizing and catechizing ministry is being fulfilled. The school is committed to being a community of faith wherein the Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. The parent seeking admission for his or her child must appreciate this commitment.

The following questions may be useful for school administrators in assessing the level of understanding of the non-Catholic student in regard to the mandate of the Catholic school:

1. Does the student understand, accept and express a willingness to support actively the philosophy and goals of the school?
2. Is the student willing to attend and participate in religion and family life classes?
3. Does the student realize that he or she will be expected to attend liturgical celebrations of the school and participate only to the extent deemed appropriate by the Church for a non-Catholic?
4. Is the student willing to relate responsibly to the members of the school community, whether adults or students?
5. Is the student willing to participate in programs or services sponsored by the school?