



Administrative Procedures Memorandum

#: APA002

Admissions to Catholic Secondary Schools

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Reviewed/Revised: August 31, 2004, December 2010, April 2015 (consolidation of APC042), October 2017, August 2019

Memo To: All Staff

From: Director of Education

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 secondary principals, vice principals, and superintendents with respect to secondary school admissions and requests by parent(s)/guardian(s), or adult students, to be exempted from taking Religious Education Courses and/or faith activities (activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer).

REFERENCES:

- Education Act
- Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations
- WCDSB Mission & Vision Statements
- Admission of Out of Boundary Students (APA003)
- Student Fees for Learning Materials and School Activities (APB002)

FORMS:

- APA002-08F: [Student Registration Form, Secondary School](#)
- APA002-01F: [Religious Education Exemption, Acknowledgement](#)
- APA002-02F: [Discernment Conversation, Guidance](#)
- APA002-07F: [Religious Education Expectations and Exemptions, Annual Review](#)
- APA002-09F: [Faith Activities, Exemption Decision](#)
- APA002-10F: [Religious Education Courses, Exemption Decision](#)
- APA002-11F: [Discernment Conversation, Principal](#)

REPORTS:

- N/A

APPENDICES:

- APA002-AX: [Religious Courses/Faith Activities Exemption Flowchart](#)
- APA002-BX: [Discernment Brochure](#)

COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

Background

Admission to Secondary Schools

- Subject to Board Policies regarding transportation and school boundaries, any secondary school-aged student within the Board's jurisdiction, may choose to attend a Catholic Secondary School (Section 42 (1) Education Act (Ontario). The completion of a [Student Registration Form, Secondary School](#) (APA002-08F) is required.
- All Secondary school-aged students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must accept and recognize the distinctive Catholic character and culture that pervades the Catholic Secondary School community and must be willing to support its purpose, goals and expectations.

Admission of Out of Boundary Students

Out of boundary/out of region families/guardians may make application for their child(ren) to attend a Catholic Secondary School through the out of boundary/out of region application process; however, the application does not necessarily guarantee admission. All requests to attend a secondary school other than the home school, will be addressed as follows:

- The parent/guardian must submit an Out of Boundary/Out of Region Application Form (APA003) [Out of Boundary Application Form](#)
- Applications will be kept on file in the order of date received
- Applications will be considered on an individual basis and where there is capacity within the school
- A copy of the out of boundary form shall be returned to the parent/guardian once a disposition has been made.

Out of boundary students are not eligible for transportation services.

Freedom of Information Consent Form

The Freedom of Information Consent Form must be completed and filed annually in compliance with provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989.

Payment of Tuition Fees

In all cases, where a student is admitted for whom the Ministry of Education does not provide education funding, tuition fees would apply as outlined in Student Fees for Learning Materials and School Activities (APB002).

Pupils of Other Faiths in Catholic Secondary Schools

Non-Catholic students are entitled to attendance in a Catholic Secondary School as a matter of law; however, the fact that students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) have a statutory right to admission should not preclude reasonable efforts on the part of the school Principal to explore with them the unique expectations of members of a Catholic school community.

The right to attend brings with it the commitment to reasonable school expectations for behavior and participation in the life of that school. Those expectations need to be clearly expressed to registering students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) in a positive and welcoming fashion and to be accepted by them.

1. All students registered in Catholic Secondary Schools are required to take at least one Religious Education course in each of the four years.
2. Students enrolled in Catholic Secondary Schools are expected to participate fully in the prayer and liturgical life of the school, including daily prayer, Masses, retreats and faith formation activities. At a minimum, 'open access' students will attend and be respectful of all religious observances.
3. All teachers in a Catholic Secondary School shall infuse the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations into every course that is being taught.
4. Under exceptional circumstances, an 'open access' student, on his/her behalf if age 18 or over, or age 16 or 17 and withdrawn from parental control, or otherwise his/her parent/guardian, may apply in writing to be exempted from taking part in the school's programs and courses of study in religious education and/or faith activities (activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer).
5. The right to apply for an exemption does not extend to a Catholic student.

Procedures

As a means of helping to clarify the school's and the Board's position regarding the program offered in WCDSB's Catholic Secondary Schools, it is necessary to engage in an application process that ensures the applicant is fully aware of the impact that an exemption from Religious Education Course(s) and/or faith activities may have, as well as the mission and purpose of Catholic schools.

No requests for exemption from Religious Education Course(s)/faith activities shall be processed until all phases of the application process have been completed.

Registration

In order to be considered for an exemption, the student must first be registered at a Catholic Secondary School.

Application Process

In order for an application to be made, the applicant must provide sufficient notice. A written request from the parent/guardian or adult student (the applicant) must be received by the secondary school principal. The written notice must include the reason(s) for the request to help facilitate further discussions regarding the impact that the exemption may have on the student and program. The applicant is advised to refer to the [Religious Courses/Faith Activities Exemption Flowchart](#) (APA002-AX) and the [Discernment Brochure](#) (APA002-BX).

Information Meetings

Once the application has been received, the principal shall set up a meeting with the applicant and his/her Guidance Counsellor.

After the meeting with Guidance Counsellor, and only if the applicant wishes to pursue the application, then he/she is advised to refer to [Religious Courses/Faith Activities Exemption Flowchart](#) (APA002-AX) for next steps.