



BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE	
Administrative Procedure	Administrative Procedure Number
Opening and/or Closing Exercises in Catholic Schools	207
Directional Policy	
200 – Catholic Education	

Title of Administrative Procedure:

Opening and/or Closing Exercises in Catholic Schools

Date Approved:

February 6, 2024

Projected Review Date:

2029

Directional Policy Alignment:

The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board serves the common good by applying the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in the context of a culturally, religiously, and regionally diverse society. Given this landscape, this Administrative Procedure embeds the practices of prayer in keeping with our faith tradition, embeds the practices of cultural diversity, and fulfills the requirements of the Education Act to promote a sense of belonging through the creation of faith-filled, equitable and inclusive learning environments.

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

This Administrative Procedure embodies our Vision for creating a culture of faith, hope and love to ensure equity and well-being and our Mission to accompany our students as we strive for excellence in Catholic Education. This Administrative Procedure supports the Board's [Strategic Plan: Building a Community that Accompanies](#), as it is rooted in our Inspiring Faith pillar goals finding unity as the body of Christ and experiencing God in ourselves and the natural environment through prayer, sacramental signs and symbols and through sacred scripture. In this and through Catholic Social teaching, we

strive to educate students in faith-filled, loving, safe, inclusive schools to develop the God-given abilities of each person.

[PVNCCDSB Board Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities](#)

Action Required:

This Administrative Procedure provides guidelines to assist principals, staff, students, and school communities with daily prayer, which brings us together in communion, as well as responsible citizenship, which is demonstrated through the singing of O Canada. It is also intended to reflect diversity and inclusion within the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board, most notably in the regular effort to include French and Anishinaabemowin variations of the national anthem.

Land Acknowledgements honour and demonstrate our journey towards Truth and Reconciliation. Through authentic reflections that acknowledge our relationship to the land and water that sustains us; to life on Mother Earth and to the Indigenous Peoples, the traditional caretakers of the land, we are reminded of our responsibilities. Land Acknowledgements speak to establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships with Indigenous people and are one way to recognize traditional Indigenous territories, treaty agreements, and deepen our understanding of the truth and our shared history as Canadians.

As such, the principal, staff, clergy, parents/guardians, volunteers and students will offer a land acknowledgement and recite/pray/reflect/meditate or listen to Catholic prayers, scripture, songs, poems, and writings that reflect the teachings of Jesus.

Responsibilities:

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring alignment with the Catholic Education Directional Policy.
- Reviewing the Opening and/or Closing Exercises in Catholic Schools as part of its regular policy and procedure review cycle.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Designating resources for ensuring the implementation and compliance with this Administrative Procedure.

Superintendents of Schools and System Portfolios are responsible for:

- Supporting implementation of this Administrative Procedure.
- Ensuring that in addition to the requirements of the Education Act, it reflects the principles of diversity and inclusion.

Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:

- Ensuring that opening and/or closing exercises are held daily in keeping with the liturgical year.
- Ensuring that the playing and singing of O Canada include French and Anishinaabemowin versions of the national anthem.
- Ensuring daily prayer takes place at the start of the school day.
- Considering annually the recitation of the Oath of Citizenship and the Pledge to the Canadian Flag ([Appendix A English/French](#)) in consultation with the Catholic School Council.
- Reviewing with staff the procedures and expectations for opening/and or closing exercises and selected assemblies.
- Considering written requests for exemption from parents of students under 18 and students over 18 with the Family of Schools Superintendent, and providing a written response to the parent/guardian in a timely fashion.
- Notifying staff about the Opening and/or Closing Exercises Administrative Procedure.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following the Opening and/or Closing Exercises Administrative Procedure.
- Observing and participating in opening and/or closing exercises by listening, singing, speaking, and engaging in daily opening and/or closing exercises.

Students are responsible for:

- Observing and participating in opening and/or closing exercises by listening, singing, speaking, and engaging in daily opening and/or closing exercises.

Parents are responsible for:

- Supporting their children's participation in daily opening and/or closing exercises or providing a written request for exemption.

Progress Indicators:

- Daily observation and participation in daily opening and/or closing exercises including the playing and singing of O Canada and the daily experience of prayer.
- Regular playing and singing of O Canada in French and Anishinaabemowin languages.

Definitions:

- [Pledge of Citizenship - See Appendix A](#)
- [Pledge to the Canadian Flag - See Appendix A](#)
- [O Canada - See Appendix A](#)

References:

- [Equity and Inclusive Education Directional Policy 700](#)
- [Equity and Inclusive Education – AP 701](#)
- [Ministry of Education Regulation 298 Operation of Schools](#)
- [Ministry of Ontario Regulation 435/00 Opening and/or Closing Exercises](#)
- [Policy Program Memorandum No. 108](#)
- [Religious Accommodation – AP 702](#)