



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy and Procedure #380.0, Character Development

Application

Board *Policy and Procedure #380.0, Character Development* addresses the York Region District School Boards belief that good character forms the basis of healthy relationships and in turn is a cornerstone of a civil, just and democratic society. The development of good character is a shared responsibility of students, staff, families and the community. When all members of society embrace opportunities to model, teach, promote and celebrate good character, we build and strengthen learning and working communities that are caring, safe, respectful and inclusive.

Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities Under this Policy

- The Board of Trustees
- The Director of Education
- Superintendents of Schools
- Principals, Managers and Supervisors
- Staff Members
- Parents/Guardians

Relationship to Board priorities

This policy and procedure support all Board priorities by having a positive impact on school and workplace climate and the well-being of all students, staff and the community.

Document History and Previous Versions

Approved 2003
Revised 2008
Working Document May 2013
Revised February 2014

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Board Policy #380.0

Character Development

Document Integration Project Format

Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board believes that good character forms the basis of healthy relationships and is a cornerstone of a civil, just and democratic society. Character development transcends all individual differences, including religious, ethno-cultural and other demographic distinctions. Inclusive communities are characterized by empathy and respect for the dignity of all people.

The development of good character is a shared responsibility of students, staff members, families and communities. When all members of society embrace opportunities to model, teach, promote, and celebrate good character, we build and strengthen learning and working communities that are caring, safe, respectful and inclusive.

The York Region District School Board believes that:

- character can be taught and learned;
- a commitment to character development should permeate all aspects of the Board's delivery of programs and services in support of improved achievement and well-being;
- character development is enhanced through partnerships with businesses, community organizations, agencies and the Province of Ontario;
- the essential components outlined in the Ministry's [Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12](#) form the basis for educating the whole child, namely learning and academic achievement, character and citizenship development, respect for diversity and parent and community partnerships;
- character development enables us to "think critically, feel deeply and act wisely" (Finding Common Ground); and
- character development is critical to building and sustaining a positive climate for learning and working.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- reviewing the *Character Development* policy in accordance with the priorities in the [Trustees' Multi-Year Plan](#) and the approved review cycle; and
- understanding and communicating with members of the community about the *Character Development* policy, as required.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- implementing and operationalizing the *Character Development* policy as per the requirements of [Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12](#); and
- ensuring a collaborative process for engaging students, staff members, parents, school councils and a diverse cross-section of the broader community in the development, implementation and review of this initiative.

Superintendents are responsible for:

- supporting the implementation of the *Character Development* policy at each school and workplace.

Principals, Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- providing leadership in the implementation and development of character-building initiatives in schools and workplaces, where applicable.

Staff members are responsible for:

- modelling the character attributes in their workplace practices and interactions with others; and
- embedding character development in all activities.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- sharing the responsibility of modelling, developing and encouraging positive character development with students, staff members and the community.

Definitions

Character Development

Character development is a deliberate effort to nurture the universal attributes upon which schools and communities find consensus. (Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12)

Attributes

The 10 York Region District School Board character attributes chosen through a community consultation process are; respect, responsibility, honesty, empathy, fairness, initiative, perseverance, integrity, courage and optimism. Each of these attributes reflects the Board's mission, vision and values and helps to create and sustain an inclusive learning and working environment.

Character Matters!

Character Matters! is the title that identifies character development initiatives in the Board. It recognizes, honours and supports all initiatives, programs and activities that contribute to character development.

Department

Education and Community Services

Related Policies

[Policy #261.0, Equity and Inclusivity](#)

[Policy #668.0, Caring and Safe Schools](#)

Policy History

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This procedure outlines the roles and responsibilities for implementing character development as outlined in the Ministry's [Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12](#).

Responsibilities

The Director of Education shall:

- allocate staff and resources to support the *Character Development* procedure.

Curriculum and Instructional Services shall:

- develop and implement resources and professional learning opportunities for school staff members in the area of character development.

Superintendents shall:

- collaborate with the Ministry of Education to develop the processes and practices necessary to successfully implement the character development initiative;
- ensure that students and staff play a key role at all stages of the development of this initiative; and
- ensure that character development is part of the Board's planning processes.

Principals shall:

- strive to engage all members of the school community in developing and implementing this initiative;
- strive to ensure that student leadership reflects the diversity of the school population;
- ensure there are opportunities to engage all students in character development and its implementation;
- provide the knowledge, skills and leadership development required for students related to character development;
- ensure character development is an integral part of the School Improvement Plan;
- support professional learning opportunities for staff and members of the school community in the area of character development;
- ensure that character development is embedded in all subject areas, classrooms, extra-curricular and programs;
- work with the school council to engage community members in the implementation of character development;
- expand opportunities for civic engagement and citizenship development of all students;
- assess the effectiveness of character development using data collected through the School Climate Survey and other instruments; and
- support character development through the school's Positive Climates for Learning and Working Team.

Principals, Managers and Supervisors shall:

- consider character development when engaging in planning processes; and
- support learning opportunities for staff in the area of character development.

School staff members shall:

- engage students in the creation of school and classroom learning environments that are collaborative, caring and characterized by high expectations for learning;
- provide the knowledge, skills and leadership development required for students related to character development;
- raise awareness of and support student participation in social justice issues, as appropriate;
- be involved in creating a school culture that values positive relationships, fosters a sense of belonging, nurtures democratic principles and encourages voice and choice in decision making; and
- use character attributes in the development of school and classroom behavioural expectations.

All staff members shall:

- be involved in creating a workplace culture that values positive relationships, fosters a sense of belonging, nurtures democratic principles and encourages voice and choice in decision making.

Students shall:

- provide meaningful input into plans and decisions for implementing character development in their schools;
- include diverse members of the student population in the daily life of the school;
- encourage all students to become involved in leadership opportunities;
- take opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to model positive character attributes in their schools and communities;
- demonstrate their concern for others by anticipating social justice issues in their schools and communities and contributing to their solutions; and
- identify and participate in community involvement, civic engagement and citizenship development.

School Councils shall:

- work with the principal in the implementation of character development;
- model the character attributes in their interactions with others; and
- embed character development in all school council activities.

Department

Education and Community Services

Related Procedures

[Procedure #261.0, Equity and Inclusivity](#)

[Procedure #668.0, Caring and Safe Schools](#)

Procedure History

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