



Human Rights Commissioner's Office

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Dear YRDSB Staff, Students, Parents, Trustees and Members of the YRDSB Community,

At this very critical and challenging time, in the midst of the COVID-19 shutdown, I would like to reach out to assure you that the Human Rights Commissioner's Office (HRCO) will continue to address issues that are brought forward to us. However, please understand that at this time all in-person consultations relating to human rights complaints are suspended until further notice. To assist you during this difficult period, we have created an [FAQ](#) to address any general questions that you may have. However, please feel free to continue reaching out to us on specific human rights matters via our online [Reporting Form](#) or at human.rights@yrdsb.ca in regard to general questions and/or concerns.

I am especially mindful of and concerned about any issues of discrimination and harassment that some of you may encounter during this time. Thus, I wish to emphasize the importance of actions and conduct that are respectful of human rights principles, where the treatment of everyone with dignity and respect must be foremost. This is not a moment to point to members of other communities or cultures to attribute blame for external events – it is a moment to stand together and be courageous. This is a time to recognize that human rights are at the core of all of our relationships and interactions. It is a time to recognize that our differences make us stronger and that strength will allow us to transcend the difficulties of this period and to overcome various other challenges of our times. Therefore, I would ask that we exercise care and compassion, particularly in regard to our engagement with fellow members of the YRDSB and broader communities who are older, those with disabilities and/or pre-existing medical conditions. As is known, certain populations are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. It is critical to be deliberately mindful of all actions that could unintentionally allow for discrimination of who we perceive people to be, or what group they may associate with or belong to. Any discrimination based on the many protected grounds of Ontario's Human Rights Code is not acceptable.

As has happened with events of significance and loss in the past, so too will this moment become a part of our shared history, and we will need to ask ourselves: What did we do when our common humanity called upon all of us to act with compassion, understanding and resoluteness? Please be well and take care of yourselves and each other.

Sincerely,

Anthony Anirud, B.A., B.E.S., LL.B./JD., LL.M., CDM., NCWM.
Human Rights Commissioner