



Dufferin-Peel
Catholic District
School Board



Progressive Discipline and School Safety (Bill 212)

in Dufferin-Peel Catholic Schools

PARENT GUIDE

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



To Our Dufferin-Peel Community,

This booklet has been prepared to familiarize our Catholic school community with the requirements of Bill 212 as it pertains to School Safety and Progressive Discipline in our board. We believe that Dufferin-Peel is in a good position to embrace this new law since we share its philosophy and embed many of the requirements in our current approach to student discipline. Bill 212 mandates that all Ontario schools move away from a solely punitive response to student misconduct, towards disciplinary strategies that take a more holistic view of child development, recognizing that “one size does not fit all.” In Dufferin-Peel, we have always acknowledged that extenuating circumstances and personal issues impact the lives of students and influence their behaviours; therefore we have attempted to be ever-mindful of these realities when tailoring student discipline to fit these unique situations. It is our consistent hope that the interventions, consequences and supports that we put in place serve to both correct and educate the student, reaping lasting positive effects on future behaviours, and on the relationship dynamics at home and school.

We are determined to ensure that all persons who work and learn in the Dufferin-Peel community feel safe, secure and respected at all times. Bill 212 has been an invitation for our board to sharpen its focus in the area of progressive discipline, and the impetus for us to consider ways to strengthen our preventative programs. We know that parents have a central role to play in the education of their children, and can support the work of the school in maintaining a safe and respectful environment. Parents have enormous influence with their children and can reinforce messages that promote a deeply caring school culture. They can help by ensuring that their children come to school eager to learn and prepared to follow school rules and accepted protocols.

Dufferin-Peel’s approach to School Safety and Progressive Discipline is firmly rooted in our Catholic Christian faith tradition which calls us to become an inclusive community modeled after Jesus and the early Christian community. As a faith community, we are committed to honouring the dignity of all persons created in God’s image, and to fostering those virtues and attitudes that promote compassionate service to all. In such a community there is no place for bullying, harassment, discrimination or violence. It is our prayer that our students, parents, faculty, staff, parish and community partners will work together to protect the vulnerable from any such behaviour, and take affirmative action to safely intervene to stop and report it when it occurs. Together we shall build a community of love, Christ’s Body, where all feel safe and welcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "J.B. Kostoff". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John B. Kostoff
Director of Education

Our Belief

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board's (DPCDSB) initiative to create safe, caring, inclusive and healthy school communities is rooted in our Catholic identity, in particular, our shared belief in:

- the dignity of all persons created in God's image;
- Jesus' model of discipleship, as the supreme exemplar of how to live faithfully in community;
- the importance of cultivating a culture of respect;
- the Catholic values of Christian service and concern for the common good;
- our obligation to the weak, the marginalized, the hurt and the lost;
- our call to be the "face of Christ," especially to the most challenging and disengaged learner;
- the importance of offering students opportunities to change, to make amends, restore relationships, and be welcomed back with love, forgiveness and support;
- a philosophy of discipline that focuses on the spirit of Jesus' law of love, rather than the letter of the law.

The Virtues Program

In response to the Ministry of Education's dual focus on Bullying Prevention and Character Education, Dufferin-Peel initiated the Virtues Program to strengthen our resolve to model and teach habits of thinking and behaving that will contribute to the virtuous life. The Virtues Program is expansive in its vision and inclusive in its outreach - intended to raise awareness, promote conversation, and enliven the faith of both adults and children system-wide. The Virtues Program, together with our Religion and Family Life Programs, our Chaplaincy Program, and the regular infusion of gospel values across the curriculum, comprise a comprehensive strategy that supports the goals of Bill 212 in creating and sustaining safe, caring, inclusive and healthy school communities in Ontario. Dufferin-Peel is proud of its commitment to address government priorities as part of its broader vision of the mission of Catholic education in Ontario.

Our Vision of School Safety

DPCDSB is committed to working with schools, parishes, families and the community to provide a positive learning environment that is safe, engaging, faith-based and academically challenging. We know that students learn best within an inviting school culture supported by caring and committed staff. Our school communities, immersed in the Gospel of Jesus, and filled with his Spirit, are committed to the values of compassion, acceptance, forgiveness and reconciliation. Recognizing that each child is unique, we strive to differentiate both instruction and disciplinary strategies to suit the particular needs of the child, the situation and the context. We acknowledge that a safe and respectful environment is the aim of all who attend our Catholic schools, and we work tirelessly to ensure that this goal is honoured, protected, and defended.

SAFE SCHOOLS POLICIES

Bill 212, the Education Amendment Act, (Progressive Discipline and School Safety Act), 2007, effective February 1, 2008, amends the safe schools provisions of the Education Act, enacted by the Safe Schools Act, 2000. The Ministry of Education's Safe Schools Action Team reports that "the changes offer a better, fairer, more equitable approach to ensuring safety in our schools" by "strengthening the focus on prevention and reducing the possibility of discrepancies in consistency, fairness and application of methods of discipline." DPCDSB is well-positioned to implement these mandated changes, which align with our philosophical approach to safe, caring, inclusive and healthy school communities, and mirror our existing practice of positive, life-giving approaches to student discipline. The complete text of our board's policy response to Bill 212 (DPCDSB Interim Safe Schools Policies) is available at www.dpcdsb.org. The excerpts below highlight key messages from these board policies.

Omnibus Policy: Safe Schools

- All shall be held to the highest standards of Catholic behaviour.
- All shall "put on the mind of Christ" in making right choices.
- Healthy relationships in the context of Catholic community shall be highly valued.
- Programs and training shall foster respectful climates and compassionate service.
- Preventative, educative and disciplinary measures shall be implemented in the spirit of Christian discipleship.
- Virtue formation shall be actively fostered throughout.
- Belief in the transformative potential of individuals, and the power of God's grace, shall be widely proclaimed.
- Faith-filled trust in the inherent goodness of all persons, created in God's image, shall be demonstrated.
- Principals, as part of their investigation, shall make all reasonable efforts to speak with the student and with the student's parent or guardian (unless the student is at least 18 years old, or is 16 or 17 years old and has withdrawn from parental control) prior to making a decision regarding long-term suspension or recommendation for expulsion, of that student. However, the authority and decision to discipline is that of the Principal (for suspension) or that of the Board (for expulsion), depending upon the circumstances.

Catholic Code of Conduct

All persons shall work together to develop spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally and aspire to the highest standards of Catholic behaviour by living out gospel values, and fostering a Catholic culture of respect, responsibility and concern for the common good. The Catholic Code of Conduct applies to everyone - students, school staff, parents, volunteers, community partners and the police.

Bullying Prevention Policy

In recognizing that "bullying* adversely affects the student's ability to learn, healthy relationships, school climate and the school's ability to educate its students," DPCDSB prohibits bullying in all forms, as a serious offence against the dignity of persons created in God's image, and as an affront to the integrity of Catholic learning communities. Thus, the board is committed to a comprehensive whole-school approach to bullying prevention and response.

Progressive Discipline Policy

DPCDSB supports the comprehensive and consistent use of a progressive discipline approach, and shall reflect the model of Christian discipleship, in its implementation of the Catholic Code of Conduct.

Board's Suspension Guidelines

A copy of the Board's Suspension Guideline, Suspension Appeal Guideline, Expulsion Guideline, Expulsion Rules, Suspension Investigation Guideline and Expulsion Investigation Guideline, will be made available upon request to the Family of Schools' Superintendent.

**Definition of Bullying on Page 9*



A SAFE CATHOLIC SCHOOL ~ A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Students demonstrate respect for self, others and mentor peers

- Participate in the liturgical life of the school community
- Demonstrate respect for Catholic faith and traditions
- Exercise self-discipline and act responsibly
- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for self/others
- Come to school prepared to learn
- Follow school rules, codes and established procedures
- Refrain from compromising safety of others
- Accept discipline as an opportunity to grow and learn

Parents educate their children and support the school staff

- Support the Catholic culture of the school
- Familiarize themselves with school policies and protocols
- Encourage their child(ren) to attend regularly, to come to school prepared to learn, and to work to their potential
- Show active interest in child's work and progress
- Encourage and assist student to follow rules of behaviour
- Assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues

Teachers and other school staff members serve as role models

- Help students to work to full potential
- Imbue gospel values across the curriculum
- Cultivate virtue formation
- Empower students to be positive leaders
- Communicate effectively and meaningfully with parents
- Demonstrate respect for all

Principals play an important leadership role

- Set high standards of conduct, and promote excellence in teaching/learning and a positive school culture
- Model gospel values in all areas of school life
- Empower students to become positive leaders
- Hold all accountable for behaviours
- Communicate regularly and meaningfully with all members

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

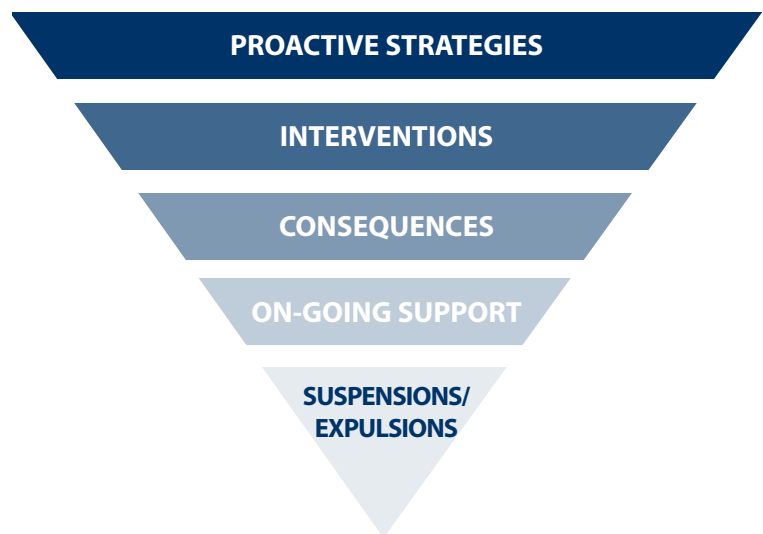
Progressive discipline is a philosophy that reflects what Jesus taught about self-discipline, restitution, reconciliation, community, and inclusivity. Jesus never disciplined to exclude, rather he corrected and forgave. Similarly, Jesus calls us to a more mature understanding of the law of God, by challenging us to move beyond a minimum standard of morality to the more demanding law of Christian love. Jesus' model of discipleship and his code of "beatitude living" underpin the practice of progressive discipline in all Dufferin-Peel Catholic schools.

A Quilt of Supports

Each student is wrapped in a "quilt of supports" made up of all the people who interface with the student, and all those who could be called upon to provide additional support (e.g. social worker, psychologist, child youth worker, speech/language pathologist). Central to the practice of progressive discipline is the power of a deeply caring community that collaborates, communicates, and consults in crafting a seamless and comprehensive system of supports that wrap around each student.

A Continuum of Discipline

Progressive discipline exists at all times. It includes a range of PROACTIVE STRATEGIES that foster Catholic community, teach responsible behaviours school-wide, and aim to prevent problems before they occur. For the most part, progressive discipline is comprised of classroom management strategies and school-wide programs that cultivate a positive learning environment for all. When challenging behaviours occur, INTERVENTIONS are initiated to help students understand the impact of their behaviours, and to change and make amends. CONSEQUENCES that help students appreciate the seriousness of their actions are part of this educative process, along with ON-GOING SUPPORT to assist students in transforming their negative behaviours. On rare occasions, progressive discipline will require SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION as a just and appropriate consequence for misconduct, and to protect the safety of others.



The Progressive Discipline Continuum

The application of progressive discipline in a Catholic school context is guided by our Catholic worldview of relationships and school safety. Our approach to progressive discipline is based on our belief that discipline is meant to be a tool for learning. Progressive discipline acknowledges the value of a staged approach to discipline that is tailored to meet the unique circumstances and needs of the persons involved. For students who struggle with challenging behaviours a variety of appropriate measures can be taken to help them improve. If suspension or expulsion becomes necessary, students still have an opportunity to continue their learning and, as the student returns to school, she/he is welcomed back with support and monitoring. Prevention programs, pro-social messages and virtue formation are part of our whole school approach to safety, and occur at all times, for everyone.

<i>Progressive Discipline Continuum</i>				
CATHOLIC CONTEXT	CURRICULUM & SUPPORTS	EARLY & ONGOING INTERVENTIONS & CONSEQUENCES	ONGOING SUPPORT	SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION CONSEQUENCES & PROGRAMS
Catholic Worldview and Safe, Caring, Inclusive and Healthy School Communities	Catholic Curriculum and Proactive/Preventative Practices, Programs, Activities, Strategies and Supports	Interventions and consequences as determined through the Progressive Discipline Response Protocol	Progressive Discipline Conferences to develop a Progressive Discipline Plan and facilitate student formation or transformation	Programs for students on long-term suspension and expulsion
<i>Safe Schools Policy and Catholic Code of Conduct</i>				

*Merciful and gracious is the Lord,
slow to anger, abounding in kindness.*
Psalm 103:9

Progressive Discipline Response Protocol

Progressive Discipline is a purposeful, sequential, step-by-step process of supporting positive behaviours and responding to and resolving a wide range of infractions and conflicts with appropriate interventions and consequences, in order to facilitate the renewal of relationships, and to ensure new beginnings for designated students within a nurturing learning environment. Ultimately, this process is pivotal to the creation and maintenance of safe, caring, inclusive and healthy school communities.

The progressive discipline process is cyclical in nature. Each component of the progressive discipline response protocol is relevant to any challenging behaviour whether it occurs in the classroom, hallway, school yard or the broader school community – including cyberspace. The intensity, frequency and duration of the challenging behaviour will dictate the degree to which attention and effort is expended on each of the protocol components.



Mitigating and other factors must be considered at each phase of the Progressive Discipline Response Protocol and will inform those individuals who are witnessing, responding, and resolving instances of challenging behaviour. Efforts to renew the relationships affected by the challenging behaviour, and planned steps to facilitate re-entry of students to their learning environment, will also be guided by mitigating and other factors. The cycle provides an understanding of the requirements to forgive, to renew and to welcome back students into the Catholic school community through a variety of efforts that may include restorative practice.

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

Principle of Discretion (See Bill 212)

- Bill 212 is a shift away from mandatory suspensions or expulsions to a disciplinary approach that is tailored to the situation and the individuals involved.
- Bill 212 supports a progressive discipline approach that utilizes a continuum of supports, interventions, consequences and on-going supports to address inappropriate behaviours within a framework that is corrective and supportive rather than solely punitive.
- Bill 212 directs schools and boards to exercise discretion in responding to infractions by providing consequences and learning opportunities that best promote positive change and a strengthening of community.

Each Case is Unique

Individualization of discipline means that “one size does not fit all” and that the principal, faculty and staff shall carefully consider the histories of the students involved before determining consequences and providing support(s). Particular attention shall be paid to the personal factors and circumstances around the incident. Parents will be consulted, as required, to ensure full knowledge of the pupil’s situation and to consult regarding the most appropriate disciplinary approach. A range of options shall be considered to address the behaviour and help students learn from their choices.

Addressing Inappropriate Behaviour

The Ministry of Education mandates that three criteria apply at the classroom, school and board levels in assessing challenging behaviours and determining appropriate consequences:

1. The particular student and the circumstances
2. The nature and severity of the behaviour
3. The impact on the school climate

Mitigating Factors

The following factors must be taken into account if they would mitigate the seriousness of the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled:

1. The pupil’s ability to control his/her behaviour
2. The pupil’s ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his/her behaviour
3. Whether the pupil’s on-going presence creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person
4. The pupil’s history
5. Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil
6. Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment
7. How the suspension or expulsion would affect the pupil’s ongoing education
8. The age of the pupil
9. In the case of the pupil for whom an individual education plan (IEP) has been developed:
 - i. whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil’s individual education plan,
 - ii. whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
 - iii. whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil’s behaviour or conduct.

SUSPENSION & EXPULSIONS

Bill 212 Changes to Note:

1. Bullying has been added to the list of behaviours for which a student can be suspended.
2. Suspensions and expulsions may result from activities that occur outside of school, but nevertheless have a negative impact on school culture and safety (e.g. cyber-bullying).
3. Only principals have the authority to suspend.
4. Principals may recommend that a student be expelled; however, only the board can issue an expulsion. In Dufferin-Peel, expulsions are determined by a committee of three trustees.
5. Parents may appeal a suspension in writing within 10 school days of the suspension notice.
6. The board must schedule the appeal within 15 school days of receipt of an appeal of a suspension.
7. Academic course work shall be made available to students on long-term suspension and expulsion.
8. 1-5 school day suspensions: School must provide homework.
9. 6-10 school day suspensions: Student Action Plan must include student access to regular school work.
10. 11-20 school day suspensions: Student Action Plan must include student access to regular school work and an opportunity to participate in a non-academic program with purposeful interventions and supports. Dufferin-Peel programs for students on suspension or expulsion include:

***POSITIVE PERSONAL CHANGE PROGRAM:** This program is comprised of an individually-tailored plan, available to students on long-term suspension. It is housed at satellite campuses in Brampton and Mississauga, staffed by teachers and a Child Youth Worker, and follows a tutorial model of academic instruction with non-academic elements.

***NEW DIRECTIONS PROGRAM:** Students on expulsion are invited to participate in a program administered by Archbishop Romero Catholic Secondary School. This program has a personalized academic component and individualized purposeful interventions.

Bullying Prevention in Dufferin-Peel

1. All Dufferin-Peel schools shall have a Safe Schools Action Team to ensure implementation of a comprehensive whole school approach to bullying prevention.
2. All Dufferin-Peel school communities shall be educated to recognize and prevent bullying.

BULLYING DEFINITION: "Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance." PPM no. 144, Ministry of Education.

How Parents Can Help

1. Keep communication lines open between you and your child, and between your home and school. Many problems can be anticipated and avoided by vigilant parents who observe, discuss, and report changes in their student's attitude and behaviours.
2. Let your child know that school safety is everyone's business. Remind them that all of us (students, faculty and staff) have a responsibility to look out for the well-being of others by putting a stop to violence in its many and subtle forms by:
 - living out gospel values in everyday life;
 - treating everyone with respect and kindness;
 - refusing to remain silent when others are being hurt;
 - speaking up for the weak and vulnerable;
 - safely reporting incidences of violence or disrespect to an adult who can help;
 - accepting responsibility for one's actions;
 - recognizing bullying, refusing to participate, reporting it when it occurs, safely intervening or getting someone to help.
3. Explain to your child that disciplinary measures at school will not look the same for everyone; "fairness" is not "sameness." Remind them that infractions of the Catholic Code of Conduct will be handled differently from person-to-person and from situation-to-situation. Every case will be judged on its own merits.
4. Impress upon your child that discipline is a purposeful aspect of the shared responsibility undertaken by caring adults at home and at school. In the model of Jesus, authentic discipleship of children requires the prudent use of discipline. From our Catholic perspective, discipline is a positive action and an educative tool meant primarily to teach and transform, not to punish.

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:27

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The revisions to the Education Act that pertain to school safety can be reviewed online at the Ministry of Education website:

www.edu.gov.on.ca

- Bill 212-Progressive Discipline and School Safety
- PPM 128-Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
- Regulation 472/07-Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils
- Regulation 474/00-Access to School Premises
- PPM 141 & 142-School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspension & School Board Programs for Expelled Students
- PPM 144-Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- PPM 145-Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour