Making Connections: Renewing the Promise and Achieving Excellence in Ontario’s Catholic Schools

Promoting Student Well-Being

A Community That Accompanies

Equity and Inclusive Education
To achieve an equitable and inclusive school climate, schools will strive to ensure that all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted. We want all staff and students to value diversity and to demonstrate respect for others and a commitment to establishing a just, caring society.

Safe and Accepting Schools
A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are imbedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and culture of mutual respect.

A Community That Builds Relationships

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A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instills Hope

Healthy Schools
Healthy schools need to focus not just on academic success, but also on the whole child and student — their cognitive, emotional, social and physical development. The research is clear: healthy students are better prepared to learn, and education is a key determinant of health.

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Mental Health
One of the guiding principles in ‘Supporting Minds’ is healthy development, hope and recovery. Individuals are resilient and have an inherent sense of hope for the future.

A Community That Accompanies

A Community That Builds Relationships

“A community that builds relationships is essential to develop the mutual trust that nurtures effective working relationships. The analogy of St. Paul is helpful: there is one body, but many parts. They need one another and must work together in harmony, ‘that there be no dissonance within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another’.” (1Cor. 12:25)

A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instills Hope

Catholic schools are communities of accompaniment where the story of our salvation is known and shared, offering the encouragement that comes from knowing that Jesus walks with us. In addition to being places of teaching and learning, Catholic schools live the Emmaus experience as they witness to the Risen Lord. It is important to recognize that people are at different stages of the journey. Jesus provides the model for how our schools need to accompany students and families with respect, patience and love, inviting all to deepen their understanding of Christ and his Church.

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Pope Francis speaks about the art of accompaniment as that of taking the time to walk alongside one another, to listen and to teach, and in so doing, to transform. Our Catholic schools do this on a daily basis as they model the Emmaus experience. Staff practice the art of accompaniment by helping students realize that their own unique story is given greater meaning and purpose in knowing and living the story we share in Christ.

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"The work of Catholic schools involves initiating, facilitating and maintaining trusting relationships with and among the Catholic educational partners. A sense of respect for the unique expertise and strengths of each and generous cooperation that acknowledges and celebrates the accomplishments of all is essential to develop the mutual trust that nurtures effective working relationships. The analogy of St. Paul is helpful: there is one body, but many parts. They need one another and must work together in harmony, ‘that there be no dissonance within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another’.” (1Cor. 12:25)

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Catholic schools provide many opportunities for students and staff to know, love and serve the Lord and one another. Catholic schools witness to the teaching of the Church that Jesus walks with us. In addition to being places of teaching and learning, Catholic schools live the Emmaus experience as they witness to the Risen Lord. It is important to recognize that people are at different stages of the journey. Jesus provides the model for how our schools need to accompany students and families with respect, patience and love, inviting all to deepen their understanding of Christ and his Church.

Just as all the parts must work together to ensure a healthy body, so too must all the educational partners collaborate and rely upon one another to ensure that Catholic education remains healthy and strong.

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A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instills Hope

Catholic schools promote what is good, true and beautiful while at the same time demonstrating that it is rational to believe. This too, is part of Catholic identity. The more we foster and nurture Catholic identity, the more we promote the expression of that identity in service and witness to the world. Our faith calls us to be engaged with the world around us, to have hope, and to inspire it in others.

A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instills Hope

The disciples on the road to Emmaus are overcome by grief. Jesus gives his disciples understanding where there only seemed to be meaninglessness. Ultimately, through this loving encounter, Jesus evokes in them a strength and courage not to run away, but to go back into difficult circumstances with a passion to share with others the Good News they have received. The result is a deep personal engagement with their community and with the world, with all of its challenges and opportunities. The story of Emmaus recounts a very human experience. The disappointment and despair experienced by the two disciples on the road is not unlike the challenges frequently faced by young people today. The message is clear: hope, courage and resolve can be found through a loving encounter with Jesus.

A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instills Hope

Catholic schools play an important role in proclaiming the joy of believing. Pope Francis states, “Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valid resource for the evangelization of culture.”

A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instills Hope

As faithful disciples of Jesus, we can celebrate God’s joy which longs to break into the world. The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who have received salvation are set free from sin, sorrow and inner emptiness and loneliness. “With Christ, joy is constantly born anew.” (Evangelii Gaudium)

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Our Catholic schools help to form joyful disciples as hearts and minds are opened to the joy of believing. Pope Francis states, “Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valid resource for the evangelization of culture.” (Evangelii Gaudium)

A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instills Hope

The joy of believing is manifest in the hearts and lives of those who faithfully follow the Lord. Catholic schools play an important role in proclaiming the joy of believing. Pope Francis states, “Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valid resource for the evangelization of culture.”

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## Promoting Student Well-Being

### Equity and Inclusive Education

Commitment to our students’ well-being is the driving force behind everything we do in education. Parents want our schools to bring out the very best in their children and help them reach their full potential. Everyone who works in education... shares that same commitment.

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### Safe and Accepting Schools

Ontario schools should be a place where everyone — children, students, staff, parents and the community — feels welcome, safe and respected. A safe, inclusive and accepting school environment is essential for student well-being and achievement.

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### Mental Health

People with lived experience of mental illness and/or addiction are valued members of their communities. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. It is important for communities and providers of services to work together to eliminate stigma and discrimination.

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## Teachers and Education Workers

### Creating inclusive places

Create inclusive places of learning that invite and enable each child and young person in your care to grow fully, to be all that God knows and hopes them to be.

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## Support Staff

### You are the stewards

You are the stewards of our physical space and facilities, without your diligence, hard work and attention to detail, our offices and classrooms would be less welcoming.

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## Principals and Vice-Principals

### Together with staff

Together with staff, ensure that it is an environment of welcome and hospitality. Model for your staff how best to minister to children and young people.

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## Trustees

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## Directors and Supervisory Officers

### As leaders of school systems

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## Clergy and Pastoral Teams

### Your words of encouragement and support

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## Together, we renew that promise by continuing to strengthen our Catholic school communities that exemplify the Good News of Jesus in word and in deed... May we work together to form joyful disciples ready and eager to renew the promise as we respond to the challenges and opportunities of this present moment. (Renewing the Promise)