

YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



BOARD POLICY	
<i>Policy Section</i> Students/Admissions	<i>Policy Number</i> 220
<i>Former Policy #</i>	<i>Page</i> 1 of 5
<i>Original Approved Date</i> September 1st, 2009	<i>Last Approved Date</i> November 23rd, 2010

POLICY TITLE: GRADUATION EXERCISES IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

SECTION A

1. PURPOSE

The York Catholic District School Board acknowledges that graduation exercises are an important recognition of a student's transition from elementary to secondary school, and upon leaving secondary school. Graduation exercises celebrate the human journey of each student who throughout his/her years in the Catholic school system has experienced an education that fosters learning as a lifelong spiritual and academic quest defined not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but also in terms of values, attitudes and actions.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the York Catholic District School Board that elementary and secondary graduations shall be acknowledged by appropriate exercises that celebrate our Faith, Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations, and recognize those partners who have contributed to this milestone in each student's life journey.

3. PARAMETERS

- 3.1 All graduation celebrations shall include a Mass with the graduates, their teachers, and where possible, their families.
- 3.2 The local pastor shall be invited to participate in elementary and secondary school graduations.
- 3.3 Graduation exercises shall respect
 - protocols, as identified in the guidelines;
 - the inclusion of a prayer or liturgical reflection;
 - time constraints;
 - appropriate language and subject matter in speeches and addresses;
 - that the event is for the students, therefore inclusion of guest speakers and presenters shall be kept to a minimum.

- 3.4 Award presentations are to be carefully structured to ensure that
 - the student receiving the award most closely embodies the intent of the award;
 - the purpose and application of the award is clearly understood by the community;
- 3.5 The guest list for graduation exercises should reflect a balance between the necessity of the guest's presence, their role at the event, and a respect for their personal time.
- 3.6 Special guests shall be acknowledged but not necessarily invited to address the audience or make presentations.
- 3.7 Secondary schools **shall** hold graduations in June of the graduating year and will inform their elementary feeder schools of the date.
- 3.8 Elementary schools shall make every effort to hold graduations no sooner than the Friday prior to the last week of school, and ensure that the graduation is not held on the same night as the secondary graduation.
- 3.9 Graduation exercises should be planned not to exceed two hours in length.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Schools (Administration, Staff)

To provide leadership in organizing graduation exercises that honour the Catholic education which the graduates have received and acknowledge the individual success of each graduating student.

To ensure that appropriate protocols are followed with respect to special guests.

4.2 Trustees

To bring greetings to the graduates and to the assembly on behalf of the York Catholic District School Board.

To participate in the graduation celebrations as requested by the organizing body.

5. CROSS REFERENCES

YCDSB Document

Graduation Liturgies

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SECTION B

GUIDELINES

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 School traditions and community preferences need to be considered when planning the occasion; however the complexity of the event must not place an undue burden on staff or families.
- 1.2 Graduation celebrations held off school property and/or after school hours shall be planned in consultation with administration, school staff and parents.
- 1.2 Valedictorian addresses should be reviewed in advance by the principal or designate to ensure appropriate language, content and style in order to respect the dignity of the occasion.
- 1.3 The following template shall be used for both elementary and secondary graduation exercises
 - Welcome
 - O Canada
 - Opening Prayer/Reflection (Pastor, Chaplain or designate)
 - Introduction of Guests (VIPs only at this time)
 - Greetings
 - Chair of the Board (if present)
 - Area Trustee (if more than one trustee serves an area, one shall be selected to bring greetings)
 - Director of Education (if present)
 - Superintendent of Education
 - Principal
 - School council chair
 - Address to Graduates (teacher/guest speaker) – secondary only
 - Conferral of Diplomas
 - School Principal shall confer all diplomas
 - Others, such as Vice-Principal(s), Superintendent, Director or Trustee may be asked to accompany the Principal, with due consideration being given to limiting the number of persons on stage at any one time.

- Awards – School and Community
 - Board chair /all trustees in attendance shall be asked to present an award;
 - Governor General’s Award presented by Director/ Superintendent;
 - Principal’s award to be presented by Principal;
 - Curriculum awards to be presented by teachers;
 - Politicians/community guests should not present any awards;
 - No speeches/remarks by the presenter of the award; and
 - Where a person or organization has donated an award, they or a representative of the organization should be invited to present the award and congratulate the student.
- Valedictory Address (five to seven minutes maximum)
- Final Prayer/Blessing (Pastor, Chaplain or designate)
- Closing Remarks

1.4 Procession/Recession – Secondary Schools

The order for the graduates procession will be the Principal, followed by the Chair of the Board, Area Trustee, Director of Education, Superintendent of Education, Vice-Principal, School Council Chair, Municipal dignitaries, i.e. Mayor, any other VIP’s.

Approval by Board	_____
	Date
Effective Date	_____
	Date
Revision Dates	_____
	Date
Review Date	November 2015

	Date

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO NOTE WHEN PLANNING GRADUATION EXERCISES

ELEMENTARY

- Graduations are celebrations of the successful completion of a student's years in elementary school. All staff should be invited to volunteer and participate in the planning, preparations and celebration. The responsibility does not rest solely with the Grade 8 teachers.
- Consider celebrating the graduation Mass and awards ceremony in the evening, (subject to the availability of the pastor) to place added focus on the liturgical component of the occasion and make it possible for more parents to attend.
- Consider inviting parents for the ceremony and awards presentation, but having students only at the luncheon/dinner/dance. This is a cost-savings to families, and also results in less-complex planning requirements.
- On the day of the Graduation ceremonies, staff organizers should be released for the afternoon to attend to final details.
- Invite parents to assist with the supervision of an evening dance or graduation activity.
- Staff that supervise a graduation dinner/dance should not incur costs.
- The number of awards in an elementary graduation is expected be proportionate to the number of graduates.

SECONDARY

- Each secondary school will design its own graduation ceremony reflective of the community in which it is located, the traditions that have been established, and the parameters and guidelines of this policy.