



York Catholic District School Board

INDEPENDENT PROCEDURE:

**BOARD/SCHOOL EVENTS PLANNING PROTOCOL
(For Graduation Planning refer to Policy 220)**

**November 2010
Revised October 2015**

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The guidelines contained in this protocol will assist all event planners to ensure that our practices are consistent when organizing board or school events. All YCDSB events should be planned with accessibility in mind, and planners should take into consideration the fact that people with various types of disabilities might attend the event. This planning document provides you with several considerations for both the planning and execution of an event.

It is the policy of the York Catholic District School Board that all events begin with a prayer (refer to Policy 315 - Prayer: Our Gift from God).

Protocol will be a key consideration when planning **important events** in York Catholic District School Board including, but not limited to:

- Blessings
- Milestone School Anniversaries
- Official Ceremonies
- Program Launches
- Official Visits
- All ceremonial occasions

The following events may not require the same degree of formal planning but must provide accommodations and accessibility as outlined within this document.

- School community nights, concerts, curriculum nights, open houses, etc.

ORDER OF SPEAKERS

- Principal (may act as MC)
- Priest (may begin the event with prayer)
- Board Chair or Board Vice Chair and/or Local Trustee
- Director of Education
- Superintendent
- Catholic School Council Chair
- Municipal Government – Mayor
- Provincial Government – Minister of Education, Member of Provincial Parliament
- Federal Government – Member of Parliament

TRUSTEE PRECEDENCE

- The chair of the Board is **always** invited to speak; however, the Chair or Vice Chair may defer to the local Trustee.
- The local Trustee(s) **will** be acknowledged by the Chair or Vice Chair and **may** speak (to be confirmed by the Principal in advance of the event).
- Other Trustees in attendance are **always** acknowledged.

BOARD ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF PRECEDENCE

- The Director of Education is **always** invited to speak. The Director follows the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board and/or Trustee. The local Superintendent of Education **may** be invited to speak (to be confirmed by the Principal in advance of the event).
- Senior School Board Administrators are **always** acknowledged.
- Employee Group Representatives (OECTA, CUPE, Occasional Teachers) are **also** acknowledged.

INVITATIONS

When an event is planned invitations should indicate that persons requiring accessibility assistance should contact the individual responsible for the event if they require accommodations. The invitation should indicate a date by which a request for accommodation must be made to ensure the service is available in time (refer to YCDSB Policy 601 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service for procedures to access services for the support of an accommodation request). If there is a registration form for the event, provide a space for people to identify necessary accommodations. Include contact information in case attendees would like to contact you directly to discuss requests.

Promotional material for events and invitations should include the following (or a similar) statement:

(Board and/or School name) is committed to accessibility for persons with disabilities. Please contact us by (date 2-3 weeks in advance of event) if you have an accommodation requirement (contact by email and phone number).

For important events (refer to page 2) the Board and Schools:

MUST INVITE	MAY INVITE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipal Government Officials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board Chair, Vice Chair, Director• Local Trustee(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayor - (May defer to the Deputy Mayor,• Local MPP• Regional Councillors, or Local Councillor <p>(ONLY ONE MAY SPEAK)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Superintendent of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employee Group Representatives (OECTA, CUPE, YOTBU)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catholic School Council Chair and Members of the Catholic School Council	

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

The event planner must check the “Notice of Occupancy” certificate posted in or near the gym of the school. If the event is being held off-site the event planner should confirm the occupancy information with the owner of the specific venue well in advance of the event to ensure the venue can accommodate the expected number of participants. The “Notice of Occupancy” certificate indicates the number of persons who can occupy the specific space in conformance with the Fire Marshals Act or the Hotel Fire Safety Act. The event planner should pre-plan for a suitable space if the number of attendees is expected to exceed the number specified on the “Notice of Occupancy” certificate.

Here are some actions you can take when planning the event to make it as accessible as possible:

Accommodations:

- Follow up with people who request accommodations in advance to discuss and agree on the appropriate accommodation (refer to Policy 601 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service for process and procedures).
- If providing food and/or refreshments, give participants the opportunity to communicate any dietary restrictions and/or life-threatening allergies.
- Train staff and volunteers on how to respectfully assist people with disabilities and to respond to any accessibility issues that may arise.

Presentation and Materials:

- If an accessibility accommodation request has been received consider the following:
 - Provide interpreters and/or note takers with agendas and presentation outlines, if available, in advance of the event so they can adequately prepare.
 - Presenters should produce materials in large print and have them available electronically in case of a request for such a format.
 - Encourage and support presenters to offer copies of their material in different formats prior to their presentation date.
 - Inquire if presenters are able to provide alternate formats for their materials, such as video and voice.

Other considerations when planning an event:

Communication: School Program and/or Publication

The event planner shall extend an invitation to the Director and local Trustee(s) when there is an opportunity for the inclusion of a message and/or letter of congratulations in a school program/publication.

Insurance / Risk Management

If events include inflatable structures or other equipment not typically part of the school grounds, good risk management practices should be followed for the protection of the Board/School and the participants. It is imperative to ensure that the company providing the equipment oversees the operation of the equipment on the day of the event, including set up and take down. As well, the providers **must** be licensed under TSSA (Technical Safety Standards Authority), carry liability insurance for their operation(s), and is willing to name the Board/School as an additional insured on their policy with respect to their operations on Board premises on the date of the event, including set up and take down time(s). The Board/School **must not** assume the liability of the company providing the equipment. The company should be responsible for the integrity and safety of the equipment, technical safety standards licensing and staff operation of the

equipment. All contracts **must** be reviewed by the Board's Risk Management department prior to signing. The School **must** have in their possession, a parent/guardian signed "Informed Consent" form describing and acknowledging the risks and potential injuries associated with participating in the event/activity. Informed Consent forms are available in the "Board Forms" conference.

EVENT LOCATION

The event planner is responsible for adhering to the specifics outlined on the "Notice of Occupancy" certificate. If the number of attendees exceeds the number specified on the "Notice of Occupancy" certificate, an overflow space/room should be made available.

The event planner should consider the following to make the event as accessible as possible:

- Make sure wheelchair access is via the main entrance. If this is not possible, post clear, legible signs at the main entrance showing alternative, safe and accessible entrances.
- Ensure accessible washrooms are within a reasonable distance and their location is known to event participants.
- Determine the nearest accessible parking and include this information on the event notice/invitation.
- When arranging seating and/or furniture be mindful of the width of aisles and space around tables to allow for easy movement for wheelchair and scooter users, as well as vision and/or physically disabled persons.
- If a stage and/or projector screen is used, ensure they are easily visible for all participants.

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

Dignitaries should be seated in the front row (or if appropriate on the stage) in their speaking order. Seat signage for dignitaries or reserved seating for persons with disabilities should be prepared for the event.

Make sure persons with a disability can reach all areas used at the event independently or with assistance from volunteers, e.g., the registration desk, auditorium or event location, breakaway rooms, stage (if necessary), washrooms, food and refreshment area (if relevant), etc.

Offer reserved seating for persons requesting accommodations. Reserve also a seat for their support person if applicable. If there are sign language interpreters, seat them across from the person with the disability.

HOSPITALITY

Dignitaries should be greeted as they enter the building and accompanied to the meeting area (i.e. Staff Room, Library) where they are greeted by a School Official. Refreshments and a place to hang coats should be made available.

After the event, it is suggested that Principals make an area available to Parents/Guardians, Catholic School Council members, etc. who may wish to greet dignitaries.

As the duty of care for students is our number one priority, please note that no alcohol is to be purchased or served at Board/School sanctioned events where students are present.

DURING THE EVENT

- Adhere to the specifics of the “Notice of Occupancy” certificate (If the number of attendees exceeds the number specified on the “Notice of Occupancy” certificate the event planner is responsible for preparing an “overflow” space (i.e. library, cafeteria, classroom)).
- Begin the event with a prayer.
- Make sure that event planners and volunteers are easily identified (name tags).
- Ensure organizers, presenters and volunteers are aware of emergency evacuation procedures. Review emergency evacuation procedures with the audience after the welcome and prayer.
- Introduce interpreters and explain what they will be doing during the event. However, it is not necessary to draw attention to the persons they are interpreting for.
- Wherever possible, try to eliminate or reduce background noise during proceedings.
- Presenters should verbally describe contents of videos, or any written materials, including overheads or chart notes for audience members with vision disabilities.
- If using evaluation forms, include a section about accessibility of the event. This can provide valuable information for use in future event plans.

GIFTS

It is not necessary to present dignitaries with gifts. However, a thank you note is appropriate.