



YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

BOARD POLICY	
<i>Policy Section</i> Facilities	<i>Policy Number</i> 702
<i>Former Policy #</i> 507	<i>Page</i> 1 of 3
<i>Original Approved Date</i>	<i>Subsequent Approval Dates</i>
March 3, 1970	February 20, 1979 February 3rd, 2009 March 25, 2014

POLICY TITLE: SOLEMN BLESSING AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF NEW SCHOOLS AND ADDITIONS

SECTION A

1. PURPOSE

The York Catholic District School Board recognizes the importance of the opening of a new school, or an addition to a school, to the Catholic community and the pupils and staff of the school. The Solemn Blessing and Official Opening Ceremony is intended to celebrate the Catholicity of the school, through the formal welcoming of Jesus Christ into the community, and to recognize those partners who are responsible for the school or addition.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the York Catholic District School Board that the opening of a new school or addition shall be acknowledged by a formal event that is comprised of two components: the Solemn Blessing and the Official Opening.

3. PARAMETERS

- 3.1 Solemn Blessings and Official Openings shall be coordinated by the Communications Department in partnership with the school community.
- 3.2 The ceremony shall be presided over by the local Trustee(s), where possible.
- 3.3 The local Pastor will be invited to participate in the Solemn Blessings of new schools and additions to schools.
- 3.4 The Archdiocese will be informed of and invited to participate in the Solemn Blessing of new schools, where possible.
- 3.5 In order to keep official opening ceremonies to a reasonable length of time, VIP guests will be acknowledged but not invited to address the audience or make presentations, other than those approved in accordance with the *Handbook for School Blessings*.

- 3.6 Solemn Blessings and Official Openings shall not exceed one and a half hours in length.
- 3.7 The Solemn Blessings and Official Openings of new schools shall be held in the evening.
- 3.8 The Solemn Blessings and Official Openings of additions may occur during the day and shall be on a smaller scale than those of new schools.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Trustees

- 4.1.1 To preside over the Solemn Blessing and Official Opening of new schools and/or additions.

4.2 Director of Education

- 4.2.1 To oversee the compliance of the Solemn Blessing and Official Openings of New Schools and Additions Policy and Guidelines.

4.3 Superintendents of Education: School Leadership

- 4.3.1 To support the implementation of the Solemn Blessing and Official Openings of New Schools and Additions Policy and related guidelines.

4.4 Communications Department

- 4.4.1 To coordinate and provide resource support for all aspects of the ceremony.

4.5 Principals

- 4.5.1 To partner with the Communications Department throughout the planning and execution stages of the Solemn Blessing and Official Opening of a New School or Addition.
- 4.5.2 To arrange for an ‘appropriate’ celebration of the Solemn Blessing and Official Opening of the new school or addition.

Approval by Board	February 3rd, 2009 _____
	<i>Date</i>
Effective Date	February 3rd, 2009 _____
	<i>Date</i>
Revision Dates	March 25, 2014 _____
	<i>Date</i>
Review Date	March 25, 2019 _____
	<i>Date</i>

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SECTION B

GUIDELINES

The Communications Department retains protocols and procedures for Solemn Blessings and Official Openings and shall be included in all discussions pertaining to the event.

School Principals will refer to “*A Handbook for School Blessings*” when planning for a Solemn Blessing and Official Opening of new schools and additions.