

# *St. Martha Catholic School*

## Code of Conduct

### **Purpose: To Create a Safe and Caring Catholic School for All**

At St. Martha Catholic School, we believe that all students are created in the image and likeness of God and have the ability to reach their full potential as contributing members of our school and wider community. We believe St. Martha Catholic School should be a safe place that promotes responsibility, civility, respect, fairness, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, included and accepted. St. Martha Catholic School actively promotes and supports positive behaviours and interactions that reflect Catholic virtues and the Catholic Graduate Expectations, which in turn promote well-being for all.

Within a culture of belonging, students, parents, teachers and other school staff have the right to be safe, and to feel safe, in their school community. The Provincial Code of Conduct sets clear provincial standards of behaviour. These standards of behaviour apply not only to students, but in addition include all individuals involved in the St. Martha community – parents, volunteers, teachers and other staff – whether on school property, on school buses, at school-related events or activities, or in the other circumstances that could have an impact on maintaining a positive school climate.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR AND EXPECTATIONS**

A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community:

- Respect and follow all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity
- Respect differences in people, their ideas and their opinions
- Treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement
- Respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability
- Respect the rights of others

- Show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others
- Take appropriate measures to help those in need
- Seek assistance from a member of school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully
- Respect all members of the school community
- Respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching
- Use appropriate and respectful language when speaking to others

### **Promoting Positive School Climate and Well-being**

All members of the St. Martha Catholic School community have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. We recognize the importance of ensuring a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment. The most effective means to address bullying is through a comprehensive school wide approach that helps to understand the causes of bullying behavior.

Bullying is defined by the Ministry of Education as aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where,

- a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of,
- (i) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or
- (ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and
- b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability, or the receipt of special education ("intimidation").

For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" above, behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

### **Cyber-bullying**

For the purpose of the definition of "bullying" above, bullying includes bullying by electronics (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

- a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
- c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals and may be interpreted in a negative manner.

A bystander is a person who witnesses bullying and

becomes part of the bullying if he/she participates, supports or ignores it. At St. Martha Catholic School, a bystander is expected to help stop the bullying from happening by seeking help from an adult.

We believe that everyone has the right to be respected and the responsibility to respect and help others in order to promote and nurture well-being for everyone.

When bullying is reported, we will work to provide supports for all individuals involved to resolve conflicts and restore relationships. The privacy and dignity of all involved will be respected and preserved.

## **1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Everyone has a role to play to promote a positive school climate.

### **(i) Staff Role**

Teachers and school staff, under the leadership of the principal, maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their self-worth;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff and parents; and
- prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship.

### **(ii) Student Role**

All students are to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Students play an important role in making our school a positive, inclusive, faith-filled culture of belonging, living out the Gospel message. Students demonstrate a commitment to success when they come to school prepared and on time, striving to achieve the Catholic Graduate Expectations which include becoming:

- ✓ a discerning believer formed in the Catholic Faith Community
- ✓ an effective communicator
- ✓ a reflective, creative and holistic thinker
- ✓ a self-directed, responsible, life-long learner
- ✓ a collaborative contributor
- ✓ a caring family member
- ✓ a responsible citizen who:
  - shows respect for themselves, for others and for those in authority;
  - refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others; and
  - follows the established rules and takes responsibility for his or her own action.

### **(iii) Parent / Guardian Role**

Parents play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents fulfill this responsibility when they:

- show an active interest in their child's school work and progress;
- communicate regularly with the school;
- help their child be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;
- become familiar with the Code of Conduct and school rules / and procedures;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour; and
- support school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues

### **(iv) Police and Community Members' Role**

Community partners and community-based service providers are resources that the school can use to deliver prevention programs. Protocols are effective ways of establishing linkages between the board and community agencies and of formalizing the relationship between them. The police play an essential role in making our schools and communities safer. The police investigate incidents in accordance with the protocol developed with our board.

### **(v) Parish Role**

The parish plays an important role in supporting the spiritual journey of all members of our school community. This includes celebrating school masses and preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation.

## **Application of Standards of Behaviour**

### **1. Attendance / Punctuality:**

- We believe that every school day counts! School attendance is the responsibility of the school, parents and students. Students are more likely to succeed when they attend school consistently. If students are experiencing difficulty attending, we want to work together with parents and students to support a plan for success.
- Students learn responsibility by arriving for school on time. The late arrival of students is recorded on school records. All students who arrive late must report to the office prior to going to their classrooms;
- After arriving, if a student needs to leave the school grounds for any reason, a note or phone call from the parents must be provided;

- Parents will be notified by the office if illness occurs;
- Parents should refrain from asking that students be allowed to remain inside at recess or noon hour. In most cases, students who are well enough to be in school are well enough to benefit from the fresh air and exercise of outdoor activities; and
- If a student is to be absent, parents are asked to contact the school prior to the commencement of classes. If no communication is received, parents will be contacted in accordance with school level "Safe Arrival" procedures.

### **Student Sign Out**

There is a sign in/out book in the office. When a parent is picking up a child during the school day, the parent must report to the office and sign out their child. The student will be called to the office to meet the parent. When students return during the school day, they must be signed in at the office.

## **2. Electronic Devices and Social Media**

The use of electronic devices and social media is in keeping with the overall expectations of the Code of Conduct:

- All electronic devices brought to school for emergency purposes when travelling to and from school must be powered off and stored in backpacks
- The use of cell phones and other electronic devices for any purpose, including telephone calls, text messaging, games, taking pictures and other functions is not permitted at any time, unless with the permission and supervision from the classroom teacher and/or school administration
- Any phone communication during the instructional day will take place only through the use of school telephones, and only with the permission of the teachers and office staff, with the exception of emergency situations as deemed by school staff
- Parents should continue to contact their child/children by calling the Main Office
- Students shall be personally and solely responsible for the security of cell phones and/or other electronic devices
- To protect the privacy of all members of our school community, cameras are not permitted on school property unless approved by school staff

## **3. Personal Appearance**

Students are expected to be dressed respectfully at all times, contributing to a positive school climate. Backs, midriffs and belly buttons must be covered and students should refrain from wearing tops with spaghetti straps. T-shirts or sleeveless shirts with minimal neck or back

scoops are acceptable. Undergarments should not be visible. Shorts should be of an appropriate length, hemmed to below the finger tips when standing with arms at rest by their side. Suggestive pictures and slogans, profanity, alcohol, drugs or any other offensive materials on clothing are not acceptable.

Students in Grades 5-8 require a change of shorts or track pants and a T-shirt for Physical Education. Running shoes must be worn for Physical Education classes. A gym bag is recommended for storage of these items. Jewellery must not be worn in Physical Education classes or for school sporting events for safety reasons.

Hats/hoods are to be removed when students reach their hook. Coats and outside footwear are also to be removed and neatly arranged before entering the classroom.

Appropriate and safe inside footwear must be worn in the school.

## **4. Preparation for Class:**

To maximize student success, students are to be prepared for each class, having ready all notebooks, textbooks and materials as indicated by the teacher. Homework and assignments should be completed neatly and on time. Students are expected to submit work which is original, completed by themselves, and represents their best effort. Students will not be excused from Physical Education class or DPA without a note from the parents or a medical certificate as required.

## **5. Promoting Safe Student Movement:**

- At all times students are to enter and exit by assigned doors;
- Students are not to enter the school prior to the 8:20 a.m. bell without authorization;
- Unless students are participating in a supervised school activity, they should not arrive prior to yard supervision in the morning (8:05 a.m.) and those walking should leave the yard promptly at dismissal time;
- Only children traveling by bus are permitted in the bus loading zone at arrival and departure time. Vehicular traffic is prohibited in the bus zone during loading or unloading times;
- Students must walk their bicycles when on school property and in front of the school (sidewalk & road);
- Students who ride roller blades, scooters, skateboards, etc. are asked to dismount and walk on the sidewalk;
- Students are expected to walk in a quiet and orderly manner at all times in the hallways;
- Students who stay for lunch shall eat in the designated area of the school, after which they will go to their designated play area with respect for others around them;
- Students may walk home for lunch provided parental permission has been communicated to the school.

- Students are reminded that the playground equipment is to be enjoyed but must be used in a safe manner. Students are asked to follow the “Hands Off” rule at all times including when on the playground equipment.

#### **6. Transportation:**

Transportation is a privilege. Travelling on the bus or other board provided transportation is considered to be part of the school day.

- Only students eligible to ride a school bus or taxi may do so.
- Students must cooperate with the bus driver and follow instructions and rules to ensure the safety of all students.
- In the interest of safety, young children should be met at their bus stops.
- The school must be notified by a parent of any request for a change in a student's regular transportation. Written notification is preferred. All such requests will be promptly considered.

Students are expected to adhere to the following rules in addition to rules established by the bus/taxi companies:

#### **Before Boarding the Bus:**

- ✓ Be on time at the designated school bus stop;
- ✓ Stay off the road and private property at all times while waiting for your bus. Bus riders are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and respectful manner while waiting; and
- ✓ Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to board your bus.

#### **While On the Bus:**

- ✓ Get on the bus one at a time and take your designated seat quietly. Seats may be reassigned;
- ✓ Remain in your seat while on the bus and keep the aisle clear;
- ✓ Speak in a moderate voice and avoid horseplay;
- ✓ Inform the driver if you have a large package;
- ✓ Do not bring dangerous items on the bus; do not eat or drink on the bus;
- ✓ Ask permission to open windows. Keep your hands and your head inside the bus at all times, and do not throw anything out of the bus windows;
- ✓ Do not touch emergency exits unless you are instructed to do so by your driver;
- ✓ In the case of a road emergency or accident, remain quiet in your seat and follow your bus driver's instructions;
- ✓ Silence is required when a bus stops at a railroad crossing; and
- ✓ Persons responsible for damaging bus seats or equipment will be held financially responsible.

#### **Getting Off the Bus:**

- ✓ Get off your bus in an orderly manner. Ask for the driver's assistance if you drop something;
- ✓ Be alert and watch the traffic carefully;
- ✓ If you must cross a road be sure to cross 3 metres in front of the bus and watch for signals from the driver and traffic;
- ✓ Help younger students; and
- ✓ Do not ask your bus driver to let you off at stops other than your regular stop unless this has been authorized by the office.

#### **Bus Consequences**

Behaviour Report #1 and #2 (to Principal)  
Situation is discussed with student, follow-up with driver occurs and parent is contacted by phone or letter.

#### **Behaviour Report # 3 (to Principal)**

Student loses bus privileges for a specific period of time. Parent is contacted.

For a serious offence a student will automatically lose bus privileges and the above procedure does not apply.

#### **7. Personal Items**

To promote safety, school values and to lessen the potential loss of valuable personal items, students are discouraged from bringing articles to school that are not required for instructional purposes or those not approved by school staff. If students choose to bring these items and they are lost, instructional time will not be used to search for lost items. Students are responsible for any valuable items brought to school.

## **Caring and Safe Catholic Schools**

#### **8. Recognition for Appropriate Behaviour**

St. Martha Catholic Schools sets high expectations for all members of our school community including respecting the rights, responsibilities and the differences of others. Appropriate behavior promotes self-satisfaction and a sense of contribution to a positive school climate. The school's pleasant, safe and orderly atmosphere is the result when everyone takes responsibility for their learning and is accountable for their actions. Young people benefit from positive reinforcement. For example:

- Private/public recognition (verbal and written e.g. Newsletter, Announcements)
- Alternate desirable activity
- Certificates and awards
- Parental encouragement
- Student announcements
- Reinforcement for academic, artistic, or athletic achievement (e.g. medallions, ribbons)
- School activities and field trips
- Leadership opportunities

#### **9. Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour**

Progressive discipline is a whole-school approach that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports and responses to address inappropriate student behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote positive attitudes and behaviours including respect, civility and responsible citizenship. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, disciplinary measures are applied within a framework that shifts focus from one that is solely punitive to a focus that is both corrective and supportive leading to a safe and caring learning environment for all.

Early and ongoing intervention strategies will help prevent unsafe or inappropriate behaviours in school and in school-related activities. Intervention strategies should provide students with appropriate supports that address inappropriate behaviour which will result in improved school climate.

St. Martha Catholic School recognizes the importance of using timely interventions and supports within a school wide approach. This includes the use of a restorative approach, recognizing that when there is an issue, restorative action involves all those who have been affected, those who have caused harm and the broader community. We further believe that restorative justice is supported by our Catholic traditions which include building an inclusive, compassionate, caring and forgiving community of believers.

The principles of progressive discipline will be followed. The following is an array of possible consequences that could be implemented depending on factors such as the age of the child and prior infractions.

- Restorative circles
- Informal interview with student
- Formal interview with student
- Parent contact – interview
- Involvement of special education personnel
- An apology by the student
- Peer counselling
- Time out from activities
- Written assignment (e.g. Time Out Action Plan)
- Redo an unacceptable assignment
- Change inappropriate clothing
- Restitution for damaged or lost property
- Removal of special events/privileges
- Withdrawal of student from classroom
- Referral to Child and Youth Worker (e.g. social skills, anger management)
- Involvement of attendance counsellor
- Behaviour or performance contract
- Referral to Resource Room assistance
- Suspension from class or school (O.S.R. documentation)
- Loss of school bus privileges
- Utilization of board service (e.g. resource personnel, testing)

- Completion of Violent Incident Report (O.S.R. documentation)
- Involvement or referral to outside agencies (e.g. Children & Youth Services, community police)
- Home instruction /alternative setting
- Expulsion (O.S.R. documentation)

## 10. Suspensions

Under subsection 306 (1) of the *Education Act*, a principal shall consider whether to suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

- Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person
- Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs
- Being under the influence of alcohol
- Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority
- Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school
- Bullying (please see definition at the beginning of this Code of Conduct)
- Medical immunization
- Any other activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under the policy of the board.

Under clause 306 (1) 7 of the *Education Act*, a pupil may be suspended if he or she engages in an activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under a policy of the Board. Under Board policy, activities for which a principal may suspend a pupil include:

- Persistent truancy
- Persistent opposition to authority
- Habitual neglect of duty
- Serious breaches of the Board Code of Conduct or the School Code of Conduct
- Conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school
- Conduct injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school
- The use of tobacco
- The use of profane or improper language
- Infraction(s) off school property where the pupil's conduct in the community negatively impacts on the school
- Dress that contravenes the established dress code within a school
- Being in possession of, or being under the influence of, or providing others with legal drugs without a prescription for the said drugs, or in a manner or an amount not contemplated by a prescription for the said drugs, or in a manner or an amount not contemplated in the general instructions for use of the said drugs

- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Taking photographs and/or video and/or audio recordings during an instructional class and in other areas of the school, unless authorized by the Principal or classroom teacher
- Harassing another person by the use of mechanical/electronic technology or communications
- Invading another person's privacy by the use of mechanical/electronic technology or communications
- Production, possession and /or distribution of hate material, including pornography
- Possession or misuse of any harmful and/or explosive substances
- Extortion
- Theft
- Aid/incite harmful behaviour
- Physical assault
- Lack of immunization as determined by the local Health Unit

Please refer to the ALCDSB Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Administrative Procedures: Suspension, Expulsion and Bullying Prevention and Intervention, 2013, found on the Board website at [www.alcddb.on.ca](http://www.alcddb.on.ca).

#### **11. Mitigating Factors and Other Factors**

In considering whether to suspend a pupil or whether to recommend to the Board that a pupil be expelled, a principal will take into account any mitigating factors or other factors prescribed by the regulations. Pursuant to the Suspension and Expulsion of pupils, the following mitigating factors shall be taken into account:

- The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour
- The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour
- The pupil's continuing presence in the school does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person

#### **12. Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities**

Extra-curricular activities are a privilege and are an extension of the school day. As such, ongoing cooperative school behaviour and meeting classroom requirements are prerequisites for participation in any extra-curricular activity. Students should always remember that they represent St. Martha Catholic School and that any behaviour deemed injurious to the moral tone of the school will be addressed. On school trips, on buses, and during school-related activities such as sports events and dances, all relevant school rules apply.

#### **13. Communication of Information**

Ongoing communication between home and school leads to greater school success. As such, students are encouraged to ensure that all notes, newsletters, report cards, and other forms of communication are taken home and returned as required. If you require additional information or would like to speak to a staff member

directly, please call the school or make an appointment. All families are encouraged to make regular use of agendas as a means of communication between home and school.

#### **14. Concluding Remarks**

At St. Martha Catholic School, we recognize that we are called to inspire and nurture a caring and safe Catholic school community that promotes and supports a positive school climate. We believe that all members of our school community have strengths, capabilities and resources that can lead to academic success and well-being for all. In partnership with students, staff, parents and volunteers, a safe and inclusive school community is accomplished when we practice open communication, maintain high standards and work as partners.

This Code of Conduct is updated regularly and includes consultation with Catholic School Council, Students, Parents, Staff, and our Caring and Safe School Team. The Code of Conduct is intended to demonstrate our commitment to fostering a positive, inclusive and faith-filled school climate, where all members of our school community feel safe, cared for and accepted. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please contact the Office.