



HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

INTERMEDIATE DIVISION

PARENT HANDBOOK

SEPTEMBER 2006

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Halton Catholic District School Board MISSION STATEMENT

The Halton Catholic District School Board, in partnership with home and Church, is dedicated to providing excellence in education by developing Christ-centred individuals enabled to transform society.

GOVERNING VALUES

We know that:

- Our school community exists to foster and exemplify Catholic values;
- The education of our students is a necessary investment in society;
- Education is a lifelong process that fosters the worth of the individual;
- Education is a process involving a partnership of students, home, school, Church, and community;
- The education of everyone toward their fullest potential creates a better future;
- An effective learning environment fosters in each student a sense of unique value, self-esteem and importance to society;
- Dedicated teachers and staff ensure a positive and caring learning environment enabling students to reach their full potential;
- The ability to understand, manage and direct change is essential to success;
- We are accountable to the community for the effective management of our resources.

VISION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Catholic schools are an integral part of the Church's mission to evangelize youth. Children who attend our schools are welcomed into Faith communities in which a Christ-centred approach is central to instruction in all subject areas.

We strive to develop in our students a love of God, people and self, an appreciation of prayer and a moral foundation to assist them as they journey through life. Our Catholic schools provide a complete academic program in an environment that integrates learning, religious instruction, Gospel values, and spiritual formation into all aspects of the curriculum. Spirituality and the witness and practice of Faith are lived out in the daily experiences of staff and students. Our schools have strong links to parishes and assist the parishes with sacramental preparation, while chaplains and parish staff conduct liturgies and provide other services to our schools

CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE EXPECTATIONS

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations define what students are expected to know, do and value when they complete secondary school. The expectations outline the life roles, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that reflect the values of our Catholic community. These expectations are used by teachers in Catholic schools to make decisions regarding curriculum planning, instructional strategies, evaluation, and assessment.

The Graduate is expected to be:

- 1) A discerning believer formed in the Catholic Faith Community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through word, sacrament, forgiveness, reflection, and moral living.
- 2) An effective communicator who speaks, writes, and listens honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of gospel values.
- 3) A reflective, creative and holistic thinker who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.
- 4) A self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.
- 5) A collaborative contributor who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.
- 6) A caring family member who attends to family, school, parish, and the wider community.
- 7) A responsible citizen who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of life.

HELPING YOUR CHILD TO LEARN

Studies show that students perform better in school if their parents are involved in their education. Parents therefore, have an important role to play in supporting their children's learning. By reading the curriculum, parents can find out what their children are learning in each grade and why they are learning it. This knowledge of the curriculum will enable parents to discuss their children's work with them, to communicate with teachers, and to ask relevant questions about their children's progress. Their knowledge of the expectations in each grade will also help parents interpret their children's report cards and work with teachers to improve students' learning. For this reason, parents are urged to read the expectations for all grades rather than just the particular grades their children are in. The expectations can be obtained from the Ministry website address: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary>

Here are a few suggestions for enjoying and helping with your child's learning:

- 1) Talk about school in an easy, interested, and meaningful way. Ask your child to explain her/his schoolwork; help with it at times. Set goals with your child that are challenging and attainable.
- 2) Set aside time for schoolwork and reading. Read to and with your child every day.
- 3) Learning to learn takes time and helping to learn requires patience. Encourage your child's curiosity. Listen actively and respond meaningfully to the questions raised. Use daily activities as opportunities for learning. Help your child to learn that making mistakes is an inevitable, important part of the learning process.
- 4) Teach by example. Your child will adopt your attitude towards education, just as he or she will often follow the examples you set in self-discipline, neatness, thoroughness, and perseverance.
- 5) Visit the school and talk with the teacher and administrators about their goals for your child and your concerns. Ask how you can help.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

The *Ontario Provincial Report Card, Grades 1 – 8*, is the document used to communicate to parents/guardians information about their child's achievement of the curriculum expectations. All schools use the *Provincial Report Card* for formal written reports three times per year, generally in December, March and June.

At the end of each reporting period, decisions are made about student performance and program, based on the assessment data collected during the term. Achievement is reported using a percentage mark and an anecdotal comment. The comment describes the student's strengths and weaknesses, and provides information to parents/guardians about how they can support next steps in their child's learning.

In addition to the *Provincial Report Card*, teachers provide feedback to parents/guardians and students during the school year through informal reports, phone calls, conferences, interviews, portfolios and samples of student work.

Page 3 of the report card provides parents/guardians and the students with an opportunity to comment on student achievement, goals, and home support and to request a meeting to discuss the report card. The response form links formal reporting to the process of assessment (including student self-assessment), reporting and communicating about the student's learning that continues throughout the year.

Page 3 of the report card must be signed and returned to the classroom teacher to indicate receipt of the report card.

ONTARIO CURRICULUM

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8 has two elements: expectations and achievement levels. The expectations identified for each subject area for each grade describe the knowledge and skills that students are expected to develop and to demonstrate. High achievement is the goal for all students, and teachers. Students, and parents need to work together to help students meet the expectations specified.

The achievement levels are brief descriptions of four different degrees of achievement of the provincial curriculum expectations for any given grade. These descriptions, which are used along with more traditional indicators like letter grades and percentage marks, are among a number of tools that teachers will use to assess students' learning. The achievement levels for the subject disciplines focus on four categories of knowledge/skills. Level 3, which is the "provincial standard", identifies a high level of achievement of the provincial expectations. Parents of students achieving at level 3 in a particular grade can be confident that their children will be prepared for work at the next grade. Level 1 identifies achievement that falls much below the provincial standard. Level 2 identifies achievement that approaches the standard. Level 4 identifies achievement that surpasses the standard.

The Ministry of Education curriculum documents state the indicators of the achievement levels for the knowledge/skills categories and all the expectations listed by subject strands. These documents can be obtained at the ministry website address:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary>



RELIGION AND FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Religion

The Religion program in use in the elementary grades is the Canadian Catechetical Program. It is written by the National Office of Religious Education of the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops.

Series: **We Are Strong Together**

This series is designed to foster and build upon the teachings of faith that parents provide to their children.

It follows a systematic approach to faith development from Grades 7 to 8. This series is an extension of the Born of the Spirit Series (Grades 1-6)

Family Life

Our Family Life education program for Grades 1 through 8 is entitled: **Fully Alive**. This program is sponsored by the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops. It presents issues of human development within the context of Catholic teaching.

A Family Edition is available for parents upon request.

Parents may use this edition to prepare, reinforce and enrich the topics presented through discussion and reflection with their children

RELIGION

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

We Are Strong Together

Grade 7: Believe in Me

- ❑ Focuses on the first part of the Apostle's Creed.
- ❑ Allows students to reflect on the components of the Creed and apply these to their daily experiences.
- ❑ Explores a variety of biblical stories and Church teachings through interactive activities.

The Grade 7 program assists students in understanding the statement of belief of the Catholic Church while nurturing their relationship with God.

Grade 8: Stand By Me

- ❑ Focuses on the second part of the Apostle's Creed, beginning with "*We believe in the Holy Spirit*".
- ❑ Examines the characteristics of the Creed and provides opportunities for students to relate these components to their faith relationship with God.
- ❑ Deepens the students' understanding of commitment and responsibility in light of their relationship with God and those around them.

The aim of the Grade 8 program is to provide opportunities for students to grow in faith. Students will appreciate the social dimension of Church and understand that common beliefs bind us together.

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Theme 1: Created and Loved by God

In this introductory theme, students will explore the Christian vision of what it means to be a person – to be created in God's image and to be blessed with the gifts of intelligence and free will. Concepts such as personality, heredity and environment are presented at this level.

Grade 7: Students will deepen their understanding of the human person. They will explore the concept of personality, and the impact of heredity and environment on individuals.

Students will be encouraged to develop a deep and realistic sense of self-acceptance.

Grade 8: Students will explore the capacity of the human mind for learning, remembering, reasoning, creating, feeling and acting freely. They will be encouraged to accept their responsibility to develop the gifts that make them human.

Theme 2: Living in Relationship

This theme focuses on the nature of family and friendship relationships, with a special emphasis on the meaning of intimacy.

Grade 7: Students will be encouraged to appreciate the value of good communication and flexibility in family relationships.

They will deepen their understanding of the influence of friendship in their lives.

Grade 8: Students will deepen their understanding of the role of the family. They will be encouraged to develop a sense of perspective within their families, recognizing changes in family relationships as they mature. They will also be encouraged to recognize the value of friendship.

Theme 3: Created Sexual: Male and Female

The Christian vision of sexuality as life-giving and loving is explored in this theme. The life stage of adolescence is given particular attention at this level.

Grade 7: Students will be encouraged to develop respectful and flexible attitudes toward the roles of females and males. They will also be encouraged to develop an attitude of acceptance and respect toward their bodies.

Grade 8: Students will explore the Christian vision of sexuality as life-giving and loving. They will be encouraged to deepen their understanding of God's plan for human sexuality.

Theme 4: Growing in Commitment

The theme of commitment at the intermediate level is presented in the context of adolescent development and the movement toward maturity. The students will explore the meaning of freedom and responsibility and the nature of commitment in the teenage years.

Grade 7: Students will examine responsible decision-making. They will explore their responsibilities toward themselves, friends and family members. Students will be encouraged to recognize the need for balance in their lives.

Grade 8: Students will discover the changing nature of commitment during adolescence. They will be encouraged to accept themselves as growing, changing and maturing individuals.

Theme 5: Living in the World

The central focus of this theme is the responsibility shared by all to build a just and loving society. A variety of social issues are presented, such as, discrimination, prejudice, poverty, the environment and respect for life.

Grade 7: Students will explore the nature of *groups* and the reasons people gather together in groups. They will be encouraged to appreciate the need to create groups that respect each individual.

Grade 8: Students will explore the meaning of individual and social justice in light of the Christian vision of human interdependence and responsibility for one another. They will explore personal qualities and skills that are essential to practise social justice.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The computer is an integral tool for research, communication, compilation, organization and storage of data, and for providing simulation-based learning activities. Computers can extend and enrich students' learning in every area of the curriculum in unique and motivating ways. Students may use computers to locate, organize, analyze, and present information on various topics; practise skills; use media to express ideas creatively; and work collaboratively and cooperatively with others.

In the Halton Catholic District School Board, students have access to networked, web-enabled computers in a lab setting and in the classroom. A variety of software applications are available to students to enhance learning experiences, including word processing, spreadsheet, concept-mapping, database, drawing, practice and drill, desktop publishing, simulation, Internet browser, web-authoring and presentation software.

Intermediate-division students continue to develop the skills that allow them to use the computer and peripherals in a safe and appropriate manner to perform a task. They are provided opportunities to access information stored in electronic form, process information using spreadsheet and database software, and communicate information using word-processing, desktop publishing, web-authoring and presentation software. Students may access the Internet once parents/guardians have given their consent according to the Board's Acceptable Use for Electronic Assets Operating Policy.

While teachers strive to teach computer skills, the goal of the instruction is to integrate the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the curriculum, and as such, ICT is not a separate program area.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION:

Students may use computers to perform a variety of tasks and learning activities – some example activities are listed below:

- Complete a tutorial on informational text.
- Create a visual organizer to record and analyze information (e.g. a mind map showing the factors that contributed to confederation).
- Write a movie review.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a website.
- Work collaboratively to create a class newspaper or yearbook.
- Locate and statistical information on the Internet, and interpret the data using dynamic statistical software.

- Learn how early settlers met the challenges of the new land by accessing a variety of primary sources.
- Explore transformations of geometric figures.
- Investigate the Pythagorean relationship using area models and diagrams.
- Research careers and sample career paths.
- Create a database of mixtures and solutions including information about the properties of the solution or mixture and an imported picture of the container.

ESL / ELD

INTRODUCTION

At the elementary level, ESL/ELD instruction is a support program or intervention rather than a separate curriculum subject. Most ESL/ELD students, from early to more advanced stages of English-language acquisition, work in a regular classroom for most of the day, with the support of the classroom teacher and/or, where appropriate, of an ESL/ELD teacher.

THE PURPOSE

The purpose of ESL support is to give students time to develop their skills in the English language before their achievement can be assessed according to the criteria used for students who speak English.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

The goal of English as a Second Language support is to assist students in acquiring the English language skills they need to participate in learning activities on an equal basis with their peers and to meet the expectations of the Ontario curriculum.

STAGES

The ESL/ELD program is organized according to the stages of second-language acquisition and literacy development. These stages are part of a continuum of language acquisition and are not tied to a particular grade or subject.

Stage 1: Using English for Survival Purposes

Stage 2: Using English in Supported and Familiar Activities
and Contexts

Stage 3: Using English Independently in Most Contexts

Stage 4: Using English With a Proficiency Approaching That of
First-Language Speakers

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

It is important to remember that students are moving along a continuum of language learning. The rate at which students move from one stage to the next will vary with the individual student. In addition students may demonstrate skills associated with more than one stage at the same time. This reflects a natural progression of second language acquisition.

In the early stages of acculturation and language acquisition, there are periods of rapid growth, as well as, times when the student may experience a “silent period” or plateau. During such “silent periods”, the student is absorbing large amounts of linguistic and cultural information but is not yet ready to produce oral language, especially in front of the class.

Most ESL/ELD students are able to use English to communicate in social situations and day-to-day classroom interactions within one or two years. However, students may require *from five to seven years* to develop the ability to understand the academic language used in textbooks and to use English to express the increasingly complex and abstract concepts encountered in the higher grades.



THE ARTS

THE PURPOSE

Education in the arts is essential to students' intellectual, physical, and emotional growth. Through the study of music, visual arts, and drama and dance, students have an opportunity to think creatively and critically, but also develop physical coordination and the ability to work with others.

STRANDS IN THE ARTS

The arts knowledge and skills expectations are organized into three strands: Music, Visual Arts, and Drama and Dance. Below is a brief overview of each of these strands.

Music

The music strand is intended to help students develop an understanding and appreciation of music. The program is a balanced program including both listening and music making.

Visual Arts

This strand is intended to help students develop their creativity, as well as, their ability to communicate through visual images. Students will acquire a range of artistic skills and knowledge. They will also develop an appreciation of various historical periods and styles.

Drama and Dance

Since drama and dance have many common elements they are combined in this strand. This curriculum is intended to help students develop an understanding and appreciation of drama and dance, as well as, the ability to create works using the forms, elements, and techniques of these two disciplines.

MUSIC

Students in Grades 7 and 8 will consolidate the knowledge gained in earlier grades and will work with a repertoire of greater complexity. In Grade 7, students will be encouraged to further develop their knowledge of conducting. They will listen in particular to music of the Romantic period and will identify some main characteristics of Romantic music. In Grade 8, students will be expected to read and perform works of greater rhythmic and tonal complexity. Listening selections will include works from the four historical periods of music. Students in both grades

will have an opportunity to solve musical problems in groups and individually, and will be expected to support the criticism of their own and others' musical efforts with logical arguments.

VISUAL ARTS

Students in Grades 7 and 8 will continue to study the principals of design, and will produce works of art on a variety of themes that will demonstrate their proficiency in using a variety of tools, materials, and techniques. Students in Grades 7 and 8 will be expected to apply the knowledge and skills learned in their study of the arts as they analyse art works representing various styles and different historical periods.

DRAMA AND DANCE

In Grades 7 and 8, students will interpret and communicate ideas and feelings from a wide range of sources and cultures, using a variety of drama and dance techniques. The students in Grade 7 will create different interpretations of a single drama or dance work using available technology for performance and the Grade 8 students will create different multimedia interpretations of a single work, using available technology to enhance their work in drama and dance performances. In Grades 7 and 8, students will refine their ability to evaluate the quality of performances by writing critiques of their own and others' work and reviewing theatrical performances.



CORE FRENCH

Core French is mandatory from Grades 4 to 8 for all students in English-language elementary schools. The curriculum describes the required knowledge and skills for each grade from Grades 4 to 8. The Core French program offers students a valuable educational experience and the opportunity to develop a basic usable command of the French language that can be expanded through further study or contact with French-speaking people.

Second language learning in general is valuable for a number of reasons. Research confirms that knowledge of a second language strengthens first language skills, and that the ability to speak two or more languages generally enhances problem-solving and reasoning skills, the capacity for creative thinking and the ability to respect and understand other cultures. Second language learning strengthens students' ability to communicate and participate effectively in the workplace and the global community. It also increases their ability to understand themselves and other people, and helps them to appreciate the power of words and the many different uses of language.

The Core French expectations are organized into three strands, which correspond to the three main areas of language use. The three strands are: oral communication, reading, and writing. The grammar, language conventions, and vocabulary expectations have been grouped into one section. These specific skills and knowledge should be developed in the context of oral communication, reading and writing activities. The overall expectations provide a broad picture of what students should know and be able to do at the end of the grade.

In Grades 7 and 8 students will have an opportunity to discuss subject matter, reading materials, personal concerns and interests. In conducting surveys and interviews they will have an opportunity to consolidate the oral language skills they have been developing since grade 4.

CORE FRENCH

Reading is a complex process that provides a bridge between speech and writing. In learning to read texts in French, students will build on the knowledge and skills developed through oral communication in order to understand and respond to written materials. A well-balanced reading program will provide students the opportunities to read for comprehension, consolidation of language learned orally, vocabulary building, information, and enjoyment, and to practice correct pronunciation and intonation. Students will be using all the basic reading strategies (e.g., visual and verbal cues, information from context, and knowledge of language patterns, conventions and structures) to help them understand written texts.

Students in Grades 7 & 8 will continue to develop and practise the basic skills related to the conventions of written language – grammar, spelling and vocabulary – that must be acquired in order to produce clear writing. Students will be expected to read a variety of written texts to help them increase and gain command over their vocabulary and learn to vary their sentence structure, and organizational approach while communicating their ideas in writing.

Parents are encouraged to read the FSL curriculum to find out what their children are learning in each grade and why they are learning it. This awareness will enable parents to discuss their children's work with them, to communicate with teachers, and to ask relevant questions about their child's progress in French. Knowledge of the expectations will also help parents interpret their child's report card and to work with the teacher to improve the student's learning.

FRENCH IMMERSION

In the Halton Catholic District School Board, a French Immersion program is offered to students beginning in grade five through grade 8 at the elementary level. This program is also offered at the secondary level subject to registration.

The principal aim of the program is to provide students with the skills they need to communicate in a second language, and thereby to enhance their ability to perform effectively and meet with success in a rapidly changing global economy. The elementary school curriculum for French Immersion is designed to prepare students for success in the corresponding program at the secondary level. The expectations that form the basis of the secondary school curriculum build on the knowledge and skills that students acquire in their elementary programs

What subjects will be taught in French in addition to language?

Science, History and Geography, and one or two of Art, Music or Physical Education. For these subjects, the expectations in each grade are those outlined in the English-language curriculum policy documents. It is recognized that programs in these subjects may need to be adapted to meet the needs of students who are learning in a second language.

The expectations for French as a Second Language in the Immersion program are organized into three strands that correspond to the three main areas of language use: oral communication; reading; and writing. All the knowledge and skills outlined in the expectations are mandatory. The programs in all grades are designed to develop a range of essential skills in reading, writing, and oral language, providing students with a solid foundation in spelling and grammar; the ability to comprehend what they read in a range of different kinds of texts; an appreciation of literature and the ability to interpret and respond to it; and the ability to use oral language accurately and effectively.

FRENCH IMMERSION

In Grades 5-8 there has been some repetition of the expectations across the grades. This repetition has been necessary to reflect the progressive nature of skills development. Expectations dealing with skills that continue to be of major importance as students progress from grade to grade are repeated for all relevant grades, and progression is indicated by means of increasingly complex tasks. All of the skills described in the expectations continue to be developed and refined as students move up through the grades, whether or not the expectations are stated specifically.

In Grades 7 & 8 students will continue to focus on effective oral communication with the teacher and each other in French at all times.

Students' ability to communicate effectively will depend on their ability to grasp ideas and information conveyed through print materials and to produce clear, coherent written work. Opportunity for practice and development of these skills will be a focus in the intermediate division. It is at this time that students will require renewed support in order to maintain the self-discipline needed to continue to be successful in the French Immersion program.

It is at this time that some students may feel overwhelmed by homework and will require increased support in terms of organization and study habits.

At the end of Grade 8 students receive a certificate of participation in the French Immersion program. In Grade 8 students are encouraged to choose the Extended French option in Grade 9. In doing so they will embark on a two course per year track in French and will receive a certificate of achievement at the end of Grade 12.

In order to successfully complete the Ministry requirements it is essential that students achieve credits in the Extended French Language courses as well as Geography, History and World Religions taught in French.

Parents and teachers are encouraged to help students understand that second- language learning skills prepare them to participate more effectively in the workplace and in the global economy, and provide them with a distinct advantage in a number of careers, both in Canada and internationally.



HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

THE PURPOSE

Healthy active living involves a combination of physical activity and appropriate lifestyle choices. Students should begin early on to acquire basic knowledge about a wide variety of health-related topics and to develop relevant skills. They need to understand how their actions and decisions affect their health, fitness, and personal well-being, and how to apply their learning to make positive, healthy decisions in all areas of life and personal development. The school environment can profoundly influence students' attitudes, preferences, and behaviours.

Through the health and physical education curriculum, students will develop:

- an understanding of the importance of physical fitness, health, and well-being and the factors that contribute to them;
- a personal commitment to daily vigorous physical activity and positive health behaviours;
- the basic movement skills they require to participate in physical activities throughout their lives.

A comprehensive approach to health and physical education emphasizes the shared responsibility of parents, peers, schools, health-care systems, government, the media, and a variety of other institutions and agencies. Meaningful health and physical education also requires safe, health-promoting environments, support services from the community, and a school curriculum that makes health a priority in the school.

ATTITUDES IN HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students' attitudes towards health and physical education can have a significant effect on their achievement of the expectations. To learn effectively and develop positive attitudes towards healthy active living, students should enjoy the skill-development and the physical activities. They should also come to recognize the importance of observing safety procedures, respecting others, and being punctual.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION STRANDS

Healthy Living – This strand includes Healthy Eating, Growth and Development, Personal Safety and Injury Prevention, and Substance Use and Abuse.

In Grade 7, students will focus on how healthy eating and active living relate to body image and self-esteem, explain how harassment relates to personal safety, and apply strategies to deal with peer pressure related to substance use and abuse. In Grade 8, students will use living skills to respond to matters related all four areas of the program. Students will adopt personal goals that reflect healthy eating practices, identify local support organizations that provide information related to health and well being, and analyze situations that are potentially dangerous to personal safety and determine how to seek assistance.

Fundamental movement skills - This strand includes locomotion/traveling, manipulation, and stability.

In Grades 7 students will combine a variety of movement skills in a variety of physical activities and in Grade 8 the students will apply a variety of movement skills in sequence in physical activities and formal games. In Grade 7 and 8 students will apply the principles of movement while refining their movement skills.

Active Participation - This strand includes physical activity, physical fitness, living skills, and safety.

In Grades 7 and 8 students will participate on a regular basis in physical activity to maintain or improve physical fitness. In Grade 7 students will identify the benefits of each component of personal fitness and in Grade 8 students will apply living skills in physical activity. Students in Grade 7 and 8 will transfer appropriate interpersonal skills to new physical activities. Students are also required to follow safety rules related to physical activity, equipment and facilities and take responsibility for personal safety.

Active Participation encourages students to participate actively in a manner that encourages others to participate.

These strands combine the living skills (e.g., personal, interpersonal, communication, conflict-resolution, goal-setting, organizational, time-management, problem-solving, and decision-making) that all students require.



LANGUAGE

THE PURPOSE

The Language program will clearly reflect the faith convictions of the Catholic community within the context of literacy so that it enhances both human and religious identity.

Language is the basis for thinking, communicating, and learning. Students need language skills in order to comprehend ideas and information, to interact socially, to inquire into areas of interest and study, and to express themselves clearly and demonstrate their learning. Learning to communicate with clarity and precision, orally, in writing, and through a variety of media, will help students to thrive in the world beyond school.

The Revised Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language, 2006 has two main parts: expectations and achievement levels.

1. *Curriculum Expectations*: describe the knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire, demonstrate and apply in their class work, on tests and in various other activities on which achievement is assessed and evaluated.
2. *Achievement Levels*: identifies four categories of knowledge and skills in language used by teachers to make judgements about student work
 - Knowledge and Understanding – subject-specific content acquired in each grade (knowledge) and comprehension of its meaning and significance (understanding)
 - Thinking – the use of critical and creative thinking skills and/or processes
 - Communication – the conveying of meaning through various forms
 - Application – the use of knowledge and skills to make connections within and between various contexts

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

Studies show that students perform better in school when their parents are involved in their education. Parents who are familiar with the curriculum expectations know what is being taught in each grade level and what their child is expected to learn. This information allows parents to

understand how their child is progressing in school and to work with teachers to improve their child's learning.

Effective ways in which parents can support students' learning include:

- Attending parent-teacher interviews
- Participating in parent workshops and school council activities
- Encouraging students to complete their assignments at home

OVERVIEW OF THE GRADE 7 AND 8 PROGRAM

The language curriculum for Grades 7 and 8 is designed to engage students in tasks that they see as meaningful in order to motivate them to analyse, evaluate, and create texts out of interest as well as to meet curriculum expectations. The expectations promote the use of language knowledge, skills, and strategies to facilitate learning in other subjects, such as science, mathematics, history and geography, and as a tool to help students understand and participate in society beyond the school.

In Grades 7 and 8, students should have access to a broad range of relevant texts such as: speeches, debates, presentations, radio advertisements, dramas, song lyrics, raps, memoirs, autobiographies, historical fiction, science fiction, essays, editorials, letters to the editor, magazines, websites, video games and newspapers

STRANDS IN THE LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The language expectations are organized into four strands:

Oral Communication – focuses on the identification and development of the skills and strategies effective listeners and speakers use to understand and interact with others. It also emphasizes the use of high-order thinking skills to stimulate students' interest and engage them in their own learning.

Reading – helps students learn to read with understanding, to read critically, to become familiar with various text forms and their characteristic elements, and to recognize the function and effects of various text features and stylistic devices. It helps students understand that reading is a process of constructing meaning and equips them with the strategies that good readers use to understand and appreciate what they read.

Writing – focuses on the skills needed to produce clear, effective writing, including organizing and developing ideas, choosing the appropriate form of writing, using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, revising, editing, proofreading and publishing.

Media Literacy – focuses on helping students develop the skills required to understand, create, and critically interpret media texts. It examines how images, sound and words are used to create meaning.



MATHEMATICS

THE PURPOSE

The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1 - 8 Mathematics, 2005 is designed to help students build the solid conceptual foundation in mathematics that will enable them to apply their knowledge and further their learning successfully. It is based on the belief that students learn mathematics most effectively when they are given opportunities to investigate ideas and concepts through problem solving and are then guided carefully into an understanding of the mathematical principles involved. At the same time, it promotes a balanced program in mathematics. The acquisition of operational skills remains an important focus of the curriculum.

The following is an overview of the expectations by strand of a student working at Level 3 at the end of Grade 8

Number Sense and Numeration

- represent, compare, and order equivalent representations of numbers, including those involving positive exponents;
- solve problems involving whole numbers, decimal numbers, fractions, and integers, using a variety of computational strategies;
- solve problems by using proportional reasoning in a variety of meaningful contexts.

Measurement

- research, describe, and report on applications of volume and capacity measurement;
- determine the relationships among units and measurable attributes, including the area of a circle and the volume of a cylinder.

Geometry and Spatial Sense

- demonstrate an understanding of the geometric properties of quadrilaterals and circles and the applications of geometric properties in the real world;
- develop geometric relationships involving lines, triangles, and polyhedra, and solve problems involving lines and triangles;
- represent transformations using the Cartesian coordinate plane, and make connections between transformations and the real world.

Patterning and Algebra

- represent linear growing patterns (where the terms are whole numbers) using graphs, algebraic expressions, and equations;
- model linear relationships graphically and algebraically, and solve and verify algebraic equations, using a variety of strategies, including inspection, guess and check, and using a “balance” model.

Data Management and Probability

- collect and organize categorical, discrete, or continuous primary data and secondary data and display the data using charts and graphs, including frequency tables with intervals, histograms, and scatter plots;
- apply a variety of data management tools and strategies to make convincing arguments about data;
- use probability models to make predictions about real-life events.

The mathematical process expectations are to be integrated into student learning associated with all strands:

- Problem Solving
- Reasoning and Proving
- Reflecting
- Selecting Tools and Computational Strategies
- Connecting
- Representing
- Communicating



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

THE PURPOSE

Science is a form of *knowledge* and *skills* that describes, explains, and assists in investigating the natural and physical world. In contrast, technology focuses on the application of knowledge and skills to solve a specific human defined problem by using materials, tools, and energy. Students must develop thorough knowledge and skills of both *science* and *technology* to enable them to be productive members of society. They also need to develop attitudes that will motivate them to use their knowledge and skills in a responsible manner.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

The goals of the science and technology program in Grades 1-8 are intended to ensure that all students acquire a basic scientific literacy and technological capability before entering secondary school. The goals for the students are:

- to understand the basic concepts of science and technology;
- to develop the skills, strategies, and habits of mind required for scientific inquiry and technological design; and
- to relate scientific and technological knowledge to each other and to the world outside the school.

These goals are equally important. Students will be engaged in learning activities that combine the acquisition of knowledge with both inquiry and design processes in a concrete, practical context.

STRANDS

The science and technology knowledge and skills expectations are organized into five strands: *Life Systems*, *Matter and Materials*, *Energy and Control*, *Structures and Mechanism*, and *Earth and Space Systems*. Below is a brief overview of the five strands.

Life Systems

This strand combines the study of biology and ecology with technology and relates it to human needs and their impact on the environment. Students have an opportunity to investigate living systems and their interactions in the environment.

Matter and Materials

This strand addresses the topic of matter and the properties of substances. Students have an opportunity to integrate the study of materials found in various types of technology.

Energy and Control Strand

This strand introduces students to the concept of energy including its forms, conversions, and uses. It offers students opportunities to explore various types of energy control technologies.

Structures and Mechanisms

This strand is organized around two enduring ideas – structures and mechanisms. A structure being a form that resists forces and a mechanism is a device made of one or more simple machines. Students focus on developing design and construct skills when investigating technology concepts.

Earth and Space Systems

This strand deals with the science and technology of our planet and of space. Students study soil and rock formation and address aspects of hydrogeology and the human impacts on geological formations found on the planet.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

TOPICS FOR EACH STRAND FOR GRADES 7-8

	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
Life Systems	Interactions Within Ecosystems	Cells, Tissues, Organs, and Systems
Matter and Materials	Pure Substances and Mixtures	Fluids
Energy and Control	Heat	Optics
Structures and Mechanisms	Structural Strength and Stability	Mechanical Efficiency
Earth and Space Science	The Earth's Crust	Water Systems



HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

THE PURPOSE

Students graduating from Ontario schools require the knowledge and skills gained from the study of history and geography in order to:

- ❑ Acquire the knowledge and skills to function as an informed citizen in a culturally diverse and interdependent world and compete in a global economy;
- ❑ Develop attitudes that will motivate them to use their knowledge and skills in a responsible manner.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

The goals of history and geography education for students in Grades 7 and 8 are:

- ❑ To understand the basic concepts of history and geography;
- ❑ To develop the skills, strategies, and habits of mind required for effective inquiry and communication, and for the application of the basic concepts of social studies, history, and geography;
- ❑ To relate the knowledge acquired through the study of history and geography to the world outside the classroom.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

When students participate in the process of developing a question to research, they are more likely to be motivated to learn. Through active involvement in every step of the research process, students are given the opportunity to apply higher order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In History and Geography, the research process is integral to the learning of the expectations.

TOPICS IN THE HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY CURRICULUM

Grade 7 and 8 History and Geography is organized into three topics per year. There are three overall expectations for each topic that describe the knowledge and skills that students are expected to achieve by the end of the grade.

HISTORY

GRADE 7: New France - British North America - Conflict and Change

In Grade 7 the study of history focuses on the development of Canada from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century. Students investigate the contributions of significant groups and individuals and develop an understanding of Canada's European roots.

GRADE 8: Confederation – Development of Western Canada – Canada: A Changing Society

In Grade 8 students develop an understanding of events in Canada from the 1850s to the end of World War I. They investigate the formation of the Canadian nation and its expansion.

GRADE 8: Patterns in Human Geography - Economic Systems - Migration

GEOGRAPHY

GRADE 7: The Themes of Geographic Inquiry - Patterns in Physical Geography - Natural Resources

In Grade 7 students are introduced to the concepts and methods of geographic inquiry. As well, the students examine the various ways resources are used and the environmental implications of their use.

In Grade 8 students focus on patterns in human geography, economic systems and migration. They explain population distribution and investigate how human activities are affected by these patterns.

INFORMATION WEB SITES

Halton Catholic District School Board -www.hcdsb.org

Ministry of Education -www.edu.gov.on.ca