

February 23, 2010

Information for Parents/Guardians on the new
Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act

Dufferin-Peel Catholic schools strive to serve as safe, healthy, caring and inclusive places to learn and to work. This has long been a cornerstone of our Catholic educational mission, and is consistent with the guiding principles of the province's new Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

As Catholic educators, we strive to teach and to model the care and compassion of Jesus to all we meet. This call to care requires that we exercise due diligence to ensure that any behaviours that cause harm to the well-being or dignity of members of our communities be addressed and corrected to ensure the common good is maintained.

On February 1, Dufferin-Peel implemented the Ontario Ministry of Education's new mandate, and first of its kind in Canada, *Keeping our Kids Safe at School Act*. The act clarifies reporting and responding procedures for all Dufferin-Peel staff when serious and inappropriate student behaviour occurs. The new legislation requires all Dufferin-Peel staff to report serious student incidents that could lead to suspension or expulsion, ensures that parents know schools will respond appropriately to serious student incidents and that parents are made aware when their child is a victim of inappropriate behaviour.

For students, the new legislation will ensure that school staff will respond to all cases of disrespectful and inappropriate student behaviour. Examples of this include racist, sexual, sexist or homophobic comments, slurs, jokes and graffiti, as well as other activities that could lead to suspension and expulsion. A school board employee who learns of a serious incident must report the incident to their principal. School staff will make sure that the victim receives the support they need, such as counseling or referral to child and youth services.

To help you and your child better understand the new legislation and its requirements, I would refer you to the Ministry of Education website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/> for additional information.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's principal for clarification.

Sincerely,

Ralph Borrelli,
Associate Director, Instructional Services