



Secondary Religious Exemption Procedures

Our Virtues and Values:

“Catholic schools must be places where students can hear Jesus’ invitation to follow Him, where they can receive His command to love all people, and where they can realize His presence and His promise to be with them always. Only in this way can they be nurtured and encouraged to become who they are meant to be: persons of dignity and freedom, created in the image and likeness of God as modeled in Jesus Christ.” (Institute for Catholic Education)

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EXPECTATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS

Guidance Teaching, Chaplaincy Team Leader, Support Services Staff:

Students registering in a secondary school in the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board will be required to register for one religion course in each year of attendance.

Registration forms will show religion as a compulsory course in each of the four years. Registration forms will not be considered completed until a religion course has been selected.

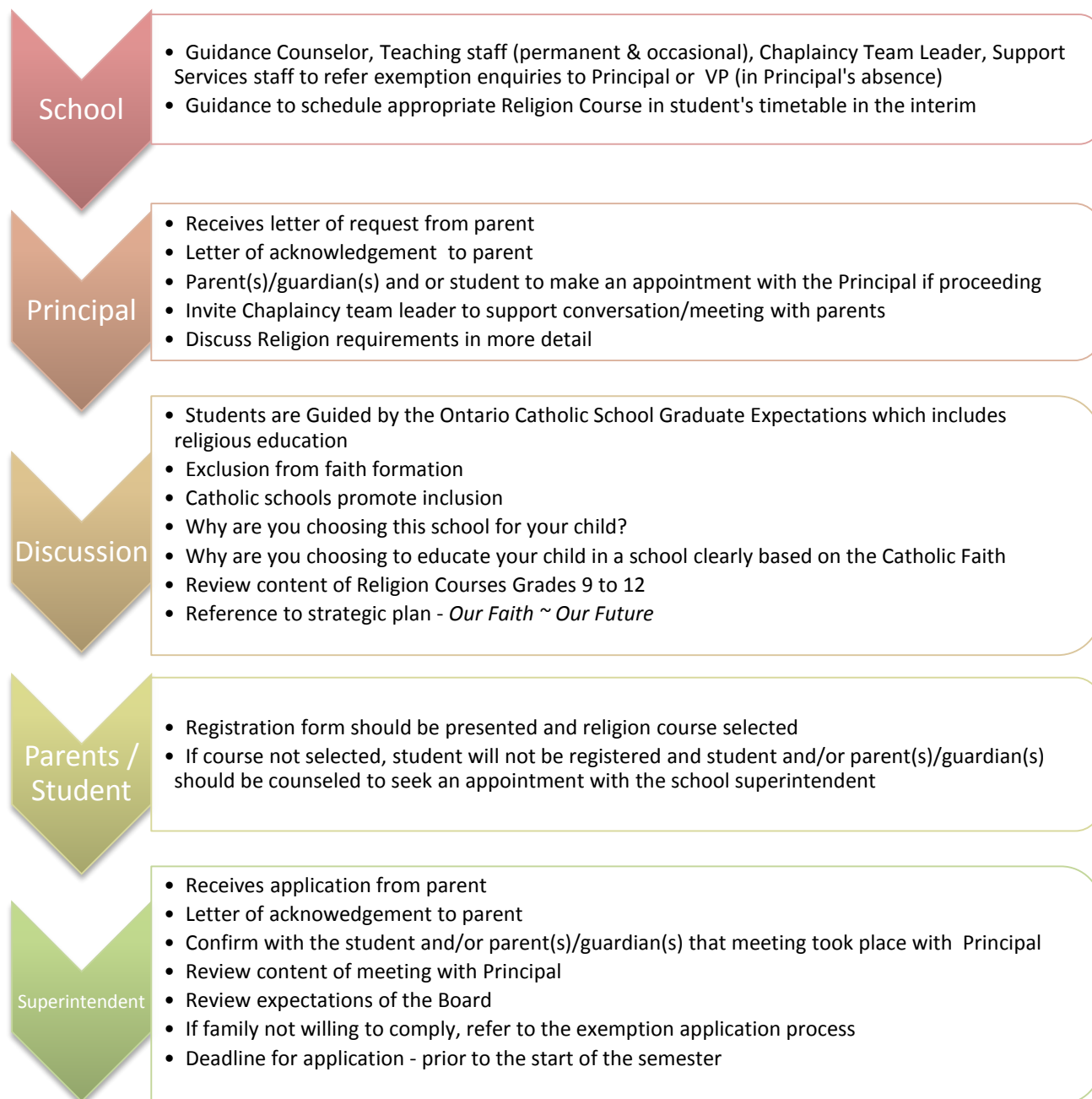
If questioned about this requirement, personnel should be directed to respond that the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board requires all registered students to enroll in one religion course in each year of attendance. Students enrolled in a Catholic school are expected to participate fully in the faith life of the school and this includes religion courses and other related activities such as liturgies, retreats and prayer services. Parents or students 18 years of age should be informed that registration forms will not be processed without the selection of a religion course.

Office and clerical staff and guidance department personnel should direct any person or parent who does not wish to comply with this expectation to make an appointment with the principal. The registration form should be set aside until such time as a religion course has been selected.

If parents or students 18 years of age do not wish to comply, they should be directed to make an appointment with the principal.

SECONDARY RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS

Enquiry Process Flowchart



ENQUIRY PROCESS

School:

- A. Principal to meet and discuss with Guidance, Teaching, Chaplaincy Team Leader, Support Services, etc. and direct them to refer every exemption enquiry from a student and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) to the Principal (or VP in their absence) with a formal request in writing regarding their intentions.
- B. In the interim, Guidance Counsellors will:
1. Schedule the appropriate Religion Course in the students' timetable;
 2. Once all students with a Religion Course have had their timetable conflicts resolved, students with an approved religious exemption will be removed from their Religion Course;
 3. These students will meet with their Guidance Counsellor to have their timetable adjusted with any available courses scheduled within that period.

Note: PRIOR to any change request, it is our practice that all students must attend the course that was originally scheduled into their timetable.

Principal:

If/when the student with their parent(s)/guardian(s) makes an appointment to discuss the exemption request with the Principal; the conversation should include the following discussion points:

- The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board expects that all students registered in a Catholic high school will enroll in one religion course for each year of attendance and participate in all faith related events in the course of a school year.
- Catholic schools provide students with an education that includes emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual growth.
- Students in Catholic high schools are required to meet the expectations of the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations including religious instruction and courses.
- Exclusion from faith formation is not in keeping with the expectations of students who graduate from Catholic high schools.
- Catholic schools promote inclusion and non-Catholic students are not expected to exclude themselves from the core faith programme and other activities related to the faith life of the school.
- Curriculum in all subject areas is infused with the beliefs and tenets of the Catholic faith.
- Religion courses are but one aspect of the faith formation, all students are expected to participate fully in all religious activities in the school community including masses, retreats and paraliturgies.
- Catholic schools provide students with a comprehensive religion programme that will influence and mold their lives into the future.

Content of Religion Courses:

Grade Nine: focuses on the student as an individual and examines the challenges a teenager faces including peer influences and relationships within the context of Catholic teachings.

Grade Ten: Christ and the Church, examines the structure of the Church, the rituals and the meaning behind the various aspects of the liturgy.

Grade Eleven: World Religion, offers a look at other faiths and their components.

Grade Twelve: deals with an array of topics of morality and social justice such as euthanasia, abortion, in-vitro fertilization, capital punishment, cloning, stem cell research within the context of Catholic teachings.

Registration form should be presented and religion courses selected. If parent does not select course, he or she should be informed that the student will not be registered in the school.

If parent raises the issue of religion exemption, expectation should be restated (all students are expected to enroll in one religion course for each year of attendance). If parent asks for next recourse, they should be provided with a Secondary Religious Exemption Request Application and directed to the Superintendent of Education.

Superintendent:

Superintendent should confirm prior to meeting with parent that a meeting has been conducted with the principal.

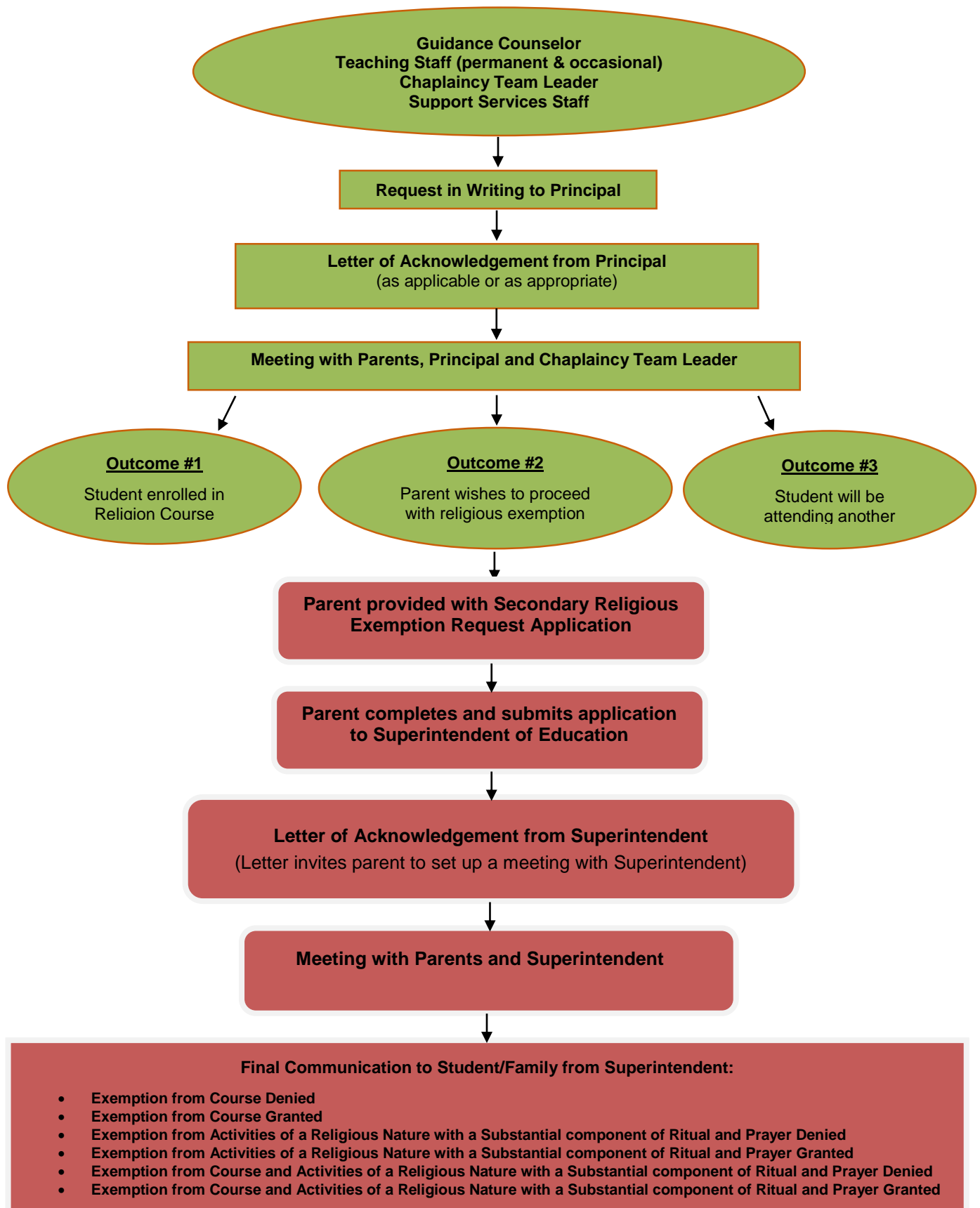
Superintendent will review the content of the parent meeting with the principal.

Superintendent should review the expectations for attendance in a secondary school in the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board.

Superintendent should further question the choosing of a Catholic school if parent or student is not willing to enroll in religion courses and/or faith life of the school.

If parent is still not willing to comply, the Superintendent may consider the application for exemption received from the parent or student.

REQUEST PROCESS FLOWCHART





SECONDARY RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION REQUEST APPLICATION

This form must be completed in full and returned along with the appropriate documents to the Superintendent of Education. Application must be received before the start of the semester.
Requests are considered on an annual basis.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Full Name:		Current School:	
Date of birth: (d / m / y)		Grade:	Phone:
Current address:			
City:		Province:	Postal Code:
Previous Elementary School(s):			How long?
Previous Secondary School(s):			How long?

PARENT/GUARDIAN/ADULT STUDENT MAKING APPLICATION APPLICATION DEADLINE – PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SEMESTER

Application Date:			
Parent #1:		Signature:	
Address:			
City:		Province:	Postal Code:
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:		Bus. Phone:
Parent #2:		Signature:	
Address:			
City:		Province:	Postal Code:
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:		Bus. Phone:

APPLICANT: ATTACH THE FOLLOWING TO APPLICATION AND SUBMIT TO PRINCIPAL

- Written request explaining rationale for exemption Latest Municipal Tax Assessment (MPAC)

SCHOOL ONLY

	Timetable: Semester One	Timetable: Semester Two
<input type="checkbox"/> Ontario Student Transcript	1.	1.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ontario Student Status Sheet	2.	2.
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Parent Baptismal Certificate	3.	3.
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Elementary Registration Form	4.	4.

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

BOARD OFFICE ONLY

Superintendent Decision:
 Approved () Not Approved () Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Checklist for Religious Exemption Meeting

School: _____ Date: _____

Principal: _____

Name of Student: _____ Grade: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) in Attendance: _____

Requesting:

- Religion Course Only
- Catholic Faith Celebration Only
- Religion Course and Catholic Faith Celebration

Why are you choosing this school for your child?

Why are you choosing to educate your child in a school clearly based on the Catholic faith, when you do not want your child to participate in religion courses and activities based on this faith?

The Catholic school system is based on inclusion, and yet you wish to exclude your child from fundamental curricular and co-curricular activities in this school. What are your reasons for such exclusion?

The following points were presented:

- The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board expects that all students registered in a Catholic high school will enroll in one religion course for each year of attendance and participate in all faith related events in the course of a school year.
- Catholic schools provide students with an education that includes emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual growth.
- Students in Catholic high schools are required to meet the expectations of the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations including religious instruction and courses.
- Exclusion from faith formation is not in keeping with the expectations of students who graduate from Catholic high schools.
- Catholic schools promote inclusion and non-Catholic students are not expected to exclude themselves from the core faith programme and other activities related to the faith life of the school.
- Curriculum in all subject areas is infused with the beliefs and tenets of the Catholic faith.
- Religion courses are but one aspect of the faith formation, all students are expected to participate fully in all religious activities in the school community including masses, retreats and paraliturgies.
- Catholic schools provide students with a comprehensive religion programme that will influence and mold their lives into the future.

Content of Religion Courses:

Grade Nine: focuses on the student as an individual and examines the challenges a teenager faces including peer influences and relationships within the context of Catholic teachings.

Grade Ten: Christ and the Church, examines the structure of the Church, the rituals and the meaning behind the various aspects of the liturgy.

Grade Eleven: World Religion, offers a look at other faiths and their components.

Grade Twelve: deals with an array of topics of morality and social justice such as euthanasia, abortion, in-vitro fertilization, capital punishment, cloning, stem cell research within the context of Catholic teachings.

Comments:

Outcome:

- Student is enrolled in Religion Course
- Parent wishes to proceed with religious exemption request
- Student will be attending another school
- Parent provided with Secondary Religious Exemption Request Application
- Other: _____

Signature of Principal: _____

Attached:

- Parent Letter
- Completed Application

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Sample / Draft

[Template #1: Letter of Acknowledgement from Principal]

Date

[Parent/Guardian/Adult Student]
[Address]

Dear [Parent/Guardian/Adult Student],

I am in receipt of your letter, dated [date], requesting your son or daughter [student name] to be exempted from ["quote from parent letter"] at [school name] for the [year-year] school year.

The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board believes that the purpose of registering a student in any of its high schools is to provide that child with an education that will form them intellectually, physically, emotionally and most importantly spiritually. A student registered in a Catholic school is expected to participate in religion courses in each year of attendance and in all activities related to the faith life of the school including masses, retreats and paraliturgies.

Students who are registered in Catholic schools are required to meet the expectations of the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations including religious instruction through selected religion courses. Our school system promotes inclusion as an important principle and students are not expected to exclude themselves from the core faith programme or other activities related to the faith life of the school they attend.

We believe that religious education courses help to build community within and outside of the school and that in order for students to benefit from a Catholic education; they must be fully immersed in a curriculum based on the beliefs of the Catholic faith. Curriculum in all subject areas is designed to mould, guide and support students in a spiritual journey that will prepare them to be discerning believers, effective communicators, self-directed lifelong learners, collaborative contributors, caring family members and responsible citizens.

Please be advised that these requests will only be considered on an annual basis which is subject to the Board's procedures. In the interim, Guidance Counsellors will schedule the appropriate Religion Course in your son/daughter's timetable until a decision has been made.

If you still wish to proceed with the religious exemption for your [son/daughter] [student name], please contact me at the school to set up a meeting to discuss your request and to provide guidance with regards to our process.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at the school.

Yours in Christ,

[Name of Principal]
Principal
[Name of School]

Copy: [Name of Director], Director of Education
[Name of Superintendent], Superintendent of Education – Secondary
OSR File

BOARD LETTERHEAD

Sample / Draft

[Template #2: Letter of Acknowledgement from Superintendent]

Date

[Parent/Guardian/Adult Student]
[Address]

Dear [Parent/Guardian/Adult Student],

I am in receipt of your application dated [date], requesting your son or daughter [student name] to be exempted from [“quote from parent letter”] at [school name] for the [year-year] school year.

Please contact my office at 705-722-3555 extension 228 to set up a meeting to discuss your request
Please be advised that these requests will only be considered on an annual basis.

Sincerely,

[Name of Superintendent]
Superintendent of Education, Secondary

Copy: [Name of Director], Director of Education
[Name of Principal], Principal – [Name of School]
OSR File

BOARD LETTERHEAD

Sample / Draft

[Template #3: Activities of a Religious Nature with a Substantial Component of Ritual and Prayer / Qualifies for Exemption]

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

[Date]

Ms. and Mrs. Smith
[Address]

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith:

I refer to your application of [Date], in which you requested to have your [son/daughter], [Name], exempted from activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer at [Name of School] for the [year-year] school year.

Subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act* provides for an exemption for any “program or course of study in religious education” for a “person who is qualified to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board who attends a secondary school operated by a Roman Catholic board.”

Please note that this exemption only applies to “open access” students who meet the qualifications in the above provision. I understand that your [son/daughter] is qualified to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board.

For the reasons given above, your [son/daughter] qualifies for the exemption under the provisions of the *Education Act*.

In this regard, [Name of Student] will not be required to take part in activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer at [Name of School].

Notwithstanding this exemption in the case of your [son/daughter], I confirm that the historical mandate of the Catholic school system in Ontario is to model the entire syllabus of the school on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Throughout the province, Catholic school boards have been using the Ontario School Graduate Expectations as a foundation reflective of the vision of all learners, our rootedness in a distinctive Christian anthropology and view of the world, and a

renewed sense of the distinctiveness and purpose that is publicly-funded Catholic education. As such, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board holds expectations for all students admitted. The following quote from the letter issued to parents upon registration clearly explains our expectations in this regard. We expect:

“all students in our schools will participate in the prayer life and in the liturgical life of the school. Catholic students are expected to participate fully as mandated by their sacramental Baptism. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate to the extent that they can. It is not the intention of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board to proselytize, however, for supervision, safety, and community reasons, the entire school participates in all religious events that occur during the school year. At a minimum, non-Catholic students will attend and maintain respectful silence at all religious observances. All students are encouraged to get involved.”

At Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, religious and moral education is not, and must not, be one subject among many in the student's timetable; it infuses all classes and materials during the school day.

Based on subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act*, the Board will comply with your request to have [Name of Student] exempt from activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer. In this regard, [Name of Student] will not be required to take part in [school masses, religious retreats and/or other activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer]. Please recognize that there will not be any alteration in the religious or moral education that infuses the remainder of [Name of Student]'s timetable and school observances.

The Board has the expectation that all students admitted to the Catholic system will benefit from these values and teachings. It is the Board's view that such values and teachings are important in forming our students into responsible, reflective and well-rounded citizens.

Please note that this approval is for a one year period and future requests will have to be made on an annual basis to the school principal. If you have any further questions on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

[Name of Superintendent]
Superintendent of Education, Secondary

Copy: [Name of Director], Director of Education
[Name of Principal], Principal – [Name of School]
OSR File

BOARD LETTERHEAD

Sample / Draft

[Template #4: Religious Education Course/Qualifies for Exemption]

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

[Date]

Mr. and Mrs. Smith
[Address]

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith:

I refer to your application of [Date], in which you requested to have your [son/daughter], [Name], exempted from the Grade [No.] religious education course at [Name of School] for the [year-year] school year.

Subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act* provides for an exemption for a “program or course of study in religious education” for a “person who is qualified to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board who attends a secondary school operated by a Roman Catholic board.”

Please note that this exemption only applies to “open access” students who meet the qualifications in the above provision. I understand that your [son/daughter] is qualified to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board.

For the reasons given above, your [son/daughter] qualifies for the exemption under the provisions of the *Education Act*.

In this regard, [Name of Student] will not be required to take the Grade [No.] religious education course at [Name of School].

Notwithstanding this exemption in the case of your [son/daughter], I confirm that the historical mandate of the Catholic school system in Ontario is to model the entire syllabus of the school on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Throughout the province, Catholic school boards have been using the Ontario School Graduate Expectations as a foundation reflective of the vision of all learners, our rootedness in a distinctive Christian anthropology and view of the world, and a renewed sense of the distinctiveness and purpose that is publicly-funded Catholic education. As such, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board holds expectations for all students

admitted. The following quote from the letter issued to parents upon registration clearly explains our expectations in this regard. We expect:

“all students in our schools will participate in the prayer life and in the liturgical life of the school. Catholic students are expected to participate fully as mandated by their sacramental Baptism. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate to the extent that they can. It is not the intention of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board to proselytize, however, for supervision, safety, and community reasons, the entire school participates in all religious events that occur during the school year. At a minimum, non-Catholic students will attend and maintain respectful silence at all religious observances. All students are encouraged to get involved.”

At Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, religious and moral education is not, and must not, be one subject among many in the student's timetable; it infuses all classes and materials during the school day.

Based on subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act*, the Board will comply with your request to have [Name of Student] exempt from taking the Grade [No.] religious education course, but there will not be any alteration in the religious or moral education that infuses the remainder of [his/her] timetable and school observances.

The Board has the expectation that all students admitted to the Catholic system will benefit from these values and teachings. It is the Board's view that such values and teachings are important in forming our students into responsible, reflective and well-rounded citizens.

Please note that this approval is for a one year period and future requests will have to be made on an annual basis to the school principal. If you have any further questions on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

[Name of Superintendent]
Superintendent of Education, Secondary

Copy: [Name of Director], Director of Education
[Name of Principal], Principal – [Name of School]
OSR File

BOARD LETTERHEAD

Sample / Draft

[Template #5: Religious Education Course and Activities of a Religious Nature with a Substantial Component of Ritual and Prayer / Qualifies for Exemption]

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

[Date]

Mr. and Mrs. Smith
[Address]

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith:

I refer to your application of [Date], in which you requested to have your [son/daughter], [Name], exempted from the Grade [No.] religious education course and activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer at [Name of School] for the [year-year] school year.

Subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act* provides for an exemption for any “program or course of study in religious education” for a “person who is qualified to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board who attends a secondary school operated by a Roman Catholic board.”

Please note that this exemption only applies to “open access” students who meet the qualifications in the above provision. I understand that your [son/daughter] is qualified to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board.

For the reasons given above, your [son/daughter] qualifies for the exemption under the provisions of the *Education Act*.

In this regard, [Name of Student] will not be required to take the Grade [No.] religious education course and take part in activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer at [Name of School].

Notwithstanding this exemption in the case of your [son/daughter], I confirm that the historical mandate of the Catholic school system in Ontario is to model the entire syllabus of the school on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Throughout the province, Catholic school boards have been using the Ontario School Graduate Expectations as a foundation reflective of the vision of all

learners, our rootedness in a distinctive Christian anthropology and view of the world, and a renewed sense of the distinctiveness and purpose that is publicly-funded Catholic education. As such, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board holds expectations for all students admitted. The following quote from the letter issued to parents upon registration clearly explains our expectations in this regard. We expect:

“all students in our schools will participate in the prayer life and in the liturgical life of the school. Catholic students are expected to participate fully as mandated by their sacramental Baptism. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate to the extent that they can. It is not the intention of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board to proselytize, however, for supervision, safety, and community reasons, the entire school participates in all religious events that occur during the school year. At a minimum, non-Catholic students will attend and maintain respectful silence at all religious observances. All students are encouraged to get involved.”

At Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, religious and moral education is not, and must not, be one subject among many in the student's timetable; it infuses all classes and materials during the school day.

Based on subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act*, the Board will comply with your request to have [Name of Student] exempt from taking the Grade [No.] religious education course and activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer. In this regard, [Name of Student] will not be required to take part in [school masses, religious retreats and/or activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer]. Please recognize that there will not be any alteration in the religious or moral education that infuses the remainder of [Name of Student]'s timetable and school observances.

The Board has the expectation that all students admitted to the Catholic system will benefit from these values and teachings. It is the Board's view that such values and teachings are important in forming our students into responsible, reflective and well-rounded citizens.

Please note that this approval is for a one year period and future requests will have to be made on an annual basis to the school principal. If you have any further questions on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

[Name of Superintendent]
Superintendent of Education, Secondary

Copy: [Name of Director], Director of Education
[Name of Principal], Principal – [Name of School]
OSR File

BOARD LETTERHEAD

Sample / Draft

[Template #6: Activities of a Religious Nature with a Substantial Component of Ritual and Prayer / Does Not Qualify for Exemption]

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

[Date]

Mr. and Mrs. Smith
[Address]

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith:

I refer to your application of [Date], in which you requested to have your [son/daughter], [Name], exempted from activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer at [Name of School] for the [year-year] school year.

Subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act* provides for an exemption for a “program or course of study in religious education” for a “person who is qualified to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board who attends a secondary school operated by a Roman Catholic board.”

Please note that this exemption only applies to “open access” students who meet the qualifications in the above provision. I understand that your [son/daughter] is a Catholic student who attended [Name of Catholic elementary school]. I also understand your [son/daughter] does not qualify to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board.

In light of the above, your [son/daughter] does not qualify for the exemption under subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act*.

The historical mandate of the Catholic school system in Ontario is to model the entire syllabus of the school on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Throughout the province, Catholic school boards have been using the Ontario School Graduate Expectations as a foundation reflective of the vision of all learners, our rootedness in a distinctive Christian anthropology and view of the world, and a renewed sense of the distinctiveness and purpose that is publicly-funded Catholic education. As such, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board holds expectations for all students admitted. The following quote from the letter issued to parents upon registration clearly explains our expectations in this regard. We expect:

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their sacramental Baptism. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate to the extent that they can. It is not the intention of the Simcoe Catholic District School Board to proselytize, however, for supervision, safety, and community reasons, the entire school participates in all religious events that occur during the school year.

At the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, religious and moral education is not, and must not, be one subject among many in the student's timetable; it infuses all classes and materials during the school day.

In the present circumstances, based on subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act*, the Board cannot comply with your request to have [Student's Name] exempted from activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer, as [he/she] does not qualify for the exemption under the provisions of the *Education Act*.

The religious expectations and requirements for the full duration of [Name of Student]'s enrolment at the school include the following:

1. [Name of Student] will enroll in a religious education course in each of the four years. All religion education courses are approved by the appropriate Catholic authority. The Government of Ontario recognizes that Religions credits count towards a secondary graduation diploma.
2. [Name of Student] will participate in an annual retreat for the first four years that [he/she] attends the school. The retreat normally takes place during the school day at a site off school property. The chaplaincy leader organizes the annual retreat based on spiritual themes appropriate for adolescents.
3. [Name of Student] will participate in the prayer and liturgical life of the school. Catholic students are expected to participate fully as mandated by their sacramental Baptism.

The Board has the expectation that all students admitted to the Catholic system will benefit from these values and teachings. It is the Board's view that such values and teachings are important in forming our students into responsible, reflective and well-rounded citizens.

If you have any further questions in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

[Name of Superintendent]
Superintendent of Education, Secondary

Copy: [Name of Director], Director of Education
[Name of Principal], Principal – [Name of School]
OSR File

BOARD LETTERHEAD

Sample / Draft

[Template #7: Religious Education Course/Does Not Qualify for Exemption]

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

[Date]

Mr. and Mrs. Smith
[Address]

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith:

I refer to your application of [Date], in which you requested to have your [son/daughter], [Name], exempted from the Grade [No.] religious education course at [Name of School] for the [year-year] school year.

Subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act* provides for an exemption for a “program or course of study in religious education” for a “person who is qualified to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board who attends a secondary school operated by a Roman Catholic board.”

Please note that this exemption only applies to “open access” students who meet the qualifications in the above provision. I understand that your [son/daughter] is a Catholic student who attended [Name of Catholic elementary school]. I also understand your [son/daughter] does not qualify to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board.

In light of the above, your [son/daughter] does not qualify for the exemption under subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act*.

The historical mandate of the Catholic school system in Ontario is to model the entire syllabus of the school on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Throughout the province, Catholic school boards have been using the Ontario School Graduate Expectations as a foundation reflective of the vision of all learners, our rootedness in a distinctive Christian anthropology and view of the world, and a renewed sense of the distinctiveness and purpose that is publicly-funded Catholic education. As such, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board holds expectations for all students admitted. The following quote from the letter issued to parents upon registration clearly explains our expectations in this regard. We expect:

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sacramental Baptism. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate to the extent that they can. It is not the intention of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board to proselytize, however, for supervision, safety, and community reasons, the entire school participates in all religious events that occur during the school year.

At the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, religious and moral education is not, and must not, be one subject among many in the student's timetable; it infuses all classes and materials during the school day.

In the present circumstances, based on subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act*, the Board cannot comply with your request to have [Student's Name] exempted from taking the Grade [No.] religious education course, as [he/she] does not qualify for the exemption under the provisions of the *Education Act*.

The religious expectations and requirements for the full duration of [Name of Student]'s enrolment at the school include the following:

1. [Name of Student] will enroll in a religious education course in each of the four years. All religious education courses are approved by the appropriate Catholic authority. The Government of Ontario recognizes that religious credits count towards a secondary graduation diploma.
2. [Name of Student] will participate in an annual retreat for the first four years that [he/she] attends the school. The retreat normally takes place during the school day at a site off school property. The chaplaincy leader organizes the annual retreat based on spiritual themes appropriate for adolescents.
3. [Name of Student] will participate in the prayer and liturgical life of the school. Catholic students are expected to participate fully as mandated by their sacramental Baptism.

The Board has the expectation that all students admitted to the Catholic system will benefit from these values and teachings. It is the Board's view that such values and teachings are important in forming our students into responsible, reflective and well-rounded citizens.

If you have any further questions in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

[Name of Superintendent]
Superintendent of Education, Secondary

Copy: [Name of Director], Director of Education
[Name of Principal], Principal – [Name of School]
OSR File

BOARD LETTERHEAD

Sample / Draft

[Template #8: Religious Education Course and Activities of a Religious Nature with a Substantial Component of Ritual and Prayer / Does Not Qualify for Exemption]

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

[Date]

Mr. and Mrs. Smith
[Address]

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith:

I refer to your application of [Date], in which you requested to have your [son/daughter], [Name], exempted from the Grade [No.] religious education course and activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer at [Name of School] for the [year-year] school year.

Subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act* provides for an exemption for a “program or course of study in religious education” for a “person who is qualified to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board who attends a secondary school operated by a Roman Catholic board.”

Please note that this exemption only applies to “open access” students who meet the qualifications in the above provision. I understand that your [son/daughter] is a Catholic student who attended [Name of Catholic elementary school]. I also understand your [son/daughter] does not qualify to be a resident pupil in respect of a secondary school operated by a public board.

In light of the above, your [son/daughter] does not qualify for the exemption under subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act*.

The historical mandate of the Catholic school system in Ontario is to model the entire syllabus of the school on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Throughout the province, Catholic school boards have been using the Ontario School Graduate Expectations as a foundation reflective of the vision of all learners, our rootedness in a distinctive Christian anthropology and view of the world, and a renewed sense of the distinctiveness and purpose that is publicly-funded Catholic education. As such, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board holds expectations for all students admitted. The following quote from the letter issued to parents upon registration clearly explains our expectations in this regard. We expect:

“all students in our schools will participate in the prayer life and in the liturgical life of the school. Catholic students are expected to participate fully as mandated by

their sacramental Baptism. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate to the extent that they can. It is not the intention of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board to proselytize, however, for supervision, safety, and community reasons, the entire school participates in all religious events that occur during the school year.

At the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, religious and moral education is not, and must not, be one subject among many in the student's timetable; it infuses all classes and materials during the school day.

In the present circumstances, based on subsection 42(13) of the *Education Act*, the Board cannot comply with your request to have [Student's Name] exempted from taking the Grade [No.] religious education course and activities of a religious nature with a substantial component of ritual and prayer, as [he/she] does not qualify for the exemption under the provisions of the *Education Act*.

The religious expectations and requirements for the full duration of [Name of Student]'s enrolment at the school include the following:

1. [Name of Student] will enroll in a religious education course in each of the four years. All religion courses are approved by the appropriate Catholic authority. The Government of Ontario recognizes that religions credits count towards a secondary graduation diploma.
2. [Name of Student] will participate in an annual retreat for the first four years that [he/she] attends the school. The retreat normally takes place during the school day at a site off school property. The chaplaincy leader organizes the annual retreat based on spiritual themes appropriate for adolescents.
3. [Name of Student] will participate in the prayer and liturgical life of the school. Catholic students are expected to participate fully as mandated by their sacramental Baptism.

The Board has the expectation that all students admitted to the Catholic system will benefit from these values and teachings. It is the Board's view that such values and teachings are important in forming our students into responsible, reflective and well-rounded citizens.

If you have any further questions in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

[Name of Superintendent]
Superintendent of Education, Secondary

Copy: [Name of Director], Director of Education
[Name of Principal], Principal – [Name of School]
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