



ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

Title: Religious Accommodation

Effective Date: September 2010 Responsibility: Superintendent of Schools and Program

PURPOSE

The Near North District School Board acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices, free from discriminatory or harassing behaviours and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodations to staff and to students.

The Near North District School Board recognizes and values the religious diversity within its

DEFINITIONS

1. Accommodation

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances define "accommodation" as a duty corresponding to the right to be free from discrimination:

Accommodation will be provided to the point of undue hardship, as defined by the OHRC (for example in the Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate). A determination regarding undue hardship will be based on an assessment of costs, outside sources of funding, and health and safety. It will be based on objective evidence. For more information about the evidence needed to prove undue hardship, see Human Rights at Work p. 133-134 and Appendix E.

A determination that an accommodation will create undue hardship carries significant liability for the Board. It should be made only with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Where a determination is made that an accommodation would create undue hardship, the person requesting accommodation will be given written notice, including the reasons for the decision and the objective evidence relied upon. The accommodation seeker shall be informed of his or her recourse under the Board's Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and Anti-Discrimination Policy and Procedure, and under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Where a determination has been made that an accommodation would cause undue hardship, the Board will proceed to implement the next best accommodation short of undue hardship, or will consider phasing in the requested accommodation.

Accommodation Guidelines

This guideline is to ensure that all Board staff, students, parents and others of the school community are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Code with respect to religious accommodation. It also sets out the Board's procedures for accommodation and the responsibilities of each of the parties to the accommodation process.

The Board is committed to providing an environment that is inclusive and that is free of barriers based on creed (religion). Accommodation will be provided in accordance with the principles of dignity, individualization, and inclusion. The Board will work cooperatively, and in a spirit of respect, with all partners in the accommodation process.

Accommodation Based on Request

The Board will take all reasonable steps to provide accommodation to individual members of a religious group to facilitate their

Newsletters and staff handbooks should include

Schedule "A"

GUIDELINE FOR KIRPAN ACCOMMODATION

A Kirpan is a ceremonial sword that must be worn by all baptised Khalsa Sikhs. The Board