



Opening and Closing Exercises at School

Board Received: January 26, 2015

Review Date: February 2019

Accountability:

1. Frequency of Reports – As needed
2. Severity Threshold – As needed (eg. Changes in Regulations)
3. Criteria for Success – Clear communication between school administration and School Council

Procedures:

1. The Principal shall ensure that opening or closing exercises are held in his/her school, in accordance with the requirements set out in S.304 of the *Education Act* and in Ontario Regulations 435/00 and 298(4).
2. The opening or closing exercises must include the singing or playing of “O Canada” and may include the recitation of a pledge of citizenship and/or readings that impart social, moral or spiritual values which are representative of Ontario’s multicultural society and/or a period of silence. Inclusive opening or closing exercises provide the opportunity for building cross-cultural awareness, responsible citizenship and a global perspective.
3. Annually, the Principal may decide, in consultation with the School Council, whether the opening or closing exercises will include the following pledge of citizenship:

“I Affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen.”

4. As stated in Ontario Regulation 435/00, a pupil is not required to sing “O Canada” or recite the pledge of citizenship in the following circumstances:
 - i) in the case of a pupil who is less than 18 years old, if the pupil’s parent or guardian applies to the principal to be exempt from doing so; or
 - ii) in the case of a pupil who is at least 18 years old, if the pupil applies to the principal to be exempted from doing so.