



## PROCEDURE

SO118

### Opening and Closing Exercises at School

Board Received: May 27, 2019 Review Date: June 2023

#### Accountability

1. Frequency of Reports – As needed (i.e. changes in regulations)
2. Criteria for Success – Clear communication between school administration and School Council

Inclusive opening or closing exercises provide the opportunity for building cross-cultural awareness responsible citizenship and a global perspective.

#### Procedures

1. The Principal shall ensure that opening or closing exercises are held in the 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”
3. The opening or closing exercises **may** include
  - the recitation of a pledge of citizenship
  - readings that impart social, moral or spiritual values which are representative of Ontario’s multicultural societya period of silence.
4. 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.”*

5. Schools are encouraged to include the acknowledgement of the Indigenous people of the land in their opening exercises and at other school events as deemed appropriate by the Principal

*“The Grand Erie District School Board recognizes the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe people, as the traditional peoples of this territory. We acknowledge and give gratitude to the Indigenous peoples for sharing these lands in order for us to continue our work here today.”*

6. 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.