



Niagara Catholic District School Board

INTERNAL SURVEYS

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Section Number – 100

No 100.16

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In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are Administrative Operational Procedures for facilitating internal survey requests.

PREAMBLE

The Board will ensure that internal surveys, surveys initiated by the Board's internal staff, are of high quality, protect the privacy, rights, and interests of participants, comply with provincial legislation, federal guidelines and Ministry directives, minimize redundancy, and support student success and well-being.

DEFINITIONS

Survey

A survey is a structured method of gathering information, typically through a set of predefined questions aimed at understanding opinions, experiences, or behaviours across a target group. It is often used to support informed decision-making by identifying trends, measuring satisfaction, uncovering insights on a specific topic, or increasing stakeholder engagement. Surveys are formal, data-driven, and designed to yield measurable results. An example of an internal survey is the Student Achievement Plan Survey.

Feedback

In contrast to a survey, feedback is more immediate, informal, and typically unstructured. It refers to comments, recommendations, suggestions, or reactions provided by individuals, often spontaneously or in response to a specific experience. While feedback can help improve processes or services in real time, it may lack the comprehensive scope or analytical depth of a survey. Feedback gathered after providing an in-service or experience such as a PD session isn't a survey and is not within the scope of this AOP.

Requester

A requester is any Niagara Catholic District School Board staff member who submits an application to conduct an internal survey within the Niagara Catholic District School Board community or on behalf of the Board.

Administrator of Research and Data Analytics

The position of Administrator of Research, and Data Analytics reviews internal survey requests in the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

INTERNAL SURVEYS

These Administrative Operational Procedures apply to any Niagara Catholic District School Board staff, applying to conduct an internal survey within the Niagara Catholic District School Board community or on behalf of the Board.

Respondents to an internal survey may include:

- Students,

- Parents/Guardians,
- Board staff,
- Board of Trustees,
- Clergy, and
- Community members.

INTERNAL SURVEY APPLICATION

A request to conduct a survey in the Niagara Catholic District School Board must be made in writing and submitted to the Administrator of Research and Data Analytics by completing the [Niagara Catholic Internal Survey Request Form](#).

INTERNAL SURVEY APPROVAL CRITERIA

Internal Surveys must:

- Abide by the teachings of the Catholic Church,
- Adhere to the Mission, Vision, Values, and System Priorities of the Niagara Catholic District School Board specifically and Catholic Education in general,
- Pose no risk to participants or cause physical, emotional, psychological, or reputational harm,
- Comply with legislative and policy requirements by fully adhering to Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL), relevant privacy laws, collective agreements and bargaining rights,
- Include a clear informed consent process by providing participants with an informed consent process that clearly outlines their rights, the voluntary nature of participation, and the ability to withdraw at any time,
- State purpose and use of results to all individuals invited to participate by clearly explaining the survey's purpose and how the collected data will be used, analyzed, and shared,
- Ensure privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. All responses must be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Personally identifiable information must not be disclosed without obtaining informed permission from the participant, or, in the case of minors, their parent or guardian,
- Include supervised administration for students. All surveys whether online or on paper, must be completed in person under the supervision of a Board employee. Secondary students may complete online surveys independently with Principal approval,
- Have parental consent for student survey participation, for all students under age 18 years. Passive permission is acceptable. An exception is made for surveys embedded in coursework or curriculum-based projects aligned with grade or subject-specific expectations in The Ontario Curriculum,
- Ensure survey data is stored securely on approved platforms, with appropriate access controls and data retention and destruction policies in place,
- Be culturally responsive and inclusive.
- Not duplicate existing or recent surveys already conducted within the same school year, unless a longitudinal or follow-up study is justified, or mandated.
- Use administration and reporting tools that meet the Board's data privacy, security, and accessibility standards,
- Be scheduled to avoid high-stress or high-activity periods (e.g., exam weeks, reporting periods) and should respect the annual survey calendar to prevent overload/survey fatigue.
- Provide follow-up support if/when sensitive topics are discussed (e.g., mental health, discrimination, bullying), support resources, and follow-ups (e.g., counselling, referral services) must be made available.

- Include a communication plan developed in consultation with the Board Communications department.

APPROVED INTERNAL SURVEYS

The Administrator of Research and Data Analytics will approve the internal surveys to be conducted in the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

- Upon approval, the principal(s) will be contacted by the Family of Schools' Superintendent.
- Unless otherwise directed by Senior Administrative Council, the decision regarding participation in the approved survey will include consultation with the principal of the school with approval by the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education.
- The administrator will also provide the Chief Executive Officer, Senior Administrative Council, and Principals with recommendations for the administration and participation in school surveys, as required.
- The Administrator of Research and Data Analytics will also provide the Chief Executive Officer, Senior Administrative Council, and Principals with recommendations for the administration and participation in school surveys, as required.
- The communication plan will be conducted by the requester, in consultation with the Board Communications and Community Engagement Officer, and as described on the *Niagara Catholic Internal Survey Request Form*. This plan should clearly outline how the survey will be presented, promoted, and results communicated with participants. It should identify the channels of communication (e.g., email, staff meetings, newsletters), key messaging (including the purpose, timeline, and confidentiality assurances), and strategies to encourage participation. The plan must also detail how the results will be shared with stakeholders.
- The decision to participate in the survey rests with the parents/guardians, students, staff, and respondents.
- The Board has access to data from internal surveys as required for reporting purposes.
- Upon completion of the survey, the requester(s) will provide a summary report to participating principals and schools, and to the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education, and/or other stakeholders as advised by the Administrator of Research and Data Analytics.

ANNUAL REPORT

The Administrator of Research and Data Analytics shall prepare an annual report of Internal Surveys conducted in the Board for the Board of Trustees, Chief Executive Officer and Senior Administrative Council.

References

- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- [Niagara Catholic Internal Survey Request Form](#)

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