



## CHARACTER EDUCATION AND SOCIAL- EMOTIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Legal References:

Related References: *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K–12, 2008*  
*A Guide to Character Development in Ontario Schools, K–12, 2008*  
*Administrative Procedure 1200 - Student Bullying Prevention and Intervention*  
*Administrative Procedure 1260 - Student Discipline Procedure*  
*Administrative Procedure 4070 - Responsible Use Procedure for Information, Communication and Collaboration Technologies*  
*Board Policy 6009 – Student Bullying Prevention and Intervention*  
*Police School Board Protocol*  
*Character Development Poster*  
*Digital Citizenship Poster*  
*Code of Digital Conduct Poster*

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### 1. Preamble

- 1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) recognizes that character development promotes safety, caring and inclusion within all learning environments including the digital environment. These characteristics of the learning environment are important in supporting high expectations for student learning and equity of learning outcomes, and increased achievement and well-being for all students. These characteristics also create the conditions for student mental health and well-being
- 1.2 Parents, guardians, caregivers and family have the primary responsibility for students' character development including social and emotional skill development. The WRDSB also plays an important supporting role in character development including the identification, instruction and reinforcement of social and emotional skills that contribute to a student's cognitive, emotional and social well-being. This includes the WRDSB identified attributes: Social Responsibility, Co-operation, Empathy, Hope, Initiative, Integrity, Kindness, and Respect.
- 1.3 Staff are expected to integrate and reinforce character development for all students from JK-12. This includes embedding character development in their teaching of curriculum, integrating character development in system priorities or projects, and promoting character attributes, as identified by the WRDSB, in workplace practices and interactions with students, parents and community partners.
- 1.4 Staff is deliberate in their efforts to nurture democratic ideals, personal development and respect for self, others, property, the environment, diversity, human rights and other qualities upon which we find common ground and in doing so support the development of strong communities and the

ideals of citizenship. The focus on character development and related attributes creates and expands opportunities for students to learn about, and contribute to the building of healthy communities, our nation and the world.

## 2. Definitions

2.1 Character Development is defined as an ongoing process of growth that intentionally models, teaches and inspires all people to want to do the right thing for the greater good of our whole community. Character Development is the journey of connecting deep caring to knowing, feeling and doing.

2.2 The Waterloo Region District School Board has identified the following eight universal attributes that are valued within schools and our communities. Character development is the deliberate effort to nurture these attributes and use them as a standard against which we hold ourselves accountable. They are key aspects of school life. They bind us together and form the basis of responsible citizenship. They are a foundation for excellence and equity in education and for school communities that are respectful, safe, caring and inclusive.

### 2.2.1 Waterloo Region District School Board - Character Attributes:

**Empathy:**

Understanding how someone feels and responding with sensitivity.

**Initiative:**

Acting responsibly without being asked.

**Cooperation:**

Everyone working together for the greater good of all.

**Integrity:**

Saying and doing what you know is right, even when it is hard.

**Respect:**

Treating others, ourselves and our environment with care and consideration.

**Kindness:**

Helping others with your caring words and actions.

**Hope:**

Acting with the belief that things can be better and that what we say and do matters.

**Social Responsibility:**

Acting as caring citizens who want to make our world a better place for everyone.