



# ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## POLICY STATEMENT

### FAIR LABOUR PRACTICES

#### Rationale

The Board commits itself to practices that will favour the protection and enhancement of the rights of all workers that produce apparel for use by the Board and in any of its schools or sites in ways that are consistent with the message and example of Jesus Christ and the social teachings of the Church.

*66... It is good for people to realize that purchasing is always a moral — and not simply economic — act. Hence the consumer has a specific social responsibility, which goes hand-in-hand with the social responsibility of the enterprise. Consumers should be continually educated<sup>[145]</sup> regarding their daily role, which can be exercised with respect for moral principles without diminishing the intrinsic economic rationality of the act of purchasing. In the retail industry, particularly at times like the present when purchasing power has diminished and people must live more frugally, it is necessary to explore other paths: for example, forms of cooperative purchasing like the consumer cooperatives that have been in operation since the nineteenth century, partly through the initiative of Catholics. In addition, it can be helpful to promote new ways of marketing products from deprived areas of the world, so as to guarantee their producers a decent return. However, certain conditions need to be met: the market should be genuinely transparent; the producers, as well as increasing their profit margins, should also receive improved formation in professional skills and technology; and finally, trade of this kind must not become hostage to partisan ideologies. A more incisive role for consumers, as long as they themselves are not manipulated by associations that do not truly represent them, is a desirable element for building economic democracy.*

*Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate*

Such a commitment to the cause of justice is entirely consistent with the Board's own Mission Statement:

*We are committed to excellence in Catholic education and to lifelong learning, so that those with whom we journey may become caring and contributing citizens in a world of constant challenge.*

*... We shall participate fully in the Church's mission of Catholic education through our philosophy, policy and practice. ... We shall value and promote responsible participation in our local and global communities.*

The Board, and the schools within its jurisdiction, as major purchasers of apparel, recognizes its responsibilities as a Catholic community to ensure that all apparel purchases are consistent with Catholic social teachings.

## **Guiding Principles**

Recognizing the inherent desire of people to make decisions which will affirm and enhance the dignity of persons, the Board, in its desire to contribute to a more just society, acknowledges its responsibilities:

- To ensure that apparel manufactured for and/or supplied to the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board and the schools within its jurisdiction are made under humane working conditions in compliance with accepted international standards and local laws.
- To promote greater respect for workers' rights and improved working conditions in the apparel industry worldwide.
- To provide relevant information about products and vendors to those individuals and groups in Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board involved with apparel purchases.
- To cooperate with other agencies (e.g... Workers Rights Consortium, Maquila Solidarity Network) in the promotion of this policy.
- To facilitate informed and conscientious apparel purchases made by the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board and the schools within its jurisdiction, including, but not limited to, student uniforms, athletics and gym wear, school spirit, club and team wear and employee uniforms.
- To provide information and to model ethical practices to members of all school communities and employee groups with the broader goal of encouraging more informed, personal consumer practices.
- To implement this policy in a manner which will support the efforts of vendors who, through their practices, seek to protect the rights and dignity of workers.

## **References**

*Laborem Exorcens*

*Caritas in Veritate*

*Ethical Guidelines for International Trade, Holy See's Note to Ministerial Conference of World Trade Organization, September 2003*

*Board Mission Statement*

*Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, ICE, 1998*

*Labour Day Statements, Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario*

*International Labour Organization Convention 138*

## **Administrative Procedures**

Fair Labour Practices

Approved: February 22, 2011

Reviewed: June 16, 2015

