



**THE ACSI EASTERN CANADA
COMMENDATION CERTIFICATE**

The ACSI Commendation Certificate

Please Note: *This is not a requirement of membership*

This is an optional service for member schools.

Introduction

ACSI Eastern Canada makes available a programme of School Development for its member schools. Upon the successful completion of the required criteria, ACSI Eastern Canada will issue a **Commendation Certificate** as recognition that the school has met basic standards of accountability spiritually, academically, legally, and operationally.

Member schools participating in this programme will examine standards of quality, philosophical and practical consistency, and legal compliance. Suggestions and/or guidance will be made available by the ACSI Eastern Canada office to lead the school into further positive development.

This programme will validate the school's accountability and reputation to its constituencies by acknowledging that the school is being run according to regionally recognized standards, policies, and procedures.

Procedure

1. Have the approval of your school board to proceed with this process.
2. Contact the ACSI Regional Office (acsiec@sympatico.ca or 705-728-7344) and request a copy of the ***Self-Evaluation Checklist***.
3. Complete the ***Self-Evaluation Checklist***, noting:
 - a) what standards are presently in place;
 - b) areas not presently addressed;
 - c) areas in which you would like help;
 - d) a planned timeline to address areas that do not meet the standards.
4. Upon the completion and submission of the ***Self-Evaluation Checklist*** to the ACSI Eastern Canada office, an evaluator from ACSI will arrange to spend a day at your school visiting some classrooms to observe instruction, meeting with teachers and the principal to discuss programmes, and offering input that will enhance your school's ministry.
5. A written report will be forwarded to your school after the evaluator's visit.

Costs

Service Fee: \$150

Travel Expenses for the ACSI Evaluator: \$0.42 per km and/or flight costs.

Overnight Accommodation: Schools more than 250 km from the evaluator's home will pay for overnight motel accommodation and meals.

CHECKLIST COMPONENTS FOR COMMENDATION

To earn the Commendation Certificate a school must address the specific issues noted in the Commendation Certificate Checklist with written policies. These policies must be delineated in the following documents:

- **Parent/Student Handbook**
- **Board Policy Handbook**
- **Teachers' Handbook**
- **Teacher and Principal Contracts**

If your school lacks any of these documents you can use the checklists to help you develop them. Also, ACSI has sample policies, which are available at no charge.

For most of the checklist policies schools can write whatever policy they think is appropriate.

In a few areas we require specific policies that state your commitment to:

- Compliance with all relevant laws and government regulations
- The use of the Matthew 18 principle for solving school problems
- Compliance with specific Spiritual Standards on the checklist
- Compliance with specific Academic Standards on the checklist
- Compliance with specific Institutional Standards on the checklist

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Criteria for ACSI Eastern Canada

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Rationale: The courts see your school handbook as a legal document. What you claim to do in the handbook is what you must do in practice or potentially face legal consequences.

The following items must be included in this handbook:

1. **Mission Statement:** encapsulating in one or two sentences the mission of your school. All aspects of the school's programme should be in agreement with this statement.
2. **Vision Statement:** presenting the characteristics you would like your graduates to exhibit as expected outcomes of attending your school.
3. **Statement of Faith:** theological specifics of the common beliefs taught and held by all staff, administrators and board members.
4. **Educational Philosophy:** and a brief explanation of its application to school operations.
5. **Admission:** policies and procedures.
6. **Academics:** subjects taught, and academic standards, reporting, standardized testing.
7. **Extra Curricular Activities** and programmes.
8. **Behavioural Standards:** including sexual harassment, bullying and other discipline policies.
9. **Health and Safety:** procedures whereby you work with the home to ensure the school has a safe, healthy environment.
10. **School Staff:** your qualifications, your standards for them and their accessibility to parents.
11. **Miscellaneous Points:** whatever other points you want to communicate to parents e.g., (unexpected school cancellation procedures).
12. **School Governance** and lines of authority: explaining the school's authority structure, the decision-making process and problem solving policies.
13. **Finance:** including tuition payment and non-payment policies, donations, and charitable receipting.
14. **Bus Policies:** (If the school does bussing)
15. **Disclaimers:** a critical component of the handbook for the school's protection.

The ACSI Commendation Certificate
Self Assessment Checklist

Parent/Student Handbook	In Place (Indicate page number if applicable)	Not Yet	Target Date for Completion	Please Provide Support Information
1/ Mission Statement				
2/ Vision Statement				
3/ Statement of Faith				
4/ Educational Philosophy				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • including integration of Scripture 				
5/ Admissions Policy				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application procedure 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spiritual requirements 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behavioural requirements 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • academic requirements` 				
6/ Academics				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subjects taught at each grade level 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards for passing, failing, and acceleration 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning difficulties (what you can and can't help) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how student progress is reported 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent-teacher contact 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standardized testing 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • field trip requirements (if part of the curriculum) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school awards 				
7/ Extra Curricular Activities				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sports and teams 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clubs, choir, drama, etc. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mission work 				

Parent/Student Handbook	In Place (Page number if applicable)	Not Yet	Target Completion Date	Please Provide Support Information
8/ Behavioural Standards				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expectations of students: treatment of staff and students, appearance, uniform or dress code, punctuality 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> philosophy of discipline 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> methods of discipline 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> student suspension, causes and procedures 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> student expulsion, causes and procedures 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sexual harassment and bullying 				
9/ Health and Safety				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parental reporting of sickness and absence 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicable disease policy 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> health conditions under which a student will be sent home 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy regarding when school personnel administer medication 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> custody issues and non custodial parent's rights 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> requirements to permit non custodial person to take a student from school property 				
10/ School Staff				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teacher qualifications and requirements including police checks 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> requirements for non teaching staff including police checks 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accessibility to parents 				
11/ Miscellaneous				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unexpected school cancellation procedures (snow days, hydro outage, etc.) 				
12/ School Governance and Lines of Authority				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School governance structure 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem solving procedures 				

Parent/Student Handbook	In Place (Page number if applicable)	Not Yet	Target Date for Completion	Please Provide Support Information
13/ Finance (This may be a separate document because tuition should change annually.)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tuition rates 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • payment procedures 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tuition assistance and scholarship policy 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • charitable receipting for part of tuition 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • donations beyond tuition 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • late tuition payment policy 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long overdue tuition policy 				
14/ Bus Policies (where applicable)				
15/ Disclaimers: The school's right to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change handbook policies without prior notice as the school board sees fit 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspend or expel any student according to the written policy 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search student bags, desks or lockers without prior notice 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change tuition fees if necessary without prior notice 				

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Criteria for ACSI Eastern Canada

BOARD POLICY HANDBOOK

Rationale: Because boards make such critical decisions they need to be guided by clearly written policies and procedures that are in accordance with the teaching of scripture. Boards cannot afford to operate upon the personal opinions of a powerful few individuals. They must have a mandate that defines and limits their role.

The following needs to be included in the Board Policy Handbook: (Not necessarily in this order)

1. School Mission Statement
2. Vision Statement
3. Statement of Faith
4. Job Description for board members: overall responsibilities, privileges and limitations
5. Spiritual Standards for membership
6. Legal/Ethical Responsibilities
7. Board Membership Mechanics – selection, term of office, retention, dismissal
8. Existing School Policies (usually compiled from the Parent/Student and Teachers' Handbook plus hiring policies)
9. New Policy Procedures: making, altering and deleting
10. Problem Solving Procedures
11. Board and the principal/administrator: hiring expectations and evaluation
12. Fiscal Responsibility

The ACSI Commendation Certificate Self Assessment Checklist

Board Policy Handbook	In Place (Indicate page number if applicable)	Not Yet	Target Date for Completion	Please Provide Support Information
1/ Mission Statement				
2/ Vision Statement				
3/ Statement of Faith				
4/ Job Description				
• Time/service expectations				
• Board offices and responsibilities				
• Limitations of board member authority				
• Role in relationship to the school principal/administrator				
• In-service training expectations				
5/ Spiritual Standards				
• Agreement with the Statement of Faith				
• Philosophical commitment to Christian school education				
• Personal character requirements				
6/ Legal/Ethical Responsibilities				
• Compliance with all relevant laws				
• Compliance with all government regulations				
• Confidentiality regarding board decisions				
• Financial accountability				
• Contractual integrity as employer of all staff				
7/ Board Membership Mechanics				
• Selection procedures				
• Term of office				
• Retention or termination				
8/ List of all existing school policies (usually compiled from the Parent/Student Handbook and Teacher Handbook plus hiring polices)				

Board Policy Handbook	In Place (Indicate page number if applicable)	Not Yet	Target Date for Completion	Please Provide Support Information
9/ New Policy Procedures				
• Policy making				
• Altering or adding to existing policies				
• Deleting policies				
10/ Problem Solving Procedures				
• The Matthew 18 principle as it applies to school problems				
11/ Board and the Principal/administrator				
• Procedures for hiring of the principal/administrator				
• Expectations of the principal/administrator				
• Annual formal evaluation of the principal/administrator				
12/ Fiscal Responsibilities and Procedures				
• Bookkeeping				
• Payment of bills				
• Public accountability				
• Oversight of fundraising				
• Insurance				
• Oversight and approval of budget				

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TEACHER'S HANDBOOK

Rationale: Most teachers in Christian schools are extremely conscientious. They tend to go “above and beyond” the call of duty. For their benefit and for the benefit of those few less conscientious teachers, expectations and requirements need to be clearly delineated.

The following should be included:

1. Mission Statement and its application to the teacher (1 or 2 sentences)
2. Vision Statement and its application to the teacher “ “
3. Statement of Faith as the foundational belief of all staff and board members
4. Spiritual standards for the teachers
5. Personal appearance and attire
6. Daily procedures and duties
7. Teacher attendance requirements: prior to school opening, after end of school year, parent nights, staff meetings, before and after school, teachers’ conventions, concerts, fundraisers, etc.
8. Absence policy: sickness, appointments, compassionate leave
9. In-service professional development expectations: conferences, courses
10. Student behavioural policies and discipline procedures including Harassment and Bullying Policies
11. Student evaluation methods and responsibilities including reports
12. Attendance, lesson preparation and student record responsibilities
13. Supervision responsibilities
14. Extra curricular programme involvement
15. Field trip procedures
16. Health and safety, accident and medication procedures
17. Emergency procedures including fire, intruder, hostage taking, bomb threat, shooting, dealing with the press, suicide
18. Teacher evaluations by the principal
19. Responsibility to report cases of abuse
20. Parental rights and custody issues

The ACSI Commendation Certificate Self Assessment Checklist

Teacher's Handbook	In Place (Indicate page number if applicable)	Not Yet	Target Date for Completion	Please Provide Support Information
1/ Mission Statement and its application to the teacher (1 or 2 sentences)				
2/ Vision Statement and its application to the teacher (1 or 2 sentences)				
3/ Statement of Faith as the foundational belief of all staff and board members				
4/ Spiritual Standards for the teachers				
5/ Personal appearance and attire				
6/ Daily procedures and duties				
7/ Teacher attendance requirements: prior to school opening, after end of school year, parent nights, staff meetings, before and after school, teachers' conventions, concerts, fundraisers, etc.				
8/ Absence policy: sickness, appointments, compassionate leave				
9/ In-service professional development expectations: conferences, courses				
10/ Student behavioural policies and discipline procedures including Harassment and Bullying Policies				
11/ Student evaluation methods and responsibilities, including reports				
12/ Attendance, lesson preparation and student record responsibilities				
13/ Supervision responsibilities				
14/ Extra Curricular programme involvement				
15/ Field trip procedures				
16/ Health and safety, accident and medication procedures				
17/ Emergency procedures including fire, intruder, hostage taking, bomb threat, shooting, dealing with the press, suicide				
18/ Teacher evaluations by the principal				
19/ Responsibility to report suspect cases of abuse				
20/ Parental rights and custody issues				

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TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL CONTRACTS

I. TEACHER'S CONTRACT/AGREEMENT

Rationale: This document states what you expect of a teacher and what they can expect from you. Verbal agreements can lead to enormous problems. God revealed his covenants clearly in writing; so should we.

This document should contain:

1. The teacher's agreement with the school mission statement, statement of faith, vision statement and philosophy of education.
2. Terms of employment.
3. Salary and benefits.
4. Responsibilities/grades and/or classes to be taught.
5. Lifestyles Addendum (**critically important**)!
6. Sick and compassionate leave policy.
7. Dispute resolution procedures (1 Cor. 6:1-7).
8. Police check requirement.
9. Evaluative requirement.
10. Contract renewal.
11. Reasons for contract early termination

NOTE: The **Faculty Handbook** will expand the items addressed in the contract. The Teacher's Contract should make reference to it.

II. PRINCIPAL/ADMINISTRATOR'S JOB DESCRIPTION AND CONTRACT

Rationale: This document states what you expect of a principal/administrator and what he/she can expect from you. Verbal agreements can lead to enormous problems. God revealed his covenants clearly in writing; so should we.

A. **Written Job Description**

This and the Contract are the only valid basis for evaluation, retention, or dismissal of the principal/administrator. If a board removes a principal for reasons other than failure to meet the standards of the written job description, that board will have little success against a lawsuit for wrongful dismissal. These topics should be addressed: specific planning and supervisory responsibilities, liaison responsibilities, employee interviewing and evaluation, specific teaching assignments, disciplinary and other responsibilities, implementation of school policies, budgetary preparation and spending oversight, and relationship with the board.

B Contract

This document should contain:

1. The principal's agreement with the school mission statement, statement of faith, vision statement and philosophy of education.
2. Terms of employment.
3. Salary and benefits.
4. Responsibilities/grades and/or classes to be taught.
5. Lifestyles Addendum (**critically important**)!
6. Sick and compassionate leave policy.
7. Dispute resolution procedures (1 Cor. 6:1-7).
8. Police check requirement.
9. Evaluative requirement.
10. Contract renewal.
11. Reasons for contract early termination.

III. SPIRITUAL STANDARDS

Rationale: "A student is not above his teacher but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher."
Luke 6:40; Matt. 10:24

1. All employees who deal directly with students and all administrators and board members are born again Christians who believe in the authority and inerrancy of scripture.
2. The school has regular staff devotions with required attendance for every teacher.
3. Every student in the school has regular classes in Bible/Christian education.
4. All students are given the opportunity to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and are challenged to use their talents and gifts in His service.

IV. ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Rationale: Teaching in a manner that honours the Lord means teaching for the most effective academic growth of our students. That requires teacher training, evaluation, and accountability.

The following items must be in place or in process:

1. A standardized national or international academic evaluation is given to students from Grade 2 on annually.
2. Formal teacher and principal/administrator evaluation occurs annually.
3. Annual in-service teacher training (e.g., conferences, courses, in-service study, etc.) for **all** teaching and administrative staff.

V. INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

Rationale: The governing bodies of successful organizations must plan for the present while anticipating a dynamic future ministry.

The following items must be in place or in process:

1. A strategic plan
2. Annual board training
3. Written standards for financial accountability

The ACSI Commendation Certificate Self Assessment Checklist

Contracts for Teachers and Principals stating:	In Place (Indicate page number if applicable)	Not Yet	Target Date for Completion	Please Provide Support Information
General				
1/ written agreement with the school mission statement, vision statement, statement of faith and philosophy of education				
2/ term of employment				
3/ salary benefits and payment frequency				
4/ responsibilities				
5/ lifestyle addendum				
6/ sick and compassionate leave policy				
7/ Christian dispute resolution procedure - not taking a fellow Christian to a secular court but following Matthew 18 and using a specified Christian conciliation group ("last court of appeal")				
8/ police check affirmation				
9/ evaluation requirement				
10/ contract renewal				
11/ reasons for contract early termination				
12/ written description for principal				
Spiritual Standards				
1/ All teachers, principals, administrators and board members are born again Christians				
2/ Regular staff devotions with compulsory attendance				
3/ Every student has regular classes in Bible/Christian education				
4/ All students are given the opportunity to receive Christ and use their talents in his service				

Contracts for Teachers and Principals stating:	In Place (Indicate page number if applicable)	Not Yet	Target Date for Completion	Please Provide Support Information
Academic Standards				
1/ Annual standardized testing for students from Grade 2 on				
2/ Formal teacher and principal/administrator evaluation done annually				
3/ Annual in service training for each teacher				
Institutional (Board) Commitment				
1/ A strategic plan in place				
2/ Annual training for all board members				
3/ Written standards for financial accountability				