

Code J: School-Community Relations

POLICY TITLE AND CODE

COMMERCIALLY BOTTLED WATER

JHA

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools strive to promote stewardship by taking care of God's abundant gifts. As stewards, the Board is entrusted with the gifts of people, financial resources, facilities and the environment. This policy is consistent with the Catholic social teachings and the themes of education for sustainable development: economic, social and environment. The policy seeks to model the use of water demonstrating solidarity with developing countries and promotes social justice with particular attention to the commodification of water.

RATIONALE

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools recognize that access to potable water is a universal human right. This right is being increasingly threatened by a number of practices. The increasing commercialization of water has manifested itself in a number of ways; from the privatization of municipal water supplies to the marketing of water in single-use, soft plastic bottles. Environmentally, the disposal of empty, plastic water bottles has created new burdens not only ecologically, but financially.

The world is already experiencing the effects of a worsening global water crisis. Growing numbers of the world's people are living in areas where fresh water is a scarce resource. Canada holds 20% of the world's supply of fresh water and so has a special role to play as steward of this critical resource. Our students must be able to contribute in informed and meaningful ways to this public policy conversation. Such consciousness raising is appropriately reinforced by modeling good stewardship practices.

As such, it will be the policy of the Board to reduce, and, where possible, eliminate the use of water in commercially produced single-use, plastic bottles and to promote viable alternatives for all Board sites and school communities.

PROCEDURES

1. The Board Office and all satellite offices will promote at all meetings, workshops and special events, the consumption of water from local sources (municipal or wells) and eliminate the provision of water from commercially bottled, single-use plastic containers insofar as such municipal or well water sources are available.
2. The above will include the promotion of reusable containers for all staff.

3. School sites shall follow the policy procedures. Changes to any contractual agreements with commercial vendors will be phased in as appropriate.
4. Fundraising activities in school communities shall strive to be consistent with these practices.
5. Where schools and other Board sites have substituted other beverages which are made available to students and staff, such substitutions will comply with the Board's Nutrition Policy.
6. Where persons deem it necessary to bring to a school site or event location water (or any other beverage) in a single-use container persons must recycle or remove their containers from the site in order that they may be disposed of appropriately.
7. Any Board site may use water from commercial sources where access to safe, potable water has been compromised until such time as access to such sources can be restored and subject to the directives of local Medical Officers of Health and/or relevant government officials.
8. The division will establish and approve a plan to install water bottle fountains in all division buildings.
9. The Board will make available resources to support the school community in educating students about the commercially bottled water policy.

REFERENCES

You Love All That Exists ... All Things Are Yours, God, Lover of Life - A Pastoral Letter on the Christian Ecological Imperative, Social Affairs Commission, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003

Our Relationship with the Environment: The Need for Conversion, Social Affairs Commission, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2008

*A Common Good ... an Inalienable Right, Papal Message for World Water Day 2007
2002 -2005 Fall Action Campaigns of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace Water – Not For Profit and, Carrying into the Share Lent Campaigns, Thirsting for Justice (<http://www.devp.org/>)*

Kairos (<http://www.kairoscanada.org/e/index.asp>)

Declaration of the United Nations - International Decade for Action Water for Life 2005–2015 (<http://www.worldwaterday.org/>)

DOCUMENTS

Document 1: Commercially Bottle Water Information Sheet for Schools

DATE APPROVED

June 22, 2015

Commercially Bottle Water Information Sheet for Schools

Why is sustainable development an important to our Catholic Identity?

“My dear friends, God’s creation is one and it is good. The concerns for non-violence, sustainable development, justices and peace, and care for our environment are of vital importance for humanity.” - Pope Benedict XVI

What is Sustainable Development?

Sustainable Development is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable Development is identified as having three aspects: *Economic, Social, and Environmental*. The commercialization of water negatively effects all three aspects through the privatization of municipal water supplies, the marketing of water in single-use containers, and the disposal of empty, plastic water bottles which create new burdens ecologically and financially for society.

Facts regarding commercially bottled water:

Cost

- Bottled water can cost anywhere from 240 to 10,000 times more than tap water, which is brought right to your home for a fraction of 1¢ (\$ 0.01) per litre.
- More than 90% of the cost of bottled water is due to things other than the water itself, such as packaging, shipping and marketing.
- If you drink the recommended eight glasses of bottled water per day, you will spend roughly \$1,400 per year on bottled water.

Health

- Bottled water isn't always as safe as tap water – only 6% of bottled water factories were tested between April 2008 and March 2009.
- 27 out of 49 bottled water products have been recalled by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency since 2000.
- Concentrations of contaminants such as arsenic, bromide, bacteria and lead have been found in bottled water samples (source: Polaris Institute)

Waste

- Toronto consumes an estimated 100 million plastic bottles a year, of which 35% are not recycled. Many plastic bottles still end up in landfills, or worse, as litter in forests, lakes and oceans.
- Plastic bottles take 700 years to begin composting.
- It is estimated that one tenth of all plastic that is created every year eventually ends up in one of our oceans, including millions of plastic water bottles. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a huge swath of plastic and other discarded materials in the Pacific Ocean, and has been estimated to be as large, or larger than, the land mass of Canada.

Energy

- 24 million gallons of oil are needed to produce a billion plastic bottles. If you were to fill one quarter of a plastic water bottle with oil, you would be looking at roughly the amount used to produce that bottle.
- The Earth Policy Institute estimates that the energy used to pump, process, transport and refrigerate bottled water is over 50 million barrels of oil annually.
- Fiji water travels over 12,372 km to reach Toronto. Municipal water typically travels about 10 or 20 km.

Human Rights

- The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that: “the human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.”

Source: Bottled Water Facts- www.yorku.ca/sustainability