



REPORT TO

## CORPORATE SERVICES, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

### PROTOCOL FOR MAINTENANCE OF BOARD-OWNED VACANT PROPERTIES

*"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."  
Philippians 4:13 (NRSVCE)*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
September 4, 2018	September 13, 2018	

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### INFORMATION REPORT

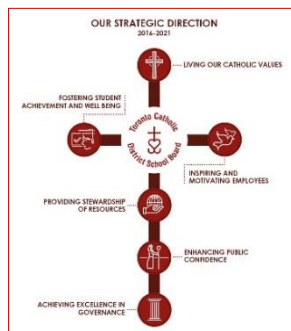
**Vision:**

*At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through  
witness, faith, innovation and action.*

**Mission:**

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive  
learning community uniting home, parish and school and  
rooted in the love of Christ.*

*We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to  
lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*



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## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Board currently owns four (4) vacant sites and ten (10) properties with vacant buildings. *This report summarizes the protocol for monitoring and maintaining vacant Board properties in order to protect the Board's assets and the safety and appearance of the surrounding neighbourhoods.* Board Operations and Maintenance staff, the Board's contracted security provider and various trades contractors fulfil the security and service needs of these sites through timer test signals and automatic arming of the intrusion alarm systems, logged custodial visits daily, grass cutting, weed removal, snow clearing and placement and completion of maintenance work orders, as required.

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 8 hours.*

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. Arising from a delegation to Board on June 14, 2018, regarding maintenance at one of the Board-owned properties, staff were directed to provide a report regarding Board protocol for the maintenance and monitoring of vacant sites and properties.
2. Ongoing incidents of vandalism, break-ins, prowlers, graffiti, accumulation of debris and growth of weeds at vacant properties, as well as damage due to severe weather events, indicate a need to revisit procedures for monitoring and caring for these sites to ensure protection of the Board's assets and the safety and appearance of the surrounding neighbourhoods.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

1. On March 3, 2006, Director's Council approved the following regarding closed vacant sites:
  - *The Board has set procedures in place for all closed sites to generate timer test signals every twenty-four hours and to automatically arm closed sites at **midnight** when closed signals have not been received at the Central Monitoring Station.*
  - *From this point forward, CEC Security has been directed to alert the Board of potential problems with these locations.*
  - *Board staff are required to ensure that custodial staff are deployed to vacant sites.*

- *Custodial staff are required to log in their activities daily with respect to inspections of the buildings, testing of the fire alarm systems, ensure that the site is secured, and the grounds maintained.*
- 2. The Board currently owns four (4) vacant sites and ten (10) properties with vacant buildings.
- 3. Closed schools that the Board plans to retain for future accommodation needs or as temporary holding schools during construction projects or emergencies, must be maintained in good working order to be ready for occupancy with minimal notice.
- 4. Sites planned for demolition represent a bigger challenge as there is no return on maintenance investments. At the same time, steps need to be taken to avoid the appearance of the properties as being abandoned, thereby attracting undesirable activities. These buildings and the surrounding property also need to be maintained to a standard that does not detract from the appearance of the neighbourhood.
- 5. School Renewal funding can be used only on sites that are currently being used for educational purposes. As such, required repairs only are completed on vacant sites and properties through Operations and Maintenance funding.

## **D. ACTION PLAN**

1. As per the protocol approved March 3, 2006 by Director's Council, recommended by the Board's security provider, Board staff from Operations and Maintenance, as well as the Board's contracted security provider and various trades contractors, fulfil the security and service needs of vacant sites owned by the TCDSB. These procedures are also required to satisfy the terms of the Board's insurance.
2. A procedure is in place for all closed sites to generate timer test signals from the intrusion alarm system every twenty-four hours and to automatically arm closed sites at midnight when "closed" signals have not been received at the Central Monitoring station.

3. If security concerns arise at a closed site, the Board's security provider is instructed to place the site on special attention with increased visits by the mobile security unit.
4. The Area Service Quality Supervisor (SQS) is responsible to ensure that custodians assigned to nearby schools visit vacant sites every day. Custodial staff are required to log their activities daily with respect to inspections of the buildings, testing of the fire alarm systems, removal of garbage and ensuring that the site is secured and the grounds maintained, and to place SAP work order notifications for any maintenance work that is required.
5. Tenants are sought for vacant sites where possible, however some closed sites must remain vacant, as they are required as temporary holding schools during construction projects or emergencies.
6. Buildings slated to be demolished can be permitted for film shoots and other short-term uses, which assists in providing activity on the site and avoiding a sense of abandonment.
7. Grass-cutting and bush trimming at closed/vacant sites are included in the Board's landscaping contracts. Vacant properties receive 13 cuts per season, one bush trimming and two leaf pick ups. Vacant lands receive 3 or 4 cuts per season, garbage pick up and bush trimming as needed. Snow is cleared from pathways leading to the front entrance of buildings. No snow clearing is carried out on vacant lands.
8. Procedures for "mothballing" schools when they are closed are as follows:
  - SQS does a thorough walk through of the building and engages custodians to do a thorough final cleaning
  - SQS does an inventory of the contents of the building
  - Permits and Security are advised that the location is closed
  - Security access cards and master keys are retrieved from staff
  - Heating system temperature is lowered to 15°C
  - Water and lights are shut off

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. The custodial activity log is kept inside the building to ensure that the custodian enters the building and the log is verified by the SQS who also is responsible to follow up with appropriate custodial or Maintenance staff for actions required.
2. Neighbouring residents may alert the Board to issues at a vacant site of which staff are unaware. These alerts are relayed to the SQS for follow up, which, in addition to clean-up or maintenance work, may require increasing the frequency of custodial visits and/or increased attention by the Board's contracted security provider.

## **F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the information of the Board.