

LEARNING MATERIALS SELECTION/CHALLENGED RESOURCES

Background

The Division is committed to providing students access to an effective, integrated array of instructional, curricular and learning resources that are intended to interest, challenge and expand student knowledge in a Christ-centered environment.

Employees, students, parents, guardians or stakeholders may challenge the appropriateness of instructional, curriculum, or learning resources being used in Division schools.

School divisions are also required to comply with *Ministerial Order #034/2025: Standards for the Selection, Availability, and Access of School Literary Materials*. These standards are intended to ensure that school library materials are developmentally appropriate, free from explicit visual depictions of sexual acts, appropriately supervised, and publicly transparent, while respecting Catholic faith and values.

Definitions:

Instructional resources are those resources selected by teachers for student use within the context of a course.

Curriculum resources are those resources used by teachers in preparation for teaching.

Learning resources are those resources accessed by students through the school, but are not explicitly required for a course. These resources can be complementary to course instruction or for student interest. These include library resources and other classroom materials that are accessible to students.

School literary materials are any materials, including books or electronic materials, that are accessible or available to children or students in a school, including classroom collections and school libraries, but does not include learning and teaching resources authorized or approved by the Minister, or those selected by a teacher to support curricular outcomes.

Sexual act means an activity or action of a distinctly sexual nature (as defined in *Ministerial Order #034/2025*), but does not include an activity or action that is not distinctly sexual in nature, such as physical contact related to medical conditions, examinations or treatment, actions or activities related to biological functions or processes like puberty, menstruation, pregnancy or breastfeeding, or actions or activities that may be related to sexual acts, such as kissing or handholding.

Visual depiction means a visual or graphic representation, such as a drawing or painting, an illustration, a photographic or digital image or a video file.

Procedures

1. Principal Responsibilities

- 1.1. The principal, as instructional leader of the school, is responsible for the approval of instructional, curricular and learning resources, as per section 197 of the *Education Act*.
- 1.2. Principals in Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools vet instructional resources through the Guiding Principles in Appendix A.
- 1.3. All instructional and curricular resources must support instruction of the prescribed programs of study in the province of Alberta.

2. Library and Learning Resource Selection

- 2.1. Learning resources, such as school literary materials and other resources available to students to enhance learning, are selected while considering: the age of the students, the teachings of the Catholic Church, and the context in which the resources are presented, and the requirements of Ministerial Order #034/2025.
- 2.2. Selection criteria are outlined in Appendix B.
- 2.3. No school library literary materials containing explicit visual depictions of sexual acts shall be selected or retained in school libraries or classroom collections, unless they are non-narrative reference works. All such materials must be removed no later than January 1, 2026, with lists of any materials that have been, or will be removed, provided to the Minister no later than October 31, 2025.
- 2.4. The Division shall maintain publicly available listings of all school literary materials (excluding classroom collections). The parents/guardians of the children or students who have access to a classroom collection shall be informed of the school literary materials contained specifically in the classroom collection.

3. Ongoing Review

- 3.1. Division staff shall review school literary collections on a regular basis to ensure alignment with Catholic values and compliance with Ministerial Order #034/2025.

4. Communication and Transparency

- 4.1. School authority staff, students, and parents shall be informed of their rights and responsibilities regarding access to school literary materials.
- 4.2. The Division will provide to the Minister any reports or information regarding school library literary materials as required.

5. Challenged Resources

In the event where a questioner (division employee, student enrolled in the school, parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the school, member of the school council or member of the community with a direct connection to the school) challenges the use of a particular resource, the following process will be followed.

Step 1: Informal Reconsideration:

- 5.1. The questioner will submit their concern in writing to the principal. This can be done via email.
- 5.2. Upon receiving a written request to review an instructional or learning resource, the principal will assess the instructional or learning resource using the guiding principles and criteria, meet to discuss the situation with appropriate staff members, and make a decision regarding its use in the school.
- 5.3. The principal will respond to the questioner with their decision and explain the rationale, to continue or discontinue the use of the resource. The principal may choose to temporarily remove the resource as they are conducting their review.
- 5.4. Should a principal choose to remove an instructional, curriculum or learning resource, he or she will inform the Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services to determine if this resource should be reconsidered in other school sites.

Step 2: Formal Reconsideration:

- 5.5. If the questioner is not satisfied with the decision of the principal during the Informal Reconsideration, they may move forward with a Formal Reconsideration, which is submitted in writing using Form [F-270](#) to the Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services.
- 5.6. Upon receiving Form [F-270](#) the Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services will form a committee consisting of the Division Principal, Religious Education Consultant, and the Literacy Consultant for the division.
- 5.7. The committee will review the concern and the previous decision of the principal and issue a recommendation. Information used to issue this recommendation can be, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Written reviews of the resource;
 - Weighing of the value of the instructional merits of the resource versus the potential of controversy;

- Discussion of the resource within the context of the Church teachings and Gospel values;
- 5.8. The decision of the committee will be final.
 - 5.9. The committee will prepare a written report, which will be submitted, as information, to the Superintendent.
 - 5.10. The Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services will review the written response with the questioner who brought forth the Formal Reconsideration.

Reference: *Ministerial Order #034/2025: Standards for the Selection, Availability, and Access of School Literary Materials*

Guiding Principles

Reflection Questions

The following questions were designed to guide conversations and decisions about literature selection for classroom instruction.

1. Critical Literacy: Students are exposed to multiple texts at school, at home, in the media and through cultural transmission. Consider intertextuality and the way in which other texts shape this particular text's meaning.
 - a) What are some similar or complementary texts?
2. Context: The time period in which a text is read shapes reader response.
 - a) What is the historical, social or cultural context in which this text was written?
 - b) How can it be made relevant to a contemporary context?
3. Reader Considerations: Culturally responsive text selection relies on the reader's knowledge and experiences.
 - a) For whom could this text be a mirror, a reflection of identity and experience?
 - b) For whom could this text be a window into the identities of others?
4. Task Considerations: How will the text help students learn?
 - a) What are the specific learning outcomes? In what ways does this text contribute to the achievement of these outcomes?
 - b) What assessment tasks (formative and summative) would effectively measure students' attainment of the instructional objectives?
 - c) What support or differentiation strategies will be leveraged to ensure that all students successfully complete learning tasks?

Qualitative Measures of Text Complexity Rubric

The purpose of the rubric is twofold:

1. For students to achieve excellence in writing, interpretive, and critical language skills.
2. For students to achieve a certain excellence of soul, by learning to integrate the knowledge gained from great literature for instructional purposes and into their own lives.

	3 Complex	2 Moderately Complex	1 Slightly Complex
Meaning	<p>Significant density and complexity, with multiple meanings; meanings may be more ambiguous.</p> <p>Figurative language plays a significant role in identifying the meaning of the text; more sophisticated figurative language is used, and the reader is left to interpret these meanings.</p> <p>Themes are presented, transcending culture and politics. They facilitate a profound understanding of the human condition and lend themselves to in-depth discussions about authentic truth and reality from a Catholic worldview.</p>	<p>Single, but more complex or abstract, level of meaning; some meanings are stated, whereas others are left to the reader to identify.</p> <p>Figurative language is used to make connections within the text to more explicit information; readers are supported in understanding these language devices through examples and explanations.</p> <p>Themes are primarily cultural and political and limit the connection to transcendent concerns. They enable exploration of authentic truth and reality from a Catholic worldview. The themes mirror the human experience.</p>	<p>Single and literal levels of meaning; meaning is explicitly stated.</p> <p>Limited use of symbolism, metaphors and poetic language that allude to other unstated concepts; language is explicit and relies on literal interpretations.</p> <p>Themes are culturally popular and do not offer sufficient opportunity to teach a Catholic perspective on transcendent issues, and/or the worldview presented in the text does not align with the Catholic faith.</p>
Text Structure	The narrative's organization is highly complex, encompassing multiple perspectives, temporal shifts, characters, storylines, and granular details.	The organization adheres to most conventions by including subplots, temporal shifts, and more multifaceted characters.	Organization is conventional, sequential, or chronological, with clear signals and transitions to lead the reader through a story, process, or set of concepts.
Language Features	Vocabulary demand is extensive, domain-specific, and representative of complex ideas; the text offers little in the way of context clues to support the reader.	Vocabulary draws on domain-specific, general academic, and multi-meaning words, with the text supporting the reader's correct interpretations of their meanings; the vocabulary used represents familiar concepts and ideas.	Vocabulary is controlled and uses the most commonly held meanings; multiple-meaning words are used in a limited fashion.
Knowledge Demands	The text demands the reader's attention far beyond his or her experiences and provides little in the way of explanation of these divergent experiences.	There is a distance between the reader's experiences and those in the text, but these divergent experiences are acknowledged and sufficiently explained to bridge these gaps.	The text contains content that closely matches the reader's life experiences.

Library Selection Guidelines for Catholic School Libraries

Purpose:

The following guidelines aim to ensure library literature selection aligns with the Catholic Worldview and reinforces the school's values, contributing to students' intellectual, moral, and spiritual formation.

What is a Catholic Worldview?

A Catholic worldview understands life through the Catholic faith, centered on God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It's guided by Church teachings (Scripture, Tradition, sacraments, etc.), emphasizing human dignity, truth, love, and a God-created world with moral order. It promotes virtues like faith, hope, and charity, calling believers to holiness and the common good.

1. Catholic Faith & Values

Ensure the materials align with Catholic teachings and values.

- **Catholic perspective:** Does the material reflect Catholic beliefs, traditions, and moral teachings?
- **Doctrine alignment:** Does the material avoid promoting ideas contrary to Catholic doctrine?
- **Faith development:** Does the material support students' spiritual and moral development?

2. Educational Value

Materials should enhance the academic and intellectual development of students.

- **Curriculum relevance:** Does the material align with the grade-level curriculum and educational standards?
- **Age-appropriate:** Is the content suitable for the age group's intellectual, emotional, and social development?
- **Student interest:** Does the material encourage inquiry, creativity and a love of reading?

3. Diversity & Inclusivity

Materials should reflect the diversity of cultures, experiences, and perspectives while respecting Catholic values.

- **Cultural awareness:** Does the material promote an understanding and respect for different cultures and traditions within a Catholic context?
- **Representation:** Are different groups (race, gender, socioeconomic background, etc.) represented respectfully and accurately?
- **Inclusivity:** Does the material foster a spirit of inclusivity, kindness, and empathy?

4. Moral and Ethical Standards

Ensure that materials promote virtuous behaviour and avoid negative influences.

- **Moral lessons:** Does the material reinforce Catholic virtues such as honesty, charity, respect, and responsibility?
- **Respectful content:** Does the material avoid inappropriate language, violence, or harmful behaviour?
- **Ethical dilemmas:** Does the material present ethical dilemmas that can be addressed from a Catholic perspective?

5. Review & Evaluation

Appropriate parties should review materials before selection.

- **Peer recommendations:** Have other schools, teachers, or librarians recommended the material?
- **Administrative approval:** Has the administration approved the resource based on its contextual relevance to political, social, and community factors?