



Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools

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Dear Parents and Guardians

In the spring of 2008, Alberta Health Services announced that it would offer the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) immunization to girls in Grade 5 beginning this fall and to girls in Grade 9 beginning in 2009 and for the next three years, thereafter. The vaccine, Gardasil, is the first vaccine developed to provide protection from the HPV infection which is the cause of about 70% of all cervical cancers. The Board of Trustees for the Greater St. Albert Catholic School Division has agreed to host the vaccination in its schools.

Immunization with the HPV vaccine is completely voluntary. As with all Alberta immunization programs, only those students whose parents/guardians choose to have their daughter(s) vaccinated and who have provided written permission for the vaccine to be administered will be immunized.

Parents/Guardians are the primary decision-makers about the health matters of their children. To assist parents/guardians to make the decision about the HPV immunization, the Bishops of Alberta have provided a written, moral directive for the Catholic faith community. In essence, the Bishops have stated that the HPV immunization should occur only with the informed consent of parents, that sexuality is a great and powerful gift, and that sexual activity is appropriate only within the sacrament of marriage and that outside of marriage, abstinence is not only clearly the choice that leads to spiritual, emotional, moral, and physical wellbeing, but is obviously the best protection against risks of disease. These beliefs do and will continue to permeate the teachings of our Catholic schools.

To access the complete message from the Alberta Catholic Bishops and the HPV immunization information from Alberta Health Services, please visit our Website, www.gsacrd.ab.ca, and click on the hotlink to HPV. If you do not have access to our Website, hard copies are available upon request to your school or by telephoning Pat Gerhardt, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Division Office, 780-459-7711.

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools encourages parents/guardians to make an informed decision about the HPV immunization.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Zimmer".

Jerry Zimmer
Superintendent of Schools