

CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE / HUMAN SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Background

The Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division believes that the purpose of Christian Family Life and Human Sexuality education is to help students acquire factual knowledge, skills and attitudes that contribute to the hope and well-being of the individual, the family and society. The teachings of the Catholic Church are the basis for the Christian Family Life and Human Sexuality curriculum. Parents, with the support of the school division, have the primary responsibility to instill moral values in their children and youth. The school division will support and supplement parents' efforts in these areas. The division recognizes the importance of making students aware of moral implications in terms of Christian sexual and social responsibility.

The Bishops of Alberta prescribe resources to support the implementation of the Alberta Health and Life Skills Program of Studies, specifically with outcomes addressing human sexuality. This includes a series of grade-specific lessons that all teachers in Catholic Schools are required to use in delivering the Human Sexuality component of the Health and Life Skills Program. These lessons are on the GSACRD division website for parents and teachers at <http://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/parents/parent-resource-library>.

These lessons serve as the prescribed basis through which human sexuality will be taught. Therefore, any other supplementary materials, resources, or presenters, other than the classroom teacher will require the prior approval of the Division Religious Education Consultant and, where such materials or presenters deal primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality, the prior approval of the Minister of Education as required under section 18.1 of the *Education Act*, unless instruction is conducted within the context of religious education.

Guidelines

1. Foundational principles of the Human Sexuality curriculum include the following:
 - 1.1 the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person from conception until natural death;
 - 1.2 chastity, the virtue that calls all human beings to express their sexuality with purity of body and mind;
 - 1.3 respect for all human persons regardless of their gender, race, belief system, sexual orientation, or family circumstance;
 - 1.4 social relationships characterized by generosity, mutual respect and service to others, especially the poor, marginalized and oppressed.
2. All teachers new to teaching the Human Sexuality component of the Health and Life Skills program must receive training in order to effectively teach the curriculum. Annual professional learning is recommended.

3. Prior to using any supplementary resources, materials, or presenters, administrators and teachers will seek approval from the Religious Education Consultant and, where applicable, the Minister of Education. This approval must be obtained at least four weeks in advance of teaching the lessons. Principals are expected to monitor external groups offering resources or interacting with students so that all information presented to students honors and reinforces the teachings of the Catholic Church. Where such external parties deal primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality, both the external party and the materials used must be approved by the Minister of Education.
4. All students in grades four to nine receive Human Sexuality instruction as per Alberta's Health and Life Skills outcomes. Grades 1-3 students receive family life education that has some content related to human relationships and sexuality in the Fully Alive resource, approved by Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA), the Catholic Bishops of Alberta, and the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association (ACSTA).

At least 30 days prior to human sexuality instruction, parents must be provided with letters describing the learning outcomes/content for the Human Sexuality and/or Family Life Education components at their child's grade level. These letters shall include sufficient detail to enable parents to make an informed decision. Parents will be provided with an [opt-in form \(F-231\)](#), and no student may participate in this instruction unless the parent has given written consent. This requirement applies to courses, programs of study, instructional materials, instruction, or exercises that deal primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality.

Parents who do not provide consent will have their child provided with alternate learning experiences at no academic penalty. Sample letters and opt-in forms may be used for each grade level and are posted on the Division Religious Education Website.

5. Parents must be in a position to make informed decisions regarding their choice to have their children participate within Human Sexuality Education. For this reason, any Division-approved supplementary materials, resources, or presenters who will be used to complement the lessons provided to students must be specifically named in the parent approval letter. When such supplementary instructional support is named, the following statement must be provided within the letter: *All supplementary instructional support for the lessons that will be provided has received the prior approval of Division Office and the Archdiocese of Edmonton / Diocese of St. Paul (whichever designation would apply to the location of the school).* All letters that contain mention of supplementary instructional supports must be kept on file with the Division Religious Education Consultant. Where Ministerial approval is required, this will be noted in the letter to parents.
6. Instruction in the Human Sexuality component of the program in grades four to nine will take place in the spring, preferably after Easter, but before mid-June, since relationships have been well established between students and teachers by that time. This supports a more comfortable discussion of sensitive issues.

References:*Education Act*

Board Policy 1: Division Mission Statement, Values and Beliefs, Goals and Objectives

Administrative Procedure 218: Sexually Transmitted Infections HIV/AIDS Education

Administrative Procedure 250: Counselling

Administrative Procedure 359: Safe and Caring Learning Environments for Students

Section 4 Ministerial Orders and Directives

Directive 4.1.2 Human Sexuality Education

The Canadian Catholic Bishops, *Pastoral Letter to Young People on Chastity*

The Canadian Catholic Bishops, *Pastoral Ministry to Young People with Same-Sex Attraction*

The Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, *A Resource for an Inclusive Community*

John Paul II, *Theology of the Body*

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