

## FAMILY LIFE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY EDUCATION

### Background

The Division and public health officials have a responsibility to protect the health and safety of our youth by providing medically accurate and timely information to students in the area of human sexuality education. Moreover, Alberta Education requires that human sexuality education within the approved Alberta curriculum be provided for all students.

It is equally important that a complete educational program that addresses the moral and ethical aspects of family life and human sexuality be provided for our students. Such a program must be consistent with our Catholic philosophy and be in keeping with the basic moral principles of respect and dignity for all human life, endeavoring to respond in a manner consistent with the teaching of our faith and with Gospel values.

### Definitions

**Responding to a Discussion:** Is when the teacher responds to a question, comment, or the response of a student in the classroom where there may need to be additional information to clarify the perspective. When possible, the teacher must discern when comments and questions are responded to individually, in small groups or in the classroom and whether outside support is needed to address the topic adequately.

**Activating a Discussion:** Is when the teacher proactively engages students in a discussion about a particular topic outside the curriculum area or a topic that may be politically or polarizing within a local, provincial, national or global community. An “activated” discussion by a teacher about human sexuality and gender identity without providing advance notice to parents is a violation of section 58.1 (1) of the Education Act.

### Procedures

1. Formal classroom instruction on family life and human sexuality education will be presented at the appropriate grade levels and integrated into the provincial curriculum as follows:

Kindergarten to Grade 9	Health and Life Skills Religious Education Programs
Grade 10, 11 and 12	Career and Life Management Religious Studies- Roman Catholic 15, 25 and 35
2. This information is to be presented in a Catholic, ethical context.
3. Given that much information about methods to avoid sexually transmitted diseases is publicly available to students, the approved program of the Division will attempt to provide the correct technical information at appropriate grade levels, using the Catholic ethical context. It must be made clear to students that the only way to avoid sexually transmitted diseases is to do what one is morally obligated to do: confine sexual activity to monogamous marriage.

4. The Principal and/or teacher shall provide notice to a parent/guardian of a student where courses, programs of study or instructional materials, or instruction, include subject-matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion or human sexuality.
  - 4.1 Notice to a parent/guardian is not required when teachers are responding to a discussion. See definitions.
  - 4.2 For clarity, when teachers activate a discussion, notice to parents/guardians is required.
5. The Principal and/or teacher will explain the rationale of this information (topic, unit of instruction, etc.) to parents/guardians and to any other interested stakeholders prior to instruction. This explanation:
  - 5.1 Must be in the form of a written letter from the school informing the parents/guardians of the scope and nature of the upcoming instruction in the area of human sexuality;
  - 5.2 May include parents/guardians information nights to allow parents/guardians to meet the teachers and review the learning resources and teaching concepts; and
  - 5.3 Must inform parents/guardians of their right to exempt their child from the human sexuality component of any course. Parents/guardians may request such exemption through a written request to the school administrator. In such cases, schools must provide alternative learning experiences for those who are exempted by their parents. Parents will be encouraged to become familiar with the information being presented to their children at various grade levels.
6. When a teacher or instructor teaching the content regarding human sexuality receives a written request that the student be excluded from the instruction, and is signed by a parent/guardian of a student, the teacher or instructor shall in accordance with the request of the parent permit the student, without academic penalty:
  - (a) to leave the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place or the for the duration of the part of the instruction
  - (b) to remain in the classroom or place without taking part in the instruction
  - (c) This does not apply to incidental or indirect references to religion, religious themes or human sexuality in a course, program of study, instruction or exercises or in the use of instructional materials.
7. Staff in-service sessions will be accessed to assist staff in the delivery of human sexuality education.
8. Use of community resource personnel is permitted with approval from the school administrator, provided that the presentation is done in a manner respectful of the Catholic moral and ethical position. However, human sexuality outcomes should be primarily taught by a teacher.
9. Resources other than those in the approved curricula must be reviewed and approved by the school administration and the Superintendent/designate prior to being utilized for instruction.

Reference: Section 18,32,33,52,53,58.1,196,197,222 Education Act  
Ministerial Directive 4.1.2 – Human Sexuality Education  
Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12