

602.7 Parent / Guardian Notification and Consent: Human Sexuality, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation Instruction

Purpose

Lethbridge School Division recognizes the vital role parents and guardians play in supporting student success and is committed to keeping them well-informed about their child's education.

In alignment with Section 16(1) of the *Education Act*, all courses, programs of study, and instructional materials must reflect the diverse nature and heritage of Alberta society, promote understanding and respect for others, and honour and respect the common values and beliefs of Albertans. Additionally, Section 58.1 of the *Education Act* requires that parents / guardians be notified and provide consent before a student participates in instructional activities that deal primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality.

Reflecting both our commitment to transparency and the expectations outlined in the *Education Act*, this procedure provides guidance for how schools and families will work together when classroom instruction primarily and explicitly addresses gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality. It is not intended to address every scenario involving these topics. Staff will use their professional judgement when addressing situations outside the scope of this document.

Procedures

Section 1. – Parent / Guardian Notification

- 1.1 Schools must notify parents / guardians at least 30 calendar days in advance when classroom instruction includes subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality. In these instances, parents / guardians must be given the opportunity to provide opt-in consent for their child to participate.
 - 1.1.1 Subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality refers to situations where these themes are a core component of instruction and are clearly and directly addressed as part of the instruction.
 - 1.1.2 Notification and opt-in are required for components of the following Alberta Education courses where outcomes relate to gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality:
 - Physical Education and Wellness (Grades 3,4,5 and 6)
 - Health and Life Skills (Grades 7,8 and 9)
 - Career and Life Management (High School)

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- Career and Technology Studies (High School)- Reproduction and Readiness for Parenting
- Career and Technology Studies (High School)- Developing Maturity and Independence

1.2 Notification and opt-in are not required for incidental or indirect references to gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality.

1.2.1 Incidental or indirect references to gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality refers to situations where these themes are not a core component of the instruction and are not explored in depth.

1.3 Notification and opt-in are not required if a student is participating in voluntary student organization or activities such as gay straight alliances (GSAs) as defined in clause 35.1(1) of the Education Act or other optional activities such as extra-curricular activities.

1.4 Notification and opt-in are not required for a staff member sharing their pronouns.

1.5 Schools will determine the process and timing for notifying parents within the parameters noted below:

1.5.1 Schools may choose to provide notice at, or prior to, the start of the school year or semester, or provide notice for specific lessons, units or events.

1.5.2 Notice must be provided at least 30 calendar days in advance of the instruction.

1.5.3 Notice must be in writing, through a letter, electronic means, or a Division form.

1.5.4 Notice must include a description of the content that will be discussed. The description must provide sufficient information and detail for parents/guardians to make an informed decision. Sufficient information may include:

- A summary of the topics or information related to gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality that will be covered.
- The curriculum expectations and/or learning outcomes being addressed.
- A summary of the format and context of the instruction (e.g. classroom discussion, video, group activity).
- Any other information the teacher deems appropriate.

1.5.5 Teachers are not required to provide lesson plans, unit plans or year plans they have developed to parents / guardians as part of the notification process.

1.5.6 If a parent / guardian believes they need additional information to make an informed decision, they are responsible for contacting the teacher directly.

2. Section 2 Parent / Guardian Opt-In Process

- 2.1 When parents / guardians are notified about classroom content that deals primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality, they must have the opportunity to provide consent by opting their child in.
- 2.2 Parents / guardians may consent to opt their child fully, or partially, into instruction involving gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality.
- 2.3 If a parent / guardian does not provide opt-in consent, the student will not participate in instruction involving gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality. The student will be required to leave the classroom or instructional setting, and arrangements will be made for appropriate supervision.
 - 2.3.1 In cases of partial consent, the teacher and parent / guardian will collaborate to determine which portions of the instruction the student may attend.
- 2.4 There will be no academic penalty for students who do not participate in instruction due to lack of opt-in consent.
 - 2.4.1 Students who do not participate in instruction due to lack of opt-in consent may be provided with an alternative assignment. Such work shall be directly related to the applicable course curriculum, shall be equitable in terms of time and effort to the work from which the child is excused, and shall be given equal weighting in the determination of course marks/grades.
- 2.5 Students aged 18 or older, or independent students, do not require parental / guardian opt-in consent to participate in instruction involving gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality.
- 2.6 Schools are responsible for developing processes to collect and retain written opt-in consent from parents / guardians. Electronic methods may be used for the collection and retention of this information. At minimum the school must collect the following information:
 - 2.6.1 First and last name of the impacted student;
 - 2.6.2 First and last name of the parent / guardian providing opt-in consent;
 - 2.6.3 Date that notification was provided;
 - 2.6.4 Date that opt-in consent was provided;
 - 2.6.5 Details of the arrangement if partial opt-in consent was provided.

Section 3 – Questions or concerns about classroom instruction

- 3.1 If a parent / guardian has questions or concerns about classroom instruction related to gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality, they should first contact the classroom teacher. If questions or concerns are not resolved with the teacher, the school principal or designate may be involved.

If the issue remains unresolved, the parent / guardian may contact the Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services for additional assistance. This can only occur if reasonable attempts have been made to address questions or concerns at the school level.

References

Education Act	Section 1, 16, 18, 32, 33, 35.1, 52, 58.1, 196, 197
Division Policies & Procedures	Policy 502.1 Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments, Policy 502.2 Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Gender Expression, Procedure 502.2 Guidelines for Attending to Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation, Policy 602.7 Human Sexuality Instruction, Policy 607.3 Instructional Resources and Materials, Procedure 607.3 Instructional Resources and Materials.
Other:	Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12