



Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education

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Dear Parents & Guardians:

Alberta Education has recently released a document entitled "[Guidelines for Best Practices: Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions](#)". The guidelines have caused controversy across the province. While the guidelines are not legislation at this time, School Boards do have an obligation to develop Policy and Administrative Regulations and submit to the Minister by March 31, 2016.

We would like to inform our parents and guardians on how Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education will be addressing these guidelines. Currently, Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education are guided by division Policies and Administrative Procedures to ensure an inclusive, welcoming, safe and caring environment is provided for all students. We believe our current practices, whether formally written into policy or not, have served us well, and are firmly rooted in the sanctity of each human person as a distinct creation of God. Guided and grounded by our faith, every child is seen as a precious and unique child of God deserving of individualized love and attention to reach their full God-given potential.

Our core principles ensure that our practices align with our faith, that parents are respected as primary educator, and that we work pastorally with all of our students and their parents/guardians.

We are reviewing our current policies and administrative procedures to better serve all of our students, while maintaining our Catholicity and preserving our schools as inclusive, welcoming, safe and caring environments. Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education has an [Administrative Procedure 160](#) based on Safe and Caring Learning Environments with strong anti-bullying policies and the LIFE Framework (Lived Inclusion for Everyone) document, prepared by the Council of Catholic School Superintendents (CCSSA). This Framework has ensured that all students, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, etc. are treated with equal respect and dignity.

Our Catholic School Trustees affirm the responsibility and the role of the Alberta Catholic Bishops to provide moral and theological leadership to the Catholic community including Catholic education communities.

We are disappointed with Alberta Education's lack of consultation with the Catholic community in the development of these guidelines, but we will endeavor to create an acceptable solution that respects the wisdom of our Catholic teachings. All school divisions in Alberta are obliged to follow the requirements of the Alberta Human Rights Act and School Act, and we will successfully continue to meet these obligations.

As Trustees for Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education we are committed to ensuring that any actions undertaken will be in keeping with Catholic teachings and in consultation with the Bishops of Alberta, the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) and the Council of Catholic School Superintendents.

We encourage you to review the documents listed below and share your opinions with your local MLA, with the Education Minister David Eggen education.minister@gov.ab.ca and the Premier's Office premier@gov.ab.ca

Sincerely,

Dick Mastel, Chairman
Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education

[Minister's Guidelines](https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626737/91383-attachment-1-guidelines-final.pdf): <https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626737/91383-attachment-1-guidelines-final.pdf>.

[Bishop Henry Letter](http://www.calgarydiocese.ca/messages-from-the-bishop/1367-pastoral-letter.html): <http://www.calgarydiocese.ca/messages-from-the-bishop/1367-pastoral-letter.html>

[Archbishop Smith Letter](http://caedm.ca/PastoralScene/entryid/384.aspx): <http://caedm.ca/PastoralScene/entryid/384.aspx>

[Bishop Terrio Letter](http://www.dioceseofstpaul.ca/images/Pastoralletters/AlbertaEducationsGuidelines-1.pdf): <http://www.dioceseofstpaul.ca/images/Pastoralletters/AlbertaEducationsGuidelines-1.pdf>

cc: Minister of Education, Premier of Alberta, MLA Med Hat Bob Wanner, MLA Cypress-Med Hat Drew Barnes

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