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## **HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION**

## **POLICY HANDBOOK**

<b>Policy Code:</b>	HGAE
<b>Policy Title:</b>	Religion & Human Sexuality
<b>Cross Reference:</b>	HNB, HGAC, HGAD
<b>Legal Reference:</b>	<i>Education Act 58 &amp; 58.1,</i>
<b>Adoption Date:</b>	February 26, 1997
<b>Amendment or Re-affirmation Date:</b>	<b>June 23, 2025</b>

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### **POLICY**

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION SUPPORTS PARENTS' RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHETHER THEIR CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN RELIGIOUS AND PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTION AND/OR EXERCISES, AND SUBJECT MATTER THAT DEALS PRIMARILY OR EXPLICITLY WITH HUMAN SEXUALITY, GENDER IDENTITY, OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND SHALL AS REQUIRED BY THE EDUCATION ACT PROVIDE NOTICE TO A PARENT OF A STUDENT WHERE COURSES, PROGRAMS OF STUDY, INSTRUCTION, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, OR EXERCISES DEALS WITH SUCH MATTERS.

THE BOARD ACCEPTS A COOPERATIVE ROLE WITH THE HOME AND SHALL EXEMPT STUDENTS WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY WHEN PARENTS CHOOSE TO NOT OPT-IN OR OPT-OUT THEIR CHILDREN INTO SUCH ACTIVITIES.

### **DEFINITIONS**

External party – means a person or organization other than

- an employee of the board,
- a student
- a student organization under S.35.1 of the Education Act

Learning and teaching resources means any resource used in a school to engage in learning or teaching, but does not include resources created by student or accessed by a student independently, including through a school library.

### **GUIDELINES**

1. The matter of process regarding the commencement and cessation of Board directed recitation of the Lord's prayer as part of the opening day will be dealt with in policy HNA.
2. Parents shall have the opportunity to opt their children out of religious and patriotic instruction and/or exercises
3. Parents must opt their children into instruction that deals primarily or explicitly with human sexuality, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

## **POLICY HGAE – *Religion and Human Sexuality*, Cont’d.**

4. Teachers shall provide notice to the parent of a student at least 30 days before the start of the course, program of study, instruction, and/or exercise.
5. Where no consent has been provided under this policy the teacher shall arrange for alternate instruction or supervision for the student outside the classroom or place where the course, program of study or instruction takes place or the instructional material or exercise is used.
6. This policy does not apply to incidental or indirect references to religion, religious themes, gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality in a course, program of study, instruction or exercises or in the use of instructional materials.
7. Noting within this policy shall be construed so as to require the provision of notice to, or the seeking of consent of, the parent of a student for any participation by the student in a student organization established, or activity held under section 35.1 of the Education Act.
8. Teachers shall not use learning and teaching resources that deal primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality unless the learning and teaching resources are approved by the Minister.

8.1. Resources students access independently such as via a library do not apply to this policy.

## **REGULATIONS**

1. The Board permits persons other than teachers to provide religious instruction or exercises to its students with principal approval.
2. Schools may access a health professional to assist with the delivery of the curriculum outcomes under the supervision of a teacher.
3. The Board will adhere to Section 58, 58.1, and 58.2 of the Education Act which requires boards to provide parents with notice (see Appendix) indicating that a particular outcome or component of a course contains subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion or human sexuality, gender identity, or sexual orientation prior to commencement of instruction.
  - 3.1. The principal shall decide if parent information is best distributed through the provision of written information sent home or a parent meeting.
  - 3.2. Parent notification shall:
    - 3.2.1. be parent opt-out for religious and patriotic instruction and/or exercises (see Appendix);
    - 3.2.2. be parent opt-in for instruction that deals primarily or explicitly with human sexuality, gender identity, or sexual orientation (see Appendix);
    - 3.2.3. be at least 30 days prior to the instruction or classroom content;
    - 3.2.4. contain sufficient information to so that parents may make an informed decision; and

## **POLICY HGAE – *Religion and Human Sexuality*, Cont’d.**

- 3.2.5. provide the opportunity for parents to opt their children out or in for all or part of the instruction and /or exercises.
4. Courses requiring notification include:
  - 4.1. Career and Life Management;
  - 4.2. Reproduction and Readiness for Parenting, HCS3050;
  - 4.3. Developing Maturity & Independence, HSS1040;
  - 4.4. Health and Life Skills (grades 7 through 9);
  - 4.5. Physical Education and Wellness (grades 4 through 6);
  - 4.6. religious courses and
  - 4.7. some locally developed courses if they contain subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion or human sexuality.
5. Where a parent decides to not have their child participate, teachers shall exempt the student, without academic penalty, and allow the student as requested by the parent
  - 5.1. to leave the classroom or place where the instruction, course or program of study is taking place or the instructional materials are being used for the duration of the part of the instruction, course or program of study, or the use of the instructional materials, that includes the subject-matter; or
  - 5.2. to remain in the classroom or place without taking part in the instruction, course or program of study or using the instructional materials.
6. The Minister shall approve any learning and teaching resources and any external party using or providing learning and teaching resources dealing primarily and/or explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality.
  - 6.1. unless the resources are used or provided to provide religious instruction.
  - 6.2. where the use or provision under regulation 6.1 is by an external party, the board shall not permit that use or provision unless the external party is approved by the Minister.
7. Where the use or provision of learning and teaching resources is by an external party, teachers shall not permit that use or provision unless both the learning and teaching resources and external party are approved by the Minister.

**POLICY HGAE – *Religion and Human Sexuality*, Cont’d.**

**NOTICE FORM UNDER SECTION 58.1 OF THE EDUCATION ACT  
Religious Instruction, and/or Exercises**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child is currently enrolled in a course or educational program that [circle one]:

- a) includes subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with Religion; or
- b) uses an instructional material or exercise that includes subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with Religion.

The subject matter is contained in the following areas: [identify the theme/outcome of the course of study, educational program, or instructional material, or exercise, that contains the subject matter].

The purpose for the inclusion of this subject matter in the course of study, educational program or instructional material or exercise is: [identify the learning outcome associated with the identified subject matter].

Instruction involving the subject matter will be provided on \_\_\_\_\_ [specify date(s) and time].

Pursuant to section 58.1(2) of the Education Act, you as a parent/guardian may request that your child be excluded from the above-identified instruction, without academic penalty, by having your child either:

- a) leave the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place or where the instructional material is being used for the duration of that part of the instruction; or
- b) remain in the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place without taking part in the instruction or use of instructional material.

In order to exercise this option, you must sign and return the attached exemption form to \_\_\_\_\_ [specify student] on or before the date of the instruction indicated above. If this form is not returned before that date, your child will be included in the instruction above.

If you would like additional information about the content of this notification, please contact

\_\_\_\_\_ [specify individual]

\_\_\_\_\_ [identify Principal]

**POLICY HGAE – *Religion and Human Sexuality*, Cont’d.**

**STUDENT EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 58.1 OF THE EDUCATION ACT  
Religious Instruction, and/or Exercises**

TO: Principal/Teacher.

In response to the notice provided to me by the school indicating that a course of study or educational program in which my child is enrolled, or an instructional material or exercise used in a course of study or educational program in which my child is enrolled, includes subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with Religion, I, in accordance with section 58.1(2) of the Education Act, hereby request that my child, \_\_\_\_\_ [name of child], be excluded from the instruction, exercise or the use of instructional material identified in the notice.

I request that my child: (check relevant box)

- ☐ A) Leave the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place or where the instructional material is being used for the duration of that part of the instruction.

OR

- ☐ B) Remain in the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place without taking part in the instruction or use of instructional material.

I confirm that I have chosen to exercise my option to have my child excluded from the instruction described in the notice. I also confirm that it is my obligation to ensure that this form is returned to the school principal/teacher on or before the date of the instruction indicated in the notice.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**POLICY HGAE – *Religion and Human Sexuality*, Cont’d.**

**NOTICE FORM UNDER SECTION 58.1(2) OF THE EDUCATION ACT  
Human Sexuality, Gender Identity, and/or Sexual Orientation**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child is currently enrolled in a course or educational program that includes subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with human sexuality, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

The subject matter is contained in the following areas: [identify the theme/outcome of the course of study, educational program, or instructional material, or exercise, that contains the subject matter].

The purpose for the inclusion of this subject matter in the course of study, educational program or instructional material or exercise is: [identify the learning outcome associated with the identified subject matter].

Instruction involving the subject matter will be provided on \_\_\_\_\_ [specify date(s) and time].

Pursuant to section 58.12(2) of the Education Act, you as a parent/guardian must confirm whether you wish to have your child included in the above-identified instruction. Choosing to not opt your child in, would not result in academic penalty, and your child would not be in the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place or where the instructional material is being used for the duration of that part of the instruction.

In order to opt your child in, you must sign and return the attached exemption form to \_\_\_\_\_ [specify individual] on or before the date of the instruction indicated above. If this form is not returned before that date, your child will not be included in the instruction above.

If you would like additional information about the content of this notification, please contact

\_\_\_\_\_ [specify individual]

\_\_\_\_\_ [identify Principal]

**POLICY HGAE – *Religion and Human Sexuality*, Cont’d.**

**STUDENT EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 58.1(2) OF THE EDUCATION ACT  
Human Sexuality, Gender Identity, and/or Sexual Orientation**

TO: Principal/Teacher

In response to the notice provided to me by the school indicating that a course of study or educational program in which my child is enrolled, or an instructional material used in a course of study or educational program in which my child is enrolled, includes subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly human sexuality, gender identity, or sexual orientation, I, in accordance with section 58 and of the Education Act, hereby request that my child, \_\_\_\_\_ [name of child], be included in the instruction and/or the use of instructional material identified in the notice.

I request that my child: (check relevant box)

☐ A) partake in the instruction and/or exercise

☐ B) Not partake in the instruction and exercise and leave the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place or where the instructional material is being used for the duration of that part of the instruction.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date