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### **Rationale**

Although care has been taken to select appropriate resources for student use, there may be occasional objections to a selection or a portion of the content of a selected item.

Any school staff member, student, parent/guardian of a student in the school may challenge learning resources used in that school's educational program on the basis of appropriateness. A procedure is required for the purpose of considering the opinions of those persons in the schools and the community who are not directly involved in the selection process.

On July 1, 2016, Independent School Authorities were required by the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools for the Ministry of Education to develop policies and procedures on how learning resources are chosen for use in schools as well as how concerns or challenges will be addressed. Existing policies were reviewed and updated to meet Ministry requirements.

### **Policy**

Legal responsibility for the selection and use of materials rests ultimately with the Board of Directors and the Catholic Independent Schools, Diocese of Victoria.

The Board of Directors will provide a channel of communication for members of the school community to challenge a learning resource.

### **Regulation**

#### **A. Guiding Principles**

1. Members of the Catholic Independent Schools, Diocese of Victoria, community may challenge the use of a learning resource (print and non-print) used by a school. However, in the case of a challenge, the following principles will be respected as fundamentally important:
  - 1.1 The decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted necessarily as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professional staff involved in the original selection and/or use of the learning resource materials;
  - 1.2 A complaint about the use of a school's learning resource must not



be generalized to allow interpretation of total unsuitability for all students, unless so declared by the Board of Directors, or its agent, the Superintendent. Information regarding controversial issues should:

- 1.2.1 Represent alternate points of view;
  - 1.2.2 Appropriately reflect the maturity, capabilities, and educational needs of the students;
  - 1.2.3 Reflect the requirements of the course as stated in the approved curriculum;
  - 1.2.4 Reflect the neighbourhood and community in which the school is located but not to the exclusion of provincial, national, and international context and, in particular, the Catholic context.
- 1.3 The criteria outlined in 1.2 is subject to considerations related to the special purposes of a Catholic school.
2. Materials that have been reconsidered by the Board of Directors following a formal complaint will not be reviewed again for three years unless a challenge is substantially different from a previous challenge.
  3. For programs that contain a parent option clause, the right of the parent to have a child excluded from instruction and/or the learning resources must be respected by the school.
  4. In dealing with controversial issues and topics, teachers are expected to consult with the Principal regarding the issues to be covered, the materials to be used and the approach to instruction in the classroom. (ref: policy 610)
  5. Questioned and/or challenged learning resources which are purchased through normal selection procedures will usually remain in use throughout the reconsideration process. In exceptional circumstances, the Reconsideration Committee may recommend as a measure, temporary suspended use of a learning resource pending final determination by the Board of Directors and/or Superintendent.



6. The Principal should review the selection and objection procedures annually with the teaching staff.

### **ACTIONS**

1. School Level Information Review
  - 1.1 A member of the school community may request a review of a learning resource;
  - 1.2 The staff member initially receiving a complaint will attempt to resolve the complaint informally.
  - 1.3 If the issue cannot be resolved the staff member will refer the complaint to the Principal;
  - 1.4 The complainant will be informed of the particular place the questioned materials occupy in the educational program and their intended usefulness. The Principal may involve appropriate professional personnel in the explanation of the materials selection procedure, criteria, and the qualifications of those persons selecting the materials.
  - 1.5 If the complaint still cannot be resolved at the school level, the Principal will inform the complainant of the procedures to make a Formal Challenge.
  
2. **FORMAL CHALLENGE** to Review Appropriateness of Learning Resources
  - 2.1 Each school will keep on hand and make available "Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources" forms (see School Administration Manual). All formal objections to learning resources must be made on this form.
  - 2.2 The "Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources" form shall be signed by the questioner and returned to the Principal.
  - 2.3 The complaint shall be filed with the Superintendent of Schools together with any relevant background information.
  - 2.4 The Superintendent shall convene a Reconsideration Committee which will render a decision on the challenge within thirty (30)



school days of the filing of the form.

- 2.5 The **RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE** will include:
- The Superintendent
  - The Principal
  - One member of the school teaching staff chosen by the school staff
  - A teacher from another school
  - Two parents of the school community chosen by the Superintendent
  - A teacher-librarian or curriculum specialist
  - An external professional representative of the community.
- 2.6 The Superintendent will:
- chair the Reconsideration Committee
  - establish the meeting dates
  - arrange for complainant or group spokesperson to have an opportunity to talk to the committee about the request
  - arrange for all reviews and curriculum documents to be available for the committee.
- 2.7 The Reconsideration Committee will:
- examine the challenged resource, both the challenged passages and the item in its entirety;
  - determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the resource;
  - weigh the values and difficulties and then form opinions based on the material as a whole, rather than on passages or sections taken out of context;
  - discuss the challenged resource in the context of the educational program;
  - give the complainant or group spokesperson an opportunity to talk about the request;
  - reach a decision within thirty (30) school days of the receipt of the "Reconsideration" form;
  - prepare a written report on the decision.

### 3. Reporting



- 3.1 The Superintendent will forward a copy of the written report to the complainant.
  - 3.2 Copies of the report will be retained on file in the Office of the Superintendent and the school in question.
  - 3.3 Written reports, once filed, are confidential and are available for examination by the Superintendent, administrators, and approved personnel only.
4. Right of Appeal
- 4.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, he/she may, within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the decision, request in writing to the Superintendent that the matter be placed on next scheduled Board of Directors meeting agenda for review.
  - 4.2 The Board of Directors will examine the written request to determine whether it will review the Reconsideration Committee's decision.

The decision of the Board of Directors will be communicated to the complainant. If the Board of Directors decides to hold a hearing it will establish procedures accordingly.

Reference:	Approved
	Date Approved: December 1994
Cross-reference: 609 - Selection Of Learning Resources 610 - Controversial Issues And Materials	Date(s) Revised: October 2006, June 6, 2017

**CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS, DIOCESE OF VICTORIA**

**"REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION"  
OF A LEARNING RESOURCE**

School Concerned: \_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Role of Complainant: Teacher\_\_\_\_ Parent\_\_\_\_ Other(specify)\_\_\_\_

Title of Resource: \_\_\_\_\_

Context of usage: Classroom Resource \_\_\_\_\_ Library Resource \_\_\_\_\_

Author(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Format: \_\_\_\_\_(i.e. book, filmstrip, magazine, etc.)

Have you reviewed the entire resource? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. To what in the resource(s) do you object? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

a) pages \_\_\_\_\_ Specific Objection: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b) pages \_\_\_\_\_ Specific Objection: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c) pages \_\_\_\_\_ Specific Objection: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

d) pages \_\_\_\_\_ Specific Objection: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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2. What do you think is the theme or purpose of the resource?

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3. What do you feel might be the positive effect of reading, listening to, or viewing this work? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you feel might be the negative effect of reading, listening to, or viewing this work? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. In many cases, the impact of a resource will vary according to how it is presented and interpreted in the classroom, and we urge you to discuss this material with the appropriate people. Have you discussed the resource with the:

Teacher? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Librarian? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Principal? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you read reviews of this resource? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Source of reviews? (attach photocopies if available) \_\_\_\_\_



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If reviews are available, would you like copies? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

7. Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR SCHOOL  
PRINCIPAL**