

PARKLAND SCHOOL PARENTAL CHOICE IN MATTERS OF GENDER IDENTITY, HUMAN SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION POLICY



September 2025

The board believes that all children have the right to be safe and to receive appropriate care and support, whether at home, in school or in the community. At the same time, the board respects the critical role parents play in ensuring the education of their children and is therefore committed to creating a learning atmosphere characterized by transparency in parental communications. To this end, the board shall seek to ensure that parents have the information they need, along with the ability to choose to have their child(ren) “opt-in”, in advance of instruction and learning content related to curricular topics with primary and explicit references to gender identity, human sexuality and sexual orientation.

Administrative Procedure – Informed Consent Regarding Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation and Human Sexuality

Definitions

- **Child** – Means, in this administrative procedure, a person who is under the age of 18 years;
- **Consent Education** – Means, in this administrative procedure, curriculum content in the Alberta Education program of studies that aims to teach students about healthy relationships, bodily autonomy and the importance of clear communication and consent in all interactions, including sexual activity.
- **Gender Identity** – Means in this administrative procedure, a reference to a person’s sense of one’s own gender.
- **Human Sexuality Education** – Means in this administrative procedure, a significant component of the Alberta Education curriculum, taught in Physical Education and Wellness (Grades 3-9), Health and Life Skills (Grades 7-9), Career and Life Management (High School) and Career and Technology Studies (High School).
- **Independent Student** – Means in this administrative procedure, a student who is 18 years of age or older, or 16 years of age and living independently as determined by a board under section 6 of *the Education Act* or is a party to an agreement under section 57.2 of the Child, Youth and *Family Enhancement Act*.
- **Opt-In** – Means in this administrative procedure, a *requirement* for parents to proactively sign their children up for participation in instructional settings where programs of study, instructional materials, instruction or exercises includes subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality.
- **Parent** – Means, in this administrative procedure, the parent/guardian as defined in section 1(2) of the *Education Act*;

- **Parental Consent** - Means, in this administrative procedure, permission or agreement given by a parent or legal guardian for a child to participate in certain identified activities.
- **Primary and Explicit References** – Means in this administrative procedure, a direct reference to instructional content or materials dealing with gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality, including those references to learning outcomes identified by Alberta Education in its programs of study.
- **Sexual Orientation** – Means in this administrative procedure, a reference to the emotional, romantic or sexual attraction that a person may feel toward another person.
- **School Community** – means the parents, students, staff, Board members and others most invested in the success and well-being of the school.
- **Student** - Means in this administrative procedure, a person who is enrolled in a school or required under section 7 of the Education Act to attend school, but does not include a child younger than 6 years of age who is enrolled in an early childhood services program.

Procedures

In recognition of the best interests, safety and well-being of children, and with respect for the role of parents who are generally in the best position to support their child/children, the school is expected to develop and implement procedures to ensure parents are fully informed about school matters and classroom content that includes subject matter dealing primarily and explicitly with human sexuality, sexual orientation, or gender identity. To this end:

1. The Principal is responsible for communicating with all staff and all parents the requirements of the *Education Act*, as they apply in this circumstance, to supporting students and families navigating complex conversations around gender identity, sexual orientation and human sexuality.
2. Regarding Gender Identity Related Preferred Names and Pronouns:
 - 2.1 If a student under the age of 18 requests that school staff use a new gender identity - related preferred name or pronoun, the school Principal or the Principal's designate must notify the parent.
 - 2.2 For students who are 16 or 17 years of age, school staff may use the new preferred name or pronouns when referring to the student, but only after parental notification has occurred.
 - 2.3 For students under 16 years of age, school staff shall use the new preferred name or pronouns when referring to the student only once parental notification has occurred **and** only after parental consent has been provided.
 - 2.3.1 Parental consent shall be indicated in the form and manner identified by the Principal, and which may include written, email or other electronic communication between the Principal or the Principal's designate and the parent.
 - 2.4 Where a staff member perceives that parental notification about a student's wish to use a new gender identify-related preferred name or pronoun is reasonably expected to cause psychological or emotional harm to the student, the staff member or Principal or Principal's designate shall make every effort to enable the student to access counselling services. **(See Appendix A)**
 - 2.4.1 In exceptional cases where there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the welfare or security of a student is endangered, the terms of the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* continue to apply in school settings.

- 2.5 For parents requiring help in supporting their child/children, the Principal or Principal's designate may recommend support services that could include Alberta's Family Resource Networks (FRN's) administered by Children and Family Services or other counselling resources. *(See Appendix B)*
 - 2.6 Notification of parents for students 16 years of age or older who are considered "independent students" under the *Education Act* is not required, as the independent student assumes all the rights, responsibilities and benefits under the *Education Act* that would otherwise belong to their parent.
 - 2.7 Where staff in the school were already using a gender-related preferred name or pronoun to refer to a student before the implementation date of this policy, the Principal or Principal's designate is not required to notify parents or to obtain parental consent for the student to continue using the preferred name or pronoun.
 - 2.8 Student participation in voluntary organizations intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, is unaffected by the notification requirements named above.
3. Regarding Parental Opt-In Requirement When Subject Matter Deals Primarily and Explicitly with Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation or Human Sexuality:
 - 3.1 As early as possible in the school year and not any later than 30 days before the onset of instruction in any of the related themes, identified teachers in the school shall, under the direction of the Principal, notify parents and provide them the opportunity to opt their child/children in, where courses, programs of study, instructional materials, instruction, or exercises include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality. The requirement to opt in applies to parents of all children under the age of 18 years, except those 16 years and older identified as *independent students* under the Act.
 - 3.1.1 If practical in the circumstance, the opportunity to opt in should be provided to parents as early as possible in the school year and then again, if necessary, 30 days before the onset of related instruction.
 - 3.1.2 As part of the notification process, teachers responsible for the subject matter instruction shall describe the intended learning outcomes, permit the viewing of pertinent resources and identify the date at which instruction in the topic is set to begin.
 - 3.2 The Principal and teachers shall understand and communicate to parents that the opt-in requirement for parents relates to direct curriculum references and learning outcomes as identified by Alberta Education, in the following areas:
 - Physical Education and Wellness (Grades 3, 4, 5, 6)
 - Physical Education and Wellness (Grades 7-9)
 - Health and Life Skills (Grades 7, 8, 9)
 - Career and Life Management (High School)
 - Career and Technology Studies (High School) – Reproduction and Readiness for Parenting
 - Career and Technology Studies (High School) – Developing Maturity and Independence
 - 3.2.1 For indirect or incidental references to the topics in 3.1 above (Example- anatomy and physiology of human reproduction in Biology 30), parental consent is not required.

- 3.2.2 Students learn about “consent” at several grade levels, but only one learning outcome (Grade 6 Physical Education and Wellness- Any sexual activity always requires consent) will require parents to opt-in.
- 3.3 The early notice to parents must permit parents time and opportunity to review and/or inquire about the learning content of the respective themes in sufficient detail to permit the parent to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish their child/children to participate and if so, whether with full or partial participation.
- 3.4 A parent’s decision to opt in their child must be communicated to the teacher responsible for the subject area instruction by no later than two weeks before the intended instruction is set to commence. A student may not participate unless the parent has opted them in.
 - 3.4.1 To establish informed consent from the parent, the teacher shall initiate a request for a written or electronic opt-in response, in the form and manner identified for this purpose by the Principal.
 - 3.4.2 The parent’s response may indicate consent for full participation or partial participation.
 - 3.4.3 Where the parent consents to partial participation, the parent and the teacher shall work together to establish expectations accordingly.
4. Where a parent has not provided opt-in consent for their child/children, the teacher will permit the student, without academic penalty, to leave the classroom where the instruction is occurring. The Principal or Principal’s designate shall work with the teacher and the student to establish an alternative supervised learning opportunity.
5. The school Principal shall be responsible for ensuring that only ministry approved learning and teaching resources are used by teachers in instructional topics related to gender identity, sexual orientation and human sexuality.
 - 5.1 Teachers and Principals will find lists of approved learning and teaching resources updated quarterly on the Alberta Education website www.New.LearnAlberta.ca.
 - 5.2 Where a school teacher wishes to use an identified local resource that deals with gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality, it must first be submitted for Ministerial approval and approval will be subject to review criteria set out in the Alberta Education *Provincial Resource Review Guide*.
 - 5.3 Where an external group or party is recommended for supporting school instruction in topics related to gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality, the external party must first be approved under the Alberta Education *External Party Review Guide* where criteria include developmentally appropriate instructional approaches, commitment by the party to conduct itself in a developmentally appropriate way and the use of approved learning and teaching resources

References:

- Alberta Education: www.LearnAlberta.ca (Learning Outcome Fact Sheet)
- Alberta Education: *Provincial Resource Review Guide*
- Alberta Education: *External Party Review Guide*
- *Counselling Alberta*

Legal References:

- *Education Act*, Sections 18, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.2, 35.1, 53, 58.1, 58.11, 58.12 and 58.2
- *Child and Family Enhancement Act*
- *Alberta Human Rights Act*
- *Personal Information Protection Act*

The Principal reviewed on:

DATE: _____ SIGNED: _____
PRINCIPAL

The Board approved on:


DATE: _____ SIGNED: _____
BOARD CHAIRMAN

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: _____

Sept/2025

APPENDIX A

Need support? Counselling Alberta is here for you

A large, light blue graphic of an opening quotation mark is positioned to the left of the text.

If you're going through a time of change, feeling uncertain about your gender identity, or just need someone to talk to, Counselling Alberta is here to help. We provide confidential and non-judgmental support to help you navigate your feelings and challenges.

How to contact Counselling Alberta:

You, your parent, or even a school staff can contact Counselling Alberta in the following ways:

- [Register online 24 hours a day](https://www.counsellingalberta.com) at [counsellingalberta.com](https://www.counsellingalberta.com)
- Register by phone at [833.827.4230](tel:833.827.4230), Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Is there a cost to access services?

Counselling Alberta offers services at no cost to you. For families we use a sliding scale to determine fees based on income and ability to pay, but no one is ever turned away because they can't pay. We're here to help you, no matter what.

How long does it take to get an appointment?

There's no waitlist for an appointment. Once you contact Counselling Alberta and register, you'll be matched with a counsellor the same day or the next business/school day.

Do you offer in-person or online sessions?

Counselling Alberta offers online or phone sessions anywhere in Alberta and has in-person options in some cities ([see website for locations](#)). You can choose what works best for you.

Do I need consent from my parent(s) to access counselling?

Counselling Alberta will meet with you to individually assess whether parental consent is needed. Please contact us so that we can better understand your situation and whether or not parental consent will be required to proceed with counselling. Your parents will not be informed that you have contacted Counselling Alberta to ask about services. We will work with you to find the right support you are comfortable with.

What to expect:

Our team of experienced counsellors will help you explore your thoughts and feelings in a safe, private space. You'll never be forced to talk about anything you're not ready to. There's no limit to the number of sessions you can have. Most people start seeing positive results after 8 to 10 sessions, but we'll keep going as long as you need support.

What if I don't like the counsellor that I'm set up with?

If you don't feel comfortable with a particular counsellor, we can work with you to find another counsellor that is a better fit. You can discuss this with your current counsellor or you can contact the intake department at intake@calgarycounselling.com

What if I don't want to go to counselling?

That's okay! It's up to you whether or not you go to counselling. You can talk to your school social worker or guidance counsellor, a trusted adult, or your parents. If you decide you want counselling, we're here for you.

Privacy and confidentiality:

Whatever you share stays between you and your counsellor—the only exception is if there's a serious concern about your safety.

Take the first step today

Visit counsellingalberta.com, email intake@calgarycounselling.com, or call us at [833.827.4230](tel:833.827.4230) to learn more about how we can support you.

SUITE 1000, 105 – 12 AVENUE SE CALGARY, AB CANADA T2G 1A1
T 403.265.4980 F 403.265.8886 COUNSELLINGALBERTA.COM
AB SOCIETY NO. 50003951 CHARITABLE REGISTRATION NO. 108091950RR0001

APPENDIX B

Supporting your child through gender identity concerns with Counselling Alberta

If your child is exploring their gender identity, Counselling Alberta provides a safe, confidential, and supportive environment for them to talk through their feelings and challenges. We're here to work with both your child and you to ensure they get the help they need.

Why am I receiving information about Counselling Alberta for my child?

Your child may have expressed an interest in speaking with a counsellor about gender identity-related concerns. Counselling Alberta offers affordable services to help children, teens, and their families work through these challenges or any concerns in a safe space.

How much will counselling cost?

Our services are provided at no charge to students. For families we use a sliding scale to determine fees based on income, but no one will ever be turned away due to financial concerns.

How long does it take to get an appointment?

There's no waitlist for an appointment. Once you contact Counselling Alberta and register, your child will be matched with a counsellor the same day or the next business/school day. Schools can also make referrals to Counselling Alberta.

What if my child doesn't want to go to counselling?

It's common for young people to feel hesitant. If this is the case, we encourage you to make an appointment for yourself to discuss how you can support your child. A counsellor can also help you find ways to approach your child about the counselling process.

How many sessions can my child and/or I access through Counselling Alberta?

There is no limit to the number of sessions your child can access. On average, many people experience positive, long-lasting changes after 8 to 10 sessions. We'll work with your child to find the right amount of support they need.

Can I be involved in my child's counselling?

Counselling Alberta works to build trust with youth and to support their parents. We encourage you to express your desire to be involved with your child. While your child has the choice about how much information they want to share, we will work with your child to find ways to involve you in the process when appropriate and when your child is comfortable.

Do I need to provide consent for my child to access counselling?

There is no general minimum age of consent in Alberta. Counsellors will work with each young person to determine what approach is best for their care. This may include building trust in the first

few sessions and exploring how to involve family in the process. Many factors are considered, such as the young person's comfort level and their support system at home. The counsellor will work with the youth to ensure they have the support they need—whether that's from their family or another trusted adult. We're here to support both the youth and their family through this journey.

Is Counselling Alberta confidential?

Yes, your child's privacy is respected. Counselling Alberta won't share any details, including with you, unless your child chooses to share it. The only exception is if there's a serious concern about safety, in which case we may be required to take further action. Schools will not receive information about a student's involvement in counselling unless you or your child chooses to share that information.

What if counselling doesn't feel like a good fit?

If your child doesn't feel comfortable with a particular counsellor, we can work with your child to find another counsellor that is a better fit.

Can my child attend counselling during school?

Counselling Alberta offers flexible hours, including after-school and virtual sessions. Your child can also attend a virtual session during school hours if the school allows and provides a private space.

We're here to support you and your child

For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit [counsellingalberta.com](https://www.counsellingalberta.com) or call us at 833.827.4230 today.

SUITE 1000, 105 – 12 AVENUE SE CALGARY, AB CANADA T2G 1A1
T 403.265.4980 F 403.265.8886 [COUNSELLINGALBERTA.COM](https://www.counsellingalberta.com)
AB SOCIETY NO. 50003951 CHARITABLE REGISTRATION NO. 108091950RR0001

PARENT OPT-IN FORM FOR MATTERS OF GENDER IDENTITY, HUMAN SEXUALITY and SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The Government of Alberta has instituted policies regarding the above topic in all schools. While Parkland School does not typically teach within the grade levels this would normally affect, we are required to lawfully gain your parental opt-in consent for any resources used to teach the following areas, as identified by the Alberta Education programs of study:

- Physical Education and Wellness (Grades 3, 4, 5, 6)
- Physical Education and Wellness (Grades 7-9)
- Health and Life Skills (Grades 7, 8, 9)
- Career and Life Management (High School)
- Career and Technology Studies (High School) – Reproduction and Readiness for Parenting
- Career and Technology Studies (High School) – Developing Maturity and Independence

This permission to OPT-IN form must be submitted to the parent/guardian with 30 days notice prior to the beginning of the lesson.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I agree that my child can participate in the stated learning outcome found in the above-mentioned areas of curriculum as defined by the Alberta Education programs of study in reference to Gender Identity, Human Sexuality and Sexual Orientation. LEARNING OUTCOME: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	I agree that my child can participate in SOME of the above-mentioned areas of curriculum as defined by the Alberta Education programs of study in reference to Gender Identity, Human Sexuality and Sexual Orientation. I acknowledge that I will have a meeting with the Teacher of my child's class to discuss which sections I will opt-in for.

STUDENT NAME (please print): _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME (please print): _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____