



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Background

Board Policy 2: Role of the Board identifies faith leadership as the Board's first area of responsibility, and the provision of Religious Education programs is one of the most tangible ways the Board fulfills this responsibility. Catholic Social Teaching suggests that parents are the primary educators of their children and are responsible for the formation of their children, but their community shares in that responsibility through its institutions. Thus, Catholic schools work closely with the home and the Church to educate students.

Further, the *Alberta Human Rights Act* requires a school board to give notice to a parent or guardian when courses of study, education programs, institutional materials, instruction or exercises include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion. All of the schools in this division are Catholic Separate Schools, the essential purpose of which is to fully permeate Catholic theology, philosophy, practices and beliefs, the principles of the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church, in all aspects of school life, including in the curriculum of every subject taught, both in and outside of formal religion classes, celebrations and exercises. Every course of study and educational program, all institutional materials, instruction and exercises will at all times include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion.

The religious education of students of Holy Spirit Catholic Schools resides at the heart of our mission as an academic institution. Our schools must be safe and caring, providing high quality educational programs to help students achieve high standards, and they must do so within the context of Catholic living and teaching. The document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997) states, "The Catholic school participates in the evangelizing mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out." (11) All personnel of Holy Spirit Catholic Schools will therefore be mindful of their role as Catholic missionaries to their students; that they work in the name of the Church, alongside parents and parishes.

Procedures:

1. The provision of religious education is governed by Section 58, *Education Act*.
2. All schools shall follow the Religious Education Program designated by the division and approved by the Bishop of Calgary.
3. The Principal ensures that religious education is offered at all grade levels and/or years of school.
 - 3.1 All students shall take a religious education course each school year. Students must take religious studies in a traditional class setting. Other non-traditional offerings will only be considered under special circumstances and must be approved by the Superintendent or designate.

- 3.2 Instructional time for religious education courses shall be:
 - 3.2.1 Elementary classes: 120-150 minutes per week
 - 3.2.2 Junior high classes: 75-100 hours per school year
 - 3.2.3 Senior high classes: Three (3) to five (5) credits per course for each of Religion 15, 25 and 35 courses.
- 3.3 In order for students to participate in graduation ceremonies they must have completed, or be enrolled and receiving a passing grade in, a grade 12 level religious education course prior to the ceremonies.
- 4. All personnel of the Holy Spirit Catholic School Division permeate all aspects of life in the division with the religious dimension as they discharge their duties. Words and actions of personnel will reflect the teachings of the Catholic faith, and in particular, relationships with colleagues and students will model Catholic teaching. Teachers in particular are sensitive to this aspect of educating students:
 - 4.1 All teachers permeate the Catholic Faith across the curriculum;
 - 4.2 As career life-long learners, and as professionals in a Catholic Separate School System pursuing the attainment of the Teaching Quality Standard, teachers are expected to participate in professional development activities that enhance their ability to make the Catholic faith “the foundation of all that they do.” This supports the mission of the school division.
- 5. All division personnel are expected to attend the School Year Opening Liturgy and Spiritual Development Day.
- 6. Schools cooperate with parish teams to enhance the religious education of the students and the faith life of the school.

References

Section 58, *Education Act*
Alberta Human Rights Act
The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1997)