



Frequently Asked Questions – Revisions to Provincial Health & Physical Education Curriculum (2015)

As Catholics, we understand that parents and guardians are the primary educators of their children. The parental role in the teaching of family life issues is pivotal and vital. Catholic schools work with parents and parishes to provide students an education that is founded in the Gospel of Jesus, and reflects a Catholic world view. As the province implements a revised provincial health and physical education curriculum, we hope this information will help Catholic families understand how the new curriculum will be adopted in publicly funded Catholic schools.

Q. I'm concerned about the new "sex ed" curriculum that people have been talking about. How will it impact my children in a Catholic school?

A. The new curriculum is a revision of the current Health & Physical Education Curriculum, last updated in 1998 by the Ontario Government. For more than 30 years, all Ontario Catholic schools have successfully provided a family life curriculum within a Catholic framework, guided by the Catholic Bishops of Ontario through the *Fully Alive* program. Catholic Family Life Education is closely associated with Religious Education. In Ontario's publicly funded Catholic schools, it accounts for 20% of the Religious Education program and is usually taught once a week.

While we have a responsibility to teach the curriculum set out by the Ministry of Education in education policy, we have always done so in a manner that conveys, respects and models Catholic principles to our students.

Q. Can you tell me more about Family Life Education?

A. In Catholic elementary schools, Family Life Education is presented through the lens of *Fully Alive*. The program goal is to present a distinctively Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage and family. *Fully Alive* complements the efforts of families and to support what parents are doing at home. The entire program, from Grades 1 through Grade 8, is designed to encourage students to become the people God wants them to be – to be fully alive.

Q. Will the revised curriculum be presented from a Catholic perspective?

A. Yes. Working with Ministry of Education guidelines, Catholic schools use the Gospel of Jesus and the tradition of the Catholic Church as the starting point in our educational approach to all content. The vast majority of the content required by the revised curriculum is already covered within the *Fully Alive* program.

Q. Now that the curriculum has been released, what will happen next?

A. Catholic education professionals will work together to produce resources that support Catholic teachers and ensure the curriculum in our classrooms is consistent with our Catholic teachings and appropriate within the context of a Catholic classroom. The Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) will coordinate this work. ICE has been working on behalf of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario since 1989.

The Ministry of Education has committed to provide funding to support the development of faith-specific resources and materials that will be appropriate for use in Catholic schools and will support Catholic teachers as they implement the revised curriculum.

Q. What about age-appropriate material?

A. Although some of the content from the existing curriculum has been reassigned, with the expectation that it be delivered in earlier grades, we are confident the revised curriculum will be delivered within the context of our Family Life program, in a way that is consistent with Church teachings and our faith tradition.

Q. How can I stay involved regarding the implementation of the curriculum?

A. We encourage all parents to maintain a healthy dialogue with local teachers and principals as the implementation of the curriculum takes place in September 2015. Information about the existing Family Life Curriculum, Grades 1-8 (2012) can be found at: www.iceont.ca (Institute for Catholic Education). If you would like to learn more about the current *Fully Alive* program, you can download this resource online at: www.acbo.on.ca/fullyalive

We all care deeply about the education of our students. We pray for parents, the primary educators of their children, weaving the thread of faith through their children's personal development. Parents are encouraged to speak with their children regularly about their classroom experiences and nurture ongoing dialogue with teachers and school administrators. We entrust our Catholic schools to offer a holistic curriculum that is shaped by a Catholic world view and is faithful to the tradition and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.