



SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Challenge to Learning Resources 5025

RATIONALE

On July 1, 2016, the 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.

Although care has been taken to select appropriate resources for student use, there may be occasional objections to a selection or 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 based on 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.

POLICY

Legal responsibility for the selection and use of materials rests ultimately with the Board of Directors and the Catholic Independent Schools of Nelson Diocese (CISND). The Board of Directors will provide a channel of communication for members of the school community to challenge a learning resource.

REGULATIONS

A. Guiding Principles

1. Members of the CISND school 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 Legal responsibility for the selection of materials rests with the Board of Directors.
 - 1.2 The decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted necessarily as a judgement of irresponsibility on the part of the

professional staff involved in the original selection and/or use of the learning resource material.

- 1.3 A complaint about the use of a defined 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:
 - 1.3.1 Represent alternate points of view.
 - 1.3.2 Appropriately reflect the maturity, capabilities, and educational needs of the students.
 - 1.3.3 Reflect the requirements of the course as stated in the approved curriculum.
 - 1.3.4 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 content.
 - 1.4 The criteria in 1.3 are 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 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. It is the ultimate responsibility of the Principal to communicate with the parents.
 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 (See Section B.2.5) may recommend 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.

B. 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 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 "The Request for Reconsideration of a Learning Resource" form. All formal objections to learning resources must be made on this form.
 - 2.2 The "The Request for Reconsideration of a Learning Resource" 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 will 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
 - A teacher-librarian or curriculum specialist
 - An external professional representative of the community
 - A Priest, if needed
 - 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 criticisms 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 filing 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 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 the 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.
- 4.3 The decision of the Board of Directors will be communicated to the complainant.
- 4.4 If the Board of Directors decides to hold a review it will establish procedures accordingly.

CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS, NELSON DIOCESE

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

School Concerned: _____

Request initiated by: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____

Role of Complainant: Teacher ____ Parent ____ Other ____

Title of Resource: _____

Context of usage: Classroom Resource ____ Library ____

Author(s): _____

Publisher/Year: _____

Format: (i.e. book, movie, magazine, audiobook, music etc)

1. Have you reviewed the entire resource?

2. To what in the resource(s) do you object?

a) Page/Section/Time Reference(s) _____

Specific Objection:

b) Page/Section/Time Reference(s) _____

Specific Objection:

c) Page/Section/Time Reference(s) _____
Specific Objection:

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

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

5. In many cases, the impact of a resource will vary according to how it is presented and used 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)

7. Additional Comments:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Date Approved: October 2017
Date(s) Revised: September 2022
Date Reviewed: