

January 20, 2016

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Alberta Education has recently released a document entitled "Guidelines for Best Practices: Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions" (<https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626737/91383-attachment-1-guidelines-final.pdf>). This document is intended to be a resource for school divisions to use as they develop new policies or amend existing policies to ensure the needs of LGBTQ students are met. These guidelines have the potential to have significant implications for all schools and they have generated considerable media attention.

We would like all of our parents and guardians to know how Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools will be addressing these guidelines. Currently, our division schools are guided by division policies and administrative procedures to ensure an inclusive, welcoming, safe, and caring environment is provided for all students. We feel that the specific policies and administrative procedures that address the needs of our LGBTQ students have served us well and are firmly rooted in the sanctity of each human person as a distinct creation of God.

Red Deer Catholic Regional School Division has, and will continue to, craft policies that meet the needs of our students and will incorporate elements of the guidelines if appropriate. We are now reviewing our current policies and administrative procedures to better serve all of our students, while maintaining our Catholicity and preserving our schools as inclusive, welcoming, safe and caring environments. We regret Alberta Education's lack of consultation in the development of these guidelines but we will endeavor to create an acceptable solution that remains true to our stakeholders and respects the wisdom of our Catholic teachings.

Red Deer Catholic Regional School Division has a very strong history and culture of being accepting of all students and we will continue this tradition without exception. We are guided and grounded by our faith in being welcoming of all students, and provide safe and caring environments in all of our schools. All school divisions in Alberta are obliged to follow the requirements of the Alberta Human Rights Act and School Act, and we will successfully continue to meet these obligations.

Once again, we encourage you to please review these guidelines and share your opinions with your local MLA, Education Minister Eggen ([Education.Minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Education.Minister@gov.ab.ca)), and the premier's office ([premier@gov.ab.ca](mailto:premier@gov.ab.ca)).

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me, or Associate Superintendent of Faith Development and Division Support Ryan Ledene, at 403-343-1055.

Yours in Christ,



Dr. V. Paul Mason  
Superintendent