



Teaching Human Sexuality - Questions frequently asked by teachers:

Must teachers take an inservice session prior to teaching human sexuality?

- An inservice session is not mandatory but is highly recommended. The K-9 Health and Life Skills and CALM Programs of Study were new for the 2002-2003 school year, so teachers must ensure that they are familiar with the new learner outcomes for human sexuality as well as with related CBE administrative regulations. Professional development opportunities related to human sexuality are made available to teachers through the combined efforts of the Calgary Health Region and the Calgary Public Board to increase knowledge and comfort level in teaching this topic effectively to students.

What resources are currently available to teachers?

The primary sources for both material and human resources are the Calgary Board of Education, the Calgary Health Region, and Alberta Learning.

Calgary Board of Education Resources:

1. **CBE Human Sexuality Education Administrative Regulation 3015**
Includes information on:
 - scheduling human sexuality education
 - parent exemption rights and parent meetings
 - sample parent letters * letters and outcomes are available online in Punjabi, Arabic, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese in the CBE Staffroom (Health/CALM Community of Practice) or www.teachingsexualhealth.ca
2. **CBE School Participation in Programs – Outside Services Administrative Regulation 1014 (Guest Speaker Policy)**
 - Includes information on the role of the teacher and principal when a guest speaker is invited into the classroom.
3. **CBE Child Abuse Domestic Violence Protocol – Administrative Regulation 6016**
Includes information on:
 - recognizing and defining abuse
 - the role of the school, teacher and principal
4. The **CBE Recommended Resources List** is available through all school libraries. This useful compilation of materials is intended to identify resources to meet the curricular needs of schools. The **Video Loan Pool** is also an excellent source for classroom resources. It can be reached at 294-8728 or online via www.cbe.ab.ca and click on Resources.
5. **CBE Curriculum Specialists** for Health and CALM can be contacted at 294-8625.
6. Access the innovative, comprehensive website teachingsexualhealth.ca for lesson plans, resources, teaching tools as well as a place to ask questions and find up to date information.

Other helpful resources:

1. The **Calgary Health Region** is an excellent resource. Their community sexual health educators are extremely skilled and knowledgeable. To contact an educator please see your school health nurse, phone 944-7115 or email contact@teachingsexualhealth.ca. As well, they have a number of resources, including videos, pamphlets and brochures, which can be accessed free of charge.
2. The **Calgary Health Region** also makes available a **Guest Speaker List**. The following organizations provide support for teaching human sexuality in the classroom:
 - Calgary Health Region (403) 944-7115
 - Calgary Sexual Health Centre (403) 283-5580
 - Sexual Health Access Alberta (403) 283-5580
 - Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (403) 237-6905
 - Aids Calgary Awareness Association (403) 508-2500
 - Canadian Red Cross Society (403) 541-6100
3. Information regarding **Alberta Education Authorized Resources** can be obtained at www.education.gov.ab.ca/lrdb or phone 780-427-5775 or fax 780-422-9750.

What do students do if parents opt them out of human sexuality instruction?

Administrative Regulation 3015 states that schools must provide alternate learning experiences for students who have been exempted from human sexuality instruction by their parents.

What are the obligations for informing parents?

- Administrative Regulation 3015 states that parents must be advised prior to the start of human sexuality instruction of their right to exempt their child from this course component. A form should be returned by all students indicating whether they can or cannot participate. (see Sample in AR3015).
- Parent meetings are strongly encouraged and decisions regarding these should be made in consultation with your principal. Communicating information home through avenues such as letters or conferences is highly recommended to reduce parent anxiety.

What if parents want to observe classes?

- When receiving such a request, carefully consider the purpose of the visit and whether or not a parents' presence would impede student discussion of sensitive topics. Interested parents would need to arrange this visit in advance with the teacher(s) and principal. Teachers are not obligated to honor parental requests to observe classes and may obtain further guidance from the ATA at (403) 265-2672.

What do I do if I receive calls from angry parents?

- Listen carefully and respond as best you can. If parents are angry and unwilling to listen, refer them to your school administration.

What does a teacher do with a multi-graded class?

- As with other subject areas, schools will need to make the best decision for learning based on student needs and community interests.

What if a student asks a question (often done through the question box) that is beyond the outcomes of the grade level being taught?

Assess whether the question is related to **information, feelings or values** and how closely it does fit with grade level outcomes.

- Questions relating to **values** can be identified as such. As values and beliefs vary from family to family, students can be encouraged to discuss these types of questions with family members and/or trusted adults. Decision-making steps may be discussed depending upon the context.
- Acknowledge varying **feelings** that arise with various questions.
- Depending on the curriculum relevance, background of student(s) and age appropriateness of the question, respond to **factual** questions in the most simple and straightforward way possible.

- As with other subject areas, teachers will need to make the best decision for learning based on student needs, grade level taught and community interests.
- For valuable, relevant information and sample responses to student questions, please access the website teachingsexualhealth.ca (student support).

What if...?

A student discloses assault/abuse:

- It is the role of the teacher to recognize the vulnerability of school-aged children and to be alert to the physical, emotional, and behavioural indicators of abuse, neglect and witnessing violence. It is the responsibility of the teacher to consult with the principal or their designate as soon as indicators of abuse are suspected and to report any suspicions of abuse to Child Welfare. The person who receives the disclosure and/or identifies signs and symptoms of abuse is **legally responsible** for ensuring that the information is reported to Child Welfare (Child Abuse/Domestic Violence Protocol, pg.13).
- School personnel are not required to prove that the student is in need of protective services, nor should they probe for details. This is the role of the Child Welfare worker.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment for the child and do not contact the student's parents or guardian.
- Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services Child Welfare Screening - 276-5335.
- For further details refer to the CBE Child Abuse Domestic Violence Protocol – Administrative Regulation 6016.

What if...?

A student discloses confidential information or is asking about such issues as pregnancy, STI, sexual orientation or referral to a community agency

- As these are very sensitive health topics, please handle with care and respect the student's right to confidentiality.
- Be sensitive to the particular circumstances of the situation, including such aspects as the age, developmental level and cultural background of the individual.
- Be careful not to impose your personal values. As indicated in the 2003 edition of the CBE booklet [My Student and the Calgary Board of Education - A Guide to Rights and Responsibilities of Parents](#), "parents can expect that counselors, when given confidential information, will counsel students to take a responsible course of action that is in keeping with the beliefs of parents when those beliefs are known to the counselor. Parents can expect that counseling does not involve advice giving nor the questioning of values and belief systems of parents".
- Teachers are expected to take an appropriate course of action depending on the particular circumstances of the situation. Options may be to assist or advise a student to talk to a nonjudgmental guidance counselor, the school health nurse, parents, family doctor or the Calgary Health Region. All referrals through the Calgary Health Region are kept strictly confidential.