



## Selection of Learning Resources #200.41

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<b>Last Reviewed/Revised:</b>	October 15, 2019, May 2021
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Superintendent of Education
<b>Next Scheduled Review:</b>	May 2025

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### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide direction to all academic and support staff regarding the selection of learning resources to be used in schools.

### APPLICATION AND SCOPE:

School administrators, consultants, teachers, librarians, and other support personnel responsible for acquiring and/or using learning resources, must adhere to the directives reflected in this administrative procedure.

School administrators – responsible for ensuring that all learning resources selected for use with students are appropriate.

### REFERENCES:

- [Catholic News Service – Movie Reviews](#)
- [Ministry of Ontario Movie Ratings](#)
- [The Motion Picture Association – Canada \(MPA-Canada\)](#)
- [Film Classification Act, 2005, S.O.2005, c.17](#)
- [Common Sense Media](#)

### FORMS:

- Form 1: Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources

### APPENDICES:

- Appendix A: Movie Classifications
- Appendix B: Movie Ratings in Ontario
- Appendix C: Canadian Film Ratings
- Appendix D: Committee Guidelines for the Selection and Approval of Learning Resources

### DEFINITIONS:

**Learning Resource:** Any material with instructional content or function that is used for formal or informal teaching/learning purposes, co- instructional activities, and events. These include a) Print material: fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, newspapers, pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, etc.; b) Non-print material: videotapes, DVDs, films, slides, audiobooks, audiotapes, electronic resources, (computer programs, Internet resources, etc.), digital files (e.g., streaming video, MP3s, JPEGs, etc.) and guest speakers.



### ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

The intention of all learning resources selected for use in our schools is to enhance the intellectual, religious, moral, physical, and social growth of our students. School administrators, teachers, consultants, librarians, and other support personnel, shall select learning resources that:

- Support and enhance the values, traditions, and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Are consistent with the Board's mission, values, and multi-year strategic plan.
- Are selected according to the curriculum needs of the student/school.
- Are age appropriate and ~~should not conflict~~ align with our Catholic values.
- Support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices, specifically addressing areas of social and cultural discrimination.
- Take into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served.
- Emphasize quality Canadian resources whenever possible.
- Reflect local needs: knowledge of the community served (primarily its spiritual needs, academic needs).
- Are evaluated according to its merits such as:
  - accuracy
  - appropriateness
  - timeliness
  - relevancy
  - source(s) of material
- Consider the concept of "whole vs. part." Each item shall be approached from a broad perspective, looking at the work as a whole and judging controversial elements in context rather than as isolated parts. Magazines, for example, should be selected and purchased for their overall reputations and should not be rejected because of an occasional article that may not align with the above.
- Does not violate copyright; restrictions must be adhered to for all learning resources used. (Reference Policy [#400.03 Copyright – Protected Works](#))
- Are presented as learning tools, not as entertainment (the exception would be books designed to raise student engagement for learning or encouraging leisure reading).
  - Are considered for moral suitability using the ratings of the Catholic News Service/U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Movie Classifications (Appendix A), Ministry of Ontario Movie Ratings (Appendix B), the Canadian Motion Picture Association Film Ratings (Appendix C) and Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources (Form 1).
  - Consider the psychological impact of using resources that displaying profanity, racism and discrimination, drugs, graphic violence, and/or sexual content.
- Are consistent with the Human Rights Code of Ontario (the Code)
- Are an equitable and accurate representation of all identities, which will permeate core and supplementary learning resources. When selecting resources, and related instructional strategies, educators will consider:
  - A Trauma-informed approach
  - Catholic teachings and values
  - The provision of the Code with respect to the prohibitive grounds of racism and discrimination



Learning Resources will:

- Illustrate and provide an understanding of people of different racial, cultural, and social backgrounds in non-stereotypical and non-biased manners.
- Explore the roles and contributions of all peoples in Canada ensuring marginalized groups are represented in a positive manner and the factors that shaped these roles.
- Encourage open discussion of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Code in society, the community, and the school.
- Will not be racist or discriminatory in nature (with respect to all the prohibitive grounds).

Materials that would be objectively considered sexually inappropriate, libelous, harmful to a person's reputation, indecent, violent, insulting, and/or harassing are not permissible.

It may occur that the selection of a particular learning resource may be questioned by a parent/guardian, student, staff, or community member. In such a case the school administrator shall:

- Acknowledge the concern and inform the appropriate staff.
- Direct the concerned party to complete a Request for Reconsideration of Selection of Learning and Library Resources form (See Form 1).
- Meet with the concerned party and appropriate staff to discuss the situation to arrive at a solution that is acceptable to all parties.

At the school level, the parties may decide to provide an alternative selection for an individual student's use. The alternative selection must be approved by the Board (as per Form 1). The school administrator will inform the appropriate teacher or librarian of the issue and any resolution.

If the request to reconsider cannot be successfully resolved at the school level, the concerned party will be advised by the school administrator of the right to have the unresolved matter deliberated by the Committee for the Review of Learning Resources. If the concerned party wishes to pursue the matter, the school administrator will inform the appropriate school staff, and the School Superintendent. The concerned party will forward the request form to the Chair of the Committee for the Review of Learning Resources.

### **The Committee for the Review of Learning Resources**

The Committee for the Review of Learning Resources is chaired by a Superintendent appointed by the Director of Education and is struck as needed. The Committee membership for the review of learning resources shall include:

- Superintendent of Education
- Religion and Family Life Consultant
- A teacher from the appropriate division
- A member of the Equity and Inclusive Education Committee
- A Catholic priest
- A parent representative
- Librarian/library technician
- A school administrator
- Other support staff (as warranted, for ex., special education, mental health lead, support staff, etc.)
- As determined by the Chair



It should be noted that no member of the school, from which the concern arises, may be a member of the Committee.

The Chair of the Committee may ask to meet at an alternative time or together with the complainant and the person who selected the learning resource, or with any other person, who may act as a resource to the committee.

The Committee will review the learning resource(s), deliberate the concern, and make a recommendation which will be forwarded to the Director of Education.

The decision regarding the learning resource(s) will be made by the Director of Education and a written notice of the decision will be sent within one month's time to the complainant, the school's superintendent and the school's administrator who will forward a copy of the notice to the appropriate staff.

Materials intended for use as core learning materials will be reviewed and recommended for purchase by a committee of Student Achievement Team (SAT) staff and other stakeholders.

Materials that are used as supplementary learning resources (beyond approved core resources) including materials that are deemed to be controversial, may need to be submitted to the Superintendent responsible for the Student Achievement Team for review and a recommendation for further action.

Expectations in making choices will support the success of each student as:

- A discerning believer formed in the Catholic Faith community
- An effective communicator
- A reflective and creative thinker
- A self-directed, responsible, life-long learner
- A collaborative contributor
- A caring family member
- A responsible citizen

The SAT will support the development and maintenance of a Board list of existing and new Learning Resources approved for use in classrooms across the system.

The Superintendent will make available processes that will include:

- Opportunities for schools to identify Learning Resources for central review and possible approval
- A standard review framework and template to be used for all Learning Resources based on alignment with Ministry of Education Course Expectations and the Human Rights Code of Ontario
- Identification of controversial and/or sensitive material
- Standard submission protocols for review and approval
- Annual release of the list of approved Learning Resources through the Student Achievement Team



## Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources

<b>School:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>First and Last Name:</b>
<b>Contact Information:</b>

Please address the following questions as fully as possible to have this request thoroughly reviewed by the school administrator. Please add extra sheets or write on the back if more space is required.

**1. Share details of the resource(s) in question (author, title, etc.).**


**2. Describe the nature of your concern with this resource. Please be specific. In your response, please add if you reviewed the entire work or sections of it. If a section was reviewed, please include which sections were reviewed.**


**3. What do you believe is the main idea of the material/resource?**


**4. What do you feel may be the effect upon students who use this resource in their learning? Does your concern eliminate all value the resource may have for students?**


**5. What do you feel may be of value in this resource?**


**6. What do you think would be a satisfactory resolution?**




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**7. Do you have any other comments you would like to add?**


**Signature:**

**Date:**

Please return this form to your child's school administrator.



## Catholic News Service/U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Movie Classifications<sup>1</sup>

### Definitions of Classifications:

#### A-I – General Patronage

Strictly speaking, this does not simply connote films that are “for” children, or films in which they would necessarily be interested in. Rather, any movie free from significant objectionable content might receive this classification. In the days of the Hollywood Production Code, when it was assumed that almost all mainstream films were acceptable for all audiences, many films with “adult” subject matter — like 1956’s “Giant” — received this classification. Nowadays, such examples are rare.

#### A-II – Adults and Adolescents

The original intent of this classification was an endorsement for older teens. However, some ambiguity remains in this category, and CNS critics generally indicate whether the film is most appropriate for “older teens” or anyone over the age of 13. Films with nudity, overt sexual activity, bloody violence, or the use of foul language are almost never allowed in the A-I or A-II categories.

#### A-III – Adults

Adult sensibilities can, of course, run the gamut from a viewer with a high tolerance for edgy subject matter to more sensitive moviegoers who find certain elements less palatable. CNS reviewers try to strike a balance between the two. Films receiving an A-III classification are usually not acceptable for teens but are appropriate for most adults. Occasionally, however, a worthy film is clearly mature in subject matter, yet older adolescents might derive benefit from it. In that case, a sentence may be added about the movie being “acceptable” or “possibly acceptable” for “older teens.”

#### L – Limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling.

This highly restrictive classification explicitly indicates that the film will probably be unacceptable to the casual adult moviegoer. It is generally used for those quality films that include more challenging material than an A-III in terms of violence, sexual content (including nudity), language or moral dilemmas, but are still worthy of consideration by mature viewers well-grounded in their faith and open to the portrayal of gritty subject matter. Less often, this classification is applied to movies that — whatever their aesthetic merit or lack thereof — are too strong for an A-III but not sufficiently wayward to receive an “O.”

#### O – Morally offensive

This classification is applied, most importantly, to films that deny the existence of God, ridicule religious faith or are otherwise sacrilegious. Movies that directly contradict scriptural values and church teaching on such matters as euthanasia, abortion, suicide, adultery, homosexual activity, or vigilante killing and revenge also fall into this category. So, too, do films that feature excessive violence, gratuitous or exploitative sexuality or, for no artistically valid reason, non-stop vulgarity.

Note: Some movies previously were designated A-IV. Older films with this classification should be regarded as classified L.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.catholicnews.com/movie-reviews/movie-classifications/>



## Movie Ratings in Ontario<sup>1</sup>

Films are rated according to age-appropriateness using these classifications:

### **General**

Suitable for viewing by persons of all ages. May contain occasional violence, swearing, and coarse language, and the most innocent of sexually suggestive scenes and nudity.

### **Parental Guidance**

Parental discretion is advised. May contain less subtle sexually suggestive scenes and nudity and a more realistic portrayal of violence than in the General category; coarse language may occur more often than in the General category. Theme or content may not be suitable for all children though there is no age restriction. Theme or content may not be suitable for all children.

### **14 Accompaniment**

May contain violence, coarse language or sexually suggestive scenes, or any combination of them. Suitable for viewers 14 years of age or older. Viewers under 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

### **18 Accompaniment**

Will contain horror, explicit violence, frequent coarse language, or scenes that are more sexually suggestive than in the 14A category, or any combination of them. Suitable for viewers 18 years of age or older. Viewers under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

### **Restricted**

These are “adult motion pictures” and may contain explicit sex scenes, violence or scenes referred to in section 5(3) of the [Motion Picture Act](#), or any combination of them. The director assigns this category to motion pictures if the director considers that the theme, subject matter, or plot of the adult motion picture is artistic, historical, political, educational, or scientific. Restricted to viewers 18 years of age and over. Persons under 18 years of age are not permitted to attend under any circumstances.

**Source:** [British Columbia Motion Picture Act Regulations](#)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/page/movie-ratings-ontario>





## Motion Picture Association – Canada ©

### Canadian Film Ratings<sup>1</sup>

**General (G):** Suitable for viewing by all ages.

**Parental Guidance (PG):** Parental Guidance advised. Themes or content may not be suitable for children.

**14A:** Suitable for people 14 years of age or older. Those under 14 should view with an adult. No rental or purchase by those under 14. Parents cautioned. May contain violence, coarse language, and/or sexually suggestive scenes.

**18A:** Suitable for people 18 years of age or older. Persons under 18 should view with an adult. No rental or purchase by those under 18. Parents strongly cautioned. Will likely contain explicit violence; frequent coarse language; sexual activity; and/or horror.

**Restricted (R):** Restricted to 18 years and over. No rental or purchase by those under 18. Content not suitable for minors. Video contains frequent use of sexual activity; brutal/graphic violence; intense horror; and/or other disturbing content.

**Exempt (E):** Contains material not subject to classification such as documentaries, nature, travel, music, arts, and culture, sports, and educational and instructional information.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mpa-canada.org/film-ratings/>



## Committee Guidelines for the Selection and Approval of Learning Resources

### Purpose and Rationale

The following framework is designed to assist educators and school administrators with the selection of appropriate Learning Resources for our school communities.

#### 1. General Criteria

The criteria outlined below applies to all learning resources. Although not **all** learning resources will meet **all** the criteria listed below, it is expected that staff members will exercise their professional expertise, judgement, and sensitivity to apply the criteria when choosing resources.

- 1.1 Alignment to Catholic Graduate Expectations and Discernment Using the Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 1.2 Alignment to the Curriculum Expectations
- 1.3 Suitability for the Community of Learners
- 1.4 Nature and Degree of the Bias
- 1.5 Canadian Content and Publication
- 1.6 Quality of Visual and Physical Format
- 1.7 Cost and Durability

#### 2. Specific Criteria

The criteria listed below expand on the seven general criteria above by highlighting key points to be used in such areas as gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, and culture, values, and Canadian content. The use of these specific criteria reflects the policies of the Board pertaining to equity in the curriculum and anti-racist and anti-discriminatory education.

##### 1.1 Alignment to Catholic Graduate Expectations and Discernment Using the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- i. The resource does not deny, mock, denigrate or challenge any of the major tenets of Catholic Christian belief as outlined in scripture or the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- ii. Resources may be chosen on controversial issues so that young Catholic readers may develop, in a safe, caring, and inclusive environment, the practice of critical literacy.
- iii. Selection is guided by the Ontario School Catholic Graduate Expectations in making choices that support the success of each student as:
  - A discerning believer formed in the Catholic Faith community
  - An effective communicator
  - A reflective and creative thinker
  - A self-directed, responsible, life-long learner
  - A collaborative contributor
  - A caring family member
  - A caring citizen



## **1.2 Alignment to Curriculum Expectations**

- The material supports the curriculum as outlined in Ministry, Board, and school documents.
- The material supports the principles of the Equity and Inclusive policies of the BHNCD SB.
- The material supports specific kinds of programs or modifications, e.g., Special Education, ESL/ELD, Credit Recovery, Alternative Education, Career Path, Continuing Education, etc.
- The material is appropriate for the grade(s) and level(s) of instruction.

## **1.3 Suitability for the Community of Learners**

- The resource will enrich the learning experiences of students.
- The resource is intended to sustain the interest of students.
- The resource will be appropriate to the maturity and experience of students.
- The resource will be relevant to and reflective of students' lives and the world around them.
- The resource will be appropriate for learning styles and skills of the intended audience.

## **1.4 Nature and Degree of Bias**

Recognizing that bias exists in all learning materials:

- Resources should be selected so that students can see their lived experiences positively reflected or be given a positive perspective into others' lived experiences.
- People of a variety of races, religions, genders, sexual orientations, classes, abilities, and ages are represented.

## **1.5 Canadian Content**

- The material presents a broadly based perspective of Canada with a global framework.
- The material presents Indigenous people in positive, contemporary contexts, where appropriate.
- The material is written or edited by a Canadian author.
- The material is edited, printed, or bound in Canada.

## **1.6 Quality of Visual and Physical Format**

- The material is well-organized and presented clearly and logically.
- The format of illustrations, graphics, pictures, photographs, and artwork is of high quality.

## **1.7 Cost and Durability**

- The cost of the material is justified for its use.
- The resource is durable.