



## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **EDUCATION ON HUMAN SEXUALITY/FAMILY LIFE**

#### **Rationale**

Pope Francis, in his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, states: *The family is the primary setting for socialization, since it is where we first learn to relate to others, to listen and to share, to be patient and show respect, to help one another and live as one. The task of education is to make us sense that the world and society are also our home; it trains us how to live together in this greater home. In the family, we learn closeness, care and respect for others (276).*

Living together as family in the world with an attentiveness to the whole person is captured by the five themes which recur through all the years of **Fully Alive** and continue to inform the approach at secondary school.

1. Created and Loved by God
2. Living in Relationship
3. Created Sexual: Male and Female
4. Growing in Commitment
5. Living in the World

The family life program (**Fully Alive**) is an essential element of elementary Catholic education and it is the intention of the Board that all students will have the opportunity to participate in it.

Family life education is a necessary component of religious education credit courses offered at the secondary level and it is the expectation of the Board that all students taking these courses will have the opportunity to participate in all aspects.

The Board recognizes that, as the first educators of their children, parents may request that their children enrolled in a Catholic elementary school be exempted from Human Development and Sexual Health expectations found in strand D of *The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1–8, 2019*. In the context of Catholic education, the exemption corresponds to Theme Three, *Created Sexual: Male and Female*, in the *Fully Alive* program. Such requests are subject to the expectations of this policy.

#### **Guiding Principles**

- It is the primary role of parents, with the appropriate support of Catholic schools, to help our students know God's love for them.

- It is important that students be invited to reflect on and appreciate the love they receive from their family members, friends, and others.
- Family Life education offers hope to students who live in difficult or painful situations and encourages them to recognize the signs of God’s love in their lives.
- Students must be encouraged to express themselves to their parents, other family members, friends, and trusted adults in matters related to family life.
- Family Life education supports the special role of the family to teach its members about the joys of being known and accepted by others.
- Family Life education seeks to present fertility as a blessing from God.
- Family Life education seeks to promote a sense of awe and respect for new human life from the moment of conception to natural death.
- Family Life education promotes the sanctity of marriage.
- Family Life education promotes chastity for all people, as appropriate for their particular state in life.
- Family Life education provides students with a positive sense of their developing sexuality, promoting a view of sexuality as integral to the human person, created in the image of a life-giving and loving God.
- Family Life education promotes the development of personal character through the virtues, reinforcing one’s responsibilities to self, others and the broader community.

**References**

*Amoris Laetitia: Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, 2016*  
*Ontario Catholic Secondary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 9-12, 2016, Religious Education*  
*Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9-12, 2015, Health and Physical Education*  
*Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 1-8, 2012, Family Life Education*  
*Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 1-8, 2012, Religious Education*  
*Our Language, Our Story – Character Education Through the Virtues, EOCCC, 2009*  
*CARFLEO Resources*  
*Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, ICE, 2011*  
*Fully Alive, Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario*  
*Parent Resources – Fully Alive, Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario*  
*Educational Guidance in Human Love, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1983*  
*Policy/Program Memorandum No. 162 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm162.pdf>*  
*Renewing the Promise, 2018*

**Administrative Procedures**

Education on Human Sexuality/Family Life

Approved: November 23, 2010

Revised: April 25, 2017

Revised: February 2020