



ALBERTA

EDUCATION
AND CHILDCARE
Office of the Minister

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

MINISTERIAL ORDER (#030/2025)

Standards for the Selection, Availability, and Access of School Library Materials

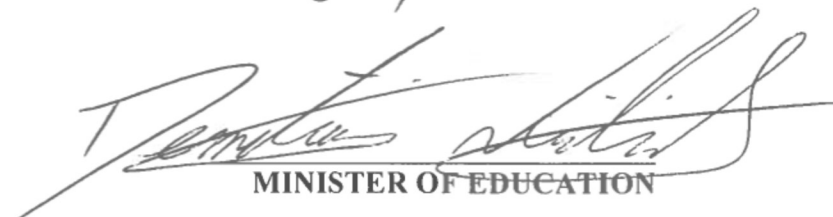
WHEREAS ensuring children and students have access to materials in school libraries that are developmentally appropriate can positively impact children's and students' mental health and well-being;

WHEREAS a school authority has the responsibility to provide its students with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and nurtures a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta wishes to support the selection, availability, and access to school library materials that promote children's and students' well-being and learning opportunities;

THEREFORE I, Demetrios Nicolaides, the Minister of Education and Childcare, pursuant to s. 18(2)(b) of the *Education Act*, hereby make the Order in the attached Appendix, being the Standards for the Selection, Availability, and Access of School Library Materials.

DATED at July 4, Alberta Calgary, 2025.


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Standards for the Selection, Availability, and Access of School Library Materials

Definitions

1. For the purposes of these Standards,

- a. “child” means a child enrolled in an early childhood services program that is younger than 6 years of age and therefore does not meet the definition of “student” in the *Education Act*;
- b. “depiction” means a written passage, illustration, photographic or digital image, video or audio file;
- c. “developmentally appropriate” means appropriate for the age, grade, and ability level and the cognitive, physical, emotional, and intellectual development of the child or student;
- d. “explicit sexual content” means content containing a detailed and clear depiction of a sexual act. This includes, but is not limited to, a detailed and clear depiction of
 - i. masturbation including touching of a person’s own genitals or anus with a finger, artificial sexual organ or other substitute for a sexual organ,
 - ii. penetration of the penis into the vagina or anus,
 - iii. contact of a sexual nature between the genitalia, mouth, hand, finger or other body part with the clothed or unclothed genitalia, pubic area, buttocks, anus, or if the person is female, the breast, of another person,
 - iv. ejaculation onto another person, or
 - v. the use of artificial sexual organs or substitutes for sexual organs on the clothed or unclothed genitalia, pubic area, buttocks, anus, or if the person is female, the breast, of another person,

but does not include non-sexual content, non-explicit sexual content or any depiction of any nature contained in religious texts or scriptures;

- e. “grade 10” means the school year that is, or is determined by a school authority as equivalent to, a student’s tenth school year of compulsory education;
- f. “non-explicit sexual content” means content containing a depiction of a sexual act that is not detailed or clear, but does not include non-sexual content or any depiction of any nature contained in religious texts or scriptures;

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- g. “non-sexual content” means content that is not sexual in nature, and includes but is not limited to
 - i. a depiction of bodies, body parts, or physical contact related to medical conditions, examinations or treatment,
 - ii. a depiction of bodies, body parts, or physical contact not of a sexual nature but related to biological functions or processes involving genitalia like puberty, menstruation, pregnancy or breastfeeding,
 - iii. a depiction of sexual acts or any biological function or process that is for information and is not narrative, such as a depiction contained in technical or reference materials such as dictionaries or encyclopedias,
 - iv. a depiction of non-sexual activities that may be related to sexual acts or romantic relationships, such as kissing or handholding, or
 - v. indirect references to sexual acts or the implication or suggestion that sexual acts have occurred or are occurring;
- h. “school authority” means any Alberta public or separate school board, francophone regional authority, charter board, operator of a private school, or private ECS operator;
- i. “school library” means any dedicated library space in a school, including a learning commons, a classroom collection or any similar collection, but does not include a library governed by the *Libraries Act* that is located in a school building;
- j. “school library materials” means any materials, including books or electronic materials, that are accessible or available to children or students in a school library, but does not include learning and teaching resources
 - i. authorized or approved by the Minister, or
 - ii. selected and used by a teacher to support curricular outcomes;

Standards for School Library Materials

- 2. A school authority is required to implement the following Standards for the selection, availability, and access of school library materials:
 - a. The school authority must not select for inclusion in a school library, or make available to any children or students in a school library, materials containing explicit sexual content.

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- b. The school authority must not permit any children, or any students enrolled in a grade or level below grade 10, to access school library materials containing non-explicit sexual content;
 - c. The school authority may permit students enrolled in grade 10 or in a grade or level above grade 10 to access school library materials containing non-explicit sexual content if such content is developmentally appropriate for the student accessing the material;
 - d. The school authority must review its collection of school library materials on a continual basis to ensure it complies with these Standards and the school authority's policies and/or procedures required pursuant to these Standards;
 - e. The school authority must establish and maintain a publicly available listing of all school library materials;
 - f. A school authority staff member must supervise the access of school library materials by children or students to ensure that they do not access school library materials that they are not permitted to access;
 - g. Where during the school day children or students have access to collections of materials, in the school building or otherwise, that are not part of a school library, a school authority staff member must supervise such access to ensure that students do not access materials that they would not otherwise be permitted to access if in a school library; and
 - h. The school authority must provide to the Minister any information and/or reports on school library materials as requested by the Minister.
3. A school authority must remove materials with explicit sexual content from school libraries no later than October 1, 2025.

School Authority Policies and/or Procedures

4. A school authority is required to have publicly available policies and/or procedures relating to the selection, availability, and access of school library materials that comply with these Standards no later than January 1, 2026. A school authority may achieve this by developing new policies or procedures, or by incorporating these Standards into existing policies and/or procedures.
5. A school authority's policies and/or procedures, at a minimum, are required to:
- a. be made publicly available;
 - b. comply with the Standards as prescribed in section 2;

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- c. establish criteria for the selection of school library materials;
 - d. set out the process for the review of school library materials;
 - e. set out responsibilities of school authority staff supervising children's and students' access to school library materials throughout the school day, not limited to instructional hours;
 - f. establish processes for
 - i. a child or student enrolled in the school,
 - ii. a school authority employee,
 - iii. a parent of a child or student enrolled in the school,
 - iv. a member of the school council, or
 - v. a member of the community with a direct connection to the school,to request that the school authority review, change the access to or availability of, reconsider, or remove specific school library materials in a particular school for reasons related to sections 2.a, 2.b. or 2.c. of these Standards.
6. A school authority is required to clearly communicate the policies and/or procedures to school authority employees, children and students, and parents.