

Our Family's Traditional Values Letter

Parent's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Child's Name: _____

School Board: _____

Child's School: _____

School Address: _____

Grade Level: _____

Date: _____

Dear Principal(s) / Teacher(s):

I/we wish to thank the school for its commitment to my/our child and his/her education. As a parent(s)/guardian(s) I/we understand the responsibility of being "Partners in Education" and are committed to working with the school to achieve the best for my/our child.

As educators in a multicultural community, the school instructs children from many cultural and spiritual backgrounds. Pluralistic Boards of Education attempt to respect and understand the values of all faiths and cultures that attend the schools. An understanding of the cultural and spiritual background of each child helps the teacher(s) to **connect the learning in the classroom to the child's cultural and spiritual understandings** (Standards of Practice in the Teaching Profession, (http://www.oct.ca/standards/standards_of_practice.aspx?lang=en-CA), and to not accidentally undermine the values taught at home.

As a family, we adhere to a set of values based on traditional Muslim principles. I/we believe that it is our responsibility, to teach these values to our children, and that the application of these values is important for achieving eternal life.

To assist the school, I/we have included the attached information that is intended to identify some of the issues that we would find sensitive and controversial. My/Our request is that whenever concepts or values are presented that may conflict with the values of the home, the teacher(s) will contact me/us prior to instruction. With an understanding of what is to be taught, I/we may choose to not have my/our child participate, or choose to include my/our child in the instruction and have a family discussion about what was learned. Either way, we are interested in helping him/her to better understand who they are and how they fit within a multi-cultural, multi-faith community.

I/We appreciate being able to share this with the school. Thank you for your respect and understanding.

Sincerely,

Signature of Parent or Student (if 18 years of age or older)
attachments – Spiritual Values / Issue in Education Letter Form
Spiritual Values – General Notes – explanation of terms
Letter, Minister of Education

TRADITIONAL VALUES / ISSUES IN EDUCATION FORM

Student Name: _____

Grade Level: _____

School: _____

School Address: _____

Name (Parent/Guardian): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

(Parent or Student if 18 or older)

Considering the **secular humanistic** approach often applied to subjects and issues within public education, I/we request that we be advised prior to my/our child's involvement in any activity or program containing the following issues and topics:

a. Values/Religious Instruction

1. ___ Values neutral education - instruction of students in "moral relativism" and principles of situational ethics. This "ism" is a central tenet of the religion of "Secular Humanism";
2. ___ Occultic principles and practices - witchcraft, black magic, spirit guides, Satanism, wizardry, new age, channeling, astrology, horoscopes, psychic powers and other such practices, which are contradictory to Muslim principles;
3. ___ Environmental Worship - placing environmental issues/concerns above the value of Muslim principles and human life
4. ___ The Origin of humans (Creation vs. Evolution)
5. ___ The discussion of the existence of a supernatural power /GOD
6. ___ World religion; the comparison of religions and philosophy vs. religion.

b. Family Life & Sex Education

1. ___ Instruction in sex education
2. ___ Discussion or portrayals of sexual conduct that we determine to be unnatural/unhealthy (anal sex, oral sex, sadism, masochism, fetishes, bondage, etc.);
3. ___ Discussions or portrayals of homosexual/bisexual conduct and relationships and/or transgenderism as natural, healthy;
4. ___ Teaching about or provision of birth control drugs and devices, without parental consent;
5. ___ Teaching that abortion is an acceptable method of birth control and that life does not begin at conception;
6. ___ Encouraging the acceptance of infanticide or euthanasia;
7. ___ Providing a false sense of security with regard to the effectiveness of condoms in preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases;
8. ___ Relationships, Pre-Marital Sex, Cross-gender relations.

[I/we request for the religious exemption of education/instruction related to Sex and Family life in the school (Instruction will be provided by us (parents) and/or his/her religious teacher according to our religious belief and practices)]

c. Medical Treatment

___ As long as I remain liable under the Family Law Act of Ontario to provide support to my child, I request that all employees and agents of the school board refrain from counseling, treating, or referring my child for non-emergency treatment, admission to a care facility, or personal assistance services within the meaning of the Health Care Consent Act of Ontario, without my knowledge and prior consent; subject only to a written waiver of this instruction for particular forms of treatment in specified circumstances, and circumstances qualifying as "emergencies" under that statute.

I/We request that:

1 My/our child not be approached for his/her consent to participate in any of the above activities, with the intent to nullify this communication; and

2. As the Ontario College of Teachers' 'Standards of Practice in the Teaching Profession (1999, 2006)' encourages teachers to '**connect learning to the child's life experiences and cultural and spiritual understanding**'(1), this information will be important for a teacher who is educating the child. Therefore, it is requested that teachers who will be in contact with the child be informed about this communication, and that this document be made available in the child's OSR.

..."an OSR will contain additional information identified as being conducive to the improvement of the instruction of the child."(2)

Standards of Practice

http://www.oct.ca/standards/standards_of_practice.aspx?lang=en-CA

Ontario Student Record Guideline 2000, Section 3

SPIRITUAL VALUES - GENERAL NOTES

Dear Principal(s) and Teacher(s):

It is difficult for a public school system to be all things to all people. For this reason I/we, the parents/guardians, wish to share with you that my/our child is raised in traditional Muslim principles(1). I/we feel that it is important that information about these sensitive issues be taught in a way that positively connects the learning in the classroom to the child's Muslim understanding.

To prevent conflict and confusion in the mind of my/our child, and to promote success, I/we request that topics, such as those listed, not be introduced to him/her without prior consent. Further, I/we ask that when opportunity arises my/our child would be encouraged to connect the learning in the classroom to their spiritual understanding by incorporating his/her values within their school work (e.g. writing about what they believe with respect to a topic, or completing a piece of art work that includes communicating their faith).

In an effort to promote understanding, please find below explanatory notes about the issues listed that could lead to conflict.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Religious Instruction

Moral Relativism and Situational Ethics: Secular Humanism, the value system often assumed by public institutions as acceptable to everyone, has been identified as a religion in the courts. It has a set of doctrine outlined in the Humanist Manifestos (I & II) and the Declaration of Secular Humanism (1980). Teachings from the position of moral relativism and situational ethics, basic tenets of secular humanism, are directly opposed to our family's values and my/our child's spiritual understandings of absolute rights and wrongs.

Environmentalism: Naturalism, which denies the existence of a Creator, is another foundational principle of the value system/religion of humanism. Humanist Manifesto II identifies the goal that the doctrines of humanism, including naturalism, must be taught through the public arena, including education. This family's faith-based spiritual understanding requires that we be responsible stewards of all that our Creator (God) has entrusted to us. As such, we do agree with many of the goals of conservation, however, these principles are often presented from a humanistic (for the benefit of man to live as long as possible) or naturalistic (deifying the Earth) worldview which is in conflict with our teachings. Our faith requires that we place nothing above our God. Meeting expectations of conservation would be more successful, for our children, if connected to their spiritual understanding of being 'responsible to their Creator by being respectful to His creation.

Family Life and Sex Education

I/we choose to inculcate in my/our child by precept and example the virtues of purity, chastity, and prudence, which is in keeping with s.264 (1)(c) of the Education Act of Ontario (2).

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Trans-Gendered Issues: People do have the liberty to choose the lifestyle, and value system, they wish to lead. Alternative lifestyles, based upon sexual orientation, is oppositional to families adhering to Muslim spiritual values. To reduce spiritual conflict within the child, the learning must positively connect to the child's life experiences and spiritual understandings, and take place only when the child has developed beyond a certain level of spiritual maturity and confidence.

Sex Education: The instruction of conception and contraception, as per Ministry of Education expectations, may be acceptable. At the appropriate grade level (as suggested within Ministry documents) our child could be instructed in these topics, provided the learning positively connects the child's life experiences and spiritual understandings of the value of abstinence from sexual activity until marriage. An example of an activity that positively connects the child's spirituality to the curriculum expectations would be: the examination, within supportive peer groups, of the practical, medical, social, emotional and spiritual reasons their value system teaches that abstaining from sexual activity until marriage is the only safe and healthy choice.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases & Condoms: The teaching of this topic cannot effectively be achieved for our child without interfering with his/her spiritual understandings of the value of abstinence until marriage. The issue of STD's and condoms deal with values and principles that are most often delivered from a humanist perspective. This perspective is in opposition to our family's spirituality and could negatively affect the teachings at home and our child's spiritual development. I/we are requesting advance notice of any curriculum materials involving these topics so we can ascertain whether our child should remain in class during this section of the curriculum.

Abortion: The acceptance of abortion by society is a value consistent with secular humanism, which accepts that our present physical life is the only life that we have any knowledge of (ie. there is no life after death). As a result, we need to make the most of it while we are alive. Thus the rationalization that "*I should have control over my body and be able to make decisions about it,*" takes priority within public education and other public arenas where humanism is the dominant value system. This information and approach fails, however, to connect the learning of this form of birth control to our child's life experiences and spiritual understandings of: life after death; the importance of the teachings of their Lord and making decisions that are consistent with their value system; the decisions made in this life affect their relationship with their Lord and could have consequences for their eternal life; human life as a gift of the Creator; and the value of human life.

Medical Consent: The reason for this request is to be sure that such treatment, counselling, etc. is consistent with our spiritual value system.

1 Section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Part 1 of the Constitution Act, 1982) states that "everyone has the: (a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression; (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (d) freedom of association."

2 S. 264(1)(c) of the Education Act of Ontario."[Teachers have a duty]...to inculcate by precept and example respect for religion and the principles of Judaeo-Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, loyalty, love of country, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, purity, temperance and all other virtues."

IN THE EVENT A CONFLICT ARISES

In the event that the teacher identifies that some materials or curriculum may be in conflict with the requests outlined, I/we (parents/guardians) would appreciate that the teacher contact me/us for clarification.

In the event that I/we (parents/guardians) identify a conflict has arisen, I/ we will take the following steps to work with the school to dialogue, and address the issue:

1. Parents will communicate directly with the teacher to reach an understanding and resolution.
2. In the event that the issue cannot be resolved at the parent/teacher level an interview will be requested with the principal.
3. If the issue is still not resolvable, a meeting will be requested with school board officials (Superintendent & trustee) in an attempt to resolve the issues.