



# TRADITIONAL VALUES / ISSUES IN EDUCATION LETTER, FORMS, & EXPLANATORY NOTES (*Catholic Version*)



**Should the component of any course conflict with a religious belief of the parent (*of minor-age children*), or a student aged 18 or older, the right to withdraw from that component of the course shall be granted, on the written request of the parent ...”**

Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education, Ontario

**P.E.A.C.E. (Public Education Advocates for Christian Equity)**  
(*Rev. Sept, 2012*)

# Our Family's Traditional Values Letter

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Board: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's School: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level (as of the date the form is completed): \_\_\_\_\_

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.

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 address the goals of the teaching profession:

- **connect the learning in the classroom to the child's cultural and spiritual understandings** (Standards of Practice in the Teaching Profession (1999, 2006)

- **model respect for spiritual and cultural values** (Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession [http://www.oct.ca/standards/ethical\\_standards.aspx?lang=en-CA](http://www.oct.ca/standards/ethical_standards.aspx?lang=en-CA))

As a family, we adhere to a set of values based on traditional Christian 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 the issues that our faith would find sensitive, and must abstain from participating.

My/Our request is that when concepts or values, as part of planned curriculum, 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, and the context of the learning materials (novels being used, songs to be sung, dramatization themes, etc – which are not identified directly in the Ministry of Education curriculum documents) we will be able to talk with the child about what is being learned and help them to understand how this

information applies to them, assisting the child to better understand who they are and how they fit in a multi-faith, multi-cultural community.

In the event that a planned learning activity (Ministry of Education skill, or contextual setting of the learning) is something that our faith requires that we abstain from, I am willing to work with the school to seek relevant and realistic accommodations.

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

Sincerely,

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Signature of Parent (or Student if 18 years of age or older)

Attachments:

- Spiritual Values / Issue in Education Form
- Spiritual Values – General Notes
- Letter from the Minister of Education

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<sup>1</sup> The Standards of Practice for the Teaching profession calls teachers to be sensitive to factors that influence individual student learning. *Standards of Practice in the Teaching Profession*

[http://www.oct.ca/standards/standards\\_of\\_practice.aspx?lang=en-CA](http://www.oct.ca/standards/standards_of_practice.aspx?lang=en-CA)

## Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Board: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's School: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level (as of the date the form is completed): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent (or Student, if 18 years of age or older)

Dear Teachers and Principal:

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 AND/OR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION**

1. \_\_\_ **Values Neutral Education** – The instruction of students in “moral relativism” and principles of situational ethics. This “ism” is a tenet of “secular humanism.”
2. \_\_\_ **Occult Principles and Practices** such as witchcraft, black magic, spirit guides, Satanism, wizardry, new age, channelling, astrology, horoscopes, psychic powers, certain aspects of Hallowe'en and other such practices contradictory to Judeo-Christian principles.
3. \_\_\_ **Environmental Worship** and the placing of environmental issues and/or concerns above the value of Judeo-Christian principles and human life.
4. \_\_\_ **Darwinian Evolution** when this is presented as fact and not theory, i.e. as evidence of a purely materialist origin of the universe or as something that disproves the existence of a creator (God).
5. \_\_\_ Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION**

1. \_\_\_ Instruction in **Sex Education**.
2. \_\_\_ Discussion of **Premarital or Extramarital Sexual Activity** as natural, healthy, or something to be encouraged or discussions about chastity that present it as unrealistic or unachievable.
3. \_\_\_ Discussion or portrayals of **sexual activity** that I/we determine to be inappropriate (e.g. masturbation, anal sex, oral sex, sadism, masochism, fetishes, bondage, etc.).
4. \_\_\_ Discussions or portrayals of, **Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans-sexual** activities and/or transgenderism as natural, healthy, or something to be encouraged.
5. \_\_\_ Teaching about or provision of **Birth Control** drugs and devices.
6. \_\_\_ Teaching that **Abortion** is an acceptable method of birth control and that life does not begin at conception.
7. \_\_\_ Encouraging the acceptance of **Infanticide** or **Euthanasia**.
8. \_\_\_ Discussions with regard to the **Purported Effectiveness of Condoms** in preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
9. \_\_\_ Other (please explain)

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**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 counselling, 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 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.

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" (Ref. 1), this information will be important for a teacher who is educating the child. Therefore, I/we request that all 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. (Ref. 2)

**References:**

- (1) Standards of Practice [http://www.oct.ca/standards/standards\\_of\\_practice.aspx?lang=en-CA](http://www.oct.ca/standards/standards_of_practice.aspx?lang=en-CA)
- (2) From the Ontario Student Record Guideline 2000, Section 3 "...an OSR will contain additional information identified as being conducive to the improvement of the instruction of the child."

## Traditional/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 Judaeo-Christian principles

I/we feel that it is important that information about the sensitive issues selected in the *Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form* be taught only when the child has developed beyond a certain level of spiritual maturity. This may be suggested in Ministry of Education documents, but ultimately the level of maturity will be gauged by his/her parents. Furthermore, I/we feel that this material must be introduced in a way that positively connects the teaching in the classroom to the child's Judaeo-Christian understanding. An example of such an activity would be to examine, within supportive peer groups, the practical, medical, social, emotional and spiritual reasons why his/her value system teaches that abstaining from sexual activity until marriage is the only truly safe and healthy choice.

To prevent conflict and confusion in the mind of my/our child, and to promote success, I/we request that those topics I/we selected in the *Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form* not be introduced to my/our child without my/our prior consent. Further, I/we ask that when opportunity arises my/our child would be encouraged to connect the work in the classroom to his/her 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 in the *Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form* that could lead to conflict.

### A. VALUES/RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

- 1. Values-Neutral Education** (moral relativism and situational ethics): Secular Humanism, the value system often assumed by public institutions to be acceptable to everyone, is broadly accepted as a religion. 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 understanding of absolute rights and wrongs.
- 2. Occult Principles and Practices.** These practices are expressly forbidden to members of our family's faith and are considered to be of the highest seriousness. As there is almost no way to handle this material appropriately to our family's background, and 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.
- 3. Environmental Worship:** Naturalism, which denies the existence of a Creator, is another principle of secular humanism. Our family believes that God created the physical world and that humans must be its responsible stewards. As such, we agree with many of the goals of the nature conservation movement. However, these principles can be presented from a worldview that is either utilitarian (for the benefit of humanity to live as long as possible) or naturalistic (deifying the Earth). Both of these are in conflict with our family's faith, which requires that we place God above all else. Thus, for our child, the laudable goal of ecological conservation could be taught more successfully when connected to our child's spiritual understanding of being responsible to their Creator for the careful use of His creation.
- 4. Darwinian Evolution.** The theory of evolution has undergone considerable development since Charles Darwin first proposed it; the word "evolution" thus has a number of meanings. Some of these meanings may be compatible with our family's Bible-based Christianity whilst others are not. Our family believes that God is the ultimate origin of

universe and of life. Teaching my/our child about evolution will be most successful if discussion stayed within the bounds of the science behind genetic mutations and natural selection without extrapolating beyond the science to speculate from a secular humanist perspective on the origins and meaning of human life.

## **B. FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION**

**1. & 2. Sex Education and Premarital, and/or Extramarital Sexual Activity.** I/we choose to inculcate in my/our child, by precept and example, the virtues of purity, chastity, and prudence and I/we encourage sexual self-control before marriage and faithfulness after it. This is in keeping with s.264 (1)(c) of the Education Act of Ontario (see Ref. 2). Within that context, our child could be taught about the sex act and conception, provided the learning positively connects with the child's life experiences and spiritual understandings of the value of abstinence from sexual activity until marriage.

**3. Unusual sexual practices** 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). Catholics believe that, because sexual intercourse is ordered towards the generation of children, any individual sexual act in which there is an *active effort* to make an otherwise fertile act into an infertile one is not licit. This includes actions such as masturbation, artificial contraception, sexual acts between persons of the same sex, oral sex, anal sex, bestiality, etc. that by their nature would never lead to conception even between healthy, fertile individuals. For different reasons, many Protestants also believe these sexual practices are sinful. These sexual practices should not be presented as positive goods to my/our child.

**4. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Trans-Gendered Activities.** I/we acknowledge that people have the liberty to choose the lifestyle they wish to lead and the value system to which they wish to adhere. However, certain alternative lifestyles based upon sexual orientation are logically incompatible with Judeo-Christian spiritual values. To reduce the spiritual conflict within the child, teaching about sexual orientation should focus on *respect for persons* and not require acceptance or approval of specific sexual practices. In a Catholic school, the teacher should reference the Catechism of the Catholic Church, articles 2357 through 2359. In all cases, this subject must be introduced in a way that positively connects to the child's life experiences and spiritual understandings.

**5. Birth Control.** I/we are raising our child to value chastity until marriage and believe that talking about birth control can encourage additional sexual activity amongst young unmarried persons. Further, I/we believe that nature has given the instinctive desire for pleasure in the sexual act, not as an end in itself, but rather for the service of life. In this, Catholics follow the Church's consistent teaching "that every attempt of either husband or wife in the performance of the conjugal act or in the development of its natural consequences which aims at depriving it of its inherent force and hinders the procreation of new life is immoral; and that no 'indication' or need can convert an act which is intrinsically immoral into a moral and lawful one." (Pius XII, *Allocution to Midwives*). Some Protestants believe that artificial contraception is always intrinsically wrong based on Psalm 127:3-5. Sometimes called "Quiverfull" families, these Protestants have an open, accepting, and obedient attitude toward the possibility of birthing children, regarding children as unqualified blessings, and believing God Himself maintains sole provenance over conception and birth. Thus, at the appropriate level of maturity (as suggested within Ministry documents but ultimately as decided by me/us) our child could be instructed on the topic of contraception if the Catholic and Quiverfull positions on the subject are acknowledged to exist and are not denigrated in class. One example of a learning activity appropriate for my/our child would be to research and write about our faith's position on the subject of contraception, such as those stated in such documents as Pius XI's *Casti Conubii* (1930), Pius XII's *Allocution to Midwives* (1951), Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae* (1968), and John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*.

**6. & 7. Abortion, Infanticide, and Euthanasia:** Our family believes that the deliberate killing of human beings (other than in legitimate self-defence/war or possibly for the most heinous of crimes) fundamentally undermines the basis of

law and public morality. Our family also believes that abortion results in the death of an innocent human. Thus, any rationalization of abortion along the lines of "my body; my choice," is incompatible with our family's spiritual values. To reduce spiritual conflict within the child, teaching on these end-of-life issues must connect with our child's life experiences and spiritual understanding of Biblical teachings, making decisions consistent with those teachings; that the decisions made in this life affect their relationship with their Lord and could have consequences for their eternal life; that human life as a gift of the Creator; and that human life at all ages and all states of health has great value. In a Catholic school, the teacher should reference documents such as Pope Pius XII's 1951 *Allocution to Midwives*,<sup>1</sup> which noted "The direct destruction of so-called "useless lives," already born or still in the womb, practiced extensively a few years ago, can in no wise be justified."

**8. Purported Effectiveness of Condoms with respect to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).** 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 and faithfulness within it. For Catholics and for some Protestants, their view of the inherently disordered nature of contraception discussed in B (5) above must also be taken into account. The issue of STIs and condoms deal with values and principles that are often delivered from a secular humanist perspective contrary to our family's spirituality that could negatively affect the teachings at home and our child's spiritual development. However, knowledge of the symptoms of STIs and of when to seek medical advice is a subject that could be introduced when our child has reached an appropriate level of maturity in the opinion of the parents.

**C. MEDICAL TREATMENT CONSENT:** The reason for this request is to be sure that such treatment, counselling, etc. is consistent with our spiritual value system.

### **IN THE EVENT A VALUES CONFLICT ARISES**

In the event that the teacher identifies that some materials or curriculum that would be in conflict with the requests outlined, I/we would appreciate that the teacher contact me/us and briefly describe the intended teaching.

In the event that I/we identify that a conflict has actually arisen, I/we plan to take the following approach to reach an understanding and resolution of the issue:

1. Parent(s) will communicate directly with the teacher
2. In the event that the issue cannot be resolved at the parent/teacher level, then an interview will be requested with the principal.
3. If the issue is still not resolvable, then a meeting will be requested with school board officials (Superintendent and Trustee).

### **References:**

- (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."
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Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your email about the teaching of sexual diversity in schools.

Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods, and facilities, and without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or handicap. Our government is strongly committed to upholding this code, and has ensured these principles are affirmed in curriculum programs and policies for schools.

Publicly funded education strives to teach students to appreciate diversity and respect differences. Our civil values include respect for sexual orientation. The curriculum is designed to reflect the diversity of Canada, and teachers are expected to implement the curriculum in such a way that students can see the variety of their own backgrounds, interests, and experiences reflected in it.

A curriculum review process initiated in February 2003 has been designed to build on the strengths of the current curriculum and identify areas for improvement. This continuous cycle of review is not a development of a completely new curriculum, but is intended to ensure it remains current, relevant, and age-appropriate from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

The revised documents released as part of the curriculum review process now contain a section on antidiscrimination education that stresses the need for students to respect the diversity of students' various backgrounds, interests, and experiences. A number of courses in our curriculum policy documents contain references to sexual orientation, homophobia, and gay rights. The review of the Social Sciences and Humanities, and the Health and Physical Education curriculum policy documents is now underway. There is an opportunity as part of these reviews to ensure that the documents are more inclusive in nature and reflect the diversity of Ontario society.

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Providing all students with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and respectful environment is a responsibility in which school boards and schools play an important role. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted. Should a component of any course conflict with a religious belief held by a parent or a student aged eighteen or older, the right to withdraw from that component of the course shall be granted on the written request of the parent or student.

The Provincial Code of Conduct states that all members of the school community must respect and treat others fairly, regardless of factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Further, the revised Code also states that members of the school community must not engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias.

In conclusion, as a government we are committed to helping every student reach his or her full potential in schools that are safe, caring, and inclusive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathleen Wynne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen Wynne  
Minister of Education