

SCHOOL LITERARY MATERIALS – SELECTION, AVAILABILITY, AND ACCESS

Background

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to ensure all HPSD schools select, manage, and make available school literary materials in a manner that:

- protects students from explicit visual depictions of sexual acts;
- increases transparency for families and the community; and
- preserves access to significant literary works, including classic literature.

This procedure is developed under the authority of Ministerial Order #034/2025 – Education and Childcare, Alberta.

This Administrative Procedure applies to all HPSD schools (libraries and classroom collections, print and digital resources). It does not apply to:

- Public libraries under the *Libraries Act*;
- Resources authorized or approved by the Minister; or
- Materials brought into school by a child/student without the knowledge of staff.

Definitions

School literary materials – Any materials (books, magazines, comics, graphic novels, digital materials, and other literary/graphic materials) in physical or electronic form, available to students at a school.

Classroom collection – A teacher-curated set of literary materials available in a classroom.

Visual depiction – Any explicit visual/graphic representation (e.g., drawing, illustration, photographic/digital image, video).

Sexual act – Activities of a distinctly sexual nature (e.g., masturbation; genital or anal penetration; sexual contact between mouth/hand/body parts and another's unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, anus, or (for females) breast; ejaculation; sex-toy use). This excludes:

- non-sexual health/biological contexts (e.g., medical care, puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, breastfeeding); and
- non-distinctly sexual activities such as kissing or hand-holding.

Procedures

1. Prohibited Content
 - 1.1. The principal shall ensure that no school literary materials containing explicit visual depictions of a sexual act are accessible or available to students or selected for a school library.
 - 1.2. This prohibition does not apply to non-narrative reference works (e.g., technical manuals, dictionaries, encyclopedias).
2. Preservation of Classic Literature
 - 2.1. HPSD affirms the educational value of classic literary works.
 - 2.2. Classic literary works are not to be removed solely based on text-only references to sexual content.
 - 2.3. Removal applies where materials include explicit visual depictions of sexual acts as defined in this Administrative Procedure.
3. Transparency
 - 3.1. Division and School Libraries
 - 3.1.1. Each school library shall maintain a publicly available, searchable list of all school library literary materials..
 - 3.1.2. At minimum, the list shall include the title of the book and the author's name.

- 3.1.3. Each school shall ensure the list is accessible from the school's website and updated regularly.
- 3.2. Classroom Collections
 - 3.2.1. Principals/designates must be aware of the materials in their teachers' classroom collections.
 - 3.2.2. Teachers shall generate a list of literary materials in their classroom collection and provide a copy to the principal/designate.
 - 3.2.3. Teachers shall ensure parents/guardians of students who have access to the classroom collection are informed of the collection's contents (title and author list).
 - 3.2.4. HPSD shall provide a request pathway for parents/guardians to obtain a copy of classroom collection lists upon request.
 - 3.2.5. Teachers must make their classroom collection lists available, upon request, within five (5) days to any party that has a direct relation to the school as defined in the Ministerial Order.
- 4. Request to Review / Reconsider Materials
 - 4.1. Who may file
 - 4.1.1. The following parties may request a review of school literary materials:
 - 4.1.1.1. a child/student;
 - 4.1.1.2. an HPSD employee;
 - 4.1.1.3. a parent/guardian;
 - 4.1.1.4. a school council member; or
 - 4.1.1.5. a community member with a direct connection to the school, as defined in the Ministerial Order.
 - 4.2. Submission (Day 0-1)
 - 4.2.1. The requester shall submit the *HPSD Literary Materials Review Form* (online or paper) to the principal or designate, including:
 - 4.2.1.1. requester name, role, and school connection;
 - 4.2.1.2. item title and author;
 - 4.2.1.3. location of the material (library, classroom collection, ebook); and
 - 4.2.1.4. specific concern citing explicit visual depictions, including pages/photos/screenshots as applicable.
 - 4.2.2. The principal shall provide written acknowledgment of the request within three (3) school days.
 - 4.3. Triage (Day 0-5)
 - 4.3.1. The principal, in consultation with library staff where applicable, shall verify whether the item contains explicit visual depictions of a sexual act.
 - 4.3.2. If no visual depictions are present (text-only content):
 - 4.3.2.1. the item proceeds to Context Review (Section 4.7); and
 - 4.3.2.2. the item remains available pending a decision.
 - 4.3.3. If visual depictions are present that may meet the definition of a sexual act:
 - 4.3.3.1. the item is immediately restricted from student access (temporary hold) pending a decision.
 - 4.4. Context Review (Day 0-10)
 - 4.4.1. The principal shall convene a School Review Committee consisting of:
 - 4.4.1.1. the principal or principal designate;
 - 4.4.1.2. library staff (where applicable);
 - 4.4.1.3. one parent/school council representative; and
 - 4.4.1.4. one HPSD Board member.
 - 4.5. Decision (Day 0-15)
 - 4.5.1. The School Review Committee shall issue a written decision to:
 - 4.5.1.1. **Remove** the item, if explicit visual depictions of sexual acts are confirmed (except for non-narrative reference works); or
 - 4.5.1.2. **Retain with unrestricted access**; or
 - 4.5.1.3. **Modify access**, including one or more of:
 - 4.5.1.3.1. re-locating the material as a teacher resource only;
 - 4.5.1.3.2. limiting access to students in Grades 10–12 only; or
 - 4.5.1.3.3. other age-appropriate access controls consistent with this procedure.

- 4.6. Appeal (Day 0-25)
 - 4.6.1. The requester may appeal the School Review Committee decision to the Superintendent within five (5) school days of receipt of the decision.
 - 4.6.2. The Superintendent shall issue a final Division decision within ten (10) school days of receiving the appeal.
5. Reporting
 - 5.1. All removals are to be reported to the Division office to support the October 31, 2025, submission to the Minister and ongoing compliance reporting requirements.
6. Monitoring And Audit
 - 6.1.1. The Division shall conduct semi-annual audits of school websites to ensure school library lists are up-to-date.
 - 6.1.2. Principals/designates shall conduct periodic spot checks of classroom collection lists for completeness and accuracy.
7. Review Cycle
 - 7.1. This Administrative Procedure shall be reviewed in June 2026 or sooner if provincial standards change.

HPSD Forms

- Administrative Form 221A – Literary Materials Review Request
- Administrative Form 221B – Appeal of Literary Materials Review Decision

References

- *Education Act (Alberta)*
- *Human Rights Act (Alberta)*
- *Ministerial Order #034/2025 – Education and Childcare, Alberta*
- *Ministerial Order on Student Learning (028/2020)*

Cross Reference

- Administrative Procedure 220 – Provision of Teaching and Learning Resources
- Board Policy 12 – Appeals Regarding Student Matters