



2.18 Standards for the Selection, Availability, and Access of School Literary Materials

This policy is applicable to all Third Academy students, parent clients, volunteers, employees, directors, and the Head of Schools.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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REVISION RECORD

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1. TITLE

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

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all school literary materials available in schools align with *Ministerial Order #034/2025: Standards for the Selection, Availability and Access of School Literary Materials* issued by Alberta Education and Childcare.

This policy sets out the standards for the selection, curation, review, and access of school literary materials to ensure they are developmentally appropriate, educationally relevant, and compliant with provincial requirements.

This policy aims to:

- Protect children and students from exposure to materials containing explicit visual depictions of sexual acts, except as permitted for non-narrative reference and technical materials in accordance with the Standards.
- Maintain access to age-appropriate, diverse, and educational school literary materials that support learning, inclusion, and well-being.
- Provide transparent processes for the regular review and reconsideration of school literary materials for reasons related to section 2(a) of the Standards.
- Uphold freedom of inquiry and professional judgment within the boundaries of legal and ethical standards and the Standards.
- Ensure that the school authority meets its obligations for public transparency, reporting to the Minister, and maintenance of publicly available listings of school literary materials.

3. DEFINITIONS

| Term | Definition |
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| School Literary Materials | Any materials, including books, magazines, comics, graphic novels or other literary or graphic materials, whether in physical or electronic form, that are accessible or available to children or students at a school. |
| Visual Depiction | A visual or graphic representation, such as a drawing or painting, an illustration, a photographic or digital image or a video file. |
| Classroom Collection | A teacher's collection of school literary materials, including books, magazines, comics, graphic novels or other literary or graphic materials, whether in physical or electronic form, that are selected, curated or managed by the teacher for use by, or available to, children or students in the teacher's classroom. |

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| Sexual Act | <p>An activity or action of a distinctly sexual nature, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • masturbation, including touching of a person’s own genitals or anus with a hand, finger, artificial sexual organ or other substitute for a sexual organ; • penetration of the penis into the vagina or anus; • contact of a sexual nature between the genitalia, mouth, hand, finger or other body part with the unclothed genitalia, pubic area, buttocks, anus or, if the person is female, the breast of another person; • ejaculation onto or into another person; or • 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. <p>A sexual act does not include an activity or action that is not distinctly sexual in nature, such as: physical contact related to medical conditions, examinations or treatment; actions or activities related to biological functions or processes like puberty, menstruation, pregnancy or breastfeeding; or actions or activities that may be related to sexual acts, such as kissing or handholding.</p> |
| Explicit Visual Depiction of a Sexual Act | A visual depiction that clearly and specifically shows a sexual act as defined above. |
| Review Request | A formal request by a child or student enrolled in the school, a school authority employee, a parent or guardian of an enrolled child or student, a member of the school council, or a member of the community with a direct connection to the school, that the school authority review, change the access to or availability of, reconsider or remove specific school literary materials in a particular school for reasons related to section 2(a) of the Standards. |
| Member of the School Community | A person with a direct connection to the school, such as a parent or guardian of an enrolled student, a volunteer, a member of school council, or a grandparent or caregiver of an enrolled child or student. The school authority will determine whether an individual meets this definition. |
| Ministerially Authorized or Approved Learning and Teaching Resources | Learning and teaching resources authorized or approved by the Minister. The contents of these resources are assessed in the Minister’s authorization or approval process and are therefore exempt from the Standards, as set out in section 8(b) of Ministerial Order #034/2025. |

4. POLICY AND PROCEDURES STATEMENT

4.1 Selection and Curation

- All school literary materials must support educational goals, literacy development, and inclusivity, and must be consistent with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment.
- Selection must consider relevance to curriculum and student interests, age and developmental appropriateness, literary, informational and artistic quality, representation of diverse perspectives, and compliance with section 2(a) of the Standards.
- Teachers and library staff shall use professional judgment in evaluating new materials, using available reviews and professional guidance.
- Minister-authorized or approved learning and teaching resources (e.g., authorized textbooks and other approved resources) are exempt from the Standards and do not require removal or listing under this policy.

Roles and responsibilities:

Teachers are responsible for classroom collections subject to Principal approval; Principals are responsible for school library collections; Principals are responsible for system-wide implementation, monitoring, and communication with Alberta Education and Childcare.

4.2 Review and Removal

- Principals must annually review all school literary materials to ensure compliance with the Standards and this policy.
- Materials containing explicit visual depictions of sexual acts must be removed from, or made inaccessible to, children and students by January 5, 2026, unless they are non-narrative information or reference materials such as technical materials, dictionaries or encyclopedias that fall within the exception in section 2(a) of the Standards.
- As part of this review, staff will identify any materials that may be non-compliant, determine whether they qualify for the reference/technical material exception, and, where they do not, remove them or restrict access so they are not available to children or students.
- The school authority shall submit a Listing of School Literary Materials to be Removed to the Minister by October 31, 2026, using the template provided by Alberta Education and Childcare, and will retain a copy of the submitted list for its records.

4.3 Requests for Review or Reconsideration

- Eligible individuals – a child or student enrolled in the school, a school authority employee, a parent or guardian of a child or student enrolled in the school, a member of school council, or a member of the community with a direct connection to the school – may request review of specific school literary

materials for reasons related to section 2(a) of the Standards (explicit visual depictions of sexual acts).

- Requests must be submitted in writing to school administration using the school authority's Review Request form, identifying the material, the concern, and how the concern relates to section 2(a).
- A Review Committee (normally including the Principal, at least one teacher, and at least one parent representative) will evaluate the material in context and issue a written decision within 30 days of receiving a complete request, or will notify the requester if more time is required.
- Outcomes may include retention, retention with restricted access (e.g., in a professional collection not accessible to students), removal, or referral under other applicable policies (e.g., instructional materials or general complaints).
- Information on any appeal or complaint process available under existing school authority policies will be provided to the requester with the decision.

4.4 Availability and Public Access

- A publicly available listing of all school literary materials (excluding classroom collections) shall be maintained on the school authority's or school's public-facing website and will be provided in hard copy, in a timely manner, upon request.
- Parents must be informed of classroom collection contents and any significant changes. Classroom collections are not required to be included in the publicly available listing but must comply with the content requirements of the Standards.
- Information about classroom collections may be shared digitally (e.g., through a classroom platform), via email, or during parent–teacher meetings or other in-person opportunities, as determined by the school authority.
- This policy is publicly available on the school authority's website and provided in hard copy upon request.

4.5 Communication and Training

- All staff will receive training on the Standards, this policy, and associated review and reporting procedures.
- Training will address key definitions (including “visual depiction” and “sexual act”), selection criteria, review processes, documentation requirements, and available provincial guidance.
- Annual communication will inform parents and students of access procedures, their right to request a review under section 2(a) of the Standards, and where to find the publicly available listing of school literary materials.

4.6 Accountability

- The Head of Schools is responsible for implementation, oversight, and communication with Alberta Education and Childcare.
- Principals are responsible for school-level implementation, including oversight of collection review, review requests, and maintenance of school-level listings.

4.7 Monitoring and Review

- The policy shall be reviewed annually, or more frequently if provincial standards or Ministerial Orders change.
- Documentation of all reviews, Review Requests, committee decisions, and material changes (including removals and restrictions) will be retained for a minimum of five years.

4.8 References

- Ministerial Order #034/2025: Standards for the Selection, Availability and Access of School Literary Materials.
- Alberta Education and Childcare: School Library Standards – Engagement Website and resources.
- Guidance for School Authority Review of Literary Materials (2025).
- Checklist for School Authority Policies and Procedures (2025).
- Frequently Asked Questions: Standards for the Selection, Availability and Access of School Literary Materials (2025).