



February 23, 2015

Dear Parents/Guardians,

By now you will be aware that the Ministry of Education's new Health and Physical Education curriculum, which has been the subject of much speculation, was released today. First, I want you to know that, although the curriculum has been released by the ministry, it is not yet being taught in schools. For Catholic schools across the province, the release of this document is only a starting point.

Beginning very soon, the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) will coordinate with Catholic partners throughout the province, including the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, to develop appropriate resources to support the new curriculum document. As has been the case for more than 30 years, Catholic schools will teach family life and sex education from a Catholic perspective through the *Fully Alive* program. We are confident the expectations of the new curriculum can be taught through the *Fully Alive* program, in a manner which adheres to Catholic principles. Teachers will receive in-servicing on the updated program and it will be in place in our schools in September 2015.

One of the areas of the new curriculum that is receiving the greatest media attention is a section referred to as "teacher prompts," which is where some of the most "hot-button" language appears. I want you to know that these are examples only, and are not required to be taught as part of the curriculum. In any event, many of the examples given would not be considered appropriate for use in Catholic schools. It is only the content in the "expectations" section of the document, which is considered compulsory, and again – let me stress – we are confident that through the expertise of the ICE panel, with the support of the Catholic bishops, this material can be successfully integrated into our Catholic Family Life curriculum, through the *Fully Alive* program.

The new Health and Physical Education curriculum is the first major update of this document since 1998. There is much in it which we believe to be important knowledge for our students to have in the 21st century – cyber-bullying, the dangers of texting private or inappropriate information or photos and healthy life-skills for good mental health, to name a few.

In closing, I want to assure you that the mission of Catholic education is, and has always been, to help form students in the Catholic faith and to teach all subjects, including sexual and physical health, through a Catholic perspective. That will not change with the release of this document. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your principal.

May God's richest blessings be with you and your family during this Holy season of Lent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Dan Parr". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dan Parr
Director of Education