

# Exemption Letter for Year 10 – Christian Religion

## Year 10 Application for exemption

The NSW Education Act (1990) (Education Act) sets out the compulsory schooling requirements for enrolment and attendance of students at school in NSW. All schools in NSW are required to teach courses of study in accordance with the outcomes of syllabuses developed by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). 'A course of study' is part of the curriculum and includes courses of study in the key learning areas (such as English, Mathematics, PDHPE etc). The syllabus documents for key learning areas are on the NESA website and provide details of the parts of each key learning area.

Under the Education Act, a certificate of exemption may be granted to parents who conscientiously object on religious grounds to their children being taught a particular part of a course of study.

A certificate of exemption cannot be issued for school programs and activities not related to the curriculum. Parents objecting to their children participating in school programs and activities, such as assemblies, special days or guest speakers, should refer to the Controversial Issues in Schools policy and procedures.

To apply for a certificate of exemption for part of a course of study, please complete a separate form below for each of your children:

Surname of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's first name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/carer listed above has authority to make decisions for this child (i.e. there are no family court orders limiting your authority): Yes / No

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

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School year: **2024**

Class: **year 10**

Subject or Key Learning Area: **PDHPE, History, English, Science**

Topic or part of the course of study which is being objected to:

- Norms, stereotypes and expectations in relation to identity
- Behavioural expectations in different relationships and social situations
- Communicating personal needs and boundaries
- Valuing diversity, difference and inclusivity
- Identify and practise ways to give and receive consent related to sexual relationships and love.
- Developing equal and respectful relationships
- Identifying early warning signs and assessing behaviours and situations as safe or unsafe
- Methods of contraception
- Safe sexual health practices
- Taking responsibility for managing their own sexual health
- Communication, connections and seeking help
- Sexual choices and the importance of consent
- External influences on sexuality and sexual health behaviours
- The influence of marketing strategies on young people's attitudes, behaviour and perceptions of health, for example sexuality, sexual health
- Accessing networks and services to seek advice and support for themselves and others.

And any other topics or videos or quizzes related to sexuality or sexual relationships.

Term / year when the lessons will be taught: **Terms 1, 2, 3 and 4 on 2024 school year**

Dear [Principal's Name],

I am writing to formally object, on conscientious grounds, to my child's participation in the lessons outlined above, scheduled for the 2024 school year. Our concerns stem from the teachings of the Christian community regarding the subjects of sexual relationships, sexuality, and gender identity.

Our objections are deeply rooted in the fundamental principles of Christianity, emphasizing the pursuit of truth, a biblically informed view on sexuality, and the utmost respect for individual privacy. These principles guide us to safeguard our children from potential grooming and deceit, and to ensure physical, social, psychological well-being of our children.

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## REASONS FOR OUR STANCE:

### 1. Led by Truth:

Christians embrace the axiom, "Truth is truth, even if no one believes it; a lie is a lie, even if everyone believes it." We discern truth through Scripture, tradition, reason, experience, community involvement, and the Holy Spirit's guidance. Our faith encourages active engagement and critical thinking, as depicted in various scriptures:

- Proverbs 2:1-5, 11:27 - Emphasizes diligence in uncovering truth.
- Proverbs 18:1, 15, 17 - Advocates cautious scepticism.
- Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1 - Encourages testing the veracity of teachings.
- Matthew 7:16-20 - Instructs to judge teachings by their outcomes.
- Thessalonians 5:21 - Commands to 'prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'

### 2. Sex, Sexuality, and Gender from a Christian Perspective:

We interpret these aspects through the lens of Christian doctrine, which values purity and truthfulness as essential elements of faith. This perspective is supported by scriptural references and the reasoned understanding of moral and ethical implications of teachings on these topics.

### 3. Issues of Safeguarding, Privacy, and Respect for Others:

Our faith promotes protecting the well-being and privacy of individuals, especially the young and vulnerable. This aligns with biblical teachings on respect and love for one another (Psalm 119; Psalm 33:4), principles that are contradicted by the exposure to certain educational content that conflicts with our values.

## CONCEPT OF GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER IDENTITY IDEOLOGY

If we apply reason, scripture, experience, and confirmation of truth to the concept of 'gender identity,' it becomes evident that this ideology does not hold up to scrutiny.

### a) Historical and Conceptual Critique:

The concept of 'gender identity' was popularized by John Money in the 1960s. His theory was discredited by his failed attempt to raise David Reimer, a boy who was castrated due to a botched circumcision, as a girl. Despite being raised as a girl during the first 30 months of life, Reimer eventually reclaimed his birth sex and tragically ended his life as an adult. The case highlighted the dangers of viewing gender or sex as purely socially constructed, yet this view has been popularized in universities and culture.

**Scripture:** Colossians 2:8 warns, "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ."

### b) Lack of Empirical Evidence:

There is no empirical evidence supporting 'gender identity' as a biologically distinct category separate from physical sex. Over 100 clinicians and researchers globally have confirmed the absence of scientific evidence for 'gender identity.'

**Scripture:** *1 Thessalonians 5:21 instructs to 'prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'*

### c) Questionable Foundations:

Authors and proponents of gender identity and queer theory, such as Alfred Kinsey and John Money, have histories that include promoting harmful behaviours, that included paedophilia and bestiality. Their works and actions, contrary to promoting healthy sexual development, involved unethical practices.

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*Scripture: Matthew 7:15-20 warns of false prophets\* who may appear harmless but are destructive, advising, "By their fruits you shall know them."*

*\*(A prophet is foremost a teacher of truth, as things really were, as they really are, and as they will be.)*

## **d) Ambiguity and Equivocation:**

The term 'gender' is used ambiguously, shifting between meanings such as an internal sense of identity and a social category. This equivocation leads to confusion and flawed understanding.

*Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:9 emphasizes clarity in communication: "Unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air."*

## **e) Media and Educational Influence:**

Schools and media often portray gender as a choice related to performance, adhering to stereotypes. This perspective can mislead children about the nature of gender (social expression) and biological sex.

## **f) Concerns Over Early Gender Labelling:**

Labelling children as transgender before they reach puberty can lead to irreversible decisions and medical interventions, which for most would not align with their eventual adult identities, if there was no active intervention like 'gender affirmation plans'. Most children who experience body dysphoria will realign with their biological sex after puberty.

## **g) Medical and Psychological Perspectives:**

Gender Dysphoria is recognised as a diagnosable condition, not an identity. It is crucial that any psycho-therapeutic intervention be conducted by qualified health professionals, not educators.

## **h) Identity Foreclosure:**

Asserting a fixed identity in children can prevent them from exploring a range of identities as they mature, potentially leading to identity foreclosure.

## **2. SEX, SEXUALITY, AND GENDER FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE**

*"God created man in his own image; in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them."*

*(Genesis 1:27).* The Bible recognizes only two sex categories—male and female. While individuals in Scripture may express their masculinity and femininity in diverse ways, the biblical narrative strictly adheres to the binary categories of men and women. One is either male or female, with no other gender categories acknowledged.

From a scientific standpoint, when truth aligns with observable reality, we embrace science. Biological sex in humans is determined by the type of reproductive cells (gametes) one's body produces, constituting a binary system anchored in genetics and chromosomes. Chromosomes influence the development of sexual characteristics but do not alone define sex. While there are rare variations from the typical XX or XY chromosome patterns (approximately 0.02%), these typically represent chromosomal disorders rather than alternate sex classifications.

For example, the presence of a Y chromosome typically sets the developmental pathway towards male characteristics and phenology, primarily for reproduction. Conversely, an XX chromosome pattern, with genes like WNT4, guides development towards female characteristics and phenology. Even in cases with additional X or Y chromosomes, the developmental path remains fundamentally binary—either male or female. Individuals with Differences in Sexual Development (DSD), often referred to as intersex conditions, still fall within these male or female categories.

### **Being Human Beyond Binary Labels**

Our humanity extends beyond our male and female bodies, each person an evolving individual that is a unique blend of attributes including race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, socioeconomic status, family background, abilities, and personal experiences. Our aspirations and achievements further shape us as we move through life.

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Therefore, our children deserve the freedom to explore and express their full humanity, full personality, unbounded by restrictive gender stereotypes or rigid 'gender identities'. They should be encouraged to embrace the full spectrum of their personalities and potentials, without being confined to predefined categories, portrayed as 'gender fluidity'.

## ISSUES OF SAFEGUARDING AND HARM:

There are four safeguarding concerns we have with the Social Emotional Learning and Comprehensive Sexual Education programs in schools. They are:

**Non-contact sexual abuse:** When teachers go beyond teaching factual, age-appropriate knowledge of sex education to discuss sexual arousal, sexual stimulation, sexual pleasure, sexual touching and being touched, graphic sexual images, and conflating love with sexual feelings, they are engaging in what is considered non-contact sexual abuse, according to [sources<sup>i</sup>]. Hence, we do not want our children exposed to this type of material, as we have seen in school libraries, influenced by UNESCO's Kinsey Institute and third-party materials used to design these programs. These teachings can venture into the area of non-contact sexual abuse and, in some cases, potentially open children to grooming.

**Cradle to the grave marketing:** We are concerned that many third-party organizations that run sex education programs also operate Gender or Sexual Health clinics and engage in 'cradle to the grave' marketing of sex-based products such as PrEP, PEP, and other STD drugs. Children are casually taught that there are no serious consequences to indiscriminate or casual sex, promoting the use of these products.

**Entrapment:** When teachers continuously prompt children to question their 'well-being' around their gender identity, this behaviour amounts to a form of entrapment. In an educational context, this is where children are led toward specific beliefs or behaviours through biased emphasis or presentation. It occurs when educators do not maintain a neutral stance and inadvertently coax or entice students into adopting specific identities or beliefs that they would not naturally explore on their own.

**Irreversible damages and psycho-social harm:** Most serious is the influence of schools in driving children toward pathways of irreversible harm. All justifications that might be used to argue for allowing a child to socially transition (engage in gender affirmation plans) at school have been dismissed:

"The systematic review showed no clear evidence that social transition in childhood has any positive or negative mental health outcomes, and relatively weak evidence for any effect in adolescence. However, those who had socially transitioned at an earlier age and/or prior to being seen in a clinic were more likely to proceed to a medical pathway." (p. 31 of [The Cass Review – Final Report](#)<sup>ii</sup>).

Significant physical and psychological harms result from medical interventions using off-label castration and endometriosis drugs ([puberty blockers](#)<sup>iii</sup>) and cross-sex surgery on minors. These include, among many harms, infertility, sterilization, cancer, stunting of higher executive brain function, and stunting of the growth of major organs and genitalia.

## SCRIPTURE:

**Matthew 18:6:** "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."

This passage, from the words of Jesus, is one of the strongest biblical admonitions against harming children. It highlights the severity with which God views the mistreatment or leading astray of children.

**Corinthians 6:19-20 says,** "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your

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bodies." This passage highlights the idea that bodies should be respected and treated with honour, which can be interpreted as a call for privacy and modesty.

**Psalms 127:3:** "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him."

This verse emphasizes the value of children as a gift from God, suggesting that they are to be cherished and protected.

**Ephesians 6:4:** "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

While this verse specifically addresses parents, it implies a broader principle of nurturing and caring for children in a way that fosters their growth and well-being, rather than exploiting or harming them.

**Proverbs 22:6:** "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it."

This proverb speaks to the importance of guiding children in a positive direction from a young age, protecting them from harmful influences and setting a foundation for their future.

**To conclude**, in accordance with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of our community, we request that our child be excused from participating in the specified segments of the curriculum. We believe that these topics conflict with our faith and the values we wish to instil in our children.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to working with you to ensure that our child's educational experience aligns with our religious beliefs while continuing to promote a respectful and welcoming environment.

Sincerely,

I confirm I have raised my concerns with the principal of my child's school on:

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Parent/carer signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/carer name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/carer signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/carer name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your application will be considered and may be granted if your objection is accepted.

Please allow at least three weeks for a decision. Your child/ren are required to attend classes until a decision about your objection has been made.

Please contact [curriculumenquiry@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:curriculumenquiry@det.nsw.edu.au) by email if you need further information.

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## Privacy

The NSW Department of Education (the department) is collecting the information requested on this form. The information is being obtained so the Secretary or delegate can exercise their powers under s26 of the Education Act.

The Secretary or delegate will consider this information when exercising their powers under s26 of the Education Act whether to grant a certificate of exemption.

Other persons that may be provided with this information include, but are not limited to, departmental officers assisting the Secretary or delegates.

Provision of this information is voluntary, however, if you do not provide all or any of the information requested the Secretary or delegate may have insufficient information to be satisfied that you conscientiously object on religious grounds to your child being taught a particular part of a course of study.

Provision of this information will significantly assist the Secretary or delegate in exercising their powers under s26 of the Education Act. It will be stored securely. If you have any concerns about provision of this information, please contact the [curriculumenquiry@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:curriculumenquiry@det.nsw.edu.au) to discuss further. You may correct any personal information provided at any time by contacting [curriculumenquiry@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:curriculumenquiry@det.nsw.edu.au)

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Child Sexual Abuse is inclusive of Sexual Assault and Non-Assaultive Sexual Offences, as defined by the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology (ANZSOC). "Child Sexual Abuse refers to the spectrum of coercive and harmful sexual acts perpetrated against children and young people (youth). Such acts include indecent assaults, penetrative assaults (oral, vaginal, and anal), and the production or possession of Child Exploitation Material. Child Sexual Abuse also includes Grooming and Unacceptable Sexual Relationship. Sexual abuse may not always include physical sexual contact and can also include non-contact offences including:

- talking to a youth in a sexually explicit way and sexual advances
- sending sexually explicit messages or emails to a youth
- exposing a sexual body part to a youth
- forcing a youth to watch a sexual act (including showing pornography to a youth)
- having a youth pose or perform in a sexual manner (including youth Sexual Exploitation)
- Stalking, voyeurism, and peeping-tom

Child Sexual Abuse does not always involve force. In some circumstances a youth may be manipulated into believing that they have brought the abuse on themselves, or that the abuse is an expression of love, through a process of grooming."

We also use the Royal Commission's definition of child sexual abuse, which is: 'any act that exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes that are beyond their understanding, are contrary to accepted community standards, or are outside what is permitted by law'.<sup>17</sup>

<https://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/non-physical-contact-behaviors>

<https://www.childsafety.gov.au/about-child-sexual-abuse/grooming>

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-offence-classification-anzsoc/2023/03>

0322 Child abuse material offences (previously labelled "Child pornography offences")

The production, possession, distribution or display of pornographic or abusive material of a child under the age of consent in written, photographic, film, video, digital or other format.

<https://www.childsafety.gov.au/system/files/2024-04/national-strategy-to-prevent-and-respond-to-child-sexual-abuse-21-30.PDF> pg 56

<sup>ii</sup> <https://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.indefenceofchildren.org/risks-and-harms> The risks and harms of Social Transitioning, Puberty blockers, Cross-Sex hormones etc.