

Dispensing condoms in schools trivializes sexuality, says papal vicar

ROME - Distributing condoms to teens in high schools in the Italian province of Rome trivializes sexuality and neglects the need to teach responsibility and respect, said the papal vicar for Rome.

Cardinal Agostino Vallini, who governs the diocese in the name of the pope, criticized plans for public high schools to install machines that dispense prophylactics.

“We deplore that this initiative could be defined as ‘a courageous act’” by government officials, he said in a statement released June 19.

Officials governing the province of Rome approved a motion June 18 to launch a sexual education campaign in public high schools in an effort promote the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. In addition to the new sexual educational program, schools would be allowed to install machines that dispense condoms.

Cardinal Vallini said the move to distribute condoms would “trivialize once more the issues of emotional affection, sexuality and the education of young people.”

The Catholic Church insists that the correct path to take entails teaching people, especially the young, to be responsible in how they use their sexuality, “which is a gift of God’s love, and to enrich one’s own body and the other’s” by understanding that love is a gift of self, he said.

He said the Catholic community would continue to advocate that schools and other

educational institutions someday decide to “dedicate themselves to enlightening young people to distrust shortcuts that often lead to undervaluing life.”