

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY

Background

The District is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe and positive environment free of discrimination, harassment and intimidation for all students, employees and community members regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The District is particularly committed to supporting those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, queer or questioning (LGBTQ+).

The District will provide a safe environment, free from harassment, discrimination and intimidation, while also promoting proactive strategies and guidelines to ensure that the LGBTQ+ community is welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life while being treated with respect and dignity.

The District will not permit, encourage, nor tolerate any behaviours contrary to these commitments, whether by commission or by failing to act to bring such behaviours to an end, and is committed to providing support and assistance to those who may be the intended or unintended targets of such behaviours.

Procedures

1. The District believes in equitable treatment of all individuals regardless of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age or any other perceived difference.
2. The District is committed to:
 - 2.1. Ensuring that schools and the District at large are places of understanding, safety and support for all people regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
 - 2.2. Ensuring that all LGBTQ+ students, employees and others who participate in the life of our schools are treated with respect and dignity, which includes both their right to privacy and their right to be supported and free from harassment, discrimination or harm.
 - 2.3. Enabling all LGBTQ+ students, employees and others who participate in the life of our schools see themselves and their lives positively reflected in the curriculum.
 - 2.4. Ensuring that all employees are aware of their responsibilities as it relates to creating safety and support for all students and employees regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and to supporting administrators, counsellors and teacher and CUPE leaders in educating colleagues.
 - 2.5. Providing age-appropriate learning activities that promote respect for and reduce discrimination against anyone who is a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

- 2.6. Supporting parents in their awareness of the issues captured in this Administrative Procedure and of their opportunities to ensure that their children have and exhibit understanding and care as it relates to members of the LGBTQ+ community.
 - 2.7. Ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with any people or organizations that identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity in order to increase cooperation and collaboration among home, school and community.
 - 2.8. Ensuring that the confidentiality of the sexual orientation and gender identity of students and employees is protected. Students and staff who are out as LGBTQ+ will be given the support they require to do their work in a safe and respectful environment.
 - 2.9. Making available a non-gendered single-stall washroom for use by students and staff in all district facilities.
 - 2.10. Individuals may choose to use washrooms that match their gender identity.
3. All employees of the District will be supported in being able to identify discriminatory attitudes and behaviours as described in this Administrative Procedure, and are expected to be committed to eliminating the harm, inequities and barriers that might exist in relation to orientation and gender identity.
 4. All administrators, teachers, counsellors, and staff and student leaders will work together to support the District's position in the school community. This will include leaders in schools ensuring that activities are undertaken at the beginning of each school to make all members of the school community aware of the expectations and provisions of this Administrative Procedure, including the expectation that every member of our school communities will work purposefully to eliminate harmful behaviours and ensure safety and support for LGBTQ+ students and staff.
 5. School administrators and counsellors will ensure that counselling and support are provided to students regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Elementary, middle and secondary schools are expected to appoint a staff person to be a Safe Contact for students and a resource person for sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
 6. Students will have the right to self-identification and determination which includes the name by which they wish to be addressed and the pronouns that correspond to their gender identity. Students may express their gender identity or gender through what they wear to school.
 7. Whenever possible and permitted by law, requests made by a student, or the parent/guardian, to change the student's official record to reflect their preferred name and/or gender identity will be accommodated. Whenever possible, the student's preferred name and/or gender identity will be included on class lists, timetables and student files.
 8. The use of changerooms by transgender and gender non-conforming students shall be assessed on an individual basis, and in consultation with the student, with the goals of maximizing social inclusion, minimizing stigmatization, and providing equal opportunity to participate in physical health education classes and sports.
 9. Schools will focus on creating inclusive activities, however, when activities remain segregated by sex, transgender and gender non-conforming students will have the option to

be included in teams, groups and Physical Health Education classes that correspond with their gender identity.

10. Students will be included and accommodated for in all extra-curricular activities regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, including support to set up a Gender-Sexuality-Alliance (GSAs) or similar club.
11. Any language or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes or incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination or harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity will not be tolerated. Principals will be expected to specifically include the specific provision of such language and behaviour in their schools' student codes of conduct.
12. Resources are to be available in every school and be chosen or updated to promote critical thinking and include materials that support the tenets of this Administrative Procedure. Principals will share and promote resource materials that provide knowledge, skills, and strategies for educators to recognize, understand and challenge discrimination such as homophobia and transphobia. Keeping in mind the cultural diversity within the District, many of the above resources are to reflect the W̱SÁNEĆ community and the specific characteristics of two-spirited people.
 - 12.1. The District will participate in provincially recognized organizations such as the BC SOGI Educator Network, a network for educators who are interested in SOGI-inclusive education. As an example, SOGI 123 is a resource that provides schools and teachers with ready to use, grade-level appropriate lesson plans, online learning modules, and customizable templates and tools that align with the BC curriculum.
 - 12.2. Each school's SOGI lead works together as part of the District's SOGI network. The school lead is an advocate for LGBTQ+, supports students and staff in building their capacity, and champions SOGI related initiatives at the local and provincial level.
13. Principals are expected to ensure that students are educated in the areas of understanding, diversity, harassment, discrimination, anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia, and anti-heterosexism through the BC provincial curriculum in ways that are curricularly relevant and age appropriate.

Glossary: Language is ever evolving, and the individual is always the expert on what language and terms they consider respectful and inclusive of themselves.

Asexual: A person who is not sexually attracted to any gender or sex. Asexual people may still be romantically attracted to people of a variety of genders and sexualities and have romantic, non-sexual relationships.

Ally: An individual who is supportive of the LGBTQ+ community. They believe in the dignity and respect of all people and are willing to stand up in that role.

Bisexual: Generally used to describe people who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one sex or gender.

Cisgender: Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

Gay: A man who is romantically and sexually attracted to other men. It is sometimes used to refer to the general GLBTQ community, but most often refers to just gay men.

Gender: A social construct used to classify a person as a man, woman, or some other identity. Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth; a set of social, psychological and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations

Gender Expression: How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress, mannerisms and/or behaviors that society characterizes as "masculine" or "feminine."

Gender Identity: The way in which an individual defines and acts on their gender.

Gender Non-Conforming: A gender identity that embraces full universe of expressions and ways of being that resonate with an individual. It may be an active resistance to binary gender expectations and/or an intentional creation of new unbounded ideas of self within the world.

Heterosexism and Homophobia: The term heterosexism refers to the assumption that all people are heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior and more desirable than homosexuality. "Homophobia" is defined as "the irrational fear and hatred of homosexuals." Both of these are perpetuated by negative stereotypes and are dangerous to individuals and communities.

Heterosexual: Created around the same time as 'homosexual' to describe individuals who are sexually attracted to the opposite sex/gender.

Homosexual: A scientific term invented in the 1800's to refer to individuals who are sexually attracted to their own sex/gender.

Intersex: An intersex individual may have biological characteristics of both the male and the female sexes.

Lesbian: A woman who is romantically and sexually attracted to other women. This term originates with the female poet Sappho who lived in a community comprised predominantly of women on the Isle of Lesbos in ancient Greece.

Pronouns: The words one uses to refer to themselves (he/him/his; she/her/hers; they/them/theirs)

Queer: The term queer has a history of being used as a derogatory name for members of the LGBTQ+ (and Ally) community and those whose sexual orientation is perceived as such. Many people use this word in a positive way to refer to the community; they have reclaimed the term as their own. Sensitivity should be used when using or hearing it as there are still many negative connotations with this term and its use by anyone other than someone who is proud to identify as queer.

Questioning: People who are in the process of questioning their sexual orientation are often in need of support and understanding during this stage of their identity. They are seeking information and guidance in their self-discovery.

Sex: Sex refers to the biological sex of a person.

Sexual Orientation: A personal characteristic that covers the range of human sexuality from gay and lesbian to bisexual, transgender and heterosexual orientations.

Trans or Transgender: An umbrella term used to refer to people who transcend the traditional concept of gender. Many feel as though they are neither a man nor a woman specifically, and many feel as though their biological sex (male, female, etc.) and their socialized gender (man, woman, etc.) don't match. Some opt to change or reassign their sex through hormones and/or surgery and some change their outward appearance, or gender expression, through clothing, hairstyles, mannerisms, etc.

Transphobia: The fear or hatred of transgender people or people who do not meet society's gender role expectations.

Two-Spirit: An Indigenous term describing the embodiment of both masculine and feminine spirits. This identity is not limited to gender expression or sexuality but encompasses them both while incorporating a spiritual element. It is a standalone identity, not an Indigenous term for gay or lesbian.

Reference: Sections 6, 7, 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act
Policy 27 – Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity
Human Rights Code
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Canadian Human Rights Act

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