



## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY**

### **Education**

Anti-Homophobia education strives to identify and change educational practices, policies, and procedures that perpetuate homophobia and heterosexism, as well as the homophobic attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. Anti-homophobia education provides knowledge, skills, and strategies for educators to examine such discrimination critically in order to understand its origin and to recognize and challenge it.

- a) the Board of Education and district administration shall promote opportunities for staff to increase their awareness of the scope and impact of discrimination against LGBTQ+ people.
- b) The Board of Education and district administration shall provide opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and skills in promoting respect for human rights, supporting diversity, and addressing discrimination in schools.
- c) Schools shall be encouraged to support age-appropriate activities which promote an understanding of the impact of discrimination on members of their LGBTQ+ community.
- d) Schools shall be encouraged to support age-appropriate activities which promote respect for and reduce discrimination against members of their LGBTQ+ community.
- e) The Board of Education and school administration shall work to increase parental awareness of the needs of LGBTQ+ students and families.

### **Learning Resources, Curriculum Resources and Library Resources**

The Board of Education is committed to ensuring that the learning, curriculum and library resources reflect and value the diversity in the district. It is also committed to ensuring all students including LGBTQ+ students see themselves and their lives positively reflected in the curriculum. Resources should be chosen or updated in order to promote critical thinking and include materials that accurately reflect the range of Canada's LGBTQ+ communities. Keeping in mind the multicultural aspect of the district, as many of the above resources as possible should be available in different languages and in formats easily accessible to ESL students.

- a) The learning, curriculum and library resources shall emphasize universal human themes that acknowledge human diversity as an essential and enriching element of our society.
- b) The learning, curriculum and library resources shall, when appropriate, provide all students with opportunities to become familiar with diversity.



- c) An awareness of the scope and impact of discrimination and the expectation that students will treat each other respectfully despite differences shall be integrated into the curriculum.
- d) Teaching personnel shall review materials prior to use to identify areas of bias.  
This review may involve consultation with representative groups.

### **Counselling and Student Support**

The Board of Education is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment which actively provides counseling and support to students who identify as LGBTQ+ or those who are questioning their gender identity. All district counsellors shall be educated in the knowledge and skills required to understand LGBTQ+ issues concerning students, staff and families. Counsellors will be informed and familiar with all policies with respect to human rights, homophobia, heterosexism, hate literature, discrimination and harassment, and will alert their school community to these policies. Counsellors will be sensitive to LGBTQ+ students as well as students from LGBTQ+ headed families.

Elementary and secondary schools are encouraged to appoint a staff person to be a safe contact for students who identify themselves as LGBTQ+ and (those who are questioning). School administrators should inform students and other staff about the location and availability of this contact person. Schools are encouraged in their goal planning to advocate for students who identify as LGBTQ+ as well as and those who are questioning their gender identity. Where students request and staff are willing to volunteer their time, Gay/Straight Alliance clubs (GSAs) will be encouraged at secondary schools in the district.

### **Safety/Anti-Harassment**

Homophobic harassment is demeaning treatment to all students, students' parents or guardians, and employees regardless of their sexual orientation. Harassment based on gender identities is also demeaning to all students and employees. These forms of harassment and discrimination are prohibited under the B.C. Human Rights Code.

Any language or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes, incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination, harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification will not be tolerated. Schools will be encouraged

to specifically include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in their student Codes of Conduct.



**Systemic Barriers**

The Board of Education will work to ensure that systemic barriers shall be addressed as they are identified.

**School and Community Relations**

The Board of Education is committed to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with LGBTQ+ communities and other communities who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity to increase co-operation and collaboration among home, school and the community.

The Board of Education will work to create partnerships that ensure effective participation in the education process by representative organizations and LGBTQ+ communities that are committed to the mission of the Board of Education.

The Board will acknowledge through its communication to students, staff, and the community that some children live in LGBTQ+ headed families and need to be positively recognized and included as such.

**Employment Equity**

The Board of Education believes in equitable treatment for all individuals regardless of race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability or political beliefs.

The Board of Education will ensure that the confidentiality of the sexual orientation and gender identity of staff will be protected. Employees who are out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or transitioning to another gender will be given the support they require to do their work in a safe and respectful environment.

**Advisory Committee**

The Board of Education will establish a Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee which will report to the Superintendent.

The members of the Advisory Committee will include representatives from students (2), parents/guardians (2), First Nations (1), community resource people (3), and district employees (1 teacher, 1 teacher-counsellor, 1 principal or vice-principal, 1 support staff member, district principal – aboriginal education, district principal – Student Support Services (1) and (1) trustee).

Advisory Committee meetings will be open to members of the public.



**Terms of Reference**

The committee will establish means to work closely with the Superintendent to:

- promote sensitivity to issues of sexual discrimination and gender identity
- hear community input regarding sexual discrimination and gender identity issues
- review and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy, including reviewing the results of surveys done in the district
- advise the Board of Education
- provide the Board of Education with an annual report.

Adopted: 2010.09.01