



# Revelstoke Board of Education

## Policy Manual

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### 5.6 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The Revelstoke Board of Education will not tolerate homophobic or discriminatory behavior or bullying toward members of the LGBTQ community.

Homophobic and gender-based comments, discrimination, and bullying are demeaning to all students, parents or guardians and employees regardless of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

The Revelstoke Board of Education recognizes the importance of understanding sexual orientation and gender identity in order to maintain a safe, positive and inclusive learning and working environment for all students, employees and other members of the school community. The Board supports opportunities for school communities to increase awareness of the scope and impact of discrimination against LGBTQ\* students, staff and families.

#### Guidelines

1. School Codes of Conduct will include specific reference to discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation. Effective procedures, responses and consequences to any language or behaviour that degrades, denigrates, labels, or stereotypes students on the basis of their real or perceived sexual and/or gender identities and/or gender expression, or that incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination or harassment will be addressed through school codes of conduct.
2. All staff will model respect for LGBTQ\* students, staff and their families and staff will respond to any incidents. Support and assistance will be provided to those who are the intended or unintended targets of such behavior.
3. Counseling support will be available for the LGBTQ\* youth in their school communities to support social/emotional needs and school retention.
4. The Board supports the formation of GSA (Gay/Straight Alliance) clubs.
5. Community resource lists and displays in schools will be inclusive of community supports for LGBTQ\* youth and families.

6. The Board, in the regular course of reviewing policy, regulations and other district documents, will ensure that language is representative of the diversity in our community.
7. Opportunities will be provided for staff to increase their knowledge and skills in promoting respect for human rights, supporting diversity, and addressing discrimination in schools.
8. The Board will support the use of curriculum, age-appropriate activities, and resources that promote knowledge and skills in developing respect and understanding for, as well as eliminating discrimination against, LGBTQ\* people.
9. The Board supports the accommodation of service and facility to ensure safe and respectful access for all individuals.

NOTE: LGBTQ\* is used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, transitioning, two-spirited, queer people or those questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity.

List of definitions follows:

## **DEFINITIONS:**

### **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 emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one sex or gender.

### **Gay**

A gay male is a male who is primarily attracted emotionally, physically, affectionately, romantically, sexually, erotically and/or spiritually to other males. Gay is also sometimes used as a broader, all-encompassing term for the community of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people. However, not all lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people accept this usage.

### **Gender Identity**

A person's gender identity is the way in which they define and act on their gender. Gender Expression is how they express their gender.

### **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**

Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside; or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in-between the male and female types.

### **Lesbian**

A woman who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to other women.

### **Pansexual**

Also referred to as omnisexuality, is sexual attraction, sexual desire, romantic love, or emotional attraction toward persons of all gender identities and biological sexes.

### **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. Not everyone believes this and sensitivity should be used when using or hearing it as there are still many negative connotations with its use.

### **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 and Gender**

It is easy to confuse these two concepts and terms; however, they are different. Sex refers to the biological sex of a person. Gender refers to their societal appearance, mannerisms and roles.

### **Sexual Orientation**

It is a personal characteristic that covers the range of human sexuality from gay and lesbian to bisexual, transgender and heterosexual orientations.

### **Straight**

A slang word used to refer to the heterosexual members of our community.

### **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 up. Some opt to change/reassign their sex through hormones and/or surgery and some change their outward appearance, or gender expression, through clothing, hairstyles, mannerisms, etc.

### **Transsexual**

Used to describe those individuals who use hormone therapy and/or surgery to alter their sex.

### **Transvestite**

More appropriately referred to as "cross-dressing", the term transvestite most often refers to males who dress in the clothing of women. The term "drag" usually refers to dressing in the clothing and styles of another gender for entertainment purposes.

### **Two-Spirit**

"Two-spirit" is an English translation of terms in various languages to describe a concept that appears in Native cultures across North America. Traditionally, the two-spirit person was one who had received a gift from the Creator, that gift being the privilege to house both male and female spirits in their bodies. Being given the gift of two spirits meant that this individual had the ability to see the world from two perspectives at the same time. This greater vision was a gift to be shared with all, and as such, two-spirit people were revered as leaders, mediators, teachers, artists, seers, and spiritual guides. They were treated with the greatest respect, and held important spiritual and ceremonial responsibilities. Nowadays, two-spirit is the term by which many First Nations LGBTQ people identify themselves. In a broader sense, two-spirit is the term that can encompass an integration of alternative sexuality and/or alternative gender with Native spirituality.