



## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY**

The Board of Education of School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) is committed to a safe, positive and inclusive learning and working environment for all students and employees regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The letter and spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *B.C. Human Rights Acts* and the NDTA and CUPE *Collective Agreements* are observed, enforced, and supported in this policy so that all members of the school community may learn and work together in an atmosphere of respect and safety, free from discrimination, harassment and/or exclusion.

The Board of Education has developed this Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity policy for students and employees including those who identify as, or are assumed to be, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-Spirit, Queer (LGBTQ+) or those who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Ensure inclusion of all students and employees in all aspects of school life irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- b) Define appropriate terms, behaviours and actions in order to prevent discrimination, harassment and exclusion through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their deleterious effects.
- c) Ensure that complaints of homophobic and heterosexist behaviours including discrimination, harassment and exclusion, are taken seriously and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.
- d) Raise awareness and improve understanding of the lives of people who are discriminated against, harassed, excluded or who feel unsafe based on their sexual orientation or gender.

The Board of Education recognizes that the successful implementation and administration of a policy which promotes a safe, positive and inclusive learning and working environment requires commitment from personnel at all levels. To such an end, the Board requires special attention be given in all school district sites to key aspects within the environment including, but not limited to:



- Education
- Learning Resources, Curriculum Resources and Library Resources
- Counselling and Student Support
- Safety/Anti-Harassment
- Systemic Barriers
- School and Community Relations
- Employment Equity
- Advisory Committee

## DEFINITIONS

**These definitions, like all language, can be imperfect and are evolving.**

**Gay** can refer to a man who is romantically, emotionally and/or sexually involved with men.

**Lesbian** can refer to a woman who is romantically, emotionally and/or sexually involved with women.

**Bisexual** can refer to people who are romantically, emotionally and/or sexually involved with women or men.

**Transgender** can refer to people who do not identify with the gender roles assigned to them by society based on their biological sex.

**Transsexual** can refer to people who use hormone therapy and/or surgery to alter their sex

**Two-Spirit** can refer to Aboriginal or Indigenous people who identify themselves based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Queer** can refer to people who identify themselves based on sexual orientation or gender identity or who resist these categories as too simplistic.

**Sexual Orientation** can cover the range of human sexuality including Gay and Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Two-Spirit and Heterosexual orientations.

**Gender Identity** can refer to the way a person defines and acts out their gender.

**Heterosexism** refers to the mistaken assumption that all people are heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior and the norm by which all other sexual orientation and gender identities are measured. Heterosexism perpetuates negative stereotypes and is dangerous to individuals and communities.



**Homophobia** the irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against people based on an actual or assumed sexual orientation or gender identity.

**LGBTQ+** an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning. The plus sign recognizes that not all people identify with these terms and may prefer terms such as Transsexual, Queer, Two-Spirit Intersex. LGBTQ+ is meant to be an inclusive term for a very diverse group of people.

For an expanded list of definitions, we encourage people to look on the Gale BC website (<http://www.galebc.org/>) or contact BCTF Social Justice Program (<http://www.bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx>).

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