

SEXUAL ORIENTATION/GENDER IDENTITY

POLICY:

TO ENSURE THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY WORK TOGETHER IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF RESPECT AND SAFETY REGARDLESS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY, THE BOARD OF EDUCATION WILL ADOPT APPROPRIATE ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS AND STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, SUPPORT DIVERSITY, AND ADDRESS DISCRIMINATION.

OBJECTIVES:

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

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Support inclusion of all students and employees in all aspects of school life, irrespective of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.
- b) Improve understanding of the lives of LGBTQ+ people and their positive contributions to society.
- c) Define appropriate terms, behaviours and actions to promote greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, the deleterious effects of homophobia, transphobia, anti-gay harassment and exclusion.
- d) Provide effective procedures to respond to complaints of homophobic, transphobic and heterosexist behaviours including discrimination, harassment and exclusion.
- e) Promote a systemic response through staff and professional development which strives to identify and address educational practices, policies, and procedures that perpetuate homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism..
- f) Make resources and support services available and visible for LGBTQ+ students and staff throughout schools.
- g) Act collectively to reduce homophobia, transphobia and other systemic barriers that are faced by LGBTQ+ students and staff who are 'in the closet' and feel they must hide their true identities.

- h) Commit to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with 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.

Date Adopted: June 14, 2011
Date(s) Revised:

Cross References: Policies 5.08, 5.10, 6.31, 6.40, 6.45

REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

POLICY # 5.45

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ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS:

EDUCATION

Staff and Professional Development

- a) The district shall provide and promote opportunities for staff to increase their awareness and understanding of the scope and impact of discrimination against LGBTQ+ people.
- b) The district shall provide and promote opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and skills in promoting respect for human rights, supporting diversity, and addressing discrimination in schools.

Student Programs

- a) Students are educated in the areas of healthy relationships, diversity and social justice education including harassment and homophobia through the BC Ministry of Education prescribed learning outcomes. These subject areas include but are not limited to: Social Studies, Social Justice 12, Health and Career Education, and Personal Planning. In the case of potentially sensitive topics in the Health and Career Education curricula, students and their parents /guardians may arrange with the school for alternative instruction outside the classroom as detailed in Board Policy #6.31 Alternate Delivery – Health and Career Education.

- b) Teachers shall be encouraged to include age appropriate LGBTQ+ issues into curriculum that meet BC Ministry of Education prescribed learning outcomes to help students acquire the skills and knowledge to understand the impacts of homophobia and transphobia upon society.
- c) Elementary and secondary schools will identify a staff person to be a member of a Positive Contact Network. The network will serve to support the distribution and sharing of resources relating to LGBTQ+ issues in education. School administrators will inform staff about the location and availability of this contact person for staff who may want guidance relating to issues such as responding to homophobia in the classroom, providing support to a student who may be LGBTQ+, or accessing subject area and age-appropriate teaching resources that comply with Ministry of Education standards for meeting prescribed learning outcomes.
- d) School staffs shall be encouraged to support LGBTQ+ people by teaching about their positive contributions to society and modeling acceptance of diversity.

Parent Programs

- a) The district and school administration shall work to increase parental awareness of the needs of LGBTQ+ students and families.

Learning Resources, Curriculum Resources and Library Resources

- a) Learning, curriculum and library resources should reflect and value the diversity in the district, so that all students including LGBTQ+ students see themselves and their lives positively reflected in the curricula.
- b) Resources will comply with BC Ministry of Education standards for meeting the prescribed learning outcomes of the specific courses where they are utilized.
- c) In order to reflect the multi-cultural diversity of the district, as many of the above resources as practical should be available in different languages and in formats easily accessible to ESL students and their families.
- d) The learning, curriculum and school library resources shall emphasize universal human themes that acknowledge human diversity as an essential and enriching element of our society.
- e) The learning, curriculum and school library resources shall, when appropriate, provide all students with opportunities to become familiar with diversity.

COUNSELLING AND STUDENT SUPPORT

- a) All counsellors in the district shall be educated in the knowledge and skills required to understand LGBTQ+ issues concerning students, staff and families.
- b) Counsellors will be informed and familiar with all policies with respect to human rights, homophobia, heterosexism, hate literature, discrimination and harassment.
- c) Counsellors will be sensitive to LGBTQ+ students as well as students from LGBTQ+ headed families.
- d) Elementary and secondary schools will appoint a staff person to be a safe contact for students who identify themselves as LGBTQ+ and those who are questioning. School administrators will inform students and other staff about the location and availability of this contact person.

- e) 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 and clubs which respect and celebrate all forms of diversity will be encouraged for intermediate elementary school students.

SAFETY/ANTI-HARRASSMENT

- a) 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.
- b) Schools will be required to specifically include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in their student Codes of Conduct.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- a) The district 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.
- b) The district 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 at all grade levels.

Date Adopted: June 14, 2011
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APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

These definitions 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.

Heterosexual refers to a man or a woman who is romantically, emotionally or sexually involved with the opposite sex exclusively.

Heterosexism refers to the assumption that all people are heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior and more desirable for all people than any other sexual orientation.

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

Transphobia is the irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against people who are transgender or who otherwise transgress traditional gender norms

LGBTQ+ is 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.