

# SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen)

## POLICY

No. F-14

---

Adopted: April 17, 2013

### SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

**Policy:**

The Board of Education believes that all public schools in the district shall be safe for everyone. The Board recognizes and values the diversity found within its school communities and believes that each individual contributes to the strength of the district's culture. The Board also recognizes that students and other school community members of a sexual minority, face a unique set of challenges within our schools and communities. In accordance with this policy, and all relevant laws of more senior governing bodies, School District No. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen):

1. Prohibits any form of discrimination, intimidation or harassment against any person based on gender/gender identity or sexual orientation/perceived sexual orientation.
2. Encourages members of the school community to welcome, include and support all regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.
3. Instructs that all schools in the district put in place protocols that support this policy. The school district will provide an environment for all members of the school community to work and learn, free from fear, discrimination, and harassment, while being proactive to ensure that sexual minority students, employees, and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life, and are treated with respect and dignity.

**Rationale:**

The purpose of this policy is to define appropriate behaviors and actions in order to prevent discrimination and harassment through greater awareness of and responsiveness to their harmful effects. This policy is also to ensure that all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with expeditiously and effectively. The policy will also raise awareness and improve understanding of the lives of people who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. By valuing diversity and respecting differences, students and staff act in accordance with Ministry of Education established principles related to diversity.

# SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen)

## REGULATIONS

No. F-14

---

Adopted: April 17, 2013

### SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

In this policy, all references to “sexual minority” persons will include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and questioning persons (LGBTQ), persons who are labeled as such, whether they are or not, and persons with immediate family members who are of a sexual minority.

Social responsibility, including information, issues and attitudes related to the sexual minority population, is not assigned to a particular grade or subject area; instead, it is a responsibility shared among all staff. Within each school, staff will take concrete actions to ensure that the school is more welcoming and safe for sexual minority students.

Therefore, school code of conduct will include language that prohibits fear promoting, harassing or discriminatory language and behavior toward students, employees or others based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification.

All staff will be sensitive to sexual minority issues when creating and updating district and school policies, and when formulating disciplinary and corrective actions related to incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or exclusion. Corrective actions include both correcting inappropriate behavior (remediation) and correcting damage done as a result of inappropriate behavior (restoration).

It is the responsibility of all administrators, teachers and support staff to work together to build school communities which are positive and welcoming:

- a. they will foster respect, inclusion, fairness and equity;
- b. they will set, communicate and establish clear expectations for acceptable conduct;
- c. they will provide students, through various techniques, information that will lead to greater understanding, acceptance and support for sexual minority students.

School staffs are encouraged to incorporate school in-service, individual professional development, and group staff development activities as opportunities to enhance the school and work place as tolerant and diverse learning environments.

The Board shall consider any violence, threat of violence, or act of aggression, including harassment, discrimination, intimidation and bullying on school premises to be a serious threat to the school environment and to the safety of both students and staff and shall be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of conduct.

Discrimination also includes: publishing, issuing or displaying – or causing to be published, issued or displayed, any statement, publication, notice, sign, symbol, emblem or other representation that indicates discrimination or an intention to discriminate against a person or a group or class of persons, including sexual orientation. Schools may need to address discrimination of this type displayed in graffiti, student publications, blogs, websites, or other communication methods.

The Board will provide support for initiatives that foster dialogue to create understanding and respect for diversity.

The Board members and the senior administrative employees shall jointly ensure that all staff know it is their individual and collective responsibility to respond to discriminatory attitudes and behaviors.