

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 (SOUTHEAST KOOTENAY)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

SECTION 3.35

The Board of School Trustees believes that all public schools in this district shall be safe for everyone. We recognize and value the diversity found within its school communities and believes that each individual, whether male or female, contributes to the strength of the district's culture. The Board also recognizes that students and other school community members with alternate sexual preferences 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, the Board of School Trustees:

- 1. Prohibits any form of discrimination, intimidation or harassment against any person based on gender or sexual orientation.**
- 2. Encourages members of the school community to welcome, include and support all others regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.**
- 3. Instructs the Superintendent to ensure that all schools in the district put in place procedures and practices that support this Board policy.**

The Board will provide an environment for all members of the school community to work and learn, free from fear, discrimination, and harassment, while also promoting proactive strategies and guidelines 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.

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 through consistently applied policy and procedures. 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 established principles related to diversity.

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

The Board will ensure that all staff will be able to identify individual discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. The Board will also work to eliminate the systemic inequities and barriers to learning for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual

orientation or gender identity, and demonstrate accountability for their removal so that all students are treated with fairness and respect.

School based administrators will be informed of and familiar with all Ministry and District policies relating to violence, discrimination and Codes of Conduct and will inform their school communities about these policies.

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).

The Board will ensure that all teaching and support staff receive necessary in-service training to assist them to acquire knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes and behaviors related to:

- a. information and issues surrounding sexual minorities (which may include students, family members and staff);
- b. the scope and impact of discrimination related to sexual orientation and gender identity;
- c. incorporating information and issues into curriculum

It is the responsibility of all administrators, teachers and support staff will 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.

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.

The Board will ensure that age appropriate resource materials (books, pamphlets, posters, etc.) are available and visible in all schools (for example, in counseling areas, libraries, classrooms). Ministry and/or locally approved resources should be chosen or updated in order to accurately reflect the range of Canada's sexual minority population.

Within each school, staff will take concrete actions to ensure that the school is more welcoming and safe for sexual minority students:

The Board will direct schools to specifically include the prohibition of fear promoting, harassing or discriminatory language and behavior in their student codes of conduct. Any language or behavior that deliberately degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes, threatens or incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination, harassment towards students, employees, or

others on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification will not be tolerated.

Approved May 2, 2006