

HOMOPHOBIA/HETEROSEXISM

POLICY:

TO ENSURE THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEARN TO WORK TOGETHER IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF RESPECT AND SAFETY, FREE FROM HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA, ANTIGAY HARASSMENT AND/OR EXCLUSION REGARDLESS OF THEIR 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 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) 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) Define appropriate terms, behaviours and actions in order to prevent homophobia, transphobia, antigay harassment and exclusion through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their deleterious effects.
- c) Ensure effective and expeditious procedures exist and are followed to respond to complaints of homophobic, transphobic and heterosexist behaviours including discrimination, harassment and exclusion.
- d) Raise awareness and improve understanding of the lives of LGBTQ+ people and their positive contributions to society. These individuals are often discriminated against, harassed, excluded and feel unsafe based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.
- e) Promote a systemic response to homophobia through staff and professional development which strives to identify and change educational practices, policies, and procedures that perpetuate homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism, as well as the homophobic attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices.

- f) Make resources and support services for LGBTQ+ students and staff visible 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) The Board of Education is committed to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with LGBTQ+ communities and other 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.

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 another man.

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

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

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS:

EDUCATION

Staff and Professional Development

- a) The Board of Education and district administration shall provide and promote opportunities for staff to increase their awareness of the scope and impact of discrimination against LGBTQ+ people. Anti-homophobia staff development provides knowledge, skills, and strategies for educators to examine such discrimination critically in order to understand its origin and to recognize and challenge it.
- b) The Board of Education and district administration 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) Teachers shall be encouraged to embed and integrate LGBTQ issues into existing curriculum in age-appropriate ways to help students acquire the skills and knowledge to understand the impacts of homophobia and transphobia upon society.
- b) 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 Board of Education 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) The Board of Education will ensure that the learning, curriculum and library resources reflect and value the diversity in the district, so that all students including LGBTQ+ students see themselves and their lives positively reflected in the curriculum.
- b) Resources will be chosen or updated in order to promote critical thinking and include materials that accurately reflect the range of Canada's LGBTQ+ communities.
- c) Keeping in mind the multicultural nature of the district, as many of the above resources as possible should be available in different languages and in formats easily accessible to ESL students.
- d) The learning, curriculum and 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 library resources shall, when appropriate, provide all students with opportunities to become familiar with diversity.

- f) An awareness of the scope and impact of homophobic and transphobic discrimination and the expectation that students will treat each other respectfully and inclusively despite differences shall be integrated into the curriculum.
- g) Teaching personnel shall review materials prior to use to identify areas of gender bias. This review may involve consultation with representative groups.

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, and will alert their school community to these policies.
- 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.
- d) 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 Diversity clubs will be encouraged for Intermediate 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 Board of Education 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 Board of Education 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.

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Date Adopted:

Cross References:

Date(s) Revised:

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