
Policy 17

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION

The Board of Education (the “Board”) is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning and working environment for all members of the school community, regardless of real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression, which includes but is not limited to Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (2SLGBTQ+). The Board believes in equitable treatment for all individuals regardless of race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or political beliefs. The letter and spirit of the Canadian Human Rights Act and the B.C. Human Rights Code shall be carefully observed, enforced, and supported, so that all members of the school community feel safe, valued and included. Language or behaviour that degrades, denigrates, labels, or stereotypes students based on their real, or perceived, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression will not be accepted.

A student’s right to discuss and express their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression will be respected. It is up to the student to determine when, and with whom, they choose to share information regarding their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

This policy is supported by Administrative Procedure 174.

Key Terms:

2SLGBTQ+: An initialism to represent people who identify their sexual orientation as other than heterosexual and/or their gender identity as other than cisgender. In representation, the initialism includes, but is not limited to Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and questioning.

Gender-Diverse: An umbrella term used to represent the diverse range of people whose gender identities and/or gender expressions do not align with overarching societal expectations of gender norms (how one performs gender in relation to one’s sex assigned at birth) in a particular context at a particular point in time.

Gender Identity: Each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with their sex assigned at birth. This includes a sense of oneself as female, male, both, in between, or neither.

Gender Expression: How a person presents their gender. This can include behaviours and appearance, including clothing, hair style, make-up, body language, voice, etc. This can also include name and pronouns. How a person presents their gender may not necessarily reflect their gender identity.

1. The Board believes that all 2SLGBTQ+ students, staff and families have the right to have:
 - 1.1. Their confidentiality protected and respected. A gender-diverse student's gender identity, legal name, and sex assigned at birth constitutes confidential personal information that will be kept confidential unless its disclosure is legally required or unless the student or the student's parent/guardian have given authorization to share that information.
 - 1.2. Self-identification and determination. Regardless of age, everyone is the authority on their gender, name, pronouns, dress, grooming and sexual orientation. As per the BC Human Rights Code, everyone has the right to define their gender identity and to express their gender. Gender-diverse people must be recognized as the gender they live and choose to express.
 - 1.3. Their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, represented, valued, and respected within all aspects of the school environment.
2. The Board will ensure that professional development and training is provided for staff to develop the awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to deliver an intersectional, inclusive curriculum that includes anti-oppression education as it pertains to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and use resources that are reflective of the 2SLGBTQ+ community including positive and celebratory portrayals.
3. It is the overarching responsibility of the Board of Education to ensure that all staff members understand that it is their responsibility to identify and call out discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. It is expected that all staff will work to eliminate barriers and inequities to learning for students who identify as 2SLGBTQ+.
4. The Board will promote strategies and guidelines so that all members of 2SLGBTQ+ communities are welcomed, respected, and supported in all schools and worksites. The Board is committed to implementing measures that will:
 - 4.1. Define appropriate expectations, language, behaviours and actions to prevent discrimination and harassment.
 - 4.2. Ensure that complaints of discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression are taken seriously and dealt with expeditiously.
 - 4.3. Raise awareness and improve understanding of the lives of people who identify as 2SLGBTQ+.
 - 4.4. Strive to eliminate systemic inequities and barriers for members of the school community whose real or perceived identity is 2SLGBTQ+.

Legal Reference: BC Human Rights Code, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Adopted: September 24, 2018

Amended: May 1, 2023