

SOGI-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ): A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Across the District, educators have been answering questions about SOGI education. The following section is a compilation of the most asked questions. We hope these will be helpful; however, every situation is different. Please contact your school's principal if you have specific questions relating to your child's education.

Here are some common questions and answers about SOGI-inclusive education:

QUESTION: Does SOGI-inclusive education promote a specific sexual orientation or gender identity?

ANSWER: SOGI-inclusive education does not promote any specific identity or orientation. It is designed to create a safe and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. It aims to combat discrimination by fostering representation of all types of people within classroom resources and enhancing awareness of the experiences and challenges faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

QUESTION: Are SOGI-inclusive resources inappropriate and contain explicit content?

ANSWER: There is no pornographic or explicit content in any curriculum taught in our schools. SOGI-inclusive education and resources address topics like diverse identities, family diversity, stereotypes, bullying and name-calling. These resources help teachers ensure everyone feels included when teaching any subject area, including Social Studies, English and Arts education.

QUESTION: Does SOGI-inclusive education violate parent/caregivers' rights?

ANSWER: SOGI-inclusive education is meant to complement parent/caregivers' efforts in teaching essential values of respect and acceptance of all people. It does not undermine parental/caregiver rights, but rather contributes to a greater understanding of diversity and inclusion for all students and families.

QUESTION: Is SOGI-inclusive education the same thing as sexual health education?

ANSWER: No, SOGI is a distinct and separate topic from sexual health education. SOGI-inclusive education is designed to promote understanding, inclusivity and support for all students. It encompasses a broader range of topics, including identity, respect and belonging. Sexual health education, on the other hand, is part of BC's Physical and Health Education curriculum. It focuses on the biological, physiological and reproductive aspects of human sexuality. Families, in consultation with their school, may arrange for alternative delivery for certain topics contained in the Physical and Health Education curriculum for students enrolled from kindergarten to Grade 10. This is not the case for SOGI-inclusive education.

QUESTION: Is SOGI-inclusive education being about recruiting students to be 2SLGBTQIA+?

ANSWER: This is a baseless myth. SOGI-inclusive education aims to create understanding, acceptance and inclusion for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. It does not seek to recruit or influence students' sexual orientation or gender identity. Teachers deeply respect and value the unique individual identities of students and work hard to create classroom environments that are inclusive.

QUESTION: Why is SOGI-inclusive education a recent and controversial addition to education?

ANSWER: SOGI-inclusive education, like the inclusion of diverse cultures and races, has been part of the broader goal for diversity and inclusion in our schools for decades. Although SOGI has gained increased attention recently, it is not a new concept. It is supported by many educational organizations, school districts, as well as child development and health experts. Sexual orientation and gender identity are also protected under the BC Human Rights Code, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and provincial legislation. The Vancouver School Board has had a SOGI policy since 2004.

QUESTION: SOGI-inclusive education is not needed because these issues are not relevant to all students, why can't teachers just stick to reading, writing and arithmetic?

ANSWER: 2SLGBTQIA+ students are members of our school communities and often face unique challenges related to their identity. Studies show that having inclusive classrooms and SOGI-specific anti-bullying policies and education improve the school climate by reducing discrimination, depression, anxiety, substance use, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts for all students. SOGI education and resources help ensure schools are welcoming for every person and allow students to learn at their fullest potential in a safe and supportive environment.

If you have any questions about your child's education, please contact your school. We value and encourage open communication with families and work hard to ensure families are well-informed and actively engaged in their child's educational journey.

