

## SENSITIVE ISSUES

### Background

The District recognizes that controversy is a natural element of a democratic society, associated with learning. The study of controversial issues is therefore an appropriate and necessary part of the school program.

In supporting the study of controversial issues, the District has three objectives:

- The development of good citizens through the educational system.
- The encouragement of responsible citizenship through the ability to discuss, listen and dissent.
- The support of skill development in:
  - Analyzing others;
  - Respecting the opinions of others;
  - Distinguishing between fact and opinion and alternative points of view;
  - Considering all pertinent factors in reaching decisions;
  - Arriving at group decisions.

### Procedures

1. The teaching of controversial issues will be productive when:
  - 1.1 The teacher keeps the Principal and parents informed when he/she perceives that sensitive issues will be involved.
  - 1.2 The issues have relevance and therefore, interest for the group.
  - 1.3 The topic and materials used are appropriate to the age group.
  - 1.4 The topic is related to school programs.
  - 1.5 Alternative points of view are properly and fairly presented.
  - 1.6 The students have free access to appropriate materials and information for analysis and evaluation of the issues.
  - 1.7 The teacher is able to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and thoughtful consideration, when discussion of a variety of viewpoints is encouraged.

*Reference: Sections 7, 8, 17, 20, 22, 65, 76, 85 of the School Act  
Civil Rights Protection Act                      Human Rights Code  
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms  
Evaluating, Selecting, and Managing Learning Resources: A Guide (2002)*

*SD No. 40 (New Westminster)*

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