

SEXUAL ORIENTATION and GENDER IDENTITY (SOGI)

Background

The District strives to create a school and district culture, which supports diversity, including a welcoming learning and working environment for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

Students who identify as LGBTTTQ+ may face challenges within our schools and communities. These individuals, as well as their families, are frequently the targets of homophobic, transphobic or heterosexist behaviours. This often results in a struggle with a variety of profound social consequences including discrimination, harassment, physical and sexual violence, social and emotional isolation, substance abuse, homelessness, school truancy and dropping-out, self-harm and suicide.

A responsive, safe, and inclusive school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Discrimination is not part of such an environment. As students learn by example, all members of the school community are expected to model respectful conduct regardless of perceived differences and should refuse to tolerate any form of discrimination due to an individual's actual or perceived LGBTTTQ+ status or identity. The District is in full-support of the BC Human Rights Code amendment to include gender identity and expression.

Definitions

SOGI is an acronym for "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity," a term used by the BC Human Rights Code to describe an area of prohibited discrimination. It is an inclusive term that encompasses all individuals regardless of where they identify on the sexual orientation or gender identity spectrums, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, heterosexual and cisgender.

LGBTTTQ+ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, and queer/questioning. There is a wide range of other terms often included in this acronym (often referred to by queer communities as "the alphabet soup") such as asexual, and this acronym tends to vary depending on the source. The plus sign (+) indicates the inclusion of all sexual and gender identities.

Appendix A found at the end of this document contains a comprehensive "Glossary of Terms."

Procedures

1. Common Language
 - 1.1. School and district staff will use appropriate and respectful language as it pertains to SOGI; see Definitions above
 - 1.2. Individuals will be respected as the expert on how they may identify and on what language or terms they consider respectful and inclusive of themselves, not withstanding legal language requirements.
 - 1.3. See Definitions above
2. District and school Codes of Conduct will explicitly include language prohibiting the harassment, bullying, or violence against staff and students based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.
3. Self-identification
 - 3.1. Students have the right to self-identification, which includes the name by which they wish to be addressed and their pronoun of choice.
 - 3.2. Whenever possible and permitted by law, requests made by a student, or the parent/guardian, to change the student's official record to reflect their name and/or gender identity of choice will be accommodated.
 - 3.3. Whenever possible, at the request of a student or of a students' parent(s)/guardian, the student's name and/or gender identity of choice will be included on class lists, timetables, student files, identification cards, etc.
 - 3.4. Unless the student or the student's parent/guardian has specified otherwise, communications between school and home shall use a student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's gender assigned at birth.
4. Confidentiality and Privacy
 - 4.1. A student's trans status, legal name, or gender assigned at birth may constitute confidential personal information that will be kept confidential unless its disclosure is legally required or unless the student or the student's parent(s)/guardian have given authorization.
 - 4.2. In situations where school staff or administrators are required by law to use or to report a trans student's legal name or sex, such as for purposes of data collection, school staff and administrators will adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such information.
 - 4.3. Students' rights to discuss and express their gender identity and/or gender expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much private information to share will be respected.
5. School dress codes will not contain gender specific language.

6. Gender Integrated and Inclusive Activities

6.1. Schools will focus on integrated and inclusive activities. To the extent where gender segregated activities continue to exist, students will have the option to be included in the group that corresponds to their gender identity or, in the case of gender non-conforming students, the group in which they would like to participate.

7. Educator Training

7.1. Professional Development and Training

7.1.1. The District and school-based administrators will strive to ensure that opportunities for professional development and training is provided for staff to develop the awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to:

- deliver an LGBTTTQ+ inclusive curriculum (including anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia education)
- identify and address homophobic and transphobic discriminatory attitudes and behaviours; and
- support and advocate for the needs of students whose real or perceived identity is LGBTTTQ+

7.2. Counselling and Student Support

7.2.1. The District and school-based administrators will strive to ensure that:

- counsellors are trained to respond competently to the needs of LGBTTTQ+ students as well as to the needs of students with LGBTTTQ+ family members;
- counsellors and staff are provided with information, from the district, on support programs or services for students and families;
- all schools have at least one staff person to be a SOGI School Lead who is able to act as a resource person for LGBTTTQ+ students, staff and families. School administrators will inform students and staff about the location and availability of this contact person; and
- all secondary schools are supported in establishing and maintaining Gender-Sexuality Alliance / Gay-Straight Alliance or similar clubs (GSAs)
- the District SOGI Lead will provide School SOGI Leads with information regarding SOGI resources

8. Inclusive Learning

8.1. SOGI related classroom materials and activities will contain accurate information about sexual and/ or gender diversity, SOGI history and culture which reflects accomplishments, contributions, and struggles of transgender and gender nonconforming people.

9. Facilities

9.1. At least one single, gender neutral washroom stall/change room in each middle school, high school, alternate school, and the Board Office will be provided.

10. Inclusive Extra-Curricular Activities

- 10.1. Students will be included and accommodated for in all extra-curricular activities regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, including support to set up a Gender-Sexuality Alliance / Gay-Straight Alliance or similar club.
- 10.2. In the case of sex-segregated team sports, on a case-by-case basis, students whose gender identity is different than their sex at birth may join the sex-segregated team aligned with their gender identity.

SD No. 40 (New Westminster)

Adopted: April 30, 2019

Modification to this document is not permitted without prior written consent from SD No. 40 (New Westminster)