

The Board of Education, School District No. 48 (Sea to Sky) believes that all members of the school community have the right to work and learn together in an atmosphere of respect and safety regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (SOGI).

This policy applies, but is not limited to, students, staff, trustees, contractors, parents, volunteers, permit holders and all other persons who are invited to or who work on school district property. It is the expectation that all staff, students, and persons invited to or visiting school district property will strive to maintain the highest level of professional and personal courtesy when interacting with others.

This policy also applies to incidents which may take place outside of school district property or hours of operation but which have the effect of adversely impacting the working and learning environment of staff and students.

Rationale

The Board of Education recognizes that individuals 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, dropping-out, and self-harm.

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. 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.

Objectives

The district shall:

Support the inclusion of all students, staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians in all aspects of school life, irrespective of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity and experience.

Improve understanding generally of diversity as a strength and more specifically the lives and positive contributions of people who identify as LGBTTTQ+.

Define appropriate terms, behaviours, and actions to promote greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, the deleterious effects of homophobia, transphobia, anti-gay harassment, and exclusion.

Establish representative LGBTTTQ+ community partnerships for enhanced support.

Regulations

The following provides specific guidelines regarding the district policy on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. All School District No. 48 teachers and staff must adhere to the guidelines outlined below.

1. Communication

The district shall:

- 1.1 Acknowledge through its communication to students, staff, and the community that some students live in LGBTTTQ+ families and need to be positively recognized and included as such;
- 1.2 Ensure that school forms and communications reflect the diversity of sexual orientations, gender identities, and expression of students, staff and parents/guardians;
- 1.3 Provide effective procedures to respond to complaints of homophobic, transphobic and heterosexist behaviours including discrimination, harassment and exclusion;
- 1.4 Promote a systemic response through staff and professional development which strives to identify and address educational practices, policies, and procedures that perpetuate homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism;
- 1.5 Make resources and support services available and visible for LGBTTTQ+ students and staff throughout schools;
- 1.6 Act collaboratively to reduce homophobia, transphobia and other systemic barriers that are faced by LGBTTTQ+ students and staff who feel they must hide their true selves; and,
- 1.7 Commit to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with communities who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression to increase cooperation and collaboration among home, school and the community.

2. Staff and Professional Development

The district shall:

- 2.1 Provide and promote opportunities for staff to increase their awareness and understanding of the scope and impact of discrimination against people who identify as LGBTTQ+ by accessing experts either nationally, provincially, or locally; and,
- 2.2 Provide and promote opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and skills in promoting respect for human rights, supporting diversity, and addressing discrimination.

3. Student Programs

The district shall:

- 3.1 Educate students in the areas of healthy relationships, diversity, and social justice education, including harassment and homophobia, through the BC Ministry of Education curricular learning standards (*parents may choose alternative instruction outside the classroom for sensitive topics*);
- 3.2 Encourage teachers to include age appropriate LGBTTQ+ issues into curriculum that meet BC Ministry of Education learning standards to help students acquire the skills and knowledge to understand the impacts of homophobia and transphobia upon society;
- 3.3 Expect school staff to use accurate positive images, accomplishments, contributions, and struggles, and model the acceptance of diversity as a strength; and,
- 3.4 Ensure that, resources relevant to SOGI emphasize universal human themes that acknowledge human diversity as essential and enriching element of our society.

4. Parent/guardian Programs

The district shall:

- 4.1 Provide parent/guardian learning opportunities to increase awareness of issues related to SOGI.

5. Learning Resources,

The district shall:

- 5.1 Provide learning resources that reflect and value diversity so that all students, including students who identify as LGBTTTQ+, see themselves and their lives positively reflected in the curricula;
- 5.2 Ensure that SOGI learning resources, as much as practical, are available in different languages and in formats easily accessible to ELL students and their families; and,
- 5.3 Ensure that the learning resources universal human themes that acknowledge human diversity as an essential and enriching element of our society.

6. Counselling and Student Support

The district shall:

- 6.1 Ensure that school counsellors have the knowledge and skills required to understand and appropriately respond to LGBTTTQ+ issues;
- 6.2 Ensure that Principals identify at least one staff person to act as the key school community support person (SOGI School Lead) to support the school community with their questions and/or needs, and will communicate the location and availability of this person; and,
- 6.3 Ensure that middle schools and secondary schools are supported in establishing and maintaining a Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) or similar club, such as a Diversity Club.

7. Safety and Anti-Harassment

The district shall:

- 7.1 Not tolerate any language or behaviour that degrades, denigrates, labels, or stereotypes students or staff on the basis of their real or perceived sexual and/or gender identities and/or gender expression, or that incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination or harassment on such bases; and
- 7.2 Establish School and the District will have Codes of Conduct that explicitly include language prohibiting the harassment, bullying, or

violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

8. Leadership

The district shall:

- 8.1 Ensure that ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with LGBTTTQ+ communities to increase cooperation and collaboration amongst and between home, school and the community; and,
- 8.2 Ensure that Principals, staff, and student leaders consult with students who identify as LGBTTTQ+ and their designated support groups to take concrete actions to make schools safe, welcoming and inclusive.

9. Names and Pronouns

The district shall:

- 9.1 Ensure students have the right to self-identification, which includes the name by which they wish to be addressed and their preferred pronouns that correspond to their gender identity.

10. School Dress Code

The district shall:

- 10.1 Ensure students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression, including that which may not be consistent with societal expectations of masculinity/femininity; and,
- 10.2 Ensure School Dress codes do not contain gender specific language.

11. Gender Inclusive Activities

The district shall:

- 11.1 Focus on gender inclusive activities;
- 11.2 Shall ensure, to the extent that some gender segregated activities continue to exist, that students have the option to be included in the group that corresponds to their gender identity or, in the case of gender nonconforming students, the group in which they would like to participate; and,
- 11.3 Ensure that classes are not segregated by gender.

12. Access to Athletics and other Extra Curricular Activities

The district shall:

- 12.1 Ensure, where possible, that students are permitted to participate in any gender-segregated recreational and competitive athletic activities, in accordance with their gender identity;
- 12.2 Ensure that students are not excluded from an extracurricular activities base on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

13. Washroom and Change Room Accessibility

The district shall:

- 13.1 Strive to make available at least one single stall gender-neutral washroom at all school locations and worksites; and,
- 13.2 Ensure students whose gender identity is different than their sex at birth shall have access to a washroom/change room which is either gender neutral or that corresponds to their gender identity; and,
- 13.3 shall ensure students who desire increased privacy are provided a reasonable alternative washroom/change room in a manner which protects their confidentiality.

Legislative Context

B.C. Human Rights Code
Teacher Regulation Branch
WorkSafe BC
Collective Agreements

Common Language (Definitions/Terms)

These definitions are fluid and continue to evolve.

1. **“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 and expression spectrums, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, heterosexual and cisgender.
2. **“LGBTQ+”**: is an initialism 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 and expression.
3. **Asexual:** A person who is not sexually attracted to any gender or sex. Asexual people may still be romantically attracted to people of a variety of genders and sexualities and have romantic, non-sexual relationships.
 4. **Bisexual:** A person who is attracted to both women and men.
 5. **Cisgender:** A person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex
 6. **Gay:** A person who is attracted to someone of the same sex and/or gender as themselves. This word can be applied to all genders of relationships, but has primarily been used in reference to men.
 7. **Gender:** A socially constructed concept of identity based on roles, behaviours, activities, and appearance such as masculine, feminine, androgynous, etc.
 8. **Gender expression:** The ways a person presents their sense of gender to others (for example, through clothes, hairstyle, mannerisms, etc.).
 9. **Gender identity:** A person's internal sense of being a man, a woman, genderqueer etc. This is not the same thing as a person's biological sex, and may not be consistent with how they are perceived by others.
 10. **Gender nonconforming:** A term that often refers to children who express gender in ways that differs from societal expectations of the sex and gender assigned to them at birth. For the purposes of this policy and accompanying regulations gender nonconforming children are included under the term trans*.
 11. **Heteronormative:** A term to describe a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the normal and/or preferred sexual orientation.
 12. **Heterosexism:** refers to the assumption that all people are heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior and more desirable for all people than any other sexual orientation.

13. **Heterosexual:** refers to a man or a woman who is romantically, emotionally or sexually involved with the opposite sex exclusively.
14. **Homophobia:** The fear, ignorance and mistreatment of people who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual. This often leads to bias, discrimination, hatred, harassment and violation of the human rights of lesbian, gay or bisexual people. Homophobic bullying can also be targeted against any individual, regardless of perceived sexual orientation.
15. **Intersex:** Refers to people whose reproductive or sexual anatomy is not easily defined as male or female. There are a variety of ways someone can be intersex, ranging from having ambiguous genitalia to having mixture of XX and XY chromosomes. Intersex individuals have historically been mistreated in North American society (i.e. being forced to have "corrective" genital surgeries as infants). The term Disorders of Sexual Development is being used increasingly amongst medical professionals in reference to intersex conditions, however, this term has not been fully adopted by intersex communities at the time this policy is being written. The word hermaphrodite was historically used to describe intersex individuals, however, this term is considered highly offensive.
16. **Lesbian:** A woman who is attracted to other women.
17. **Perceived as LGBTTQ+:** Refers to someone who is treated as if they are LGBTTQ+ even if they do not identify as such.
18. **Positive Contact Network:** A group of staff members, preferably one in each school, who serve as "safe contacts" for students who identify themselves as LGBTTQ+ and those who are questioning.
19. **Pronouns:** The words one uses to refer to themselves (e.g. he/him/his; she/her/hers; they/them/theirs; xe, xem, xyr, etc.)
20. **Queer:** An umbrella term (often used in place of the LGBTTQ+ acronym) used to describe individuals who identify as being part of sexual and gender diverse communities (e.g. lesbian, gay, transgender).
21. **Sex:** A biological classification based on physical attributes such as sex chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive structures, and external genitalia. At birth, it is used to identify individuals as male or

female. For those whose sex is not easily categorized as male or female see Intersex.

22. **Sexual Orientation:** Refers to a person's attraction towards a particular gender or sex. Someone may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, two spirit, pansexual, etc. It is important to remember that sexual identity and gender identity are separate.
23. **Trans** (also Trans*, Transgender, Transsexual): An umbrella term that can be used to describe people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what they were assigned at birth. Some trans people may choose to medically transition by taking hormones, having surgery. Some trans people may choose to socially transition by changing their name, clothing, hair, etc.
24. **Transgender:** can refer to people who do not identify with the gender roles assigned to them by society based on their biological sex.
25. **Transphobia:** is the irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against people who are transgender or who otherwise transgress traditional gender norms.
26. **Transsexual:** can refer to people who use hormone therapy and/or surgery to alter their sex.
27. **Two-Spirited:** An indigenous term describing the embodiment of both masculine and feminine spirits. This identity is not limited to gender expression or sexuality, but encompasses both while incorporating a spiritual element. It is a standalone identity, not an indigenous term for gay or lesbian.