

**School District #62 (Sooke)**

<b>SEXUAL-GENDER DIVERSITY</b>	No.: C-340
	Effective: Oct. 25/11 Revised:

**SCHOOL BOARD POLICY**

**Rationale:**

The Board of Education is responsible for providing an educational system that is safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming for all students. The Board recognizes and values the diversity found within its school communities and believes that each individual contributes to the strength of the district’s culture. The Board also recognizes that students and other school community members identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, intersex, queer or questioning (LGBTTIQQ) face a unique set of challenges within our schools and communities. Homophobic bullying is a form of bullying that takes place in all schools. Individuals of sexual minority groups or those perceived to be members of these groups are frequently the targets of homophobic, transphobic, and/or heterosexist behaviours. This often has profound social consequences, including discrimination, harassment, physical and sexual violence, social and emotional isolation, substance abuse, homelessness, school truancy and drop-out, self-harm and suicide.

It is with this rationale in mind and with an understanding that each member of the school and district community must bear the responsibility for creating a safe welcoming, inclusive and affirming environment for all individuals.

This policy is meant to be congruent with the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the British Columbia Human Rights Code, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom.

**Policy**

The Board will promote a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, by implementing proactive strategies and guidelines to ensure that LGBTTIQQ students, employees and families are equally welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity.

Any language or behavior that degrades, denigrates, stereotypes, incites hatred or fear, prejudice, discrimination, harassment toward individuals on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification will not be tolerated. School codes of conduct will include the prohibition of such language and behaviour.