

Preamble

The Board of Education 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, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer, or questioning (LGBTTIQQ) face a unique set of challenges within our schools and communities. 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 drop-out, selfharm and suicide.

The Board recognizes that each member of the school and district community must share the responsibility for supporting all students in addressing and facing these challenges and that the district is responsible for providing an education system that is safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming for its students, employees and community members. The Board commits to creating this environment for all students and employees regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity with special attention paid to supporting those who identify as LGBTTIQQ.

Policy Statement

School District 63 is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe and positive environment free of discrimination, harassment and intimidation for all students, employees and community members regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The Board is particularly committed to supporting those who identify as LGBTTIQQ. In this regard, the Board is committed to the letter and spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *BC Human Rights Code*, related Board policies and the *Collective Agreements*.

Specifically, the Board will not tolerate hate crimes, harassment, discrimination or intimidation, and will vigorously enforce policy and regulations dealing with such matters. The Board will provide a safe environment, free from harassment, discrimination and intimidation, while also promoting proactive strategies and guidelines to ensure that the LGBTTIQQ community is welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity.

The Board will not permit, encourage, nor tolerate any behaviours contrary to these commitments, whether by commission or by failing to act to bring such behaviours to an end, and is committed to providing support and assistance to those who may be the intended or unintended targets of such behaviours.

School District 63 (Saanich)

Policy Name: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No: 6150

Statutory References: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
BC Human Rights Code
Ministerial Order 276/07

Contractual References: Saanich Teachers' Association Collective Agreement
CUPE Local 441 Collective Agreement

Policy References: Policy 1350 - Human Rights and Discrimination s
Policy 5530 - Harassment
Policy 6110 - Prevention of Violence, Intimidation and
Harassment

Date of Initial Board Approval: June 2012

Amendments:

Guiding Principles

1. The Board believes in equitable treatment of all individuals regardless of race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability or political beliefs.
2. The Board is committed to the principles as outlined in the preamble and policy and to ensuring that schools and the district at large are places of understanding, safety and support for all people regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
3. The Board is committed to ensuring that all LGBTTIQQ students, employees and others who participate in the life of our schools are treated with respect and dignity, which includes both their right to privacy and their right to be supported and free from harassment, discrimination or harm.
4. The Board is committed to enabling all LGBTTIQQ students, employees and others who participate in the life of our schools see themselves and their lives positively reflected in the curriculum.
5. The Board is committed to ensuring that all employees are aware of their responsibilities as it relates to creating safety and support for all students and employees regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and to supporting administrators, counsellors and teacher and CUPE leaders in educating colleagues.
6. The Board is committed to providing age-appropriate learning activities that promote respect for and reduce discrimination against anyone who is a member of the LGBTTIQQ community.
7. The Board is committed to supporting parents in their awareness of the issues captured in this policy and of their opportunities to ensure that their children have and exhibit understanding and care as it relates to members of the LGBTTIQQ community.
8. The Board is committed to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with any people or organizations that identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity in order to increase cooperation and collaboration among home, school and community.
9. The Board is committed to ensuring confidentiality of anyone's sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and to supporting anyone who is out as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual or other descriptor within LGBTTIQQ.

Administrative Procedures

1. All employees of the school district will be supported in being able to identify discriminatory attitudes and behaviours as described in this policy, and are expected to be committed to eliminating the harm, inequities and barriers that might exist in relation to orientation and gender identity.
2. All administrators, teachers, counsellors, and staff and student leaders will work together to support the Board's position in the school community. This will include leaders in schools ensuring that activities are undertaken at the beginning of each school to make all members of the school community aware of the expectations and provisions of this policy, including the expectation that every member of our school communities will work purposefully to eliminate harmful behaviours and ensure safety and support for LGBTTIQQ students and staff.
3. School administrators and counsellors will ensure that counselling and support are provided to students who are dealing with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Elementary, middle and secondary schools are expected to appoint a staff person to be a safe contact for students who are dealing with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Schools are encouraged in their goal planning to advocate for such students. Where students request and where staff are willing to volunteer their time, Gay/Straight Alliance clubs (GSAs) will be encouraged at secondary schools in the district.
4. Any language or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes or incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination or harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity will not be tolerated. Schools will be expected to specifically include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in their student codes of conduct.
5. Resources should be available in every school and be chosen or updated in order to promote critical thinking and include materials that support the tenets of this policy. Schools are encouraged to find anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia and antiheterosexist resource materials that provide knowledge, skills, and strategies for educators to recognize, understand and challenge such discrimination. Keeping in mind the multicultural aspect of the district, many of the above resources should reflect the WSA NEC community and the specific characteristics and issues of people of two spirits.
6. The school district will be committed to ongoing in-service and professional development in the matters captured in this policy, including anti-homophobia, antitransphobia and anti-heterosexist education.

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Administrative Procedures (cont'd)

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7. Schools are expected to ensure that students are educated in the areas of understanding, diversity, harassment, discrimination, anti-homophobia, antitransphobia, and anti-heterosexism through the BC provincial curriculum in ways that are curricularly relevant and age appropriate.
8. In the interest of safe and supportive environments, the district is committed to ensuring that the confidentiality of the sexual orientation and gender identity of students and employees will be protected. Students and employees who are out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or transitioning to another gender, etc. will be given the support they require to do their work in a safe and respectful environment.

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Appendix 1: Glossary

Ally: An individual who is supportive of the LGBTTIQQ community. They believe in the dignity and respect of all people, and are willing to stand up in that role.

Bisexual: Generally used to describe people who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one sex or gender.

Gay: A man who is romantically and sexually attracted to other men. It is sometimes used to refer to the general GLBTQ community, but most often refers to just gay men.

Gender Identity: A person's gender identity is the way in which they define and act on their gender. Gender Expression is how they express their gender.

Genderism: Refers to the assumption that one's gender identity or gender expression will conform to traditionally held stereotypes associated with one's biological sex.

Heterosexism and Homophobia: The term heterosexism refers to the assumption that all people are heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior and more desirable than homosexuality. "Homophobia" is defined as "the irrational fear and hatred of homosexuals." Both of these are perpetuated by negative stereotypes and are dangerous to individuals and communities.

Heterosexual: Created around the same time as 'homosexual' to describe individuals who are sexually attracted to the opposite sex/gender.

Homosexual: A scientific term invented in the 1800's to refer to individuals who are sexually attracted to their own sex/gender.

Intersex: An intersex individual may have biological characteristics of both the male and the female sexes.

Lesbian: A woman who is romantically and sexually attracted to other women. This term originates with the female poet Sappho who lived in a community comprised predominantly of women on the Isle of Lesbos in ancient Greece.

Sex & Gender: It is easy to confuse these two concepts and terms; however, they are different. Sex refers to the biological sex of a person. Gender refers to their societal appearance, mannerisms, and roles.

Sexual Orientation: A personal characteristic that covers the range of human sexuality from gay and lesbian to bisexual, transgender and heterosexual orientations.

Straight: A slang word used to refer to the heterosexual members of our community.

Transgender: An umbrella term used to refer to people who transcend the traditional concept of gender. Many feel as though they are neither a man nor a woman specifically, and many feel as though their biological sex (male, female, etc.) and their socialized gender (man, woman, etc.) don't match. Some opt to change or reassign their sex through hormones and/or surgery and some change their outward appearance, or gender expression, through clothing, hairstyles, mannerisms, etc.

Transsexual: Used to describe those individuals who use hormone therapy and/or surgery to alter their sex.

Transvestite: More appropriately referred to as "cross-dressing," the term transvestite most often refers to males who dress in the clothing of women. The term drag usually refers to dressing in the clothing and styles of another gender for entertainment purposes.

Two-Spirit: Used by some First Nations to describe people in their culture who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

Queer: The term queer has a history of being used as a derogatory name for members of the LGBTTIQQ (and Ally) community and those whose sexual orientation is perceived as such. Many people use this word in a positive way to refer to the community; they have reclaimed the term as their own. Not everyone believes this and sensitivity should be used when using or hearing it as there are still many negative connotations with this term and its use by anyone other than someone who is proud to identify as queer.

Questioning: People who are in the process of questioning their sexual orientation are often in need of support and understanding during this stage of their identity. They are seeking information and guidance in their self-discovery.

With appreciation to the Saanich Teachers' Association for providing these definitions based on research done by various agencies and universities.