

SUPPORT FOR DIVERSITY POLICY (September 2016)

Rationale

The Board recognizes and values the diversity found within its school community and believes that each individual contributes to the strength of the school's culture. The Board also recognizes that students and other school community members identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, intersex, queer, questioning, or any other gender-based or sexual-based identity may face challenges within school and the broader community. Individuals who are dealing with or are perceived to be dealing with issues of gender identity, gender expression, intersexuality or sexual orientation, as well as their families, are frequently the targets of homophobic, transphobic, or heterosexist behaviours. This can result in any number of 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 reality in mind and with an understanding that each member of the school and community must share the responsibility for making the school a safe and caring place for all who attend and all who have any interaction with members of the school community.

While reference has already been made to this issue in our 2013 policy on harassment, this policy was included to add more clarity and specificity.

Policy

The Board will promote a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, by encouraging pro-active strategies and guidelines to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, intersex, queer, and questioning students, employees, families, and guests are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity.

Any language or behaviour that degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes, incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination, harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual-orientation or gender identification will not be tolerated. The school is encouraged to include specifically this matter in its code-of-conduct development and review processes each year.