

POLICY

POLICY #220 - SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY (SOGI)

RATIONALE

This policy is based on the principles of respect, acceptance, safety, and the value of all members of our learning community. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all members of the learning community reflect upon their behaviors and actions in order to prevent discrimination and harassment through greater awareness how their interactions can create an inclusive, equitable, supportive environment for all in our learning community.

The regulations and schedules attached to this policy are intended as guidelines and information only. The policy does not anticipate every situation that might occur with respect to sexual orientation or gender identity; therefore, the needs of each student and/or employee must be assessed on an individual basis with the intent to protect the rights and safety of all.

POLICY

The Board of Education is committed to a safe, positive and inclusive learning and working environment for all students, employees and members of the school community regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The letter and spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *B.C. Human Rights Code* are observed, enforced and supported in this policy so that all members of the school community may learn and work together in an atmosphere of respect and safety, free from discrimination, harassment and/or exclusion.

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These regulations cover conduct that takes place in the school; on school property; at school sponsored functions and activities; on school buses or vehicles and at bus stops; and also pertains to electronic technology and communications including school computers, networks, forums and mailing lists.

The Board of Education expects that all students, staff and members of our school communities will:

- 1) Adhere to a code of conduct that prohibits any form of discrimination, intimidation or harassment against any person, and that is educative, preventative and restorative in practice and response. (See Policy #310 – District Code of Conduct and Policy #318 – Workplace Bullying and Harassment)
- 2) Foster school cultures that are responsive to the diverse social and cultural needs of individuals and groups regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.
- 3) Recognize the injustices of marginalization, advocate for social justice and promote human rights. This includes being cognitive to the needs of persons having identified sexual orientation or gender identity (LGBTQ+) including but not limited to:
 - a) Privacy and Confidentiality
All persons have a right to privacy. This includes the right to have one’s sexual orientation or gender identity and sex assigned birth kept private at school. Disclosing this information would be in violation of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Schools must balance the parent or guardian’s need to be informed about their child’s school experiences with the student’s right to live freely with their affirmed genders and right for privacy.
 - b) Names and Pronouns
Every student and employee has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change document is not required as official records will not be changed at this point. MyEd BC includes the ability for the identification of “preferred name” and “preferred gender”. Schools will populate all internally generated documents using the “preferred name”, examples include class lists; PAC and photographers lists; attendance sheets; report cards; diplomas; and parent notifications. For situations requiring legal name, such as, provincial assessments, schools may utilize “hand coding” to preserve a student’s desired identification.
 - c) Official Records
Schools must maintain a mandatory permanent record that includes a student’s legal name and legal sex. The school may only change this information with the receipt of documentation to which such change has been made by court order or through amendment of provincial or federal issued identification. To change the name legally within MyEd BC and with the Ministry, the change must be submitted to the PEN department.
 - d) Gender-Based Curricular and Extra Curricular Activities
All students have the right to participate in sports and other activities in a manner that respects and embraces their gender identity. Students should be given the option to decide which activities they feel more comfortable doing. A request may come directly from the student or from a parent or guardian. The school will make the

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requested arrangements for these students in school, extra-curricular and physical education, while being respectful of the needs of all students involved. With regard to extracurricular sports, BC School Sports policy D7.2.2 which reads "...a student-athlete may participate with the opposite sex in a sex-segregated sport on the basis that doing so would be consistent with his/her gender identity. Application for eligibility on school teams will align with BC School sports procedures." All requests, meetings and decisions must be documented and kept confidential.

e) International Students

International students who have identified sexual orientations or gender, will be placed with host families that are aware of the needs of an LGBTQ+ student and the community.

f) Media Communications

In speaking with media, of any gender identification or sexual orientation issues, all district employees will be cognizant to maintain and protect the privacy of all LGBTQ+ staff and students and may refer all media back to the Superintendent as the spokesperson.

g) Washrooms and Change Rooms

All students and staff have a right to safe and private washrooms and change facilities. They have the right to access the facilities that correspond to their identified gender. Schools may maintain separate washroom and change room facilities provided that students and staff may freely access them based on their gender identity. Where available, schools are encouraged to designate gender neutral facilities designed for use by one person to satisfy the need to feel safe and private.

h) Billeting and Overnight Field Trips

Plans for billeting of sports teams and/or any overnight school sponsored function must provide accommodation for each student in a room where they will feel safe and accepted. The administrator, teacher or coach in charge of organizing the event will make every effort to support the student. When staying with a billet family the administrator, teacher or coach must discuss with the student and/or parent or guardian whether the billet family will be informed of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

4) Participate in the ongoing development of practices that promote fair and equitable treatment of everyone, cultivating mutual respect, civility and a sense of belonging.

a) Support for Students

In the support of LGBTQ+ students sexual orientation and/or gender identity a use of common language is important to maintain inclusivity, safety, acceptance and anti-harassment behavior. Schedule A contains some common terms and definitions.

b) Responding to Incidents

Incidents regarding any violations will be dealt with through Policy #310 – District Code of Conduct, clause 3; Consequences for Unacceptable Conduct or Policy #318 – Workplace Bullying and Harassment. All incidents will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

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c) Staff Development and Education

All administrative, teaching and support staff will be expected to be familiar with this policy, Policy #310 - District Code of Conduct and Policy #318 – Workplace Bullying and Harassment; promote understanding of the common language; fully understand the protection of privacy for these students and their families; be aware of strategies and procedures for intervening with issues, such as, bullying, harassment, intimidation and/or discrimination; and model and teach inclusive, respectful practices that honour diversity and promote human rights.

Attached Schedule B contains a list of LGBTQ+, sexual orientation and gender identity resources and learning resources.

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SCHEDULE A – COMMON LANGUAGE

Common Language associated with sexual orientation and gender identity will be promoted and defined from the following LGBTQ+ resource:

http://qmunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Queer_Terminology_Web_Version_Sept_2013_Cover_and_pages_.pdf

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SCHEDULE B – RESOURCES

Resources associated with Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:

SOGI 1 2 3

SOGI 1 2 3 shares proven SOGI-inclusive tools and resources in the areas of policy and procedures, inclusive environments and curriculum resources. <http://www.sogieducation.org>

BC Teachers Federation

The BCTF offers a variety of free workshops to teachers that aim to develop skills to interrupt, address, and challenge homophobia and transphobia within our classrooms and school communities. <http://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=17988>

Education Resources Acquisition Consortium (ERAC)

ERAC provides a range of services including evaluation, licensing and acquisition of print, software, and digital learning resources. ERAC offers a curated catalogue of SOGI resources (see LGBTQ collection) <http://www.bcerac.ca/index.aspx>

Out in Schools

Out in Schools presentations and Learning Hub provide youth with opportunities not only to learn, but to do. The presentations offer a chance to build participation in and creation of Queer Straight Alliances across the province. The Rise Against Homophobia Video Contest offers youth the chance to use media as a vehicle not only for personal expression, but to shape more inclusive school communities. <http://outinschools.com/about/>

QMUNITY – BC’s Queer Resource Centre

QMUNITY is a non-profit organization based in Vancouver, BC that works to improve queer and trans lives. They provide a safer space for LGBTQ/2S people and their allies to fully self-express while feeling welcome and included. <http://qmunity.ca/>

Egale Canada Human Rights Trust

Founded in 1995, Egale Canada Human Rights Trust is Canada’s only national charity promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) human rights through research, education and community engagement. <http://egale.ca/>

MyGSA

MyGSA.ca is Canada's website for safer and inclusive schools for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) community. <http://mygsa.ca>

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SCHEDULE B – RESOURCES CONTINUED

Trans Care BC

The Trans Care BC program aims to enhance the coordination of trans health services and supports across the province, bringing gender-affirming care closer to home wherever possible. <http://www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/trans-care-bc>

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

The leading national US-based education organization focused on ensuring safe and affirming schools for LGBTQ students. <http://www.glsen.org/>

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

PFLAG Canada is a national charitable organization, founded by parents who wished to help themselves and their family members understand and accept their non-heterosexual children. <http://pflagcanada.ca/>

Pride Education Network

The Pride Education Network of teachers, administrators, support staff, youth and parents strives to make the BC school system more welcoming and equitable for LGBTQ students and staff and queer families. <http://pridenet.ca/>