

## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION**

### **Background**

The District is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all students and their families, employees and volunteers including those who identify as or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, queer or questioning their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression (LGBTQ.) This environment is to be free of discrimination, harassment and intimidation.

### **Definitions**

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.

Bisexual: A person who is attracted to both women and men.

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.

Gender: A socially constructed concept of identity based on roles, behaviours, activities, and appearance such as masculine, feminine, androgynous, etc.

Gender expression: The ways a person presents their sense of gender to others (for example, through clothes, hairstyle, mannerisms, etc.).

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.

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\*.

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.

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.

Lesbian: A woman who is attracted to other women.

LGBTQ: An acronym that in this case stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, 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.

Perceived as LGBTQ: Refers to someone who is treated as if they are LGBTQ even if they do not identify as such.

Pronouns: The words one uses to refer to themselves (e.g. he/him/his; she/her/hers; they/them/theirs; xe, xem, xyr, etc.)

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).

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.

Sexual Orientation: Refers to a person’s attraction towards a particular gender or sex. Someone may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, pansexual, etc. It is important to remember that sexual identity and gender identity are separate.

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.

Transphobia: Fear, ignorance and mistreatment of people who are, or are perceived to be, trans\* or gender nonconforming. This often leads to bias, discrimination, hatred, harassment and violation of the human rights of transgender or gender nonconforming people. Transphobic bullying can also be targeted against any individual, regardless of perceived gender expression.

Transition: A term most commonly used to refer to someone transitioning from one gender to another. Transition often consists of a change in style of dress, selection of a new name, and a request that people use the correct pronoun when describing them. Transition may, but does not always, include medical care like hormone therapy, counseling, and/or surgery.

Two-Spirit: An Aboriginal term describing the embodiment of both masculine and feminine spirits. This identity is not limited to gender expression or sexuality, but encompasses them both while incorporating a spiritual element. It is a standalone identity, not an Aboriginal term for gay or lesbian.

(These definitions are adapted from the Vancouver School Board's [Policy ACB - R - 1: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities](#))

## **Procedures**

### **1. Safe, Inclusive and Welcoming Environment Free of Harassment**

- 1.1. The District is committed to operating in such a way that a person is unlikely to be exposed to hatred or contempt because of that person's sex or sexual orientation, among other things.
- 1.2. The District will not discriminate against or deny service to a person because of sex or sexual orientation, among other things, without a bona fide and reasonable justification.
- 1.3. The District is committed to providing an environment where bullying and harassment are not acceptable or tolerated.
- 1.4. The District will introduce supports for LGBTQ students and reach out to those who have dropped out.
- 1.5. The District will assist a student who is transitioning to develop a transition plan addressing items such as safety, and choice of washrooms and change rooms usage.
- 1.6. The District will permit and encourage the formation of Gay-Straight Alliances in schools.
- 1.7. The District will encourage library staff to include age appropriate LGBTQ resources in library collections.
- 1.8. The District will encourage each Principal to identify a supportive adult for LGBTQ students.
- 1.9. Principals will welcome students' families into the school community, including opportunities to volunteer in a manner consistent with other families, where one or more of the family members have identified as LGBTQ.
- 1.10. An individual's prospect of employment with the District or an individual's status or opportunities as an employee of the District will not be affected by their identity as LGBTQ.

### **2. Staff Development**

- 2.1. The District will encourage all staff to participate in learning opportunities regarding LGBTQ issues.
- 2.2. The District will make age-appropriate LGBTQ material available for staff to incorporate into their practice.

### **3. Non-disclosure - LGBTQ individuals**

The District recognizes that an individual's gender identity is their personal information and the District commits to respect the confidentiality of that information and the privacy of the individual, subject to legal obligations of disclosure.

### 3.1. LGBTQ Students

- 3.1.1. The Principal will not disclose a student's identity as an LGBTQ individual to anyone, including the student's parents or guardians, without that student's consent, subject to legal obligations of disclosure.
- 3.1.2. The Principal will use the student's legal name and gender on the permanent record and, if the student requests, any other name they wish to be recorded on the permanent record.
- 3.1.3. The onus is on the student or the student's parent to notify the Principal of a change of legal name or gender and provide copies of government-issued identification reflecting that change.
- 3.1.4. The Principal will consult with the student about their preference for name and gender on school records, including communications that may be sent to the student's home and will respect their choice.

### 3.2. LGBTQ Employees

- 3.2.1. The employer will not disclose an employee's identity as an LGBTQ individual without that employee's consent, subject to legal obligations of disclosure.
- 3.2.2. The employer will use an employee's legal name on all official records. The onus is on the employee to notify the employer of a change of legal name or gender and provide copies of government-issued identification reflecting that change.
- 3.2.3. The employer will use an employee's chosen name and gender unless otherwise required on official records.

### 3.3. LGBTQ Volunteers in Schools and School Sanctioned Events

- 3.3.1. The Principal will not collect information about a volunteer's identity as an LGBTQ individual.
- 3.3.2. The Principal will disregard information s/he inadvertently receives concerning a volunteer's identity as an LGBTQ individual.

## 4. Restrooms and Change Rooms

- 4.1. The District will, where reasonably practical, ensure that each school or other District facility has at least one gender-neutral restroom available for any individual's use, whether or not they have identified as LGBTQ.
- 4.2. Where change rooms are provided in a school for student use or in any school or other District facility for employee use, the District will, where reasonably practical, ensure that alternatives to gender segregated change rooms are provided for any individual's use, whether or not they have identified as LGBTQ.

## 5. The Superintendent will review this Administrative Procedure annually.

Reference: Sections 20, 22, 65, 85, 177 School Act  
BC Human Rights Code  
Workers' Compensation Act  
Occupational Health and Safety Regulation  
Ministerial Order 276/07 Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order

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