

Administrative Procedure 169

AP 169 – IDENTITY, BELONGING AND CONNECTION

Goal:

The goal of this Administrative Procedure is to create a positive and inclusive learning environment where all students, staff, families, and guests, especially those currently and historically marginalized, feel they can bring their authentic selves, feel safe, be included, welcomed, accepted, and experience a sense of belonging and connection to others.

Background:

This Administrative Procedure was built to support the work of Policy 25 - Identity, Belonging and Connection. The Policy was a result of the Board of Education's Ad-Hoc Anti-Racism Committee (2022). A sub-committee included representation from Indigenous Leadership students, union leadership, the District Sul'hween (Elder), District Indigenous Education Staff, and a local community member. The sub-committee included members who self-identified as Indigenous and people of colour.

Definitions:

Identity, Belonging, and Connection were chosen to frame this work as these concepts complement the First Peoples Principles of Learning in that learning supports the self (me), the family (we) and the community.

Identity: The multiple facets of a person's whole self. Identity can be something seen and shown externally as well as aspects that are kept to oneself. Identity is the internal understanding of the various aspects of yourself.

Belonging: The relationships that make us feel whole within a group. Belonging requires a place of safety, where individuals can bring their whole identities to the group. Belonging is the internal structure of a group and focuses on the interactions of those who are part of the group. Belonging to a group makes members feel loved, happy, and safe and is a place where the various needs of the individuals are accepted and respected.

Connection: The way in which a group bridges to others by connecting through common interests and themes. Connection is the external focus of a group and uses its influence to expand, welcome, and intentionally join or include other groups in community.

Procedure:

In order to create a school community that respects and fosters Identity, Belonging and Connection, the following is required:

Identity:

1. Create the conditions, environments, and behaviours that respect each individual and the sum and totalities of their identities.
2. Honour and acknowledge differences in, and not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, religion, (dis)ability, physical attributes, and/or socioeconomic status.
3. Celebrate the ability to be one's authentic self in age-appropriate ways.
4. Accept, with compassion, the depth and breadth of the individual identities that students, staff, family, or community members may hold.

Examples of supporting Identity:

5. Create physical, emotional, electronic, or other spaces where individuals feel safe and comfortable being their authentic selves.
6. Nurture trusting and individual relationships with students, staff, families, or community members.

Belonging:

7. Be present and attentive to creating strong, supportive, relationships with students, staff, families, and community members.
8. Foster a sense of acceptance and inclusion within a group by recognizing, accepting, and offering supports to help individual students, staff, families and community members navigate a range of emotions.
9. Identify and foster supportive environments for individuals with similar interests or activities so they may find belonging within a group.

Examples of supporting Belonging:

10. Expand curricular and extracurricular activities with intention to bring together groups with similar interests.
11. Create multiple opportunities for diverse voices to come together behind a common interest.
12. With permission, center marginalized voices within groups to celebrate diversity and promote understanding and compassion.

Connection:

13. Develop networks that support people in achieving their aspirational goals.

14. Create spaces where groups are recognized and empowered either formally or informally.
15. Recognize the importance of peer relationships and ensure that the conditions, environment, and behaviours are in place to support them.

Examples of supporting Connection:

16. Ensure that diverse voices/groups are represented in school activities/assemblies.
17. Create group-specific awareness campaigns that help link groups to larger school communities.
18. Create opportunities for multi-age group and multi-class interactions.

Adopted: January 2024