

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

The Board of Trustees is committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning and teaching environment for all members of the school community. This includes those students, staff, and families who identify or are perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, queer or questioning their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Board expects all members of this diverse community to be welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported in our schools.

All members of the school community have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. This right is guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, *Alberta Human Rights Act*, and *Alberta School Act*. These rights shall be supported, and enforced so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation for individual differences. The Board of Trustees will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The Board believes that all sexual and gender minority students, staff and families have the right to:

- be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect;
- have their confidentiality protected and respected;
- self-identification and determination;
- freedom of conscience, expression, and association;
- be fully included and represented in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner by all school personnel;
- have equitable access to the same supports, services, and protections provided to heterosexual students and families;
- have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, and/or violence; and
- have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, valued and respected within all aspects of the school environment.

### **The Superintendent shall:**

- Define appropriate expectations, behaviours, language, and actions in order to prevent discrimination, prejudice, and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their harmful effects.

- Ensure that all such discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.
- Improve understanding of the individual lives of sexual and gender minorities and their families, cultures, and communities.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate inclusive educational strategies, professional development opportunities, and administrative guidelines to ensure that sexual and gender minorities and their families are welcomed and treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of the school community.
- Ensure all aspects of this regulation are clearly communicated to all staff, students, and families.
- Ensure staff address and provide appropriate remedial consequences for all interactions involving the use of comments, behaviours and actions which display homophobic, transphobic, and sexist bias, whether they occur in person or in digital form.
- Ensure staff know their professional responsibility to identify discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, and create caring, respectful and safe learning environments.
- Ensure awareness and adherence to all division policies with respect to diversity, equity, human rights, sexual orientation, gender identity, discrimination, prejudice, and harassment.
- Ensure staff utilize language and educational resources and approaches that are inclusive, age-appropriate, and respectful of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.
- Provide inclusive and respectful services and supports to sexual and gender minority students and families.
- Ensure staff work proactively to eliminate systemic inequities and barriers to learning for sexual and gender minority students and families.
- Support the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), or similar student support groups, at educational settings offered within the Division, where interest by students has been expressed.
- Identify a staff member to serve as a safe contact for sexual and gender minority students. The Principal will inform the school community about the location and availability of this safe contact resource person.
- Ensure staff will not refer students to programs or services that attempt to change or repair a student's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Ensure discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented and dealt with expeditiously.
- Ensure all staff recognize the confidentiality of the sexual orientation and gender identity of all students and protect them from unwanted disclosure of such information.
- Ensure employment practices are free of bias resulting from any prejudice, including prejudice related to sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Ensure equal opportunity for employment and advancement.

## SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

To foster school/community partnerships, the Northern Lights School Division No. 69 (NLSD) Board of Trustees affirm their support for the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances in our high schools. These partnerships may serve as a vehicle to establish trust, understanding and a sense of belonging in the school environment.

## GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION

To support the safety, health, and educational needs of students who identify as, or are perceived to be, transgender or transsexual persons, division staff shall adhere to the following recommended best practices wherever possible and appropriate:

- **Names and Pronouns-** A student or staff member has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to his or her consistently asserted gender identity.
- **Official Records and Communication** - When requested by an independent student, or the parent/guardian, the student's official record will be changed to reflect their preferred name, sex, or gender. All school forms and records shall be changed to ensure that a student's preferred name and sex or gender is current on class lists, timetables, student files, identification cards, etc.
- **Gender-Segregated Activities** - To the greatest extent possible, schools should reduce or eliminate the practice of segregating students by gender (with the exception of already established single gender-based alternative programs). In classroom activities or school programs where students are segregated by gender, all students should be given the option to be included in the group that corresponds to their consistently asserted gender identity.

- **Athletics, Locker Room, and Change Room Access and Accommodation**

All schools shall proactively review their student athletic policies to ensure they are inclusive of sexual and gender minority students. Transgender and transsexual students shall not be asked or required to have Physical Education outside of assigned class time, and shall, subject to safety considerations, be permitted to participate in any gender-segregated activities in accordance with their consistently asserted gender identity, if they so choose.

All students shall, subject to safety considerations, have access to locker room facilities that correspond to their consistently asserted gender identity. In locker rooms that require undressing in front of others, students who desire increased privacy, for any reason (e.g., medical, religious, cultural, gender identity, etc.) shall be provided with accommodations that best meet their individual needs and privacy concerns.

- **Restroom Accessibility** - All students shall have access to the restroom that allows for appropriate privacy and that does not significantly disrupt the school environment. Staff shall consistently demonstrate sensitivity to the needs and safety of all students with respect to restroom access. The Principal shall ensure that individual solutions to restroom access are implemented with respect and discretion.

- **Dress Code** - All students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression.
- **Resolving Conflict** - The Principal shall be the final determiner of disputes that may arise with regard to a transgender or transsexual student's participation in educational or athletic activities. The principal shall ensure that the resolution of any conflict ensures reasonable accommodation and inclusiveness.

*Reference: Edmonton Public School Board Policy HFA-BP, 20/11/2011*

*Approved: November 26, 2014*