

Administrative Procedure 176

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION

Vision

All members of the school community are able to work and learn in an environment where they are welcomed, respected, accepted and supported; where they are treated with dignity; where they are free from fear, discrimination and harassment; and where they are confident strategies and guidelines being promoted ensure that all students, staff and families are included in all aspects of education and school life.

Background

Northern Gateway Public Schools is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe, inclusive equitable and welcoming learning and teaching environment, including:

1. supporting the inclusion of all students, staff and families in all aspects of school life, irrespective of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
2. supporting students and staff based on their human rights to enable the free and full expression of their gender identity.
3. improving understanding of the lives and experiences of individuals, communities and cultures.
4. defining and appropriate terms, behaviours and actions to promote greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, the harmful effects of homophobia, transphobia, harassment and exclusion.
5. addressing acts of harassment, bullying, intimidation or discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Definitions

Gender Expression - how a person presents his or her sense of gender to the larger society.

Gender Identity - a person's internal sense or feeling of being male or female.

Sexual Orientation - a person's romantic or sexual attraction to a specific gender or genders (e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual, straight, pansexual). Sexual orientation and gender identity are separate, distinct parts of one's identity (e.g. one can be transgender and identify as gay, straight, bisexual, etc.).

Procedures

1. The Division shall:

- 1.1 establish consistent and widely understood and maintained procedures, guidelines and practices to ensure that members of school communities and their families are welcomed, accepted, respected and included in all aspects of education and school life;
- 1.2 ensure opportunities are provided and promoted for staff to increase their awareness and understanding of the scope and impact of discrimination;
- 1.3 through the process of making resources and support services available, ensure transparency and visibility for students and staff throughout the Division;
- 1.4 ensure communication to students, staff, families and communities put out by the Division utilizes respectful and inclusive language;
- 1.5 ensure the Division engages in employment and advancement practices that are free of bias resulting from any prejudice;
- 1.6 ensure the right of students and staff to privacy and confidentiality regarding sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, including in all student and employee records, forms and processes;
- 1.7 ensure, where possible, records, forms and processes reflect the preferred name and gender as requested by an employee, parent/guardian or independent student;
- 1.8 ensure, where required, records, forms and processes are established on the legal identity of the individual and are only updated when an employee, parent/guardian, or independent student requests a change to the individual record with supporting documentation;
- 1.9 ensure, where possible, gender neutral washrooms are made available.

2. The School shall:

- 2.1 ensure all aspects of this Administrative Procedure are clearly communicated to all staff, students and families;
- 2.2 ensure staff know their professional responsibility to identify discriminatory attitudes and behaviours and to create caring, respectful and safe learning environments;

- 2.3 ensure the use of a comprehensive school-wide approach to promote healthy relationships and positive interactions for conflict resolution;
- 2.4 ensure staff address and provide appropriate consequences for all interaction involving the derogatory use of comments, behaviours and actions towards staff, students or families to deliberately degrade, denigrate, label, stereotype or incite hatred, prejudice, discrimination or harassment, whether they occur in person or in digital form, in an expeditious manner, including documentation;
- 2.5 ensure awareness and adherence to all Division policies, procedures and guidelines with respect to diversity and equity;
- 2.6 ensure staff utilize language, examples and perspectives that adhere with Alberta Education prescribed learning outcomes and are inclusive, age-appropriate and respectful of diversity to promote critical thinking and help students acquire the skills and knowledge to understand unique perspectives and live realities while nurturing a sense of belonging and developing a positive sense of self;
- 2.7 ensure learning, curriculum and library resources reflect and value diversity, so that all students see themselves and their lives positively reflected;
- 2.8 provide inclusive and respectful services and supports to families that respond to a student's individual needs;
- 2.9 ensure staff work proactively to eliminate systemic inequities and barriers to learning for students and families, thereby increasing cooperation and collaboration among home, school and community;
- 2.10 ensure students (in keeping with section 3) and staff are addressed by their preferred name(s) and pronoun(s) that correspond to their asserted gender identity;
- 2.11 support the establishment of student support groups, at educational settings within the Division, where interest by students has been expressed;
- 2.12 ensure that staff and students have access to washroom and change room facilities consistent with their asserted gender identity that allow for safety, comfort and appropriate privacy and do not significantly disrupt the school environment;
- 2.13 ensure individual solutions to washroom and change room access are implemented with respect and discretion;
- 2.14 ensure staff demonstrate sensitivity to the needs and safety of all students with respect to washroom and change room access;

- 2.15 ensure all students shall be able to participate in physical education and extracurricular activities in ways that are safe, comfortable and consistent with their asserted gender identity;
 - 2.16 ensure school dress code procedures adhere to a student's right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity while still respecting the learning and teaching environment;
 - 2.17 identify a staff member to serve as a safe contact for students and ensure the school community is informed about the location and availability of this safe contact resource person;
 - 2.18 ensure staff recognize the confidentiality of sexual orientation and gender identity of students and protect them from unwanted disclosure of such information;
 - 2.19 ensure staff do not refer students to programs that attempt to change or repair a student's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 3 Student changes of Preferred name and pronouns related to gender identity
- 3.1 In keeping with the Education Amendment Act 2024, a student's new preferred name and/or pronouns related to gender identity may not be used until:
 - 3.11 For students below the age of 16, parents have been notified and written consent has been received.
 - 3.12 For students above the age of 16, parents have been notified.
 - 3.2 If a staff member has a reasonable belief that parent notification of a new preferred name or pronouns related to gender identity would not be psychologically or physically safe for the student, they will immediately notify school administration who, along with the School Division, will create a plan to support with counselling and other services the student in communicating their choices to their parent.

Reference: Education Act 18, 31, 32, 33, 52, 53, 56, 196, 197, 204, 222, 225 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Alberta Human Rights Act (2000) Guide to Education ECS to Gr. 12 Guidelines for Best Practices: Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions (2016) Education Amendment Act 2024	Date Approved: April 1, 2021 Reviewed or Revised: August 1, 2025
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