

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen)

POLICY

No. F-14

Adopted: April 17, 2013
Reviewed: November 23, 2016
Amended: April 27, 2022

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Policy:

The Board of Education believes that all public schools in the district shall be safe for everyone. The Board recognizes and values the diversity found within its school communities and believes that each individual contributes to the strength of the district's culture. The Board also recognizes that students and other school community members from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, face a unique set of challenges within our schools and communities. In accordance with this policy, and all relevant laws of more senior governing bodies, School District No. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen):

1. Prohibits any form of discrimination, intimidation or harassment against any person based on gender/gender identity or sexual orientation, perceived or otherwise.
2. Encourages members of the school community to welcome, include, celebrate, support, and have unique identities represented, valued and respected within all aspects of the school environment.
3. Believes that all 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff and families have the right to have their confidentiality protected and respected.
4. Instructs that all schools in the district put in place protocols that support this policy. The school district will provide an environment for all members of the school community to work and learn, free from fear, discrimination, and harassment, while being proactive to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ students, employees, and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and are treated with respect and dignity.

Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to define appropriate behaviors and actions in order to prevent discrimination and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their harmful effects. This policy is also to ensure that all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with expeditiously and effectively. The policy will also raise awareness and improve understanding of the lives of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. By valuing diversity and respecting differences, students and staff act in accordance with Ministry of Education established principles related to diversity.

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen)

REGULATIONS

No. F-14

Adopted: April 17, 2013
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SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

In this policy, the acronym 2SLGBTQIA+ will be used. This means “Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex and Asexual. The placement Two Spirit (2S) first is to recognize that Indigenous people are the first peoples of this land and their understanding of gender and sexuality precedes colonization. The ‘+’ is for all the new and growing ways we become aware of sexual orientations and gender diversity.” (from UBC’s Equity & Inclusion Glossary of Terms, Jan, 2022)

Social responsibility, including information, issues and attitudes related to the 2SLGBTQIA+ population, is not assigned to a particular grade or subject area; instead, it is a responsibility shared among all staff. Within each school, staff will take concrete actions to ensure that the school is more welcoming and safer for 2SLGBTQIA+ students and staff.

Therefore, school codes of conduct will include language that prohibits fear promoting, harassing or discriminatory language and behavior toward students, employees or others based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification.

All staff will be sensitive to 2SLGBTQIA+ issues when creating and updating district and school policies, and when formulating disciplinary and corrective actions related to incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or exclusion. Corrective actions include both correcting inappropriate behavior (remediation) and correcting damage done as a result of inappropriate behavior (restoration).

It is the responsibility of all administrators, teachers and support staff to work together to build school communities which are positive and welcoming:

- a. they will foster respect, inclusion, fairness and equity;
- b. they will set, communicate and establish clear expectations for acceptable conduct;
- c. they will provide students, through various techniques, information that will lead to greater understanding, acceptance and support for 2SLGBTQIA+ students.

School staffs are encouraged to incorporate school in-service, individual professional development, and group staff development activities as opportunities to enhance the school and workplace as tolerant and diverse learning environments.

The Board shall consider any violence, threat of violence, or act of aggression, including harassment, discrimination, intimidation and bullying on school premises to be a serious threat to the school environment and to the safety of both students and staff and shall be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of conduct.

Discrimination also includes: publishing, issuing or displaying – or causing to be published, issued or displayed, any statement, publication, notice, sign, symbol, emblem or other representation that indicates discrimination or an intention to discriminate against a person or a group or class of persons, including sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Schools may need to address discrimination of this type displayed in graffiti, student publications, blogs, websites, social media, online platforms, podcasts, or other communication methods.

The Board will provide support for initiatives that foster dialogue to create understanding and respect for diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Board members and the senior administrative employees shall jointly ensure that all staff know it is their individual and collective responsibility to respond to discriminatory attitudes and behaviors.