
SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION

The Board will provide an environment for all members of the school community to work and learn, free from fear, discrimination, and harassment, while also promoting pro-active strategies and establishing guidelines to ensure that sexual and gender minority students, employees and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life, and are treated with respect and dignity.

The Board has a legal and ethical responsibility to ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board and each staff member employed by the board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

The Board affirms the rights, as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, of each staff member employed by the school authority and each student enrolled in a school operated by the school authority; and

Furthermore, staff members employed by the Board and students enrolled in a school operated by the Board will not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The Board is committed to:

- Supporting inclusion of all students and staff in all aspects of school life, irrespective of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
- Supporting transgender and nonbinary students and staff based on their human rights to enable their equitable participation and the free and full expression of their identity.
- Improving awareness, understanding and celebrating of the lives and diverse experiences of sexual or gender minority individuals, communities, and cultures.
- *Defining* appropriate terms, behaviours and actions to promote greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, the deleterious effects of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, anti-2SLGBTQIA+ harassment and exclusion.
- 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.

Definition

In this policy, all references to “sexual or gender minority” persons or 2SLGBTQIA+ persons encompass, but not limited to, two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer or questioning persons, persons who are labelled as such, whether they are or not, and persons with immediate family members who identify as a sexual or gender minority.

Specifically

1. The division will establish a Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression Advisory Committee (composed of staff, students, administrators, parents, and community members) to provide strategic input, monitor, and support the implementation of this policy.
2. The division shall establish consistent school-based policies and practices to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ members of school communities and their families are welcomed, accepted and included in all aspects of education and school life.
3. The division shall provide and promote opportunities for staff, administrators and board members to increase their awareness and understanding of the scope and impact of discrimination against 2SLGBTQIA+ people.
4. The division will support, declare and officially recognize the celebration of Pride week and related activities, in June which reflect the importance of inclusion, acceptance, and proactive support for 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, cultures, and communities
5. The division shall make resources and inclusive and affirming support services available for 2SLGBTQIA+ students and staff.
6. The division shall provide ongoing professional development so staff are informed and familiar with expectations pertaining to human rights, discrimination, harassment, sexual and gender minority diversity, and to become aware of and sensitive to the needs and concerns of sexual and gender minority students and their families.
7. The division shall ensure school counsellors and other wellness professionals are adequately trained to support the mental health needs of sexual and gender minority students and are aware of inclusive and affirming division and community supports and services.
8. The division will provide specific training for all athletic coaches, advisors, and volunteers to ensure for welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe environments for all students, including students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.
9. The division shall commit to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with 2SLGBTQIA+ communities to increase cooperation, mutual respect and collaboration among home, school and community.

10. Teachers shall be encouraged to help students acquire the skills and knowledge to understand the unique perspectives, contributions, and lived realities of sexual and gender minorities.
11. Learning, curriculum and library resources shall reflect and value the diversity in the division, so that all students, including 2SLGBTQIA+ students see themselves, communities, and their lives accurately and positively reflected in age and grade level appropriate ways.
12. Principals shall identify a staff person to be a safe contact for students who identify themselves as 2SLGBTQIA+. Principals will inform the school community about the location and availability of this contact person.
13. Voluntary student organizations such as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), Queer-Straight Alliances (QSAs), or other similar organizations shall be supported at all schools in the division.
14. If one or more students attending a school operated by a board request a staff member employed by the board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall
 - a. permit the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and
 - b. designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.
15. For the purposes of section 14, an organization or activity includes an organization or activity that promotes equality and non-discrimination with respect to, without limitation, race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, including but not limited to organizations such as gay-straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs and anti-bullying clubs.
16. The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”, after consulting with the principal.
 - a. For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”.
17. The principal shall immediately inform the Board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in section 14, and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.
18. The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in section 14 is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.

- a. Notification, if any, is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations and activities
19. Any language or behaviour that deliberately incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination or harassment towards student or staff on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will not be tolerated. Principals shall specifically include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in all Student Codes of Conduct. Allegations of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, behaviour, or discrimination will be reported to the teacher or principal in the case of students. In the case of employees, allegations will be reported to the immediate supervisor or the liaison superintendent.
 20. The division shall use respectful and inclusive language in its communication to students, staff, families and the community.
 21. The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and *Alberta's Personal Information Protection Act* shall govern the disclosure of personal information by the school authority. The division shall maintain the right of 2SLGBTQIA+ students and staff to privacy and confidentiality regarding their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. This includes all student and employee records, forms, communications and processes.
 22. Students and employees shall have the right to use washroom and change room facilities that correspond to their gender identity, regardless of their sex assigned at birth. Where possible, readily accessible universal or gender-inclusive washrooms shall be made available at each school and worksite.
 23. All students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, shall be able to participate in physical education classes and extracurricular activities, including competitive and recreation athletic teams in ways that are safe and comfortable and consistent with their self-declared gender identity.
 24. The division will ensure all students have the right to dress and express their identity in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression in accordance with school guidelines.
 25. All students and staff shall have the right to be addressed by their preferred name(s) and pronouns that correspond to their gender identities. This is true whether or not the student or staff member has obtained documentation of a legal change of name or sex designation. Student records will be changed when a mature student, parent or guardian requests a change in name and/or gender. Confidentiality of a student's or a staff member's records will be maintained at all times.
 26. The division supports all students and staff members' right to self-determination and identification. The division does not support or condone any practices, communications or referrals to persons or programs that purport to be able to change, fix, repair, deny, or suppress a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
 27. The division will work with all schools, communities, and educational stakeholders to ensure

this policy and regulations are publicly communicated, appropriately resourced, and are respectfully implemented to support all students, staff, and families in our schools.

Legal Reference: Education Act
Alberta Bill of Rights
Alberta Human Rights Act
Alberta Personal Information and Protection of Privacy Act (PIPA)
Freedom of Information and Privacy Act
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Teaching Profession Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Criminal Code