

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

The Board is committed to establishing and 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 (LGBTQ) 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 every school.

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 Education 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 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:

1. Be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect;
2. Have their confidentiality protected and respected;
3. Self-identification and determination;
4. Freedom of conscience, expression, and association;
5. Be fully included in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner by all school personnel;
6. Have equitable access to the same supports, services and protections provided to heterosexual students and families;
7. 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
8. Have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, valued and respected within all aspects of the school environment.

The Board is committed to implementing measures that will:

1. 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.

2. 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.
3. Improve understanding of the individual lives of sexual and gender minorities and their families, cultures, and communities.
4. 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.

Specifically

1. 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:
 - 1.1 Immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and
 - 1.2 Within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request 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. The staff contact shall inform the school community about available Division and community supports and resources.
 - 1.3 The principal must ensure that notification of a club or activity be consistent with the usual practices of any club or activity, and;
 - 1.3.1 Is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization holding the activity.
 - 1.3.2 The Board is bound by the *Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP).
 - 1.4 Principals are to ensure that they provide supports for any student impacted by inappropriate behavior or who engage in inappropriate behavior.
2. 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.
3. 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 (1), 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.

4. The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in section (1) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.
5. Students and staff who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ) shall be treated fairly, equitably, with respect and have their confidentiality protected.
6. Employees of the Division shall not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation or discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
7. The Principal shall promote and provide inclusive education, professional development opportunities and support for staff to support same - gender parented families and students who are LGBTQ.
8. The Principal will ensure the safety, health and educational needs of students who identify as transgender, transsexual or gender queer and promote best practices, including universal design of washrooms, preferred name and pronouns, information contained on the student record, and access to locker room facilities, field trips, and extracurricular activities consistent with a student's lived gender identity or gender expression.
9. Students who identified as LGBTQ are encouraged to report any incident or victimization, harassment, discrimination, intimidation or bullying to the Principal/safe contact person.
10. The Principal shall ensure satisfactory resolution to any conflict that may arise in the process of providing reasonable accommodation and inclusive practices in keeping with the best interests of the student.
11. The Principal shall ensure that all students, staff and families are aware of this policy, promote equality and non-discrimination with respect to gender, gender identity, gender expression and/or sexual orientation.

Legal Reference: Section 8, 31, 33, 35, 35.1, 36, 37, 41, 51, 52, 53, 222 Education Act
Alberta Bill of Rights
Alberta Human Rights Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Criminal Code
Bill 24 – An Act to Support Gay Straight Alliance