



Respecting Human Diversity

Administrative Procedure 8.025

Board Governance Policy Cross Reference: Policy 1, 2, 3, 16, 17

Administrative Procedure Cross Reference: 1.A.30-Code of Conduct, 1.A.80-Human Rights, 8.130-Student Safety, 8.160iii-Harrassment Prevention

Legal Reference: *Safe Schools Charter (PSA), Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Manitoba Human Rights Code*

Research Reference:

Taylor, C. & Peter, T., with McMinn, T.L., Elliott, T., Beldom, S., Ferry, A., Gross, Z., Paquin, S., & Schachter, K. (2011). *Every class in every school: The first national climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools. Final report.* Toronto, ON: Egale Canada Human Rights Trust.

Date Adopted: September, 2013

Date Amended:

Date Reviewed: March, 2018; April, 2019; January, 2020; Jan, 2021

“Every student is respected and in turn respects others”

Background

This administrative procedure was developed through a collaborative process involving students and staff of School District of Mystery Lake, with input from the R.D. Parker student G.L.O.W.(Gay, Lesbian, or Whatever) Group and in response to a call for action on the part of students. Consideration of the district mission, vision, values and beliefs was of primary focus.

The development of this administrative procedure was informed by Canadian and Evergreen School Division research that confirms homophobia, transphobia, biphobia as a particularly pervasive issue in Canadian schools and therefore requires particular attention. This research, which includes the work conducted by Dr. Catherine Taylor, (University of Winnipeg) includes the following key lessons:

- Many students do not feel safe at school. 19.8% of students feel unsafe at school due to some form of homophobic harassment. Over 12% of students reported physical harassment either because of their sexual orientation, perceived sexual orientation, or their expression of their gender orientation.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, questioning (LGBTQQ) students experience much higher levels of verbal, physical, and other forms of harassment than other students. Nationally, 64% of LGBTQQ students feel unsafe at school.
- Most students are distressed by the issue of homophobia, i.e. the issue affects more than just the LGBTQQ students. 87.8 % of students report that they are either extremely/very upset or upset by homophobic comments. Also, 36.6% of students

have experienced multiple occurrences of verbal harassment for the way they express their gender and 19.5% of students experience verbal harassment due to their perceived sexual orientation.

The School District of Mystery Lake believes in the principle of Human Rights as identified in the Manitoba Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the equitable treatment for all individuals regardless of race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, or political beliefs.

The School District of Mystery Lake is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in which students, parents and employees are aware of and respect the rights and human dignity of others. The District expects that students, parents and employees will actively protect the dignity, values and equality of others.

Purpose:

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to define appropriate behaviours and actions in order to prevent discrimination and harassment through greater awareness and responsiveness to the detrimental effects of discrimination.

This administrative procedure is to be instructive in developing practices to address:

- **Education** – this includes student learning, curricular and otherwise, but also student and staff learning support related to creating and maintaining safe, supportive, and welcoming learning experiences for all students.
- **Conduct** – this includes the support to, and responsibility of staff and students to uphold behavioural expectations.
- **Environment** – this includes the support to, and responsibility of staff and students to create and maintain safe, supportive, and welcoming learning environments for all students.

The role of educators is critical in creating positive societal change to address realities of G.L.O.W students, parents and employees.

Procedures:

The District will provide a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, while also promoting pro-active strategies and guidelines to ensure that GLOW students, employees and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity.

1. All staff will be able to identify individual discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, as well as work to eliminate the systemic inequities and barriers to learning for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression and demonstrate accountability for their removal so that all students are treated with fairness and respect.

2. All staff will take action to ensure schools are safe for GLOW students, staff and parents by treating all with respect and acceptance, using language that affirms all sexual orientation as being equal and challenging staff, students, and parents who display prejudice on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Any language or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes, incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination, harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression will not be tolerated.
3. All administrators, teachers, counsellors, staff and student leaders will communicate the district's position to their employees, staff and students. In the course of their leadership roles, they will commit to listen to GLOW youth and their designated support groups and take concrete actions to make schools more welcoming and safer places for these students.
4. In order to support teachers in the School District of Mystery Lake to treat students whose gender identity is different than their anatomical sex and/or students whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual with courtesy, consistency, fairness, respect, and in a non-discriminatory manner, SDML encourages teachers to seek training on gender identity and youth sexuality. This training could be through university courses, Regional Health Authorities, or private organizations which provide training.
5. All counsellors will be educated in the knowledge and skills required to deal with GLOW issues with students. Counsellors will be informed and familiar with all policies with respect to human rights, anti-homophobia, hate literature, discrimination and harassment, and will alert their school community to these policies.
6. Schools are encouraged to appoint staff to be safe contacts (ALLY's) for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. School administrators should inform students and other staff about the location and availability of these contact people.
7. All schools will establish procedures and practices in their code of conduct that support this Administrative Procedure.
8. Curriculum should include positive images and information about history and culture which reflects the accomplishments and contribution of GLOW people. Resources should be chosen or updated in order to promote critical thinking and include materials that accurately reflect the range of Canada's GLOW communities.
9. Where students request and where staff are willing to volunteer their time, Gay/Straight Alliance clubs (GSAs) will be given administrative approval and school support.

Protocol for Students Disclosing

All staff must respond with sensitivity and respect when a child reveals s/he may be any of LGBTTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Two-Spirit, Questioning).

A child's disclosure does not result in an automatic phone call to parents, as confidentiality is of the utmost importance. If not trained, the staff member will refer the student to a trained, professional staff member in the school. The teacher will offer to accompany the student to talk to the trained person.

All disclosures **MUST** be kept confidential. Staff must refrain from sharing information about the disclosure with anyone, including family, friends, and other staff members. The trained individual is expected to support the students in sharing any further about their disclosure and/or questions.