

DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Background

The district acknowledges that it is important for students as well as employees to have an understanding and appreciation for the heritage and culture of British Columbia and Canada. Within this context, the Board of Education affirms its commitment to the anti-discrimination principles and values contained within the BC Human Rights Code, and supports the provision of educational services that fosters respect for diversity amongst all members of the school community.

The district is committed to:

- Creating an environment of respect and inclusion in the district with a view to promoting non-discrimination consistent with the BC Human Rights Code and in consideration of gender identification;
- Subjecting learning resources and the learning environment to ongoing evaluation in order to ensure that students are provided with educational programs that take a non-discriminatory approach to persons and groups within our community and society;
- Developing policies, programs, and practices that require employees to act as positive role models in the area of human rights and cross-cultural understanding;
- Hiring employees on the basis of merit consistent with human rights laws;
- Providing students with educational programs that will assist them in participating in and contributing to society's attempts to eliminate discrimination.

The district recognizes that cross-cultural understanding and support for the rights and freedoms of the BC Human Rights Code will provide its students with experiences that foster dignity, respect, and self-worth. The district supports the development and implementation of policies, practices and programs that promote and foster a learning environment in the district which emphasizes tolerance, equality, and non-discrimination.

The district will not tolerate any actions that serve to undermine its commitment to the principles and values of the BC Human Rights Code.

Procedures

1. Application

1.1 Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination under the BC Human Rights Code

The BC Human Rights Code provides protection for persons who have historically been discriminated against in our society. The Code prohibits discrimination in the provision of accommodation, services and facilities customarily available to the public on the following grounds: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation.

The Code prohibits discrimination in employment on the above grounds and also on the basis of political belief, age or because the person has been convicted of a criminal or summary offence that is unrelated to the employment or intended employment of that person.

1.2 Exceptions under the BC Human Rights Code

The BC Human Rights Code provides for certain exceptions to the above prohibition. The Code does not prohibit discrimination in the provision of accommodation, services and facilities customarily available to the public on the basis of sex, if the discrimination relates to the maintenance of public decency or to the determination of premiums or benefits under contracts of life or health insurance, or, on the basis of physical or mental disability, if the discrimination relates to the determination of premiums or benefits under contracts of life or health insurance.

The Code also does not prohibit discrimination in employment as it relates to age, to a bona fide scheme based on seniority, or as it relates to marital status, physical or mental disability, sex or age, to the operation of a bona fide retirement, superannuation or pension plan or to a bona fide group or employee insurance plan. Additionally, the prohibition against discrimination in employment does not apply with respect to a refusal, limitation, specification, or preference based on a bona fide occupational requirement.

2. Conduct

2.1 All students, employees, contractors, visitors, and other persons and groups who use district facilities shall be required to conduct themselves in accordance with the district's commitment to non-discrimination, human rights and cross-cultural understanding as set out in this operational procedure. Conduct which is not consistent with this operational procedure shall not be tolerated by the district. In order to ensure that the district's commitment to fostering and promoting non-discrimination, human rights, and cross-cultural understanding is communicated effectively, the district shall ensure:

- All persons and groups who use district facilities shall be informed of this operational procedure;
- All schools shall include in their school code of conduct clear statements reflecting the district's commitment as expressed in this operational procedure to cross-cultural understanding, non-discrimination and human rights;
- Conduct consistent with this operational procedure is considered to be a term and condition of employment for all staff;
- Allegations of discrimination will be reported to the principal in the case of students, and to the immediate supervisor in the case of employees, contractors, and volunteers.
- Where possible and appropriate, staff will intervene and then report the incident.

2.2 Any act such as name calling, slurs, graffiti or physical violence which is aimed at depicting a particular group in an unfavourable light, or which can be reasonably viewed as lowering the self-esteem of a person shall be defined as a discriminatory act, which will be subject to appropriate sanction as determined by the responsible district official.

3. Curriculum

- 3.1 The district endorses curricular goals and learning objectives that provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to a society that is free of discrimination, and which will allow students to develop positive attitudes with respect to human rights and deal constructively with intolerance and discrimination that they may encounter in their daily life experiences.
- 3.2 In keeping with this commitment, the district encourages staff to:
- Adapt and adjust curriculum materials and programs to provide opportunities for all students to develop positive attitudes with respect to human rights, anti-discrimination, and cultural diversity;
 - Promote school and classroom environments that are free from discrimination that contravenes the Human Rights Code;
 - Review developments regarding human rights and anti-discrimination matters, so that they can, where appropriate, develop resource and learning materials for use in educational programs.
- 3.3 The district will continue to attempt to develop and implement strategies relating to curriculum, textbooks, audiovisual and other resource materials that promote human rights and anti-discrimination.

4. Placement

- 4.1 The district recognizes the need to support positive and equitable learning and instructional initiatives and/or alternative approaches and strategies designed to allow all students to realize their full potential. In support of this goal, placement of students shall not be unduly inhibited by a cultural and or language barrier. Expectations of students shall not be based on prejudices or stereotypes.
- 4.2 The district expects that decisions regarding student placement will be based upon consideration of a student's educational needs, and it will not tolerate discrimination in the provision of instructional programs and services contrary to the BC Human Rights Code.
- 4.3 All placement practices and procedures are to be free from ethno-cultural bias. In order to ensure that assessment procedures are adapted to meet the particular needs of students from different ethno-cultural groups, consideration is to be given to:
- Testing instruments;
 - Interviewing;
 - Counselling;
 - Monitoring;
 - Meaningful communication with parents/guardians;
 - Regular classroom evaluation of curriculum;
 - Sensitive material.

5. Staff and Student Training

The district will:

- 5.1 Provide support and opportunities for training of all staff, students, elected trustees and Parents' Advisory Councils to develop their knowledge, awareness and skills in the areas of human rights, anti-discrimination and cross-cultural understanding.
- 5.2 Expect all schools to develop clear statements in their school code of conduct to address issues of discrimination.

Reference: Sections 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act
Human Rights Code
SD72 Board Governance Policy: Diversity, Quality and Equity