

DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Background

The District acknowledges that it is important for students to have an understanding and appreciation for the heritage and culture of British Columbia and Canada. Within this context, the Board affirms its commitment to the anti-discrimination principles and values contained in the B.C. Human Rights Code, and supports the provision of educational services that foster respect for diversity among 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 Human Rights Code;
- Subjecting learning resources and the learning environment to ongoing evaluation in order to ensure that students are provided with educational programs that take a nondiscriminatory 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 Human Rights Code will provide its students with experience 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 nondiscrimination.

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

Procedures

1. Application

1.1 Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination under the Human Rights Code

The 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 Human Rights Code

The 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 Administrative Procedure. Conduct which is not consistent with this Administrative 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 Administrative Procedure;
- All schools shall include in their school code of conduct clear statements and rules reflecting the District's commitment as expressed in this Administrative Procedure to cross-cultural understanding, non-discrimination and human rights;
- Conduct consistent with this Administrative 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.

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:
 - 3.2.1 Adapt and adjust curriculum materials and programs to provide opportunities for all students to develop positive attitudes with respect to human rights, antidiscrimination, and cultural diversity;
 - 3.2.2 Promote school and classroom environments that are free from discrimination that contravenes the Human Rights Code;
 - 3.2.3 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. Assessment and 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, assessment and placement of students shall not be unduly inhibited by a cultural/language barrier. Expectations of students shall not be based on prejudices or stereotypes.
- 4.2 The District expects that decisions regarding student assessment and placement will be based upon consideration of a student's educational needs, aptitudes and abilities, and it will not tolerate discrimination in the provision of instructional programs and services contrary to the BC Human Rights Code.
- 4.3 All assessment and placement practices and procedures are to be free from ethno cultural bias. In order to ensure that assessment and placement procedures are adapted to meet the particular needs of students from different ethno-cultural groups, consideration is to be given to:
 - 4.3.1 Testing instruments;
 - 4.3.2 Placement;
 - 4.3.3 Interviewing;
 - 4.3.4 Counselling;
 - 4.3.5 Monitoring;
 - 4.3.6 Meaningful communication with parents/guardians;
 - 4.3.7 Regular classroom evaluation of curriculum;
 - 4.3.8 Sensitive material.
- 4.4 Standardized testing and other formal types of school assessments are not to be undertaken by a student whose first language is not English until the student has had adequate time to achieve facility with the English language, the curriculum, and the local school culture. In the interim, appropriate non-standardized assessment practices are to be utilized.

4.5 All parents are to be made aware of the appeal procedures available to them regarding student assessment and placement decisions.

5. Home, School and Community Relations

5.1 The District recognizes that the diversity of the school community results in a variety of learning styles, behaviours, modes of communication and expectations within the school system, and in communication between home and school and between schools and the broader community.

5.2 In view of this situation, the District is committed to:

5.2.1 Developing strategies for improving communication between home and school and between schools and the community, with particular sensitivity to ethno-cultural considerations;

5.2.2 Taking reasonable steps to ensure that District employees responsible for personnel selection shall be provided with training to enhance their sensitivity to human rights issues, including sensitivity to ethno-cultural hiring issues.

6. Staff and Student Training

The District will:

6.1 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.

6.2 Support the continuation and development of school teams and a District Advisory Committee as a mechanism to provide meaningful education and support for human rights, anti-discrimination and cross-cultural understanding.

6.3 Expect all schools to develop clear statements in their school code of conduct to address issues of discrimination.

Legal Reference: *Sections 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act*
 Human Rights Code