

School District #62 (Sooke)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY & GENDER EXPRESSION	No.: C-340
	Effective: Oct. 25/11 Revised: Apr. 24/18 Reviewed: Feb. 19/18; Mar. 12/18; Mar. 13/18

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

The Sooke School District 62 Board of Education recognizes the need and obligation to provide a safe and supportive environment for all members of the school community regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The Board is committed to the rights of all students and staff to learn and work free from fear, discrimination, and harassment, while also promoting pro-active strategies and guidelines to ensure that all students, employees and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life, and are treated with respect and dignity. This requires that appropriate expectations, behaviors, language, and actions are defined in order to ensure support and inclusion, and prevent marginalization or discrimination.

Specific supports, in addition to those outlined below, may be required to enable the full participation of students and staff, expression of their sexual orientation, expression of their gender identity, or protection of their safety. Adaptations or accommodations should be individualized in a manner that meaningfully involves the student or staff member in the decision making process.

DEFINITIONS

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

Gender nonconforming: A term that often refers to children who express gender in ways that differs from societal expectations of the sex and gender assigned to them at birth.

Trans or Transgender: An umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what they were assigned at birth. Some trans people may choose to medically transition by taking hormones, having surgery. Some trans people may choose to socially transition by changing their name, clothing, hair, etc.

1. Leadership

In order to provide leadership on the issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, the Board will:

- Support inclusion of all students and staff in all aspects of school life (academic, social, and extracurricular), and enable the free and full expression of their sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Ensure discriminatory actions and complaints regarding discrimination or harassment relating to perceived or actual sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.

- Ensure that gender based discrimination and transphobia are treated with the same professional due diligence as any other form of discrimination.
- Advocate for the needs of transgender and gender non-conforming students at a provincial level, including the inclusion of gender identity and expression in curriculum.

2. Learning Resources

The Board is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment for transgender and gender non-conforming students and staff where students and staff have access to educational resources that are respectful of diverse gender identities and gender expressions.

3. Student and Staff Support

The Board is committed to ensuring that transgender and gender nonconforming students and staff are supported in our schools.

The establishment of school-based clubs dedicated to gender and sexual minority inclusion will continue to be encouraged and supported in all schools.

4. Student and Staff Information and Privacy

The Board believes that all students and staff deserve to have their information and privacy protected and respected.

The Board believes that students and staff have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and/or gender expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much private information to share.

5. Communications

The Board will ensure that communications to students, staff, parents, guardians, and the community recognize that some students and staff live in gender diverse families that represent a diversity of gender identity, expression and sexualities.

6. Sex-Segregated Activities

The Board is committed to reducing, and where possible eliminating, the practice of segregating students based on sex and/or gender in order to ensure the full inclusion of transgender and/or gender non-conforming students. This commitment applies to physical education classes, as well as recreational and competitive athletic activities.

7. Accessibility

The Board recognizes that students and staff have the right to freely access bathroom and change room facilities that are gender neutral.

The Board recognizes that students and staff have the right to access to bathroom and change room facilities that corresponds to their gender identity or the group in which they are most comfortable.

The Board is committed to incorporating single use washroom facilities into new construction or renovation that are accessible to ALL students and staff.

8. Dress

The Board recognizes that students and staff have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression.

9. Employment

The Board is committed to providing an inclusive and safe workplace ensuring that sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are not barriers to employment and/or advancement in position.

10. Staff and Stakeholder Training

The Board is committed to providing training and education for all staff, elected Trustees, and Parent Advisory Councils in the effort to develop knowledge, skills and behaviors to identify and eliminate discrimination related to sexual minority and gender identity and expression.