



BOARD POLICY No. GOV 11

Adopted	March 25, 2014
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Review Date	
Board Motion	18-R84

LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT: EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

1. RATIONALE

This governance policy reflects the values of Rainbow District School Board that all persons are entitled to learn and work in environments that promote human rights and equity of opportunity, free from discrimination and harassment. This policy affirms the Board's responsibility to provide a protected learning and working environment that is supportive, nurturing, welcoming, respectful and inclusive for everyone taking part in Rainbow District School Board activities.

2. DEFINITIONS

Bias Free: Without inclination of prejudice for or against a person or group especially in a way considered unfair

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

Discrimination: Discrimination is differential treatment which negatively affects the status of a person based upon a protected ground under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Diversity: The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Harassment: Harassment is defined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as "engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome".

Inclusive Education: Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surrounding, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

Protected Grounds: The *Ontario Human Rights Code* defines protected grounds as: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability.

3. POLICY

3.1 Equity and Inclusive Education

- a) Rainbow District School Board is committed to providing a learning and working environment in which all individuals treat each other with respect and dignity, free from objectionable conduct, discrimination, or harassment.
- b) The Board respects and values the diverse perspectives of the Rainbow District School Board community and actively promotes a bias-free working and learning environment.
- c) The Board is committed to an education system that upholds the principles of equitable and inclusive education in order to enable each student to succeed personally and academically regardless of background, identity or personal circumstances.
- d) The Board will implement bias-free employment practices.
- e) The Board is dedicated to serving staff, students, and families by embedding the principles of equitable and inclusive education into all aspects of its operations, structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices, consistent with the principles of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- f) The Board will investigate in a thorough and timely manner any claims of discrimination and harassment and take appropriate action, consistent with the principles of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

3.2 Accommodations

- a) Rainbow District School Board will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all policies, procedures, and practices are consistent with the principles of equitable and inclusive education.
- b) The Board makes accommodations for persons with disabilities. The Board is committed to making services and facilities accessible to all in accordance with the provisions of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, and the *Ontario Building Code*.
- c) The Board acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not follow religious/spiritual beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour and is committed to providing religious/spiritual accommodation to students, staff, and volunteers. Religious/spiritual accommodation will be in

accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the requirements in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108 Opening or Closing Exercises, and in sections 27-29 of Ontario Regulation 298 regarding religion in schools.

- d) The Board acknowledges each individual has a right to live according to gender identity and gender expression and makes accommodations based on gender identity and gender expression in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

4. BOARD EXPECTATIONS

- 4.1 This policy applies to all members of the Board's community including, but not limited to, students, staff, trustees, contractors, parents/guardians, volunteers, permit holders and all other persons who are invited to or who work on Board property.
- 4.2 This policy also applies to any communication or activity which may take place outside of Board property but which has the effect of or results in adversely affecting the Board's working and learning environment.
- 4.3 It is the expectation of Rainbow District School Board that all employees, students, and persons invited to or visiting Board property will maintain the highest level of professional and personal courtesy when interacting with Board employees and students.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legal:

*Education Act, para. 8 (1) 29.1 Equity and Inclusive Education; Section 169.1 School Climate
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Ontario Human Rights Code
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005
Ontario Building Code.
Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2009
PPM No. 119 Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies 2013
Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation
PPM No. 108 Opening or Closing Exercises
Ontario Regulation 298, Sections 27-29 Religion in Schools
Ontario's Education, Equity Action Plan*

Board:

Board Policy No. GOV-01 Vision, Mission, and Values
Board Policy No. GOV-12 Learning and Working Environment: Safe Schools
Strategic Directions for Rainbow Schools
Administrative Procedures