

SUPPORTING AND GUIDING STUDENTS IN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION

Background

Based on the mission statement for the Division and the commitment of all Division staff to create excellent learning environments for students, staff, and community members, our Division is dedicated to ensuring that we collectively provide a welcoming, supportive environment for all staff, students, and families regardless of their gender identity.

When a request for accommodation is received on the basis of gender identity or gender expression, the Principal is to respond in a prompt and supportive manner and in accordance with the principles outlined in this Administrative Procedure.

Definition

Education Services Personnel refers to the Assistant Superintendent, Education Services, Director, Education Services, and Director, Safe and Caring Schools.

Independent Student. The Education Act defines an Independent Student:

6(1) In determining whether a student is living independently for the purposes of this Act, a board may consider the following:

- (a) whether the student or the student's parent has made a statement in writing indicating that the student is living independently;
- (b) the student's living arrangements;
- (c) whether the student is financially independent or contributes financially to his or her maintenance;
- (d) whether the student is responsible for the making of significant decisions regarding matters such as health care;
- (e) any other factor the board considers relevant.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provisions in this Act, an Independent Student is entitled to exercise all the rights and powers and receive all the benefits and is subject to all the obligations under this Act that the student's parent would be entitled to exercise or receive or would be subject to, and the student's parent shall not exercise those rights, receive those benefits or be

Procedures

1. The Principal shall:

- 1.1. Ensure all aspects of this Administrative Procedure are clearly communicated to all staff, students, and families on a regular or as-needed basis.
- 1.2. Ensure staff address and provide appropriate remedial consequences for all interactions involving the use of comments, behaviours, and actions which display homophobic, transphobic, and sexist commentary, whether they occur in person or in digital form.
- 1.3. Ensure staff know their professional responsibility to identify discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, and create welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments.
- 1.4. Ensure awareness and adherence to all administrative procedures with respect to diversity, equity, human rights, sexual orientation, gender identity, discrimination, prejudice, and harassment.
- 1.5. Ensure all resources used in relation to human sexuality and gender identity have been approved as required through Alberta Education and are aligned directly with the curricular outcomes at each grade level.
- 1.6. Provide inclusive and respectful services and supports to all students and families, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 1.7. Ensure staff work proactively to eliminate systemic inequities and barriers to learning for all students and families, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 1.8. Support the establishment of Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) or similar student support groups in educational settings offered within the Division, where interest by one or more students has been expressed;
 - 1.8.1 If one or more students attending a school operated by a board request a staff member employed by the board for support to establish a voluntary student organization or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall:
 - 1.8.1.1 Immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and
 - 1.8.1.2 Subject to subsection (1.8.3), within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request, designates a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment and the ongoing operation of the student

organization or to assist in organizing the activity.

- 1.8.2 The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance,” after consulting with the principal.

- 1.8.2.1 For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance.”

- 1.8.3 The principal shall immediately inform the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in subsection (1.8.1.2), and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.

- 1.8.3.1 If a staff member indicates to the principal a willingness to act as a staff liaison, that staff member shall be deemed to be available to serve as the staff liaison; therefore, there is no need to inform the board or the Minister.

- 1.8.4 The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection (1.8) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity and is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations and activities.

- 1.8.5 Wolf Creek Public Schools is a public body under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The collection, use, and disclosure of any personal information will be done in accordance with this Act.

- 1.9. Identify a staff member to serve as a safe contact for sexual and gender minority students. The Principal will inform the school community about the location and availability of this safe contact resource person;

- 1.10. Ensure staff will not refer students to programs or services that attempt to change or repair a student's sexual orientation or gender identity;

- 1.11. Ensure discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously; and

- 1.12. Ensure all staff recognize the confidentiality of the sexual orientation and gender identity of all students and protect them from unwanted disclosure of such information.

2. Staff

- 2.1. Responsibility - The Division is a safe and respectful working environment where diversity is valued and embraced, and staff are treated with respect and supported. In consequence of this fundamental belief, all staff share responsibility

for creating and maintaining a work environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. Complaints of discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity shall be promptly investigated and resolved by the administrative team at the school, under the direction of the Principal, and in accordance with the intent of this Administrative Procedure.

- 2.2. Professional Learning - To assist all staff in becoming more knowledgeable about sexual and gender minority identities, cultures, and communities;, the Assistant Superintendent of Education Services will provide professional learning opportunities to assist all staff in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and appropriate teaching practices necessary to create safe, inclusive, equitable, and respectful schools regardless of how students are perceived or identified.
- 2.3. Teaching and Learning Resources - Principals shall not permit the use or provision of learning and teaching resources that deal primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality unless the learning and teaching resources are [approved by the Minister](#), as outlined in section 4 of [Administrative Procedure 204 - Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation and Human Sexuality Topics](#).

3. Student Accommodation

- 3.1. Any educator approached with a request for accommodation (as outlined in Section 4.0. Division Specific Accommodations) is to respond with sensitivity and compassion. The Principal and Assistant Superintendent of Education Services are to be notified.
- 3.2. Any student may request an accommodation, as outlined in Section 4 of this Admin Procedure titled "Division Specific Accommodations." It is important for a student to understand that requesting any of these accommodations requires the student to disclose to their families and possibly other personnel the reason why they need the accommodation. Independent students can also request accommodations, and the requirement to disclose to their families would not pertain.
- 3.3. A parent/guardian who wishes to submit a request for accommodation on behalf of a student on the basis of gender identity or gender expression is to submit a request in writing.
- 3.4. Where requests are made for any accommodations beyond those listed below, such requests are to be promptly forwarded to the Assistant Superintendent of Education Services, who may facilitate a Coordinated Services Planning Meeting (CSP) if needed.
- 3.5. The CSP meeting will involve a collaborative team of school staff, partner agencies (if required), the student, and the student's family, who will develop a Coordinated Services Plan for accommodations. The Coordinated Services Plan aims to provide a unique set of accommodations based on the particular student's situation. The CSP Team shall be guided by the best interests of the student.

- 3.6. At all times, the privacy rights of the student involved are paramount. Any information that must be disclosed for the purposes of accommodations outlined in this Administrative Procedure must be only disclosed to staff on a need-to-know basis and remain confidential.
 - 3.7. Where requests are made for accommodations that influence the privacy rights of other students, such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may require the involvement of the CSP process, which must include a member of Education Services personnel.
 - 3.8. The Division will work with all schools, communities, and educational stakeholders to ensure this policy and regulations are respectfully implemented to support all students, staff, and families in our schools.
4. Division-Specific Accommodations - It is important for a student to understand that requesting any of these accommodations requires the student to disclose to their families and possibly other personnel the reason why they need the accommodation unless the student meets the definition of an independent student under the Education Act.
5. If a student requests that a new preferred name or pronouns be used by teachers, teacher leaders, and other school staff when referring to the student in school, the Division shall;
 - 5.1. In the case of a student who is under 16 years of age, notify the student's parent of the request and seek the parent's consent for teacher, teacher leaders, and other school staff to use the new preferred name or pronouns when referring to the student in school; or
 - 5.2. In the case of a student who is 16 or 17 years of age, notify the student's parent of the request.
 - 5.3. Where notifying the student's parent or seeking the parent's consent is reasonably expected to cause emotional or psychological harm to the student, or the student requests access to assistance, the Division shall ensure that the student is provided with counseling or other assistance before notifying the student's parent.
 - 5.4. A student making an inquiry about the process to request a name/pronoun change is not in itself a request to do so, and will not warrant parent notification. In the event the student wishes to make the request, 5.1 and 5.2 will apply.
6. School-Issued Documents - When requested by an independent student or the parent/guardian, school-issued documents will be changed to reflect the student's preferred name, sex, or gender. This change will be made in our student information system and will be recorded as an alias with the student's legal name still recorded. This change will then impact class lists, timetables, identification cards, report cards, etc.
7. Official School Records - To change a student's name on Alberta Education official documents (high school diploma, transcripts, PASI, etc.), the parent/guardian, or independent student, will provide evidence of documentation showing their child's new legal name.

8. Dress Code - All students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression in accordance with school guidelines.
9. Washroom Accessibility - Every principal shall provide access to a washroom for use by any student who desires increased privacy.
10. Locker Room and Change Room Accessibility - In locker rooms that require undressing in front of others, students who desire increased privacy for any reason (e.g., medical, religious, cultural, gender identity, etc.) are to be advised that the school will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations that best meet their individual needs and privacy concerns. Principals will make available a private changing area for the use of any student who is uncomfortable using the common changing facility, whether such discomfort is related to gender identity or expression or another reason.
11. A student will be provided with the available accommodation that best meets the needs and privacy concerns of all students involved. Based on availability and appropriateness to address privacy concerns, such accommodations could include, but are not limited to, a separate changing schedule (by utilizing the change room before or after other students) or use of a nearby private area (e.g., a nearby washroom).
12. Extra-Curricular and Physical Education Activities - Ensure that students who choose to participate in, or are required to participate in, physical education or extracurricular activities, including competitive and recreational athletic teams, can do so in ways that are comfortable for them and supportive of their diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. In circumstances where activities are organized by gender, students who are trans and gender-diverse have the support they need to participate safely in accordance with their gender identity and/or gender expression, and based on requirements as per [Alberta Education](#). Students also have full access to recreational or competitive athletic activities in accordance with their self-declared gender identity.
13. Overnight Field Trips - Overnight Trips and/or Field Trips - School staff will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations that are inclusive, respectful, and acceptable to the student and that do not impose any additional expense or burden for the student and/or their family. The privacy and confidentiality of the student will be maintained at all times. If there is a specific request to stay with other students, all those students' parents/guardians or independent students involved will be notified and asked to provide written consent.
14. Resolving Conflict - The Principal shall ensure that the resolution of any conflict ensures reasonable accommodation and inclusiveness. Where parents/guardians or independent students are not satisfied with a decision by the Principal with respect to a request for accommodation and wish to appeal the decision, the guardians or independent student shall notify the Superintendent of their request for an appeal. The appeal shall be in accordance with [Board Policy 13 – Appeals and Hearing Regarding Student Matters](#).

Reference: [Education Act](#) Section 16, 18, 19, 31, 32, 35.1, 52, 53, 55, 58.1, 58.2, 68, 196, 197, 204, 222, 225
[Alberta Bill of Rights](#)
[Alberta Human Rights Act](#)
[Ministerial Order on Student Learning 001/2013](#)
[Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12](#)
[Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)

[Teaching Sexual Health](#)
[ASAA Bylaws and Policy](#)
[Alberta Education Curriculum Implementation Hub](#)
[Alberta Education, Bill 29](#)

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