
SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONS

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY POLICY

8072

1. Rationale

Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) is committed to providing safe, caring, and inclusive learning and work environments that are free from discrimination and harassment, in accordance with the 7030 Human Rights and Workplace Harassment Policy. Lakehead District School Board respects diversity and values the contributions of all members of our school communities and workplaces. Lakehead District School Board is committed to the principles of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code, the 1020 Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and Procedures, 8070 Safe Schools - System Expectation Policy and Procedures and 8071 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Procedures.

Lakehead District School Board recognizes the biases and challenges faced by students and other school community members identifying as or perceived to be Two Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual (2SLGBTQQIA) within our schools and communities, including discrimination, harassment, physical and sexual violence, social and emotional isolation, substance abuse, homelessness, school truancy and drop-out, self-harm, and suicide.

Every student, employee, parent/guardian, community member and trustee has the right to freedom from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and violence, regardless of sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity. Lakehead District School Board will not permit, encourage, nor tolerate harassment, discrimination, intimidation and/or violence. Lakehead District School Board is committed to providing support and assistance to those who may be the intended or unintended targets of discriminatory behaviours and to promoting a safer and more inclusive space for all members of the school community including those who are members of 2SLGBTQQIA communities.

2. Policy

It is the policy of Lakehead District School Board to foster and promote a safe, caring and inclusive learning and work environment while also promoting proactive strategies and guidelines to ensure that the Two Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual communities are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity.

Lakehead District School Board is committed to ensuring that all employees are aware of their responsibilities as they relate to creating safety and support for all students and employees regardless of sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity.

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3. Areas of Focus

3.1 Homophobia, Transphobia and Heterosexism

Lakehead District School Board is committed to providing an environment of respect for all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity, and will endeavour to raise awareness of issues related to human rights and equity throughout the Board's jurisdiction. Lakehead District School Board is committed to identifying and eliminating homophobic, transphobic and heterosexist discrimination and barriers.

3.2 Confidentiality

Lakehead District School Board will make every effort to ensure confidentiality of anyone's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

3.3 Guidance and Counselling Services

Counselling services are available for students and will be sensitive, supportive, and free of bias, in order to respond effectively to the needs of all students. School staff will help to remove discriminatory barriers and provide positive strategies to enable students to realize their potential and meet their academic goals.

3.4 Staff Development and Professional Learning

Lakehead District School Board employees will participate in staff development activities dealing with equity and inclusive education in order to acquire the knowledge, and skills, to identify and eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination. Professional learning activities will be ongoing, evidence based, and will provide opportunities for staff and trustees to participate in training on topics such as gender-based violence, transphobia, and homophobia, and will provide information for students and parents/guardians to increase their knowledge and understanding of sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity. Training will allow staff to provide age appropriate information to students at all levels.

3.5 Leadership

Lakehead District School Board will provide leadership that is committed to identifying and removing sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity related, discriminatory behaviours and systemic barriers to learning, ensuring that all partners in education assume the responsibility for preparing students to live and to participate in a diverse society.

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4. Review

This policy shall be reviewed in accordance with 2010 Policy Development and Review Policy.

| <u>Cross Reference</u> | <u>Date Approved</u> | <u>Legal Reference</u> |
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| 1020 Equity and Inclusive Education | May 28, 2013 | Ontario Human Rights Code |
| 7020 Employment Equity | <u>Date Revised</u> | |
| 7030 Human Rights and Workplace Harassment | April 27, 2021 | |
| 8070 Safe Schools – System Expectations | | |
| 8071 Bullying Prevention and Intervention | | |