

HUMAN RIGHTS EQUITY

Background

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

Article 1 – United Nations
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In keeping with the spirit and intent of Articles 1 and 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, the Board subscribes to the fundamental principle that all persons are equal in dignity and rights. The development and implementation of policies, practices and programs shall reflect and promote equal rights, and provide an environment which promotes and fosters growth, harmony and equality of opportunities for all students and staff members.

Differences of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, sexual orientation, abilities, family status and marital status shall be recognized and respected. Such differences shall not be the basis for any discrimination in the Division and its schools.

Procedures

1. Curriculum

- 1.1 The curriculum shall make provision for students and teachers to acquire an understanding of human rights and social justice and the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to deal constructively with human rights inequities experienced in daily life.
- 1.2 All students shall be given the opportunity to:
 - 1.2.1 Develop and maintain confidence and a sense of self-esteem;
 - 1.2.2 Acquire the basic skills fundamental for future education and employment opportunities; and
 - 1.2.3 Gain the knowledge and acquire the attitudes necessary for active and full participation in Canadian and world society.
- 1.3 Opportunities shall be provided for students to develop positive attitudes, an understanding of and respect for differences in religions, cultures, races, gender, sexual orientation and abilities, and an appreciation for their own cultural backgrounds as well as for the cultural backgrounds of others.
- 1.4 Education shall be conducted in such a manner that all students receive the opportunity to develop their potential and aspirations to the fullest extent without limitations imposed by stereotyping.

- 1.5 All learning materials shall be examined before use for racial, ethnic, gender, sexual or religious discrimination or bias in accordance with Division criteria.

2. Assessment and Placement of Students

- 2.1 All instruments employed for assessment, testing, interviewing and counseling shall be selected and administered in such a way that they are valid indicators, as far as possible, of each student's ability and/or achievement.
- 2.2 All assessment procedures and placement practices shall be administered in an unbiased manner.
- 2.3 Staff members shall base formal and informal evaluations, as well as expectations of students, on observed growth and verifiable achievements. Staff members shall guard against basing expectations for achievements on prejudices and stereotypes.

3. Incidents of Discrimination

Definition

Incidents of Discrimination are defined as slurs against one's race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, sexual orientation, abilities, family status, marital status, ability, as well as name calling, insults, exclusion, racial, religious or ethnic jokes, teasing, graffiti, threats and physical abuse that:

- Are made by a person who knows, or ought to know, that such action is unwelcome; and
- Cause discomfort and endanger the well-being, performance or job security of the victim.

3.1 Incidents of Discrimination by Students

- 3.1.1 A student witnessing an incident involving discrimination shall report the details of the incident to a member of the professional staff.
- 3.1.2 Any staff member witnessing an incident involving discrimination by a student, or to whom the details of such an incident have been reported, shall without undue delay:
 - 3.1.2.1 Assist those involved and witnessing the incident in identifying the discrimination behaviour and appropriate alternative behaviours;
 - 3.1.2.2 Provide support to the victim or victims of the incident;
 - 3.1.2.3 When possible, bring the parties together to seek a mutual understanding about future interactions; and
 - 3.1.2.4 Record the details of the incident and discuss it with the Principal in order to generate alternative strategies which may be needed.
- 3.1.3 When appropriate, the staff member and/or the Principal shall discuss the perpetrating student's behaviour with parents or guardians and attempt to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

- 3.1.4 The Principal shall inform the victim or victims of the incident, and if appropriate, the parents or guardians of the resolution of the incident.
- 3.1.5 In the event that a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, or subsequent incidents are committed by the same perpetrator, further consequences shall be applied in accordance with existing policies and procedures.
- 3.2 Incidents of Discrimination by Staff Members
 - 3.2.1 Staff members observing incidents involving another staff member are to act in accordance with the Code of Ethics of their professional organization.
 - 3.2.2 Incidents where a staff member is accused of being a perpetrator shall be reported to the Principal by the staff member involved.
 - 3.2.3 Where an allegation directed at a staff member is made through the administration, the staff member shall immediately be informed.
 - 3.2.4 The Principal or designate is to immediately put the staff member in contact with a counselor from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and a member of the school counseling department.
 - 3.2.5 Students making allegations about teaching staff shall be immediately removed from classes taught by the teacher in question and provided with alternate instructional processes and made aware of counseling resources available.
 - 3.2.6 A statement of circumstances surrounding the alleged incident shall be provided to the Principal or designate by the student making the allegation.
 - 3.2.7 In cases where outside agencies become involved, the Principal or designate will serve as the avenue for communication regarding the incident.
 - 3.2.8 The student and staff member involved will, in all cases, be given the opportunity to meet and resolve the incident. The Principal or designate shall be involved to serve as a mediator, arbitrator or witness.
 - 3.2.9 It shall be the obligation of the Principal or designate to ensure that the issue is resolved.
 - 3.2.10 Where allegations are found to be without substance, the individual making the allegations shall meet with a school counselor.
 - 3.2.11 Students may be returned to class if the student, the teacher and the Principal or designate all feel the matter has been successfully resolved.
 - 3.2.12 In the event that there is no satisfactory resolution, staff members are encouraged to pursue options with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the Principal or designate.
 - 3.2.13 In dealing with allegations of discrimination, confidentiality shall be maintained by all persons involved, to the maximum extent possible.

3.3 Incidents of Discrimination by Others

- 3.3.1 Staff members responsible for students participating in out-of-school experiences, such as job shadowing or work experience, where there is a shared supervisory responsibility, shall ensure support is available for students who encounter incidents of discrimination in the workplace.
- 3.3.2 Entry to Division-owned premises or Division-approved activities shall be denied to any person, group or association whose intent is to advocate hatred of discrimination based on race, colour, creed, nationality, ethnicity, gender, family status, marital status, sexual orientation or place of origin.

4. Staff Development

- 4.1 Staff members shall be encouraged to seek opportunities to enhance their professional growth in the field of human rights equity.
- 4.2 In-service sessions to promote human rights equity and to enhance sensitivity and competence in working with people of diverse racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic backgrounds or varying abilities shall be an integral part of staff development for all Division employees.

5. Staffing

- 5.1 The processes in place which work toward achieving employment equity shall be communicated to all staff.
- 5.2 Hiring, placement and evaluation practices shall reflect the principles of equal employment opportunity for all staff. All qualified persons shall have equal access to employment opportunities.
- 5.3 Criteria and Guidelines for hiring and promotion shall be communicated to all staff.

6. School-Community Relations

- 6.1 Human rights equity and harmony within the school system, in the community and between the school system and the community, shall be promoted.
- 6.2 Administrators, when communicating with parents and guardians about plans for dealing with the behaviour of students, shall include statements relating to the handling of incidents involving discrimination. Such statements shall include information advising parents and guardians of ways to communicate concerns to school and Division Office officials.

6.3 Communication shall be encouraged with those Divisions, community groups or associations and government agencies that offer consultation or assistance in strengthening the school system's approach to gender equity, multiculturalism, ethnic and race relations, and equal opportunity and access to educational services.

Reference: Sections 85, 87 108, 109 Education Act
Human Rights Act
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Canada Labor Code
STF Code of Ethics
Saskatchewan Human Rights Code
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights