

## IHF-APM – Safe and Caring Learning Environment (Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression)

### Administrative Procedure

#### **Purpose:**

The Board is committed to creating a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment for students, staff and all members of the school community. The Board affirms the rights, as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, of each staff member employed by the Board and each student enrolled in a school operated by the Board. Students and staff members will not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

#### **Objective:**

School staff are expected to ensure a welcoming, supportive environment for all sexual minority staff, students and families. This procedure supports the following Board Policies:

- Policy IHF – Safe and Caring Learning Environment
- Policy BBA – School Board Powers and Duties
- Policy GBE – Health and Safety
- Policy GBEA – Protection of Staff
- Policy IFC – Student Code of Conduct
- Policy IFCA – Student Dress and Grooming
- Policy IGD – Student Suspension and Expulsion
- Policy IGH – Anti-Bullying
- Policy JAB – Conflict Resolution
- Policy EEABA – Cross Boundary Transportation

#### **Procedure:**

##### 1. LEADERSHIP

The Principal shall:

- a. communicate this regulation to the staff, parents and students
- b. ensure staff address and provide appropriate remedial consequences for all interactions involving the use of discriminatory statements, publications, notices, signs, symbols, emblems or other representations;
- c. communicate to staff their professional responsibility to identify discriminatory statements and behaviours, and create caring, respectful and safe learning environments;
- d. communicate and enforce adherence to all district policies with respect to diversity, equity, human rights, sexual orientation, gender identity, discrimination, prejudice, and harassment;
- e. communicate to staff the expectation to use language and educational resources and approaches that are inclusive, age-appropriate, and respectful of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions;
- f. provide inclusive and respectful services and supports to sexual and gender minority students and families;

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- g. ensure staff work proactively to eliminate systemic inequities and barriers to learning for sexual and gender minority students and families;
- h. ensure discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented and dealt with expeditiously; and
- i. ensure that when a student reports a positive and safe relationship with parents, staff encourage students to seek the support of their parents, but staff must recognize that the confidentiality of a student's sexuality belongs to that student.
- j. Support the establishment of student organizations and activities in accordance with Section 16.1 of the *School Act*.

#### **Support for student organizations;**

16.1(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

(a) immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and

(b) subject to subsection (4), within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request designate 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.

(3) 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.

(3.1) For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes "gay-straight alliance" or "queer-straight alliance".

(4) 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), 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.

(6) The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection (1) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity. \*

\* Notification is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notification of other student organizations and activities

Peace Wapiti Public School Division is a public body as defined by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and is bound by the provisions of that Act.

## 2. STAFF

All staff share responsibility for creating and maintaining a work

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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. The District engages in employment practices which:

- a. are free of bias resulting from any prejudice, including prejudice related to sexual orientation and gender identity; and
- b. ensure equal opportunity for employment and advancement.

#### 3. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

To assist all staff to become more knowledgeable about sexual and gender minority identities, cultures, and communities, PWSD PD will provide professional learning opportunities to assist all staff to acquire the knowledge, skills, and appropriate teaching practices necessary to create safe, inclusive, equitable, and respectful schools regardless of how students are perceived or identified.

#### 4. TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Teaching and learning resources shall be chosen and/or updated to promote critical thinking and should include age-appropriate materials that accurately reflect the diversity of Canada's sexual and gender minority families, cultures, and communities.

#### 5. GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION

To support the safety, health, and educational needs of students who identify as, or are perceived to be, transgender or transsexual persons, district staff shall adhere to the following recommended practices wherever possible and appropriate:

- a. **Names and Pronouns-** A student or staff member has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to his or her consistently asserted gender identity.
- b. **Communication and Official Records-** When requested by an independent student, or the parent/guardian, the student's official record will be changed to reflect their preferred name, sex, or gender. All school forms and records shall be changed to ensure that a student's preferred name and sex or gender is current on class lists, timetables, student files, identification cards, etc. Schools should inform the student of the limitations regarding their chosen name and gender identity or gender expression in relation to official school records that require legal name change. When possible the school should have the student's explicit permission before disclosing information related to the student's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression to peers, parents/guardians.
- c. **Gender-Segregated Activities** - To the greatest extent possible, schools should reduce or eliminate the practice of segregating students by gender (with the exception of already established single gender-based alternative programs). In classroom activities or school programs where students are segregated by gender, all students should be given the option to be included in

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the group that corresponds to their consistently asserted gender identity.

d. **Athletics, Locker Room, and Change Room Access and Accommodation**

- i. Transgender and transsexual students shall not be asked or required to have Physical Education outside of assigned class time, and shall, subject to safety considerations, be permitted to participate in any gender-segregated activities in accordance with their consistently asserted gender identity, if they so choose.
- ii. Schools will work to provide access to change facilities that meet individual needs and privacy concerns. Students will have access to change rooms that meet their individual needs and privacy concerns. Transgender students will be provided with an alternative change room. In the event that a request is made by the transgender student to change in the change room of the student's consistently asserted gender, then the principal will inform the other students who share the change room without disclosing the identity of the student. Any student who objects to sharing the change room with a transgender or diverse gender student will be offered an alternative facility. (This also applies if a parent objects on behalf of the student). Principals are reminded of the need to protect the privacy of transgender individuals and to communicate information in a manner that is respectful of the privacy of the transgender student. For example, at the beginning of the school year, the principal could announce in a general way that a transgender student may be using a change room and advise students with concerns to discuss it with the principal.
- iii. Overnight accommodations need to be addressed on a case by case basis. School staff should make reasonable effort to provide solutions which are respectful and inclusive of the students, do not impose additional expense and are respectful of the privacy rights of all students.

e. **Restroom Accessibility** - Schools will provide a non-gender easily accessible single stall washroom for use by any student who requires increased privacy for any reason (e.g., medical, religious, cultural, gender identity, etc.). All students shall have access to the restroom that allows for appropriate privacy and that does not significantly disrupt the school environment. Staff shall consistently demonstrate sensitivity to the needs and safety of all students with respect to restroom access. The Principal

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shall ensure that individual solutions to restroom access are implemented with respect and discretion.

- f. **Dress Code** - All students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression in compliance with division policy and school dress codes.
- g. **Resolving Conflict** – At the school level, the Principal shall make the final decision on disputes that may arise with regard to a transgender or transsexual student's participation in educational or athletic activities. The principal shall ensure that the resolution of any conflict ensures reasonable accommodation and inclusiveness.

### REFERENCES

#### Cross References:

[Policy BBA – School Board Powers and Duties](#)  
[Policy GBE – Health and Safety](#)  
[Policy GBEA – Protection of Staff](#)  
[Policy IFC – Student Code of Conduct](#)  
[Policy IFCA – Student Dress and Grooming](#)  
[Policy IGD – Student Suspension and Expulsion](#)  
[Policy IGH – Anti-Bullying](#)  
[Policy JAB – Conflict Resolution](#)  
[Policy EEABA – Cross Boundary Transportation](#)  
[IFCM-APM – Voluntary Student Organizations or activities admin Procedure](#)  
[Alberta Education Guidelines for Best Practices](#)  
[Alberta Human Rights Act](#)  
[Canadian Multiculturalism Act](#)  
[Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)  
[School Act – Section 16.1; 45\(1\)](#)

Owner:

Supt

Date Last Reviewed:

2017/18

Next Review:

2019/2020