

Proactive Steps in Preventing Homophobic Harassment

Preamble: A school is a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence in a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment. Staff, students, parents, trustees, school councils, and community members working in a cooperative partnership must share the responsibility for creating and maintaining such an environment. Each individual is important and unique and should be empowered to contribute positively to the school community. Responsibility and ownership for a safe learning environment must be assumed by all members of the school community. The fair treatment of others, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnicity, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation (including LGBTQ issues), socio-economic status, age or disability is an expectation from all school members.

The Board will commit to and demonstrate the following:

1. An active commitment to existing policy and procedures, provide direction to administration, including Principals, to implement and enforce policy, and to review all policies to make sure they are up-to-date and relevant regarding the rights of all students with respect to sexual orientation.
2. Ensure that policies and procedures, particularly in respect to LGBTQ issues, be transparent and widely communicated, and accessible (e.g. Board/school web sites, brochures, student codes of conduct, newsletters, classroom discussions, parent forums, public notices through local media, etc.)
3. Provide ongoing diversity training to all administrators, managers, principals, vice principals, guidance/student service counsellors, teachers, secretaries, educational assistants, social workers, early childhood educators, custodians, and lunchroom supervisors. School trustees will receive information regarding diversity, including LGBTQ issues and how they relate to students, staff and policy at the Board in their orientation package. The requirements of the Board's policies on diversity shall be followed by bus drivers who are contracted by the Board, and the contracting bus companies to be advised of the policy. .
4. Access and purchase, or develop, curriculum resources dealing with homophobia and heterosexism. Use these resources to help create a safe school environment in this regard.
5. Where a teacher volunteer can be found for students, in accordance with the school governance for the establishment of clubs and extra curricular activities, facilitate a Gay/Straight Alliances..

* Note: LGBTQ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Two Spirited, Questioning and Queer .

6. Establish in every high school 'safe spaces' for LGBTQ students utilizing volunteer teachers and support staff who are trained in and sensitive to diversity issues, (to Board satisfaction) including LGBTQ issues. The 'safe spaces' staff will impart information to students about forming Gay/Straight Alliances.
7. Create a supportive work atmosphere so that LGBTQ staff can feel safe and supported in their workplace and organization.
8. Establish a time line and evaluation plan for the implementation of these initiatives.
9. All school administrators will deal with reported incidents of homophobic violence in accordance with appropriate safe school policies.

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