

Creating SOGI-inclusive schools in NLPS

SOGI inclusive policies and procedures have been proven to reduce discrimination, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts for all students. An integral part of the Learning Framework and the NLPS Strategic Plan is to ensure all our schools are safe, inclusive, and honour diversity.

What do SOGI-inclusive schools look like?

Inclusive policies and procedures that explicitly reference SOGI

Learning environments that reflect gender inclusivity and neutrality

Resources that teach diversity and respect, and include examples of LGBTQ+

What is our responsibility?

As educators we have a duty to ensure **all** of our students feel safe and welcomed. This not only aligns with our moral obligations, but also the district and ministry policies that outline our professional responsibilities:

BC Curriculum Overview: Valuing Diversity

- Teachers should ensure that classroom instruction, assessment, and resources reflect sensitivity to diversity and incorporate positive role portrayals, relevant issues, and themes such as inclusion, respect, and acceptance. **This includes diversity in family composition, gender identity, and sexual orientation.**

NLPS AP 351: Alternative Delivery of Sensitive Materials

- Parents/Caregivers can request 'alternative delivery' of sensitive materials pertaining the direct instruction of reproduction and sexuality. However, topics that refer to inclusive learning environments and honouring diversity including, sexual orientation and gender identity will be **integrated throughout the curriculum** (p. 1).

NLPS AP 347: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

- All persons have the right to privacy which includes, the right to have one's gender identity and/or sex assigned at birth **private** at school (p. 3).
- Transgender and non-conforming students have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when and how much private information to share and with who. Those decisions **need to be respected** by school personnel (p. 1).
- Every student has the **right to be addressed** by a name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity. Student does not need to change their official records (p. 3).

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Examples of Best Practice

Gender Inclusive Classroom

Challenge stereotypes by avoiding categorizing activities, toys, or colours by gender.

Instead of grouping students by gender → group students by non-gendered categories:

Ex: Group students by birthday or the colour of their t-shirt.

Ex: Signout for 'boys' and 'girls' → use name cards.

Visibility

Make classrooms visibly inclusive by displaying pride flags, "safe space" stickers, posters displaying a variety of families, etc.

Display books that represent diverse identities.

Gender Inclusive Language

Address groups using gender neutral language.

Ex: "Good Morning, everyone", "Good Morning, Division 5", "Good Afternoon, Folks".

Introducing the use of a singular gender-neutral pronouns (they, them, theirs) in class.

Self Identification

Create space to have students use their preferred name and pronouns.

SOGI Checklist:

- My school has a gender neutral washroom that is clearly marked and accessible for all.
- My school has a safe and inclusive space for students who are LGBTQ+ in my school (ie: Diversity Club, Social Justice Club, Gay Straight Alliance Club).
- My staff is supported to embed SOGI inclusive teaching practices in their curriculum.
- My school has a passionate SOGI lead that can raise awareness of SOGI within the schools by sharing, developing, and implementing SOGI practices.
- My staff is aware of the policies that protect LGBTQ+ students.
- My school has evaluated all gender-based procedures, routines, activities, rules, and ceremonies to ensure inclusive language and purpose.
- My school library is supported to acquire new resources that reflect the diversity of NLPS.
- My school has an allocation of funds to support inclusive teaching and learning practices.

