



Policy no. 2018-CA-24:	Policy on Respect for Diversity
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1.0 PREAMBLE

The Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board (SWLSB) is strongly committed to protecting human rights and preventing discrimination. Creating safe and caring environments for all students and staff is a top priority for the school board.

The school board is responsible for ensuring that all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

The school board believes that no individual should be a target of discriminatory behaviour or exclusion. All members of the SWLSB share the responsibility for upholding the values inherent in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Civil Code of Québec*, and for supporting students and staff in addressing and facing unique challenges. Homophobic or transphobic comments, discrimination, bullying and attacks are demeaning to all students, parents or guardians and employees, regardless of their identity.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to foster an educational environment that is safe, welcoming, and free from stigma and discrimination for all individuals, and to ensure that all have the opportunity to express themselves and live authentically.

This policy's interpretation should be consistent with the goals of reducing stigmatization, ensuring the inclusion of all individuals, maintaining their privacy, and fostering cultural competence and professional development for all staff. Furthermore, this policy will support collaboration between educators, parents and community members to promote healthy school and work environments for the well-being of all individuals.

3.0 REFERENCES

The present policy is established with respect to the following documents:

- *Education Act*
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (Québec)*
- *Civil Code of Québec*
- *Table nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie et la transphobie des réseaux de l'éducation - Measures for openness to and support for trans and non-binary students*
- *Government Action Plan Against Homophobia and Transphobia*

4.0 DEFINITIONS

The following terms and vocabulary are not intended to define labels or categories for individuals, nor is this section intended as a comprehensive list of definitions. The purpose is rather to assist staff in understanding this policy and their legal obligations. Individuals may or may not use these terms to describe themselves.

Gender identity: A person's deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender. One's gender identity can be the same or different than the gender assigned at birth.

Gender expression: The manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behaviour, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice or mannerisms.

Transgender: A broad term referring to a person whose gender identity or gender expression is different from their biological sex assigned at birth.

Non-binary: A person who identifies outside of the gender binary (see *Gender identity*).

Bullying: Any repeated direct or indirect behaviour, comment, act or gesture, whether deliberate or not, including in cyberspace, which occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance between the persons concerned and which causes distress and injures, hurts, oppresses, intimidates or ostracizes.

Harassment: Harassment means any vexatious or contemptuous behaviour in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures that affects a person's or group of persons' dignity, psychological integrity or physical integrity and that results in a harmful work environment for the person or group of persons.

5.0 APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This policy covers all conduct that affects individual well-being in school or in the workplace, whether this conduct occurs on or off site. It also pertains to usage of all media and electronic communications. Furthermore, it applies to the entire school community, including educators, school staff, students, parents and volunteers.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Discrimination, bullying and harassment based on **ethnic or cultural identity, religion, family status, physical, psychological or intellectual disabilities, age, socio-economic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression** shall be prohibited within the school board and its schools. It is the responsibility of each school and all staff to ensure that all students and staff have a safe school/centre/workplace environment. The scope of this responsibility includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment or bullying is given immediate attention, including investigating the incident, taking appropriate corrective action, and providing students and staff with appropriate resources. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's actual or perceived identity are to be taken seriously and handled in the same manner as any other discrimination, bullying or harassment complaint.

All schools are expected to comply with the present policy and its guidelines.

To this end, the school board expects that persons will:

- *value and encourage learning and working environments that are inclusive and respectful of the diverse individual, collective, social and cultural needs of our community;*
- *treat one another with dignity and respect;*
- *refrain from engaging in, or encouraging, acts of violence of any form;*
- *show care and regard for school property and the property of others;*
- *take appropriate measures to help those in need; and*
- *respect those in positions of authority.*

The school board expects that all persons will not engage in behaviour that constitutes discrimination as set out in the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, Québec's *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* and the *Civil Code of Québec*, including the following but not limited to:

- *gender identity or expression*
- *ethnic and cultural identity*
- *religion*
- *family status*
- *physical, psychological or intellectual disability*
- *sexual orientation*
- *age*
- *socio-economic status*

Furthermore, in the spirit of inclusion, in the case of a transgender or non-binary student, all schools are expected to:

- *create an inclusive school environment;*
- *support the individuality of the student;*
- *use the name and pronoun chosen by the student;*
- *allow the student to wear clothing that coincides with the expression of their gender identity;*
- *allow the student to choose which washroom and changing room to use based on their gender identity;*
- *enable the full participation of the student in physical education classes of their gender choice and in extracurricular activities;*
- *respect the confidentiality of the student's information and legal records.*

7.0 FINAL PROVISIONS

Each school principal is required to implement this policy and respect the school board's *Guidelines for Supporting Transgender and Non-binary Students* (Appendix A).

All schools shall respect the following:

- *Schools shall ensure the collaboration of the school administration, teachers and support staff, which is essential for the successful integration of all students.*
- *Schools shall adapt their social and administrative environment to fulfill the obligation of protecting transgender and non-binary students and their personal information.*
- *Schools shall sensitize staff to the reality of transgender and non-binary students. This will better equip schools to raise student awareness regarding the importance of respecting non-binary individuals, and may foster resilience among youth who are experiencing difficult transphobic situations.*

- *Schools shall accommodate the needs of transgender and non-binary students to facilitate their full inclusion and well-being in school life.*

8.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A: *Guidelines for Supporting Transgender and Non-binary Students*. The appendix is subject to change as needed.