Safe and Caring Schools

Procedure 7
Guidelines for LGBTQ Inclusive Practices

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Every effort has been made to provide proper acknowledgement of original sources. If cases are identified where this has not been the case, please notify the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Guidelines for LGBTQ Inclusive Practices

Introduction

Maintaining a safe, caring and inclusive school requires ongoing support, direction and attention from all stakeholders. A safe, caring and inclusive school ensures that all students, including those with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions, have access to the educational opportunities and supports needed to be successful in school, and in life.

A safe, caring and inclusive system requires all schools to implement evidence-based practices to ensure safety, belonging and full participation of all members of the school community.

Purpose of these guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to support the creation and maintenance of safe, caring, and inclusive learning environments through fostering a positive school culture, promoting diversity, belonging and a positive sense of self for all students. These guidelines provide schools with best practices that focus on all of the above.

These guidelines encourage:

- The creation of a school culture that supports open communication with students, staff, families and community, and celebrates increased understanding and knowledge of diversity;
- The review and revision of existing policies, practices and procedures to ensure they are in line with these guidelines;
- The reflection of these guidelines in the creation of new policies, regulations, procedures and resources;
- The planning of professional learning and professional conversations.

Principles essential to guidelines

These guidelines are built on the following principles:

- All students and staff with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions:
  - are treated with dignity and respect;
  - have the right to be open about who they are without fear of unwanted consequences;
  - have the right to privacy and confidentiality;
- are **actively** included in the Collaborative Decision Making Process within these guidelines.
- Self-identification is the sole measure of an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Legislation and Policy Requirements

Safe and Caring Schools Policy (2013)

The *Safe and Caring Schools Policy (2013)* promotes the acceptance and inclusion of all individuals regardless of economic status, national or ethnic origin, religion, culture, body size, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or ability. The policy states that all members of the school community have the right to feel safe and secure in all school-related activities and share in the responsibility for ensuring this is the case.

Building a safe, caring and inclusive school environment requires schools to focus on developing respectful and caring relationships for all members of the school community – among students, among adults and between students and adults. It is important that school practices address this focus as it relates to all member of the school community including those with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

The Inclusive Education philosophy in Newfoundland and Labrador supports all students having access to meaningful learning experiences regardless of gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or any other factor. The *Safe and Caring Schools Policy (2013)* section 4.6.4 states that schools will ensure that classroom and school-based practices are inclusive. Examples of inclusive practices include:

- A welcoming school culture in which all members of the school community feel they belong, have the opportunity to realize their potential, and contribute to the life of the school.
- A strong partnership with families and outside agencies to promote the celebration of diversity.
- A network of resources and supports in place to address diversity.
- The availability of a non-gender, single toilet bathroom for students, staff and visitors to the school.
- Curriculum, literature and resources available for teachers and students which represent the many faces of diversity (ethnicity, ability, family composition, sexual identity, etc.).
- Class profiles reflecting student diversity including learning styles, interest, needs and learning readiness.
- School based forms which only require pertinent information.

Newfoundland and Labrador Schools Act, 1997

The *Schools Act, 1997*, provides that school districts are responsible for the promotion of a safe and caring learning environment. It requires schools to establish, implement and maintain a Code of Conduct that clearly defines the standards for appropriate behaviour.

The *Act* requires that every student ensure their conduct contributes to learning environments that are safe, caring, and inclusive.

Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Act, 2010

Sub-section 9-(1) of the Newfoundland and Labrador *Human's Rights Act, 2010*, protects all individuals from discrimination including those of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. This *Human Rights Act, 2010*, takes precedent over other provincial legislation.

When an individual within a school alleges that discrimination is occurring then the school is required to alleviate or mitigate adverse impacts resulting from the alleged discrimination. The school can most effectively do this by engaging in respectful discussions (defined in these guidelines as the Collaborative Decision Making Process) to chart out a reasonable accommodation(s) to ensure that the individual does not continue to face adverse impacts that are within the schools ability to alleviate or mitigate.

An accommodation(s) is usually considered reasonable if it meets the needs of the individual requesting the accommodation, to the greatest extent possible, short of undue hardship, and if it respects the dignity of the person requiring it. What qualifies as undue hardship varies from case to case, and is not specifically defined. Generally the hardship must be a substantial interference with the schools operations to qualify as undue.

Guidelines

The following guidelines for supporting students and staff with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions are based on practices most consistently identified in current research and educational literature, and provide schools with the flexibility required to provide reasonable accommodations.
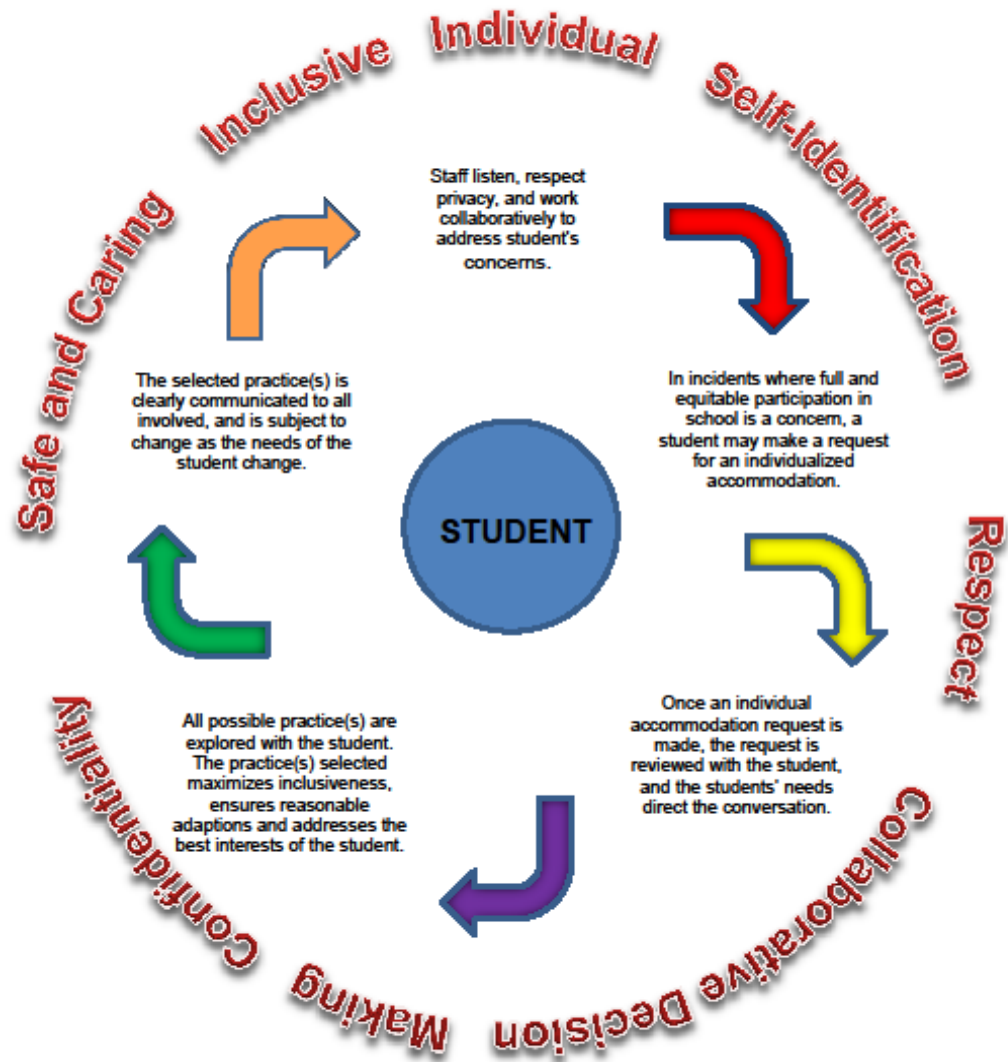
They are important in creating environments that are safe, caring and inclusive for students, staff, families, and all other members of the school community.

1. Providing supports that respond to a student's individual needs.
2. Respecting the individual's right to self-identification.
3. Maintaining school records to respect privacy and confidentiality.
4. Ensuring dress codes respect an individual's gender identity and gender expression.
5. Minimizing gender-segregated activities.
6. Enabling students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions to have full, safe and equitable participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities.
7. Providing safe access to washroom and change-room facilities.
8. Providing professional learning opportunities that build the capacity of staff to understand and support diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.
9. Using a comprehensive school-wide approach to promote healthy relationships and prevent and respond to bullying behaviour.
10. Ensuring students have the understanding, skills and opportunities to contribute to safe, caring and inclusive learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self.
11. Ensuring all families are welcomed and supported as valued members of the school community.
12. Ensuring that school staff have work environments where they are protected from discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identitiy and gender expression.

These twelve guidelines are mutually supportive and interdependent. Each guideline is further developed in the next section and includes a short descriptor and indicators of best practice in action.

It is important to recognize that as understandings of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions evolve, and learning environments and school communities' change, best practices will also evolve and change.

Collaborative Decision Making Process

Inclusive Individual Self-Identification

Staff listen, respect privacy, and work collaboratively to address student's concerns.

In incidents where full and equitable participation in school is a concern, a student may make a request for an individualized accommodation.

Safe and Caring

Respect

The selected practice(s) is clearly communicated to all involved, and is subject to change as the needs of the student change.

STUDENT

Once an individual accommodation request is made, the request is reviewed with the student, and the students' needs direct the conversation.

All possible practice(s) are explored with the student. The practice(s) selected maximizes inclusiveness, ensures reasonable adaptions and addresses the best interests of the student.

Confidentiality Making Decision Collaborative

1. Providing supports that respond to a student's individual needs

All students, including those with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions, are unique individuals and have differing needs. Supports that work for one student cannot simply be assumed to work for another. When a specific or individualized accommodation request is required, a student-centered Collaborative Decision Making Process is used. See preceding diagram for details.

Indicators of best practice in action

1.1 Students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions feel comfortable to seek out a staff person to discuss their particular needs, interests and concerns.

1.2 Staff actively listen to student's concerns, respect the student's privacy and confidentiality, and work collaboratively to identify and implement best practices that will make a positive difference for the student.

1.3 In incidents where full and equitable participation in school life is a concern, a student can make a specific accommodation request. This can be followed by participation in a respectful conversation (Collaborative Decision Making Process) to identify practices that are in the best interest of the student.

1.4 Requests for accommodation are addressed on a case-by-case basis and solutions are individualized to best meet the needs of the student making the request.

1.5 The selected practice(s) is clearly communicated to all involved, and is subject to change as the needs of the individual change.

1.6 Staff support or assist a student (or the student's family) to identify relevant and appropriate resources and supports in the community.

1.7 Staff supports the establishment and naming of Gay-Straight Alliances or similar student leadership and support groups (Gender/Sexuality Alliance), when students express an interest.

For more information on Gay-Straight Alliance see:

http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/safeandcaring/index.html

2. Respecting an individual's right to self-identification

The sole requirement for providing an accommodation for students and staff is an individual's self-identification. Individuals may self-identify regarding:

- sexual orientation
- internal sense of being male, female, both and/or neither
- expression of being male, female, both and/or neither

Some individuals may request to be addressed by their chosen name and/or chosen pronouns that align with their gender identity and/or gender expression. These individuals may not feel included in the use of the pronouns "he" or "she" and may prefer alternate pronouns such as "ze," "zir," "hir," "they," or 'them" or might wish to express themselves or self-identify in other ways.

District and school staffs make every effort to seek student consent or consult with the student prior to parent contact. This will ensure that district and school officials are fully informed, and provides for consideration of extenuating circumstances such as student safety or specific concerns of age of minority/maturity when determining the best practice in an individual case.

Indicators of best practice in action

2.1 Inform students of the limitations regarding the use of their chosen name and gender identity or gender expression in relation to official school records that require legal name change and gender designation documentation.

2.2 Consult with the student to determine the most appropriate way to reference the student's gender identity, gender expression, name and related pronoun in the school environment.

2.3 Staff and peers consistently use a student's chosen name and pronouns in ways the student has requested in day to day interactions.

2.4 At the beginning of the school year the school privately ask students who have requested such accommodations for chosen name and pronoun, how they want to be addressed in correspondence to the home or at meetings with the student's parent(s)/ caregiver(s).

3. Maintaining school records to respect privacy and confidentiality

The *Schools Act, 1997*, requires schools to maintain a student record for each student "in the manner required by a policy directive of the Minister". This record includes a student's legal name and gender. School district record keeping policies must concur with provincial legislation.

Under the *Change of Name Act, 2009*, a student is entitled to have a name change on all legal documents, such as their student record. Once an official documentation of approval of name change has been presented, the school will initiate the name change on all school and district based legal documents.

http://www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca/birth/legal_name_change/index.html

The *Vital Statistics Act, 2009*, was amended in April 2016 to cease requiring gender reassignment surgery in order for individuals to change their gender designation on government issued documents. Based on the legislative amendment Service Newfoundland and Labrador has revised the application for change of gender identity on a birth certificate.

http://www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca/birth/changing_your_sex_designation/index.html

Indicators of best practice in action

    3.1   School staffs maintain student confidentiality by obtaining a student's explicit permission before disclosing information regarding a student's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or legal matters such as name change to peers, guardians or other adults. When student consent may not be available the reason(s) for the absence of consent will be a critical consideration (e.g. student safety) in how to address such a circumstance.

    3.2   A student's legal name is used consistently on all legal documentation.

    3.3   Consistent use of a student's chosen or preferred name on school-issued documents such as class lists, PowerSchool or other school documents, and by all members of the school community.

    3.4   Gender designations are not included on student lists unless there is a specific reason for this information. If this information is required the designation should include "other".

4. Ensuring dress codes respect an individual's gender identity and gender expression

A flexible and gender-inclusive dress code recognizes that all students and staff have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression. Accommodating choices in clothing and general appearance is part of respecting the individuality of all including those with diverse gender identities and gender expressions.

Implying that a certain type of clothing, such as skirts, will be worn by one gender only is not a respectful or inclusive practice. Respecting choices in clothing is part of respecting the individuality of all, regardless of gender identity or gender expression.

Indicators of best practice in action

    4.1   Dress codes are respectful and inclusive of all, including those with diverse gender identities and gender expressions.

5. Minimize gender-segregated activities

To the greatest extent possible, reduce the practice of segregating students by categories such as gender and avoid structuring activities based on stereotypical roles. This increases opportunities to respect students' full expression of who they are and allows them to play, learn, dress, present and express themselves in flexible and diverse ways that are congruent with their gender identity or gender expression.

Indicators of best practice in action

5.1 Schools avoid structuring courses or activities based on gender-specific roles such as "boys" versus "girls" in academic, athletic or talent competitions.

5.2 In rare circumstances where activities are organized by gender, all students have access to inclusive activities and spaces in accordance with their gender identity and/or gender expression.

5.3 Activities that involve the need for overnight housing or accommodations are addressed on a case-by-case basis. School staffs make every reasonable effort to provide solutions that are safe, caring, inclusive and acceptable to the student. Solutions will not impose any additional expense or burden for the student. Schools must follow the Collaborative Decision Making Process shown on page 6.

6. Enabling students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions to have full, safe and equitable participation in curricular classes and extracurricular activities

All students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, have the right to participate in all activities. These curricular and extracurricular activities occur within inclusive and respectful environments, and in ways that are safe, comfortable and supportive of students' sexual orientations, gender identifies and gender expressions.

Indicators of this best practice in action

6.1 Policies and procedures related to school curricular and extra-curricular activities are inclusive of all students, including students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

6.2 All students participate in curricula in ways that are comfortable and supportive of their diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. The use of differentiated resources, as opposed to gender grouping, is considered to meet diverse student needs.

6.3 When a student requests an accommodation, the Collaborative Decision Making Process is to be used to determine the most appropriate course of action. The student's choice(s) as to where they feel the safest and most comfortable directs the conversation.

6.4 All students participate in extra-curricular activities in ways that are comfortable and supportive of their diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

6.5 Student athletic policies and procedures must be inclusive of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. Students who wish to become members of athletic school teams do so in ways that are congruent with their gender identity and gender expression.

6.6 Students, who consider themselves transgender, must be deemed eligible to compete on a team other than that of their biological orientation. The school must deem the student eligible to compete on the team of the gender to which the student identifies by following the process outlined in the *Transgender Policy of the School Sport NL Handbook*.

http://www.schoolsportsnl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/SSNL-Handbook-Main-Text.pdf

6.7   School districts and schools provide opportunity for building the capacity of coaches, teacher advisors, and community volunteers in ensuring extra-curricular activities that are safe, caring and inclusive for all students, including students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

7. Provide safe access to washroom and change-room facilities

All students have the right to use facilities, such as washrooms and change rooms, that they are comfortable using and which are congruent with their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. This applies during school time and school-related activities on and off school property (such as field trips, artistic and athletic events).

Although creating separate spaces may be sometimes necessary, emphasis should be on creating safe and inclusive spaces. As part of a comprehensive whole-school approach, strategies should be in place to ensure all areas of the school are safe for all students, at all times. This may include implementing proactive strategies such as communicating clear behavioural expectations to all students (*Safe and Caring Policy, 2013*), ensuring adequate supervision of students, and monitoring school environments identified through school data (Review 360) where unsafe behaviour(s) may be prevalent.

Indicators of best practice in action

7.1   Students are able to access washrooms that are congruent with their gender identity. The use of a non-gendered, separate washroom is a matter of choice for students, and not a compulsory requirement.

7.2   School Codes of Conduct have clear behaviour expectations for washrooms and change rooms that are clearly communicated and understood by students, staff and volunteers.

7.3   It is suggested that schools provide separate/non-gender washrooms for use by any student who desires increased privacy regardless of reason (medical, behaviour, gender identity, gender expression, etc.). This washroom should be in an easily accessible location within the school.

7.4   When possible, schools have more than one non-gendered washroom.

7.5   All students have access to change-room facilities that meet their individual needs and privacy concerns. This may include a choice of options such as:

- A private area within the common change-room area (such as a stall with a door, or an area separated by a curtain) or;

- A nearby private area (such as a nearby washroom).

7.6   A student who objects to sharing a washroom or change-room with a student who is transgender or gender-diverse is offered an alternate facility (this scenario also applies when a parent or other caregiver objects to shared washroom or change-room facilities on behalf of their child).

7.7 When travelling for competition or an event at another school, if a student makes a specific accommodation request for changing, showering, or washroom facilities, staff will ensure that request is communicated and all efforts are made to accommodate the request. Staff maintain the student's confidentiality by not disclosing information related to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression without direct permission.

8. Providing professional learning opportunities that build the capacity of staff to understand and support diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions

Staffs participate in professional learning that is evidence-based and builds knowledge about diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. Attention should be brought to the implications for teaching and learning, social and emotional well-being and personal safety. The presentation of information and strategies facilitates the creation of safe and caring environments that include and respect all members of the school community.

Indicators of best practice in action

8.1 School districts and school staffs work collaboratively to provide professional learning that uses valid research, shares best practices, reflects firsthand knowledge and, lived experiences of transgender people, which creates mutual understanding and respect.

8.2 Teachers work to identify and select learning resources and implement instructional approaches that are inclusive and respectful of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

8.3 Staff work collaboratively to identity and address discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that create barriers to participation and learning for students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

8.4 Schools maintain positive and mutually respectful relationships with a variety of support groups. These groups partner to share resources and expertise and contribute to the ongoing evolution of safe, caring, and inclusive school environments.

9. Using a comprehensive school-wide approach to promote healthy relationships and to prevent and respond to bullying behaviour

The Newfoundland and Labrador School Climate Survey (2014/15) identified that approximately fifty percent of the student population in intermediate and senior high schools report that students do not treat others with respect.

In 2009, Egale conducted the first national survey regarding experiences of LGBTQ student safety in schools across Canada. In this survey, researchers spoke to over 3000 secondary school students from coast to coast; almost two-thirds of the LGBTQ youth surveyed reported that they felt unsafe on a daily basis. This is also the case for students who may be perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, queer or questioning, as well as students who are harassed regarding their or family/friends actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Promoting a culture that increases understanding and knowledge of diversity and nurtures a sense of belonging is most successful when addressed through an approach that:

- happens over a sustained period of time;
- is embedded in curricular and extra-curricular activities, school policies and practices;
- builds capacity of the school community;
- is supported by ongoing professional development;
- involves family and community partnerships.

For more information on developing an effective Code of Conduct see the *Safe and Caring Schools Policy (2013)*:

http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/safeandcaring/index.html

Indicators of best practice in action

9.1   Staff will implement school-wide positive behaviour supports, inclusive practices and promote social-emotional learning and healthy relationships in order to reduce the likelihood of bullying behaviour, including homophobic and transphobic bullying.

9.2   The school Code of Conduct is developed in collaboration with staff, students, and other members of the school community.

9.3   The school Code of Conduct meets the legal requirements as identified in Section 26.1 of the *Schools Act, 1997*.

9.4   The school Code of Conduct follows the guidelines and template in the *Safe and Caring Schools Policy (2013)*.

9.5   The primary focus of the school Code of Conduct is promoting a safe, caring and inclusive learning and working environment, for all members of the school community, by promoting respect, responsible citizenship and academic excellence.

9.6   All adult members of the school community, including parents, guardians and families, understand and support the school's Code of Conduct.

9.7   Schools follow the *Bullying Intervention Protocol; Procedure 3* from the *Safe and Caring Schools Policy (2013)* which is used for reporting, intervening and investigating reports of bullying.

9.8   All complaints of discriminatory and bullying behaviours/ language are taken seriously, documented and dealt with in a timely and effective manner according to the schools' Code of Conduct, and documented using the Review 360 database.

9.9   Support is provided to students impacted by bullying behaviours and those who engage in bullying behaviours.

For more information on bullying prevention see Bullying: Awareness and Prevention:

http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/bullying/index.html

10. Ensuring students have the understanding, skills and opportunities to contribute to safe, caring and inclusive learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and positive sense of self

Paragraph 11(a) of the *Schools Act, 1997*, specifies that students have a responsibility to ensure they conduct themselves in a manner that promotes a safe and caring learning environment. Staff, parents and guardians play an important role in shaping school culture, but for meaningful and lasting change to occur, students must be an integral part of the process.

Students need to be part of preventing as well as solving problems. They need authentic opportunities to share their ideas regarding safety, inclusion, leadership and responsibility within the school community. This involvement helps create a sense of ownership for the well-being of the school community and encourages students to advocate for themselves and others personally and collectively.

Teachers are role models for students and challenge stereotyping by integrating content on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression into everyday teaching. When the existence of different sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions are directly acknowledged, it nurtures a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self for students.

Indicators of best practice in action

10.1   Students have a clear understanding of behavioural expectations in their school and demonstrate accountability for their own behaviour.

10.2   Students treat all members of the school community with respect, compassion and kindness.

10.3   The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development reflects gender diversity and positive content regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and expression into existing and newly developed curricula.

10.4   District and school leaders acquire, for schools, literature and resource materials that are inclusive and focus on developing understanding of diversity and awareness of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.

10.5   Students understand the definition of bullying.

10.6   Students refrain from bullying behaviour and the use of derogatory or discriminatory language, both at school and online.

10.7   Students refrain from participating in, encouraging, or acting as bystanders to the bullying behaviour of others.

10.8   Students report any bullying behaviour they see or experience (including online/cyberbullying) to an adult in the school, at home or within the community.

10.9   Students understand what it means to contribute to their school community in a positive way, and identify both formal and informal ways to do so.

10.10   The school community provides meaningful ways for students to contribute through community-building activities, such as peer mentoring, student council, school student led committees (e.g. Social Justice) and volunteering.

10.11   Students understand that they have the right to establish a voluntary student organization or lead an activity to promote a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment that promotes diversity, including Gay-Straight or Queer-Straight Alliances.

For more information on GSAs or QSA see:

http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/safeandcaring/index.html

11.   Ensuring all families are welcomed and supported as valued members of the school community

Feeling like a valued member of a community is essential to strengthening families, and increasing students' well-being and success in the school community.

Research shows that student achievement improves when parents, guardians and other caregivers play an active role in their child's education, and that good schools become even better schools when parents and families are involved. When parents, guardians, teachers, students, school leaders, and others see one another as partners in education, a safe, caring and inclusive community is formed.

Parents, guardians and other family members with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions, may have experienced discrimination, and may not feel welcome or included in their child's school community. In these cases, engaging in specific practices that support an intentional and inclusive approach to school, family and community partnerships is necessary to build positive relationships and help both students and families feel supported and valued as members of the school community.

Indicators of best practice in action

11.1   School forms, websites, letters and other communications use non-gendered and inclusive language (e.g., parents, guardians, partners, student or "their" instead of "him", "her").

11.2   Staff use appropriate and agreed upon language to acknowledge and communicate with families. If unsure of the appropriate language, they seek direction from the student first, then parents, or guardians.

11.3   The school creates events that provide increased opportunities for students, parents/guardians and staff to celebrate diversity, and contribute to the ongoing development of a welcoming school culture.

11.4   Staff respects the privacy and confidentiality of parents/guardians and families in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

12. Ensuring that school staff have work environments where they are protected from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression

Paragraph 75(c.1) of the *Schools Act,1997*, provides that Districts are responsible for ensuring the promotion of safe and caring learning environments. The Newfoundland and Labrador *Human Rights Act 2010*, subsection 9(1) includes sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression among the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination.

Research confirms that individuals with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or gender expressions are more likely to experience discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

By communicating clear expectations about respectful behaviour and interactions, developing inclusive and supportive practices, and facilitating discussion and professional learning, districts and school leaders ensure a safe and caring work environment is available to all staff, which in turn has a positive impact on students.

Indicators of best practice in action

12.1   Staff is supported in serving as liaison for a Gay-Straight Alliance or any other voluntary student organization intended to promote a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

12.2   District and school leaders' support and value staff diversity, including diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

12.3   Staff maintain a safe, caring and inclusive environment where staff members with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions feels safe to express themselves.

12.4   District and school leaders and other staff respect the privacy of individual staff members and ensure confidentiality as it relates to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

12.5   Requests for support are addressed on a case-by-case basis and solutions are individualized to best meet the needs of the staff member making the request.

12.6   District and school leaders communicate and model expectations that all personnel interact in respectful ways and that discriminatory language or harassing behaviour is not acceptable.

12.7   Incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination of school staff related to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression by any member of the school community are taken seriously, documented and responded to in a timely and effective manner.

12.8   Staff consistently use inclusive and non-gender language (e.g., partner, spouse) and plan inclusive school events.

12.9   District and school leaders, as well as staff, have professional conversations about issues such as diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions, alongside other diversity, equity and human rights issues that are discussed in the workplace.

Summary

Meeting the diverse needs of students requires a collaboration that is student centered, and multi-faceted. These guidelines **do not** require schools to immediately change all practices and policies, or implement every best practice listed in these guidelines. They do require that school practices reflect these guidelines and the corresponding best practices. As each situation is unique therefore actions identified may also be unique. Careful consideration is required when addressing individual student requests. As educators, we need to be reminded that at the core of the request is the identity of a human being.

The Safe and Caring School Policy, Procedure Seven Guidelines for LGBTQ Inclusive Practices is designed to guide school districts and schools in addressing the individual needs of students, staff and family members with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. Following these guidelines, and implementing the Collaborative Decision Making Process as outlined in this document will ensure that schools are maintaining safe, caring and inclusive environments.

Supplementary resources are available on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website. These resources offer practical information for creating safe, caring and inclusive environments for students and staff with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. Districts and schools can use these resources to support the implementation of these guidelines, and to support putting best practices into action.

Newfoundland and Labrador Legislation

Newfoundland and Labrador. 2009. *Change of Name Act.*
http://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statues/c08-1.htm

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http://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statues/h13-1.htm

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https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626737/91383-attachment-1-guidelines-final.pdf

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