

SAFE AND CARING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Background

HPSD is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours. In accordance with the Alberta Human Rights Act, HPSD will endeavor to ensure all learners, regardless of race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, or any other factor(s), have access to meaningful and relevant learning experiences that include appropriate instructional supports.

A safe and caring learning environment is physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe for all members of the school community. It is an environment wherein everyone is afforded respect and dignity with equity of opportunity and access to programs, services, and resources that are critical for supporting the conditions for success.

Procedures

1. General

- 1.1. Each school shall develop and implement school-wide character education and support the development of positive behaviours inclusive of:
 - 1.1.1. Assessment of the existing school culture;
 - 1.1.1.1. This may be accomplished through surveys and/or consultation and should involve wide representation of staff, students, parents, and community members
 - 1.1.2. development of an age-appropriate definition of bullying behaviours;
 - 1.1.3. promoting strategies students can use to prevent or respond to bullying behaviours and assist in preventing violence;
 - 1.1.4. outlining specific roles for principals, teachers, support staff, students, and parents;
 - 1.1.5. organizing activities for participation in Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week
- 1.2. The principal shall ensure awareness and adherence to legislation protecting Albertans from discrimination based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.
- 1.3. The principal shall ensure that staff utilize language, resources, and approaches that are inclusive, age appropriate, and respectful of the differences that make each student unique.

2. Supports for Student Organizations

- 2.1. HPSD supports student organization in accordance with the Education Act, Section 35.1:
 - 2.1.1. If one or more students attending a school operated by the board request a staff member employed by the board for support establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a safe and caring learning environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours, the principal of the school shall
 - 2.1.1.1. permit the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and
 - 2.1.1.2. 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.
 - 2.1.2. For the purposes of subsection 2.1.1.1., an organization or activity includes an organization or activity that promotes equality and non-discrimination with respect to, without limitation, race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status, or sexual orientation, including but not limited to organizations such as gay-straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs, and anti-bullying clubs.
 - 2.1.3. 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.
 - 2.1.4. The principal shall immediately inform the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison, 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.

3. Facilities and Accommodations

- 3.1. The principal shall ensure
 - 3.1.1. all students have access to washrooms and changerooms that respect differences and privacy concerns.
 - 3.1.2. individual solutions to washroom and change room access are implemented with respect and discretion.
 - 3.1.3. overnight accommodations are addressed on a case-by-case basis. Staff should make reasonable effort to provide solutions which are mindful of logistics and budget but also respect the privacy and individual needs of all students.

4. Student Names and Pronouns

- 4.1. In accordance with section 33 of the Education Act, school staff have responsibilities regarding parental notification and consent for student preferred name and pronouns that
 - 4.1.1. vary from the names or pronouns that staff regularly use when referring to the student, and
 - 4.1.2. the student prefers for reasons related to the student's gender identity.
- 4.2. If a student requests that a new gender identity-related chosen name or pronouns be used during school hours and school-sanctioned activities, and the student is under 16 years of age
 - 4.2.1. the principal shall ensure the parents are aware of the student's request, and
 - 4.2.2. seek the parent's consent for school staff to use the new gender-identity-related preferred name or pronoun when referring to the student during school hours and school-sanctioned events.
- 4.3. If a student requests that a new gender identity-related chosen name or pronouns be used during school hours and school-sanctioned activities, and the student is under 18 years of age, the principal shall ensure the parents are aware of the student's request.
- 4.4. Parental notification and consent-seeking should,
 - 4.4.1. be conducted in a manner that enhances student wellbeing
 - 4.4.2. take place in person with appropriate staff present on school grounds within school hours. Email or other electronic communication should not be considered a default.
 - 4.4.3. involve the input of the student, and if appropriate, a mental health professional
 - 4.4.4. not be considered if it is reasonably expected to cause emotional or psychological harm to the student.
- 4.5. The principal shall ensure that the student has access to mental health support before, during, and after student consideration or request to change gender identity-related chosen name or pronouns.
- 4.6. School staff shall not use a student's new gender identity-related chosen name or pronouns during school hours or school-sanctioned events
 - 4.6.1. until the student's parent is notified, or
 - 4.6.2. until consent is given if the student is under 16 years of age.

References

Education Act

Alberta Human Rights Act