

Equity and Non-Discrimination Policy

PREAMBLE

The Board of Education is committed to ensuring learning and working environments that are safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming for all members of the school district community. The Board recognizes and celebrates the diversity of the community it serves and believes that each individual contributes to the richness and strength of the School District culture. The letter and spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the B.C. Human Rights Code and the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the B.C. Multiculturalism Act will be observed, supported, and enforced, so that all members of the School District community may work together in an atmosphere of respect where differences are honored.

This commitment is grounded in the understanding that Discrimination:

- Exists and takes many forms, including but not limited to racism, indigenized racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism.
- Can be direct or indirect, overt, or subtle (microaggressions), intentional or unintentional and exists at institutional and systemic levels.
- Impacts people in different ways, each person's reaction to discrimination is unique, and some members of our school district community face multiple forms of discrimination.
- Can have long term negative consequences on a person's sense of self and /or a person's ability to fully actualize. (*The legacy of residential schools*).
- Has no one-size-fits-all solution. Different types of discrimination will require different approaches, strategies, and procedures to combat; and
- Constitutes an infringement of a person's equality rights and acts as a barrier to full participation in the school district community and society at large.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education is committed to creating an inclusive environment through the elimination of all forms of discrimination and the support of educational and employment equity for all who learn and work in Comox Valley Schools. It also recognizes and celebrates the diversity of the community it serves and believes that each individual contributes to the richness of the School District culture.

The Board of Education also acknowledges that all members of the School District community, staff, students, parents, caregivers, partner groups and rightsholders, share the responsibility for creating a responsive, compassionate, inclusive environment which honors and respects everyone. The Board is

committed to supporting all members in their efforts to create an environment where all individuals feel safe, cared for and a sense of belonging. The Board of Education expects each member of the district community to participate in the ongoing development of practices that promote fair and equitable treatment for everyone, cultivating mutual respect, civility, and a sense of belonging, as we eliminate all forms of discrimination and address the effects of historic, organizational, systemic, and attitudinal discrimination of all forms.

OBJECTIVES

The Board of Education is committed to:

- Equity and inclusivity in all contexts, activities, and places.
- Supporting the education of how to act directly or as a bystander against all forms of discrimination.
- Developing cross-cultural connections to create understanding, show respect for, and to honor racial, ethnic, and cultural identity, religion and individual abilities.
- Ensuring that school codes of conduct make explicit references to the prohibited grounds of discrimination as outlined in the B.C. Human Rights Code.
- Supporting employment equity through the provision of effective process to recruit, retain and develop all staff acknowledging gender, sexual orientation, race, color, disabilities, ancestry, national and ethno-cultural organization, and religion.
- Support educational equity through quality programs that celebrate diversity and welcome all learners recognizing gender identity, race, color, disabilities, ancestry, national and ethno-cultural organization, and religion.
- Create an educational and workplace environment that promotes equality and welcomes and values diversity.

Legal Reference:

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
B.C. Human Rights Code
B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act
B.C. Multiculturalism Act

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