



Policy: Equity And Inclusive Education

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1.0. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The Education Act requires schools and School Boards, to provide safe, inclusive and accepting learning environments to support the achievement and well-being of all students, including students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. After changes to the Ontario Human Rights Code that accommodate transgender and nonbinary individuals, the Superior North Catholic School Board will stand as an all inclusive organization.
- 1.2. The Board recognizes that any form of social or cultural discrimination is incompatible with Catholic moral principles and is in violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Board recognizes that the school system gives pre-eminence to the tenets of the Catholic faith, congruent with the protection afforded in the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Constitution Act, 1982 and confirmed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- 1.3. The Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the Ontario Ministry of Education (the "Ministry") Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, in a manner which is consistent with the exercise of the Board's denominational rights under section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and as recognized at section 19 of the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- 1.4. Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2013/2014) "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools" identify eight areas of focus for implementing equity and inclusive education.
- 1.5. In accordance with the above policy documents, applicable legislation that outlines the denominational rights of the Catholic school system and with adherence to the Guiding Principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, and consistent with the Code, each area of focus will be introduced and anchored by a preamble. This will serve to guide the actions of the Board and its schools, in honouring its commitments to equity and inclusive education policy development, implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- 1.6. The Board recognizes the importance of antiracism and anti-harassment policies in promoting and maintaining a Catholic educational and working environment which fosters racial and ethno-cultural understanding.
- 1.7. The Board will ensure that its policy review cycle will result in the alignment and integration of the requirements of Policy/Program No. 119 and the Strategy with all Board policies, programs, procedures, and practices. The perspectives of the entire diverse Catholic school community will be reflected in all areas of the teaching, learning and administrative culture.

- 1.8. Every effort will be made to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit access to and opportunity for effective employment procedures for individuals from diverse communities and underrepresented peoples within the context of the denominational rights of Catholic school boards.
- 1.9. The Board is committed to serving staff, students, and families in its diverse Catholic community by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its policies, programs, procedures, and practices that are consistent with Catholic denominational rights.

2.0. All Gender Washrooms

- 2.1. The Superior North Catholic District School Board, as part of the Ministry of Education inclusivity promotes respect and maintains and advocates for an inclusive campus for all students regardless of race, gender, religion, gender identity or expressions, ethnic background, socio-economic class, ability or sexual orientation.
- 2.2. As part of our effort to encourage inclusivity and respect for diversity, we have responded to the need for all gender washrooms at all schools to meet the needs of all of our students including transgender students and other individuals who do not identify with traditional gender stereotypes. Part of this commitment includes making all gender washrooms accessible to individuals who need them.

3.0. What are all gender washrooms?

- 3.1. An all gender washroom is simply a single-user facility that is not labelled male or female; rather, it is available to anyone regardless of gender identity or biological sex. At the Superior North Catholic District School Board, all gender washrooms will also be wheelchair accessible and will be identified by the standard wheelchair icon.

4.0. Why do we need all gender washrooms?

- 4.1. In 2014, the Ontario Human Rights Commission launched its policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression. Human dignity involves many factors, including respect for transgender people and other gender nonconforming individuals, their self-worth, and their physical and psychological integrity and empowerment.
- 4.2. Access to washrooms is a basic physical need at the core of human dignity for everyone. Yet washrooms cause significant barriers for transgender people and are one of the public spaces they avoid most. Transgender people have the right to access these facilities based on their lived gender identity. It is also about privacy, confidentiality, comfort, autonomy, individuality and self-esteem.

5.0. Who can use all gender washrooms?

- 5.1. Washrooms need to be inclusive, accessible and safe spaces for everyone including transgender people and other gender nonconforming individuals. All gender, single-user washrooms improve access for people whose gender identity or expressions do not fit into man or woman.

6.0. What are the benefits of all gender washrooms?

- 6.1. Achieving integration and full participation requires a barrier-free, inclusive design up front, with the removal of existing barriers. Inclusive design minimizes the need for people to ask for individual accommodation. The Supreme Court of Canada notes that standards should be designed to reflect all members of society to the extent that is reasonably possible.
- 6.2. As a community, we will uphold our organizational values of promoting a culture of respect, equal access and diversity. All gender washrooms promote dignity, ensure accessibility and offer a safe environment for everyone.

7.0. Approval and Review Dates

Prior Date Approved: November 8, 2010

Revised Date Approved: November 6, 2017

Review Prior To: January, 2018

Reviewed by: Policy Review Committee, Administrative Council