

- Procedure Number: 617
 - Procedure Name: LGBTTIQQ Diversity (new)
 - Date of Original: 2007 01 10
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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The LGBTTIQQ community and the GISS Gay/Straight Alliance will act in an advisory capacity in the review, implementation and further development of the following recommendations:

- 1.1 That the Board and district shall provide opportunities for school communities to increase awareness of the scope and impact of discrimination against LGBTTIQQ and to create an inclusive environment.
- 1.2 That schools support age-appropriate activities and provide resources that promote knowledge and skills in developing respect for, as well as eliminating discrimination against, LGBTTIQQ people.
- 1.3 That current and promising practices, which promote safe and inclusive school environments for LGBTTIQQ youth, be identified and shared with school staffs.
- 1.4 That resources be identified which schools can access to assist their school communities in becoming safe and inclusive school environments for LGBTTIQQ youth.
- 1.5 That all schools include in their implementation and enforcement of their Codes of Conduct specific reference to issues of hurtful behaviour and discrimination on the basis of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.
- 1.6 As a part of its annual report to the Board on violence prevention (see Policy #524, Violence Prevention), each school will include material specific to gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.
- 1.7 That schools provide support for the LGBTTIQQ youth in their school communities.
- 1.8 That community resource lists and displays in schools be inclusive of community supports for LGBTTIQQ youth and families.
- 1.9 That the Board, in the regular course of reviewing policy, procedure, and other district documents, ensures that language is representative of the diversity in our community.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

1. **Bisexual** – an individual (male or female) who is attracted to, and may form sexual and affectionate relationships with both males and females. A bisexual may not be equally attracted to both genders and the degree of attraction may vary over time.
 2. **Gay** – a person who forms sexual and affectionate relationships with those of the same gender, often used to refer to men only.
 3. **Gender Expression** – the appearance, mannerisms and/or behaviour used to signify to others the gender that the individual wishes to be perceived as.
 4. **Gender Identity** – one's internal and psychological sense of oneself as male or female, or both or neither (regardless of sexual orientation); people who question their gender identity may feel unsure of their gender or believe they are not of the same gender as their physical body. Third gender is the term sometimes used to describe people who feel other than male or female and bi-gender refers to people who feel they are both male and female. Often bi-gender people will spend some time presenting in one gender and some time in the other. Some people choose to present androgynously in a conscious attempt to question and expand traditional gender roles, even though they do not question their gender identity.
 5. **Heterosexism** – the institutionalized assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual and that heterosexuality is inherently superior to and preferable to homosexuality or bisexuality; also refers to the institutional and organizational discrimination against non-heterosexuals or behaviours not stereotypically heterosexual (this discrimination is also sometimes referred to as cultural, institutional or societal homophobia).
 6. **Homophobia** – the irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against homosexuals or homosexual behaviour. There are many levels and forms of homophobia, including cultural/institutional homophobia, personal homophobia, interpersonal homophobia and internalized homophobia. Many of the problems faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people stem from homophobia and heterosexism. Transphobia is the fear, hatred and intolerance of the transsexuals, or transgender people, including anyone judged to not fully fit into their assigned gender.
 7. **Intersex** – people who were born with a combination of male and female anatomy. Used to be called “hermaphrodite”; some still use this term though intersex is the word now preferred.
 8. **Lesbian** – a woman who forms sexual and affectionate relationships with other women; the term originates from the Greek Island of Lesbos which was home to Sappho, a poet, a teacher and a woman who loved other women.
 9. **Queer** – broad term used both as an individual label and also signifying a larger socio-political movement created from a general dissatisfaction with a gay and lesbian politic that is thought to be too assimilationist in nature; “queer” defines a strategy, an attitude, a reference to other identities and a new self-understanding. It is a term also used as shorthand for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people.
 10. **Questioning** – an apt term or self-label sometimes used by those exploring personal and political issues of sexual orientation, sexual and gender identity, and choosing not to identify with any other label; “questioning” may create greater potential to create new options as well.
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Appendix A (cont)

11. **Sexual Orientation** – refers to a person’s deep-seated feelings of sexual attraction. It includes whom we desire sexually, with whom we want to become intimate, and with whom we want to form some of our strongest emotional relationships. The inclination or capacity to develop these intimate sexual and emotional bonds may be with people of the same gender (lesbian, gay), the other gender (heterosexual) or either gender (bisexual). Many people become aware of these feelings during adolescence or even earlier. Some do not realize or acknowledge their attractions (especially same-sex attractions) until much later in life. Orientation is not the same as behaviour since not everyone acts on his or her attractions. It is also important to note that one’s gender identity is totally independent of one’s sexual orientation; neither facet should be considered predictive of the other.
 12. **Transgender** – refers to people who do not identify with the gender roles assigned to them by society based on their biological sex.
 13. **Transsexual (TS)** – an individual who presents himself/herself and lives in the gender “opposite” to his/her genetic/physical gender at birth. A transsexual is someone who feels psychologically like the other sex and has somehow been trapped in the wrong body. Transsexuals may be heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual in their sexual orientation. Some transsexuals may undergo operations and hormone therapy in order to make their body fit what they feel is their true gender. TS’s are also known as female-to-male, FTM, transmen or male-to-female, MTF, transwomen.
 14. **Two-Spirit** – Two-Spirit is a term used by some indigenous (First Nations) people to describe themselves in a way that is closer to their cultural construct of sex/gender/sexuality than the dominant Western view. Many of the languages of indigenous nations of North America include specific terms for gender and sexual diversity; some indigenous people may use both the general term Two-Spirit and the culturally specific term from their own language to describe themselves.
 15. **Gay/Straight Alliance** – a group of students, generally based in a school setting, which has a part of its mandate the support of LGBTTIQQ students, the education of all students on issues regarding the LGBTTIQQ community and the creation of a school environment comfortable and beneficial to all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.
 16. **LGBTTIQQ** – acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, intersex, questioning, queer.
 17. **GLOSSI** – acronym for Gays and Lesbians of Salt Spring Island.
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APPENDIX B

STATISTICS AND INFORMATION

- 37% of gay and lesbian youth feel like outsiders at school.
- Two-thirds often hear homophobic remarks made by other students.
- Nearly 1 in 5 lesbian and gay youth have been physically assaulted and the majority of youth have been verbally harassed at school in the past year.
- 46% of the lesbian and gay youth surveyed attempted suicide at least once before in their lifetime and in the past year, almost 25% attempted suicide.
- The average age of a first suicide attempt was 13 years.
- Almost 40% of lesbian and gay youth have dramatically low self-esteem.
- 61% of surveyed youth have been physically abused in their lifetime.
- None of the surveyed youth gave high ratings to the quality of their family relationships.

One of the primary findings of a survey was that schools are not safe or supportive places for most gay and lesbian youth. When asked by surveyors if they liked school, 37% gay and lesbian youth responded that they don't like or hate school compared to 21% of all youth in schools.

Studies of transgender youth have documented elevated high school dropout rates, parental abuse and increased likelihood of becoming street involved, with high rates of sexual exploitation of homeless transgender youth. While some transgendered people are well supported, many struggle with daily discrimination, physical and sexual violence, poverty and extreme social isolation with resulting depression, alcohol and drug use and high rates of self-harm and suicide attempts. HIV rates are disproportionately high among transgendered people.

According to the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA), "a person with an intersex condition is born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia or an internal reproductive system that is not considered 'standard' for either male or female." It is estimated that 1% of the population is intersex. The medical profession is currently split between those who believe that intersexuality should not be treated unless it poses health risks and those who believe that evidence of intersexuality should be concealed through surgery, hormones and non-disclosure to intersex children. The trauma from repeated invasive surgeries can have profound long-term consequences on the physical, mental and sexual health of intersex people. Additionally, intersex youth speak of becoming depressed and suicidal as a result of the shame and stigma they feel about their bodies as a result of constant medical scrutiny.

The recognition and support of LGBTTIQQ members of the school community is a human rights issue. It may also enrich our community as we gain understanding of the history, culture, politics, and survival strategies of LGBTTIQQ people through history and around the world.

Addressing homophobia benefits all students, not only those who self-identify as LGBTTIQQ. Research shows that homophobia keeps all boys and girls from achieving healthy relationships with one another and with their gender identity.
