

Effective Date	March 21, 2016
Revision Date	June 18, 2018
Review Year	2020

Background/Purpose:

The Board of Directors acknowledges its responsibility in creating, maintaining and ensuring welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environments for each enrolled student, every employed staff member, families and all other members of the school community.

Policy Statement:

All members of the school community have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. This right is guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, *Alberta Human Rights Act*, and *Alberta Education Act*. These rights shall be supported, and enforced so that all members (staff and students) of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation for individual differences.

Guidelines:

All members of the school community with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions have the right to: be treated with respect, to be open about who they are, and to privacy and confidentiality. The Board expects all members of this diverse community to be welcomed, respected, accepted and supported in every school. The Board will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination on the basis of a person’s actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Support for Student Organizations:

1. If one or more students attending a school operated by a board request a staff member employed by the board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall:
 - a) Immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and;
 - b) Subject to subsection (e), within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request 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.
 - c) 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.
 - d) For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance.”
 - e) The principal shall immediately inform the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in section (1), 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.

2. Assure that the principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred in section 35.1(1) of the Education Act:
 - a) Is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity, and

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- b) Is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations and activities.
- 3. Boards, Charter Schools and Regional authorities are public bodies under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and are bound by the provisions of that Act.

Accountability:

Annual monitoring by Principals and Superintendent

References:

The Education Act (Alberta)

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Alberta Human Rights Act