

Policy 18

Respect for Human Diversity

Background

Human diversity includes all the ways in which human beings are both similar and different. Respect for diversity means accepting, and respecting differences in people and their unique circumstances. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, religion, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, color, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, race or perceived race, receipt of public assistance and gender identity. Our understanding of diversity is constantly evolving and an attitude of inclusion should be kept in mind when applying this policy.

Prairie South School Division subscribes to the fundamental principle that all persons are equal in dignity and rights. Acts of discrimination based on these or other differences protected by law shall not be tolerated in Prairie South School Division operated schools, Prairie South School Division sponsored events, learning environments (including extra-curricular and co-curricular environments) or workplaces. The development and implementation of policies, procedures, practices and programs shall reflect and promote everyone's right to equal concern and respect, and provide an environment which promotes and fosters growth, harmony, accessibility and equality of opportunity for all stakeholders. Stakeholders include School Community Councils (SCCs), students and their families, staff, Board members. As far as possible, stakeholders will encourage community partners and other visitors to adhere to this policy.

Policy

1. Guiding Principles

Prairie South School Division recognizes that the underlying principle of human rights is the recognition of the individual worth and inherent dignity of all members of the human family. The objective of this policy is to ensure that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights and to discourage and eliminate discrimination. The Division is committed to the following guiding principles toward ensuring safe, respectful and inclusive school and work environments.

- a. **Communication:** Policy and procedure expectations related to human diversity, individual rights, social justice, bullying, harassment and discrimination are clearly and regularly communicated to all stakeholders.
- b. **Shared Responsibility:** All stakeholders are knowledgeable about the issues surrounding human diversity and are prepared to respond appropriately to questions and incidents.
- c. **Positive Relationships:** All stakeholders are encouraged to develop positive relationships by respecting the right of all individuals to have their own beliefs, provided their actions do not harm or violate the rights of individuals who may not share those beliefs.

- d. Ongoing Monitoring and Improvement: All policies, procedures, practices and programs related to human diversity are monitored and improved to ensure best practice and compliance.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

All Prairie South School Division Stakeholders are responsible for:

- a. Modelling respect for human diversity.
- b. Understanding that equity and inclusive principles apply to everyone.
- c. Using inclusive and respectful language and approaches in all interactions.
- d. Taking reasonable steps to modify, in respectful ways, behaviors that are inconsistent with equity and inclusive practices. This applies to one's own behaviors and those observed in others.
- e. Reporting matters of harassment and discrimination in compliance with Prairie South School Division's policy and procedures.

3. Education, Training and Professional Development

- a. The Division will strive to ensure that education, training and professional development is provided for employees to develop awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to support employees and students on issues regarding human diversity.
- b. The Division will consult with other agencies, associations and community groups that offer consultation or assistance in strengthening the Division's approach to human diversity and access to educational services.
- c. The Division will strive to provide developmentally appropriate materials, resources and activities that represent the diversity, values, backgrounds and experiences of all.
- d. The Division will support stakeholders on issues of human diversity and work with them to help empower them to treat each other with dignity and acceptance.

4. Dealing with Discrimination and Harassment

- a. Discrimination and harassment, or any expression thereof will not be tolerated and any such incident will be dealt with according to processes outlined in applicable policies and procedures.

References: The Education Act, 1995
The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code
The Saskatchewan Employment Act – Part III

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