

**EDMONTON ACADEMY**  
**SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL POLICY**  
**Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

**POLICY**

Edmonton Academy is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning and teaching environment for all members of the school community. This includes those students, staff and families who identify or are perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, queer or questioning their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Edmonton Academy expects all members of this diverse community to be welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported.

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 School Act*. These rights shall be supported, and enforced so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation for individual differences. Edmonton Academy 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.

Edmonton Academy believes that all sexual and gender minority students, staff and families have the right to:

- be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect;
- have their confidentiality protected and respected;
- self-identification and determination;
- freedom of conscience, expression, and association;
- be fully included and represented in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner by all school personnel;
- have equitable access to the same supports, services, and protections provided to heterosexual students and families;
- have avenues of recourse (without fear and reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, and/or violence; and
- have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, valued and respected within all aspects of the school environment.

Edmonton Academy is committed to implementing measures that will:

- Define appropriate expectations, behaviours, language, and actions in order to prevent discrimination, prejudice, and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their harmful effects.
- Ensure that all such discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.
- Improve understanding of the individual lives of sexual and gender minorities and their families, cultures, and communities.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate inclusive educational strategies, professional development opportunities, and administrative guidelines to ensure that sexual and gender minorities and their families are welcomed and treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of the school community.

Edmonton Academy understands that institutional and cultural change occurs over time and believes that the provision of an annual report at the Annual General Meeting on progress related to the strategic directions and benchmarks identified in this policy will ensure accountability and demonstrate the school's commitment to supporting our diverse communities.

Edmonton Academy also recognizes the need to develop and maintain mutually supportive relationships with a variety of sexual orientation and gender identity minority groups in order to ensure the ongoing improvement of the implementation of this policy.

## **PROCEDURES:**

### **Objective:**

School staff are expected to ensure a welcoming, supportive environment for all sexual minority staff, students and families.

### **Regulation:**

#### **A. LEADERSHIP**

The Principal shall:

- ensure all aspects of this regulation are clearly communicated to all staff, students, and families;
- ensure staff address and provide appropriate remedial consequences for all interactions involving the use of comments, behaviours and actions which display homophobic, transphobic, and sexist, whether they occur in person or in digital form;
- ensure staff know their professional responsibility to identify discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, and create caring, respectful and safe learning environments;

- ensure awareness and adherence to all school policies with respect to diversity, equity, human rights, sexual orientation, gender identity, discrimination, prejudice, and harassment;
- ensure staff utilize language and educational resources and approaches that are inclusive, age-appropriate, and respectful of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions;
- provide inclusive and respectful services and supports to sexual and gender minority students and families;
- ensure staff work proactively to eliminate systemic inequities and barriers to learning for sexual and gender minority students and families;
- support the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), or similar student support groups, where interest by students has been expressed;
- identify a staff member to serve as a safe contact for sexual and gender minority students. The Principal will inform the school community about the location and availability of this safe contact resource person;
- ensure staff will not refer students to programs or services that attempt to change or repair a student's sexual orientation or gender identity;
- ensure discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented and dealt with expeditiously; and
- ensure all staff recognize the confidentiality of the sexual orientation and gender identity of all students and protect them from unwanted disclosure of such information.

## B. STAFF

Edmonton Academy is a safe and respectful working environment where diversity is valued and embraced and staff are treated with respect and supported. All staff share responsibility for creating and maintaining a work environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. Complaints of discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity shall be promptly investigated and resolved.

Edmonton Academy engages in employment practices which:

- are free of bias resulting from any prejudice, including prejudice related to sexual orientation and gender identity; and
- ensure equal opportunity for employment and advancement.

## C. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

To assist all staff to become more knowledgeable about sexual and gender minority identities, cultures, and communities, Edmonton Academy will provide professional learning opportunities to assist all staff to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and appropriate teaching practices necessary to create safe, inclusive, equitable, and respectful schools regardless of how students are perceived or identified.

## D. TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Teaching and learning resources shall be chosen and/or updated to promote critical thinking and should include age-appropriate materials that accurately reflect the diversity of Canada's sexual and gender minority families, cultures, and communities.

## E. GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION

To support the safety, health, and educational needs of students who identify as, or are perceived to be, transgender or transsexual persons, staff shall adhere to the following recommended practices wherever possible and appropriate:

- **Names and Pronouns** – A student or staff member has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to his or her consistently asserted gender identity.
- **Official Records and Communication** – When requested by an independent student, or the parent/guardian, the student's official record will be changed to reflect their preferred name, sex or gender. All school forms and records shall be changed to ensure that a student's preferred name and sex or gender is current on class lists, timetables, student files, identification cards, etc.
- **Gender-Segregated Activities** – To the greatest extent possible, Edmonton Academy should reduce or eliminate the practice of segregating students by gender. In classroom activities or school programs where students are segregated by gender, all students should be given the option to be included in the group that corresponds to their consistently asserted gender identity.
- **Athletics, Locker Room, and Change Room Access and Accommodation**
  - Edmonton Academy shall proactively review their student athletic policies to ensure they are inclusive of sexual and gender minority students. Transgender and transsexual students shall not be asked or required to have Physical Education outside of assigned class time, and shall, subject to safety considerations, be permitted to participate in any gender-segregated activities in accordance with their consistently asserted gender identity, if they so choose.

- All students shall, subject to safety considerations, have access to locker room facilities that correspond to their consistently asserted gender identity. In locker rooms that require undressing in front of others, students who desire increased privacy, for any reason (e.g. medical, religious, cultural, gender identity, etc.) shall be provided with accommodations that best meet their individual needs and privacy concerns.
- **Restroom Availability** – All students shall have access to the restroom that allows for appropriate privacy and that does not significantly disrupt the school environment. Staff shall consistently demonstrate sensitivity to the needs and safety of all students with respect to restroom access. The Principal shall ensure that individual solutions to restroom access are implemented with respect and discretion.
- **Dress Code** – All students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression.
- **Resolving Conflict** – The Principal shall be the final determiner of disputes that may arise with regard to a transgender or transsexual student’s participation in educational or athletic activities. The principal shall ensure that the resolution of any conflict ensures reasonable accommodation and inclusiveness.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

School Act Section 16.1  
 Edmonton Public Schools’ (EPS) Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy  
 Teacher Standard of Conduct Policy

## IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW DATES

This policy will be reviewed on a five-year cycle to ensure that it meets Provincial requirements and the mission statement of Edmonton Academy.

Beginning with the 2015/2016 school year, it will be added to the Student/Parent Handbook, Staff Handbook and Staff Policy binder.

**POLICY NAME: SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL POLICY: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

Implement/Review Date: June 1, 2015

Next Review Date: June 1, 2020

