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	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
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Background

The Grande Prairie Public School Division affirms the right of all students and staff to be a contributing member of a school community that is welcoming, caring, respectful and safe for all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression. The Grande Prairie Public School Division does not tolerate any bullying, harassment, or discrimination directed at individuals or groups of individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression.

Foundations and Basic Commitments

- Board Policy 20 affirms the commitment of the Trustees of the Grande Prairie Public School Division to support welcoming, caring, respectful and safe working and learning environments in all Division sites.
- AP 359, Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments, commits all staff members of the Grande Prairie Public School Division to ensuring that our classrooms, schools, and all work spaces are free of bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Discrimination and harassment occurs when a person is subjected to unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct because of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation. Alberta human rights law prohibits discrimination and harassment based on these grounds.
- The Grande Prairie Public School Division is committed to addressing complaints of discrimination, harassment, and bullying related to sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression. Specific provisions for are supported by <u>AP 170</u> (<u>Harassment</u>), <u>AP 171 (Student Harassment and Discrimination</u>), <u>AP 175 (Protection of Staff</u>), and <u>AP 359 (Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments)
 </u>
- The Grande Prairie Public School Division is committed to ensuring that all Board Policies and Administrative Procedures supporting welcoming, caring respectful and safe working and learning environments are recognized and understood by staff and students.
- Parents are critical partners in a child's learning and as such individual parental involvement supporting students of diverse gender identities is highly encouraged where appropriate and where the student consents. In cases where those involved have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a child is in need of intervention shall forthwith report this matter to Children's Services.

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Procedures

Division Leadership will:

- 1. Ensure that all aspects of this Administrative Procedure are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents, and the public;
- 2. Provide opportunities for staff to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes to appropriately support all students in welcoming, caring respectful and safe learning and working environments:
- 3. Collect, evaluate, and distribute current supporting resources for administration to support all students and staff;
- 4. Maintain Division policies and procedures to ensure they are current with accepted best practices.

School Leadership will:

- 1. Strive to create schools which reflect the values of the Division in terms of welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environments;
- 2. Ensure all staff recognize the confidentiality of sexual orientation and gender identity of all students.
- 3. Work collaboratively with individual parents on matters of gender identity, with student consent;
- 4. Ensure staff have an appropriate level of understanding of Division policies and procedures;
- 5. Ensure that complaints of discrimination, harassment, and bullying are taken seriously, investigated, properly documented, and dealt with in a timely manner. Documentation should be compiled and retained by School Administration.
- 6. Support the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA's) or similar groups or activities in accordance the Education Act Section 35.1 and <u>Board Policy 20</u>.

School Staff will:

- 1. Foster learning and working environments that reflect the Division's commitment to welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environments;
- 2. Be respectful of all diversity in the school and among staff;

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- 3. Address all discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in establishing welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environments;
- 4. Report to school administration any repeated behavior directed towards students identified in this policy.
- 5. Not impose their personal opinions as fact to allow for different opinions to be fostered in a respectful manner.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression

To support the safety, health, and educational needs of students and staff who identify as or are perceived to be transgender or transsexual persons, Division 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. Traditional use of pronouns is not to be discouraged in schools.

Official Records and Communication

When requested by a student, as defined in the Education Act, or the parent/guardian, the student's school record will be changed to reflect their preferred name or gender. All Grande Prairie Public School Division forms and records shall be changed to ensure that a student's preferred name and gender is current on class lists, timetables, student files, identification cards, etc. Please note, changes in name or gender may not be incorporated into official documents such as diplomas, transcripts, or provincial exams unless legally authorized by the Province.

Athletics, Locker Room, and Change Room Access and Accommodation

All schools shall proactively review their student athletic policies to ensure they are inclusive of sexual and gender minority students. All students will be expected to participate in regular physical education programming unless the need for an alternate program is identified following consultation with the student, administration and where appropriate, the parent(s).

Any student, staff, coach, manager, trainer or other persons who identify as or are perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, queer or questioning may participate fully and safely in sex separated sport activities in accordance with their consistently asserted identity. (Alberta Schools Athletic Association)

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Restroom/Change Room: Accessibility and Accommodation

- 1. All students shall have access to the restroom/change room that allows for appropriate privacy.
- 2. Schools will ensure gender neutral restrooms/change rooms exist on their site.
- The Principal shall ensure that individual solutions to restroom/change room access are implemented with respect and discretion. Staff shall consistently demonstrate sensitivity to the needs, safety and dignity of all students with respect to restroom/change room access.
- 4. All parents, adult visitors, volunteers, and contractors will be required to use a restroom/change room that has been designated for adult use.

Dress Code

All students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression in accordance with Administrative Procedure 350.1 (Student Dress Code).

Resolving Conflict

The principal will support the resolution of disputes that may arise with regard to a transgender or transsexual student's participation in educational or athletic activities. The principal will ensure that the resolution of any conflict ensures reasonable accommodation and inclusiveness and is consistent with Board Policy and Administrative Procedures.

Division Leadership will provide support, directly or indirectly, to school administration in support of dispute resolution.

Gay-Straight Alliances

A Gay-Straight Alliance or GSA is a student run, extra-curricular club that provides a supportive environment for students to meet, offer peer support, and talk about issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Activities of clubs fall within the domain of social support and prosocial activism.

Definitions

AFAB/AMAB—Assigned Female at Birth/Male at Birth. Assignment of gender refers to the way that we assume others' genders based on their bodies. When a child is born, our culture slots it into one of two groups, male or female, avoiding all overlap. We "determine" the child's "correct"

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identity based on a quick visual assessment of the appearance of its sexual organs, and we do so by following a specific dichotomy: a vulva bearing child is typically assigned female at birth, or AFAB, for short. A penis-bearing child is typically assigned male at birth, or AMAB. Gender assignment mostly tends to work out for those involved; however, many trans people are not in alignment with their assigned gender.

Ally, gay positive, queer positive, straight supporter—a person, regardless of his or her sexual orientation, who supports and honours the human, civil and sexual rights of sexual and gender minorities, and who actively explores and understands his or her own biases.

Agender/genderless/gender-free/gender neutral/non-gender/ungender—terms describing those who identify as having no gender or being without any gender identity.

Androgyny—an individual's gender expression that is simultaneously masculine and feminine.

Asexual—having no interest in or no desire for sexual activity, either within or outside of a relationship. An individual who does not experience sexual attraction to any gender or sex.

Being out—a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender person who has come out about his/ her orientation or gender identity and is open about this aspect of their life.

Bigender—a person who has two separate genders.

Bisexual—someone who is attracted physically and emotionally to people of both the same and opposite sexes.

Body dysphoria—the emotional discomfort an individual experiences due to internalized conflicts arising from the incongruity between one's natal (birth) sex and one's sense of gender identity (a personal sense or feeling of maleness or femaleness).

Cisgender—a nontranssexual person whose gender identity, gender expression and natal (birth) sex align with conventional expectations of male or female.

Closet—hiding one's sexual orientation from others in the workplace, at school, at home and with friends.

Coming out—(1) the process through which a person recognizes their sexual preferences and differences and integrates this knowledge into their personal and social lives; and (2) the act of disclosing these things to others. Often refers to "coming out of the closet."

Cross-dresser—historically often referred to as transvestites, cross-dressers are men or women who enjoy dressing as the opposite sex. Most cross-dressers do not identify as transsexuals, nor do they wish to use hormones or have sex reassignment surgery. Cross-

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dressing also occurs in the gay and lesbian culture, where gay men dress and perform as drag queens and lesbians dress and perform as drag kings to deliberately exaggerate or parody gender stereotypes.

FTM or F2M—a person who is transitioning or has transitioned from female to male.

Gay—someone who is physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same sex. Gay can include both males and females but is commonly used to identify a masculine person who is attracted to other masculine people.

Gay bashing—physical violence by homophobic people against people thought to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited or queer.

Gender expression—the manner in which individuals express their gender identity to others. A person's gender expression is often based on the binary model of gender, which is either stereotypically male or female. However, some individuals choose to express themselves in terms of a multiple model of gender, mixing both male and female expressions since they do not see themselves as being either stereotypically male or female, but possibly some combination of both or neither genders. Some individuals may receive aggressive reactions or violent responses from members of society who feel a woman is acting too masculine or a man is acting too feminine. The majority of homophobic and transphobic bullying is often based upon the enforcement of rigid sex-role stereotypes rather than a person's actual sexual orientation or gender identity.

Gender identity—a person's internal sense or feeling of being male or female, which may or may not be the same as one's biological sex.

Gender fluid—gender identity that refers to a gender which varies over time. A gender fluid person may at any time identify as male, female, neutrois, or any other nonbinary identity, or some combination of identities. Their gender can also vary at random or vary in response to different circumstances.

Gender queer and nonbinary—a catchall category for gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine—identities that are thus outside the gender binary and cisnormativity; an umbrella term referring to gender identities other than male and female. Many youth prefer the fluidity of the term gender queer and reject the labels of transgender or transsexual as too limiting. For example, gender queer individuals may think of themselves as having both male and female gender identities, or as having neither male nor female gender identities, or many other possible gender identities not restricted to the traditional gender binary model.

Gender reassignment surgery (GRS)— sometimes used instead of "sex affirmation surgery."

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Please see that entry for a definition.

Gender roles—the set of behaviours a person chooses or is expected to express as a man or a woman. These are the behaviours that Western society most often calls "masculine" or "feminine". Gender roles can change with time and may be different from one culture to another. For example, many Indigenous communities have rich histories of multiple gender traditions. These roles are not static and evolve over time.

Harassment—a form of discrimination that refers to single or ongoing communication or expression engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known as unwelcome.

Heterosexism—the assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that this sexual orientation is superior.

Heterosexual—someone who is physically and emotionally attracted to people of the opposite sex. Also referred to as straight.

Heteronormative—the belief that people fall into distinct and complementary genders (man and woman) with natural roles in life. It asserts that heterosexuality is the only sexual orientation and norm, marginalizing everything outside of the ideals of heterosexuality, monogamy and gender conformity. When other sexualities are acknowledged in this world view, they are seen as inferior or intrinsically wrong.

Homophobia—fear and/or hatred of homosexuality in others, often exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying or acts of violence. Homophobic behaviour—a behaviour that constitutes discrimination or harassment based on sexual-orientation. It can manifest itself in such behaviours as derogatory comments, "outing" or threats of outing, or LGBTQ bashing (see Gay bashing).

Homosexual—someone who is physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same sex. Because the term is associated historically with a medical model of homosexuality and can have a negative connotation, most people prefer other terms, such as lesbian, gay and bisexual.

Inclusive language—language that avoids the use of certain expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people. For example, the gender-specific word mankind might be considered to exclude women. Another example is assuming that a married woman must have a husband rather than a wife; that is, assuming that a married woman is straight and not gay. The gender-neutral term "spouse" is preferable.

Internalized homophobia—a person's experience of shame, guilt or self-hatred in reaction to his or her own feelings of emotional and/or sexual attraction for a person of the same gender.

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Intersex— a general umbrella term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. Also used to describe a person born with such anatomy. Historically, the medical community labeled intersex persons as hermaphrodites and often surgically assigned them a sex in early infancy. Contemporary perspectives have sought to question and challenge the arbitrary practice of sex assignment surgery as a form of compulsory identity and/ or genital mutilation. Recently, some individuals have moved to eliminate the term "intersex" from medical usage, replacing it with "disorders of sex development" (DSD) in an effort to avoid conflating anatomy with gender identity. Others have suggested that "intersex" be changed to "variations of sex development" as a way to avoid pathologizing this condition. These decisions and suggestions are controversial and are not accepted by all intersex people or medical professionals.

Lesbian—a woman who is attracted physically and emotionally to other women.

MTF or M2F—male to female; a person who is transitioning or has transitioned from male to female

Natal sex—the sex a person is assigned at birth, which is often equated to one's biological sex.

Outing—the public disclosure of another person's sexual orientation without that person's permission or knowledge. This can be very disrespectful and is potentially dangerous to the outed person.

Pangender—individuals who consider themselves to be other than male or female, a combination of the two, or a third gender. Gender queer is a similar term.

Pansexual—sexual, emotional and/or romantic attraction toward people of any sex or gender identity or expression.

Pink triangle—pink (for gay men) and black (for lesbian women) triangle symbols were used by Nazis to identify gay and lesbian prisoners; now reclaimed as symbols of gay and lesbian pride.

Polysexuality—sexual, emotional and/or romantic attraction toward multiple genders, but not necessarily all genders; a person who experiences sexual and/or romantic attraction to multiple genders and sexes. Polysexual is sometimes viewed as an umbrella term for both bisexual and pansexual, as both fit the definition.

Pronoun usage—it is important to be courteous to others about their pronoun choice to avoid misgendering them. In English, the following are considered gender-neutral pronouns: they/them, ey/em, ze/zim, zir, hir, xe/xim. Feminine pronouns are she/her and masculine pronouns are he/him.

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Queer—historically, a negative term for homosexuality, but more recently reclaimed by the sexual minority movement to refer to itself.

Questioning—a person who is unsure of his or her sexual orientation, gender or sexual identity.

Reclaimed language—taking terms or symbols that have been used in a derogatory fashion and using them in a positive way to name one's self or one's experience. Queer is an example of a term that has been reclaimed by the SGM community.

Romantic orientation—an individual's pattern of romantic attraction based on a person's gender(s) regardless of one's sexual orientation. Aromantic refers to individuals who do not experience romantic attraction toward individuals of any gender(s). Biromantic refers to individuals who experience romantic attraction toward both males and females.

Sexual orientation—a person's affection and sexual attraction to other persons; feelings of attraction, behaviour, intimacy or identification that direct people towards intimacy with others. Like gender, sexual orientation can be expressed along a continuum.

Sex Affirming Surgery (SAS)—also referred to as sex reassignment surgery, gender reassignment surgery (GRS), sex change operation, sex reconstruction surgery, genital reconstruction surgery or gender confirmation surgery. It is the surgical procedure (or procedures) by which a transgender person's physical appearance and the function of their existing sexual characteristics are altered to resemble that of their identified gender.

Transgender, trans-identified or trans*— a term encompassing many gender identities of those who do not identify or exclusively identify with their sex assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy or how one is perceived in daily life. In this publication, the term transgender will be used as an expansive and inclusive term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions.

Transition—the process of changing from one's natal (birth) sex to that of the opposite sex. In many cases, this process is begun with hormone therapy, and often, though not always, followed by gender confirmation surgery.

Transphobia—fear, discrimination or hatred against transgender people specifically, or gendernon conforming people more generally.

Transsexual—an individual whose gender identity is not congruent with his or her natal sex. Many transsexual individuals frequently experience discomfort with the disparity between their physical body and sense of self (gender dysphoria) and, as a result, often begin transitioning

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with hormone therapy and may follow with surgery to make the body more closely align with their gender identity. All transsexual people are transgender, but not all transgender people are transsexual.

Transman or Transboy—a person who is transitioning or has transitioned from female to male (FTM).

Transwoman or Transgirl—a person who is transitioning or has transitioned from male to female (MTF).

Two-spirit—some Aboriginal people identify themselves as two-spirit rather than as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Historically, in many Aboriginal cultures, two-spirit persons were respected leaders and medicine people. Before colonization, two-spirit persons were often accorded special status based on their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives.

Definitions from Prism – Toolkit for Safe and Caring Discussions about Sexual and Gender Minorities