

PRIDE & JOY:

SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ STUDENT SUCCESS

2019





**“LGBTQ+ people need to
be who they are and not
hide their true colours!
Everyone’s colours should shine!”**



PRIDE & JOY: SUPPORTING
LGBTQ+ STUDENT SUCCESS

Director's Message



DSBN Pride flag raising day
June 1, 2019

Pride and joy – all students deserve to experience these feelings in our schools. By celebrating the uniqueness of the students we are so fortunate to serve, we create the conditions for them to be their true selves, confident in the knowledge they'll be accepted and valued for who they are.

This document is an important resource for our schools to continue fostering welcoming, inclusive, and safe environments where students thrive. This document supports an understanding of the lived reality of students in the LGBTQ+ community, how they perceive their world, and how we can best support their success in our schools.

From caring staff, to our community partnerships, inclusive curriculum, and schools that honour student voice, we take pride in the way we nurture a positive environment for all students. Thank you to those involved in the creation of this document and to the staff who bring it to life daily in our schools.

Sincerely,

Warren Hoshizaki,
Director of Education

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Purpose of this Resource

Pride and Joy: Supporting LGBTQ+ Student Success is intended for all DSBN staff and community members who work with DSBN students. The purpose is to develop awareness and to create a school climate that is inclusive of LGBTQ+ students.

This resource was created collaboratively with members of the LGBTQ+ community. A special thank you goes to the LGBTQ+ writing team who were the driving force. We would also like to acknowledge and thank all the students, teachers, parents, staff, school principals, student achievement leaders and community members who contributed to this resource.

"Providing safe, positive, caring and inclusive spaces for all is the touchstone of our work at the DSBN. The rich diversity found our schools is celebrated daily through respect, engagement, and connections."

~Susie Palumbo, Student Achievement Leader: Well-being



A Foundation of Equity

DSBN's principles of equity and inclusive education set the foundation upon which we support our LGBTQ+ student communities.

The Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (2017) states that "every student should have the opportunity to succeed personally and academically regardless of background, identity or personal circumstance".

DSBN recognizes the importance of equity, dignity, well-being, diversity and inclusion of all individuals, groups and communities. As well, we honour the unique experiences, cultures, viewpoints, and talents that make up each one of our students and staff members. Our strength lies in the diversity of these traits.

"**EQUITY:** a condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences."

~Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009, p.4



Legislation & Responsibility

The Education Act makes it a requirement to “promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils, including pupils of any race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability”(see section 169.1(1) (a.1) of the Education Act <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e02>). This is also supported by the Ontario *Human Rights Code* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>).

“Staff and students have both the power and responsibility to create a positive school climate. Always ask yourself, ‘How can I make school spaces look, sound and feel inclusive for students of **all identities, backgrounds and experiences?’”**

~Stacy Turner, Consultant: Equity and Inclusive Education



In the DSBN, the responsibility to create a positive school climate and uphold human rights extends to all members of the school and board community, including, but not limited to:

- Students
- Parents/Guardians
- Guest Speakers and Performers
- Volunteers
- Public Health staff
- Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)
- Psychologists
- Youth Counsellors
- Social Workers
- Secretaries
- Caretakers
- Educational Assistants
- Designated Early Childhood Educators
- Teachers (school-based, resource, itinerant, consultant)
- Administrators
- Senior Team
- Board of Education Staff
- Trustees

Details about creating a positive school climate for LGBTQ+ students can be found in the **Best Practices** section. In addition, staff are obligated to step in whenever an incident contributes negatively to school climate. Any DSBN employee must report to the principal of the school any incident motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. See DSBN Policy G-28: Student Discipline for details.

For more information on the responsibility of school communities to create inclusive school spaces, read:

- DSBN Policy G-28: Student Discipline
- DSBN Administrative Procedure 3-26: Student Discipline
- PPM 119: Developing and Implementing Equity & Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools, 2013
- Bill 157: Keeping Our Kids Safe at School, 2009
- Bill 13: Accepting Schools Act, 2012
- The Ontario *Human Rights Code*



The Journey...

2015

Ontario: Ministry of Education releases updated Health and Physical Education curriculum, with the addition of specific expectations related to the importance of respect for oneself and other people, in all their diversity – including people of all gender identities, sexual orientations, mental and physical abilities, and social and cultural backgrounds.



2016

Ontario: Bill 28: All Families are Equal Act. Ontario passes law ensuring equal recognition for all parents and children, regardless of how the child is conceived.

2016

Ontario: Sex designation is no longer displayed on the Ontario health card.

2018

Canada: Historical Canada releases Heritage Minute telling story of Jim Egan and Jack Nesbit's fight for spousal rights.

2018

Ontario: Ontario began providing a non-binary option on birth certificates.



2016

Canada: Justin Trudeau becomes the first Prime Minister to attend a Pride Parade.



2012

Ontario: Bill 77, Law against Reparative Therapy, is passed. No person shall, in the course of providing health care services, provide any treatment that seeks to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of a person under 18 years of age.

2012

Ontario: The Ontario Legislature passes Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act, a bill indicating that students are allowed to form Gay-Straight Alliances in both public and Catholic schools.

2013

Ontario: Kathleen Wynne is sworn in as Ontario's first female and openly lesbian Premier.

2014

Canada: Toronto hosts the fourth World Pride event.



1969

Canada: Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau amends the Criminal Code to decriminalize homosexuality in Canada.

1969

United States: Stonewall riots sparked the Gay Rights Movement around the world.

1973

United States: American Psychiatric Association (APA) removes diagnosis of "homosexuality" from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)

1978

Canada: Canada gets a new *Immigration Act*. In the Act homosexuals are removed from the list of inadmissible classes.

1981

Canada: "Canada's Stonewall" took place. About 3,000 people marched in Toronto to protest police raids on gay bathhouses, resulting in the arrest of more than 300 men.

1986

Ontario: Ontario added sexual orientation to its *Human Rights Code*.

2017

Ontario: OFSAA supports the participation of student-athletes in sport in accordance with their lived gender identity.

2017

Canada: Bill C-16: An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code is passed. Gender Identity and Gender Expression are added to the list of prohibited grounds for discrimination.



2017

Canada: Trudeau officially apologized for discrimination faced by the LGBTQ+ community.

2017

Ontario: Drivers were provided with the option to select an 'X' on their driver's licence.

2017

Canada: Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada announced that it will be working to implement an "X" gender designation in Canadian passports.

2005

Canada: Bill C-38 officially legalizes same-sex marriage in all of Canada. Canada becomes the fourth country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage, after the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain.



2012

Ontario: Ontario Human Right Commission adds gender expression and gender identity as protected grounds in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

2009

Ontario: Ministry of Education releases Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy which includes "gender identity and sexual orientation" as part of the province's official definition of diversity.

1990

Switzerland: World Health Organization (WHO) removes diagnosis of "homosexuality" from the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD).

1995

Canada: Ontario becomes the first province to allow same-sex couples to become adoptive parents.

2000

Canada: Bill C-23 is passed, extending full benefits and obligations to persons in same-sex relationships. One significant exclusion was their right to marry.

1988

Canada: Svend Robinson of the NDP is the first Member of Parliament to go public about being gay.



1989

Denmark: Denmark is the first country to legally recognize same-sex partnerships.

1992

Canada: Gays and lesbians are now allowed to serve in Canada's military.



1996

Canada: The federal government passes Bill C-33, which adds "sexual orientation" to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

2002

Canada: Ontario Superior Court Justice Robert McKinnon rules that student Marc Hall has the right to take his boyfriend to his high school prom.

Facts & Statistics

35% of gender diverse federal employees have experienced harassment in the workplace, compared to 16% and 19% of cisgender* men and women.
~Gender Diverse Employees in the Public Sector: Results from the 2017 Public Service Employee Survey

- “In 2017, the Jewish community followed by the black community, the Muslim community, and the LGBTQ community were the groups most frequently victimized [by hate crimes].”

~ Toronto Police Service 2017 Annual Hate Crime Statistical Report

- “While we have achieved much for students, we continue to observe poorer outcomes for disproportionate numbers of...students who identify as LGBTQ...”

~Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan, 2017

- “Police-reported hate crimes targeting sexual orientation accounted for 11% of hate crimes reported in 2015. Police-reported hate crimes targeting a sexual orientation had the highest percentage of violent crimes in 2015 (59%)”

~StatsCan: Police Reported Hate Crime in Canada, 2015

- “LGBTQ+ youth make up between 25-40 percent of the homeless youth population.”

~ Abramovich, A.I. (2013). No Fixed Address: Young, Queer, and Restless.

Toronto: Canadian Observatory On Homelessness. (on Covenant House website: <https://www.covenanthousetoronto.ca/homeless-youth/Facts-and-Stats>)

- Refer to your school’s School Climate Surveys for school-based statistics about well-being, exclusion and bullying.

*see **cisgender** in Glossary



Unlearning & Rethinking

BIAS

Shakil Choudhury, author of **Deep Diversity: Overcoming Us vs. Them**, describes implicit bias as “an unconscious form of prejudice that impacts our decisions automatically, quickly and unconsciously. If we are not able to detect our implicit bias, there could be significant outcomes on certain identities” (Diversity: Not so Black and White, <https://www.tvo.org/video/diversity-not-so-black-and-white>). When it comes to creating inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ students, we all need to be mindful of the damage of jumping to conclusions about someone’s identity. We need to practice catching our assumptions and redirecting our thinking. As Erin Rand states in Embrace Your Bias “<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rGlvHMEjyU>”, “Having bias is human; addressing bias is courageous.”

DISPELLING MYTHS

Part of addressing implicit bias is to dispel myths surrounding personal identities. It is okay to admit you do not know something, as long as you make the effort to learn.

- Being LGBTQ+ is not a mental health problem.
- “Coming out” is not done for attention.
- You do not have to be LGBTQ+ to speak out and advocate for inclusive schools.
- Outward expression is not an indication of LGBTQ+ youth (e.g. clothing, makeup, tone and pitch of voice).
- Educating students about accepting LGBTQ+ peers does not lead to the recruitment of students to “become gay” or “become transgender”.

“Self-reflection is foundational to the examination and identification of one’s own biases.”

~Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Ministry of Education (2013).

REFLECT

- What does this image remind you of?
- Whose perspective is depicted?
- Is there oppression in this image? Is there power?
- What assumptions and biases exist about sex, gender and sexual orientation?
- How does our implicit bias impact the students we teach?
- What does society need to unlearn?



(Image credit: Unlearn)

Understanding LGBTQ+

The term LGBTQ+ is often used as an umbrella term to include gender and sexually diverse communities. It is important for staff to view themselves as lifelong learners, and to recognize that concepts and language regularly evolve. Staff and students must strive to use language that will affirm people's identities, so sensitivity is required when choosing language. Generally, when in doubt, privately asking a person how they self-identify is the most respectful approach.

"Gender identity is each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex. **Gender identity is fundamentally different from a person's sexual orientation.**

Gender expression is how a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender.

Trans or transgender is an umbrella term referring to people with diverse gender identities and expressions that differ from stereotypical gender norms. It includes but is not limited to people who identify as transgender, trans woman (male-to-female), trans man (female-to-male)...gender non-conforming, gender variant or gender queer."

"Our schools should be places where students not only learn about diversity but also experience it. Students should see themselves and their classmates reflected in their studies"

~Ontario Education Equity Action Plan, 2017, p.4

Source: OHRC Policy on Preventing Discrimination Because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression, 2014

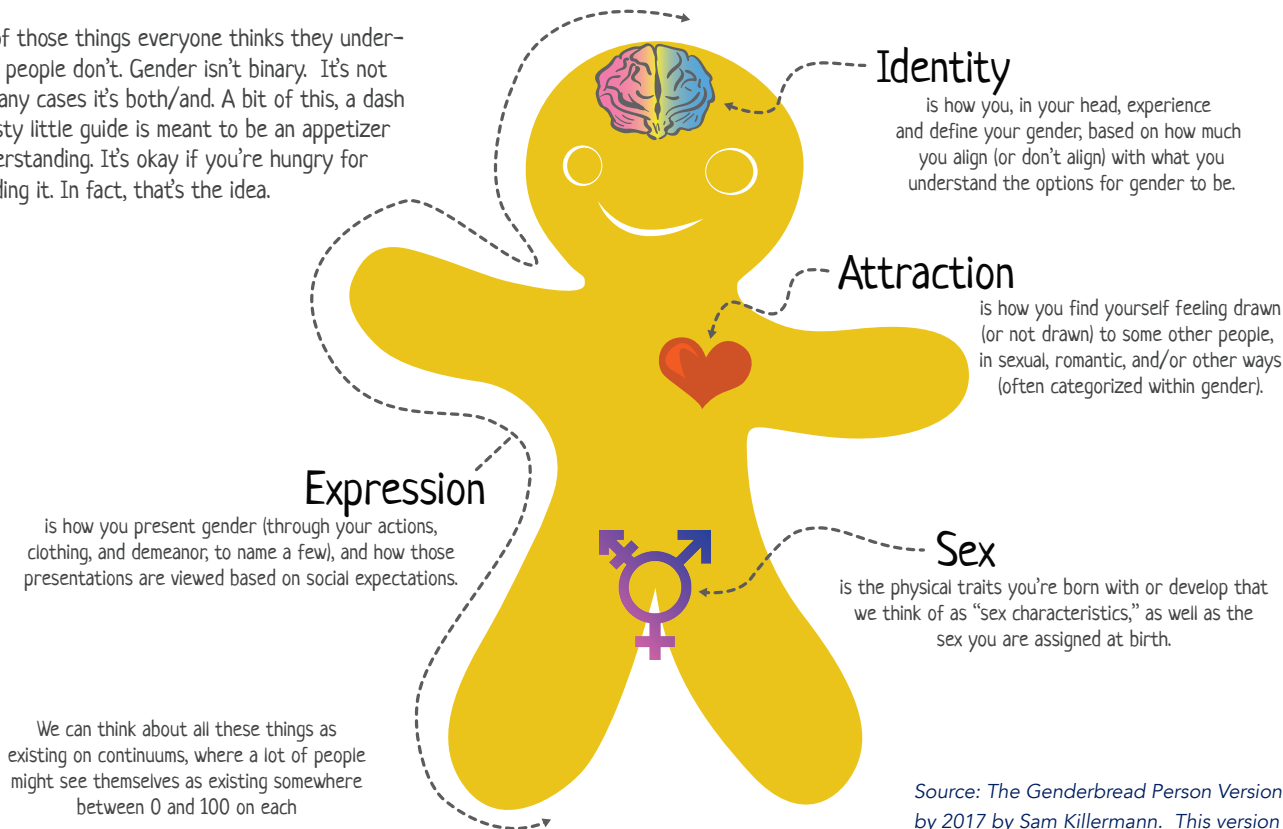


The Genderbread Person

The Genderbread Person provides an illustration of the fundamental differences between gender identity, gender expression, biological sex (or sex assigned at birth), and attraction (also commonly known as sexual orientation).

Please note that there are many versions of the Genderbread Person, which can be found at the sources below.

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more after reading it. In fact, that's the idea.



Source: *The Genderbread Person Version 4* was created and copyrighted by 2017 by Sam Killermann. This version is adapted from the original, which can be found at: <https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Genderbread-Person-v4-POSTER-18x24.pdf>. Also see <https://www.genderbread.org/resources> and <https://egale.ca/identitydice/>



LGBTQ+ The Genderbread Person

Here is just a small sample of common terms (among many, many, many more) associated with:

- **Gender Identity:** woman, man, agender, cisgender, fluid, pangender
- **Gender Expression:** feminine, masculine, androgynous, fluid
- **Sex:** female, male, intersex, AFAB (assigned female at birth)
- **Attraction (Sexual Orientation):** gay, straight, bisexual, lesbian, questioning

Important to Consider...

- All individuals have a right to privacy regarding their personal information. A person's sexual orientation and gender identity is private and confidential. Be sure not to share this information without explicit prior consent.
- It is important to recognize that some students are "out" about their sexual orientation or gender identity to some people and not to others. Be mindful to maintain confidentiality.
- Some students may wish to change their pronouns, such as "he", "she", "they" (singular) or any other pronoun. Using a student's pronouns shows respect.
- Students may need time to settle into a pronoun that represents who they are. Though it's hard for staff, it's harder for students who are in transition. Your patience supports the student's well-being.
- Students are able to participate in school activities, including sports, based on their lived gender identity. For students who are gender-fluid, avoid dividing students based on gender. Consider dividing students in other ways.

For a detailed list of LGBTQ+ terms, see the glossary at the back of this guide.

- Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, all students have a right to safe washroom facilities and the right to use a washroom that best corresponds to the student's lived gender identity. Help to create the conditions for safety in all school spaces. Some education for the student's peers may be required.

Two Spirit is a term chosen by some **Indigenous people** to describe an aspect of their **identity**. Seek the thoughts of your local Indigenous Elders and communities.

~www.twospiritmanitoba.ca



Supporting Our Transgender Communities

In spring 2018, DSBN released Guidelines to Support our Transgender and Gender Variant Communities, available in the Mental Health and Well-being icon in the staff portal. The DSBN recognizes and values a person's right to self-determine gender. "A person's self-defined gender identity is one of the most basic aspects of self-determination, dignity and freedom. For legal and social purposes, a person whose gender identity is different from their birth-assigned sex should be treated according to their lived gender identity." (Ontario Human Rights Code)

"Once we met with medical professionals, we realized we needed to support our child in transitioning. We immediately saw a sad and despondent child begin to thrive and achieve greatly in every aspect of their life."

~DSBN parent of a transgender child

When a Student Comes Out to a Staff Member

It is important that staff members recognize that they may be the caring adult for that student. If a student discloses confidential information to a staff member about their sexual orientation or gender identity, the staff member should say to the student:

"I would like to make sure that our school supports you to the best of our ability. Could I/we share this with our principal/vice-principal? They are the ones who are able to make sure that supports are in place. We/you can work with them to request what you need."

Student says YES

If the student agrees, assist the student in arranging a meeting with the administrator(s). Offer to attend the meeting for support.



Student Says NO

Honour the student's choice, and keep information confidential. Let the student know that they can change their mind at any time. Ask how you can support the student, and also let them know that some supports are only available through the administrator(s).



***Please note:** The role of the caring adult is to support students, but should not be mistaken for the role of social worker, counsellor, advisor or administrator. It is important to know your scope of practice and when to refer the student for further support.

Teachers are encouraged to work with their administrators around report card comments.

Inclusive Education

"Our schools should be places where students not only learn about diversity but also experience it. Students should see themselves and their classmates reflected in their studies"

~Ontario Education Equity Action Plan, 2017, p.4

The Ministry of Education defines inclusive education as "education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honored and all individuals are respected."

(Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009, p. 4)

Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (2017) further supports this by encouraging practices based in culturally responsive pedagogy: "Culturally responsive pedagogy recognizes that all students learn in ways that are connected to background, language, family structure, and social or cultural identity. It goes beyond recognizing uniqueness to intentionally nurturing it in order to create and facilitate effective conditions for learning."

(Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan, 2017, p.16)

The District School Board of Niagara commits to learning environments where students of all cultural and social identities feel safe, accepted, included, affirmed and inspired to succeed.



"LGBTQ+ students who have a school community, social circle and family who accept their identity have better mental health and are more likely to be optimistic about their future."

~Dr. Amanda Sherman, Psychologist, DSBN Mental Health and Well-being Team

Best Practices

In DSBN schools, all school staff, volunteers and community partners are expected to:

- Contribute to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students
- Interrupt inappropriate comments and behaviour
- Embed inclusive education strategies and materials in classroom instruction and curriculum
- Respond to student voice
- Engage in professional development opportunities

The goals outlined above are to be woven into schools, classrooms, curriculum and daily practice by:

IN OUR SCHOOLS:

- Develop practices and routines that align with the DSBN Equity Policy.
- Intentionally create a school community and sense of belonging for all students.
- Reinforce that students of all identities in the school environment, including LGBTQ+, deserve to be respected, included and celebrated.
- Review your school climate survey data to understand how your students feel. Determine areas of celebration and areas of improvement.
- Post symbols and images of LGBTQ+ pride and inclusion on the walls of the school (e.g., rainbow flag, positive space posters, families with two moms, people who are gender-fluid, etc.)
- Commit to a school-wide approach to prohibiting and confronting discrimination and inappropriate terms such as, “That’s so gay”, “What a fag”, and other offensive language.
- Ensure that students have a safe, consistent and reliable way to report homophobic/transphobic incidents. Ensure that both the victim and the



Source: Real Families Rock (by Out For Our Children)

These posters depict the complexity and infinite diversity of ordinary families. The posters are targeted at Early Years Centres and Primary Schools. Post cards are available from info@outforourchildren.org.uk.

offender receive support, recognizing that the offender may require support to change future language/behaviour.

- Meet regularly with your Safe Schools Team, and consider establishing a school equity committee.
- Create diverse school and classroom libraries/Learning Commons, and include texts with LGBTQ+ authors, characters and themes. Remove resources in the school that promote stereotyping or discrimination.
- Bring awareness to LGBTQ+ days of significance and commemoration through assemblies, announcements and lessons. Consult the UN’s list of International Days, Canada’s Important and Commemorative Days, Ontario’s Celebrations and Commemorations and the Multicultural Calendar.
- Encourage the formation of **GSAs** (see **GSA** section of this guide). Create safe spaces for students to network, share ideas, and mobilize with other students around the world.



LGBTQ+ Best Practices

- Ensure that every student can identify a caring adult with whom to confide.
- Make available staff training sessions to improve school climate for all LGBTQ+ identities.
- Ensure that all students are aware of the role of the youth counsellor, social worker, and public health nurse.
- Hold meetings to educate parents and community about the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and The Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

IN OUR CLASSROOMS

- Set an example – be a role model for students and staff (e.g., show allyship, show interest in LGBTQ+ issues, speak up, take action, use inclusive language, challenge disrespectful language, etc.)
- Make your classroom a safe and welcoming space. Set a tone of respect and inclusion of all personal identities in your classroom and in the school.
- Ensure your range of classroom resources reflect the diversity of LGBTQ+ communities. Consider books, applications, websites, images, poetry, videos, music, scripts, guest speakers, posters, co-created materials, and other resources that you use.
- Include LGBTQ+ role models in lessons. For example, consider LGBTQ+ authors and characters in novel studies, and use “out” celebrities as examples of successful people.
- Remove materials that represent LGBTQ+ people in a negative or stereotypical way.
- Engage students in questioning what kind of bias exists in text. See **Critical Literacy** section of this guide.
- Use scenarios, role play, and tableaux as a way of equipping students to effectively deal with homophobic/transphobic incidents.
- Use inclusive language. For example, “folks” instead of “boys and girls”; “partner” or “couple” instead of “mom and dad”; and “all genders” instead of “both genders” reflect the broad diversity of our communities.
- Use gender neutral language when referring to various occupations, such as firefighter, police officer, and mail carrier.

- Avoid dividing students into groups or teams by gender. Consider grouping in other ways.
- School staff must report homophobic/transphobic incidents at school to the principal. Familiarize yourself with your school's practice.
- Provide a location for students to pick up LGBTQ+ supportive materials and resources which they can take in a discreet manner, such as pamphlets from Quest and PFLAG, or My GSA printout (https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/MyGSA_ON_Resource_CompleteKit.pdf), and more.
- Engage in conversations about how offensive language (e.g., slurs, stereotypes, etc.) is hurtful for people. Clarify what appropriate language sounds like. For example, the word “gay” is not an insult, rather it is a part of a person's identity; the idea that transgender people are confused about their gender is a stereotype.

IN OUR CURRICULUM

- Ask yourself, “How can I embed LGBTQ+ perspectives into the curriculum expectations in all subject areas?”
- Use a critical thinking and inquiry models to respond to what is relevant for and reflective of the students you teach.
- Include conversations about bias, point of view, and perspective in all curricular areas. In particular, consider the heteronormative and cisnormative messages in text and media. See **Critical Literacy and the Curriculum** section of this Guide.
- Become familiar with the specific references to gender roles, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation in the curriculum documents (e.g., front matter, expectations, examples, and teacher prompts, etc.)
- Choose learning resources for your language program that positively embed concepts and terms related to a variety of LGBTQ+ identities.
- When planning, assume that some students or their family members identify as LGBTQ+.
- Look for curriculum connections to the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and

consider using **Teaching Human Rights in Ontario** – a Guide for Ontario Schools at http://www.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Teaching%20Human%20Rights%20in%20Ontario_2013.pdf

IN OUR DAILY PRACTICE

- Be supportive, inclusive, approachable and affirming with LGBTQ+ students and students with LGBTQ+ family members.
- Challenge and interrupt name calling, making fun of mannerisms, stereotyping, and inappropriate jokes. Say, "That word/phrase is not appropriate, and here's why _____. Let's find another word to express what you mean.", or "We must support and be inclusive based on the law. We are all protected under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, including every sexual orientation and gender identity".
- Ask students how they would like to be addressed (name and pronouns)
- Be approachable as the caring adult for students. Be cautious to not assume the role of a social worker, and know when to refer the student to see another professional.
- Provide opportunities for students to play, dress and behave in ways authentic to the individual rather than conforming to stereotypes.
- Advocate for individual students as needed (e.g., start a GSA, access to social worker, report bullying, etc.)
- Avoid assumptions about a student's personal identity.
- Maintain confidentiality when and where professionally appropriate.
- Be supportive if a student wants to "come out" to families and friends. See **When a Student Comes Out to a Staff Member** section of this Guide.
- Accept and respect students in their process of self-identity.
- Build relationships with community organizations that serve your students (e.g., PFLAG Niagara, Quest, Pride Niagara, etc.)
- Continue to learn about the issues that the students face in your school community, region and province (e.g., visit your school's GSA, read about reported hate crimes in the province, etc.)
- Firmly shut down rumours surrounding a student's identity (e.g., I think he's gay; I saw her use the boys washroom.).
- Participate in professional development relating to LGBTQ+ awareness, supports and issues. Consider conferences, seminars, workshops, presentations, collaborative inquiry opportunities and learning communities that are available to school staff.



Critical Literacy & the Curriculum

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

DSBN recognizes and values the premise of Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act (2012): “The people of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly...believe that students need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitude and values to engage the world and others critically, which means developing a critical consciousness that allows them to take action on making their schools and communities more equitable and inclusive for all people, including LGBTTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, intersex, queer and questioning) people” (<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-40/session-1/bill-13>)

EMBEDDING LGBTQ+ PERSPECTIVES

Our curriculum documents set the stage for using diverse instructional materials. Consider how the following examples direct educators to plan using resources that reflect the students’ identities, backgrounds and experiences in our classrooms, schools, and broader school community.



Image source ‘Pride’ by Robin Stevenson, Orca Publisher

Equity and Inclusive Education in Kindergarten:

“In an environment based on the principles of inclusive education, all children in Kindergarten, their parents, other family members, and other members of the school community – regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, sex, physical or intellectual ability, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or other similar factors – are welcomed, included, treated fairly, and respected. Diversity is valued, and all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted.” and “Learning experiences, resources, and materials used in Kindergarten must be free from bias and stereotyping so that children can make meaningful connections between what they are learning and their own backgrounds, experiences, and learning styles. Books should include fairy tales, stories from mythology, and tales about children and adults from diverse social, cultural, spiritual, and family contexts”
~*The Kindergarten Program, 2016, p. 101-102*

Antidiscrimination Education in the Language Program:

“Learning resources that reflect the broad range of students’ interests, backgrounds, cultures, and experiences are an important aspect of an inclusive language program. In such a program, stories contain heroes and protagonists of both sexes from a wide variety of racial and cultural backgrounds. Students are made aware of the historical, social, and cultural contexts for both the traditional and non-traditional gender and social roles represented in the materials they are studying.”
~*Elementary Language Curriculum, 2006, p. 28*

Equity and Inclusive Education in Health and Physical Education:

“Teachers can give students a variety of opportunities to learn about diversity and diverse perspectives. By drawing attention to the contributions of women, the perspectives of various ethnocultural, religious, and racial communities, and the beliefs and practices of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, teachers enable students from a wide range of backgrounds to see themselves

reflected in the curriculum. It is essential that learning activities and materials used to support the curriculum reflect the diversity of Ontario society. In addition, teachers should differentiate instruction and assessment strategies to take into account the background and experiences, as well as the interests, aptitudes, and learning needs, of all students.”

~Secondary Health and Physical Education Curriculum, 2015, p. 72

Scavenger Hunt:

- Look at the front matter of the curriculum documents for your subject area(s). How do the Anti-Discrimination / Equity and Inclusive Education statements guide instructional material selection?
- A culturally responsive approach to teaching involves viewing “the curriculum as flexible and adaptive to the lived experiences of students so they see themselves and their lives reflected in daily learning opportunities”. (Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Ministry of Education, 2013). Which curriculum expectations demonstrate such flexibility? Can all expectations be viewed this way?
- Which books with LGBTQ+ authors, characters and/or themes are currently in your classrooms and Learning Commons? Which might you consider adding?

Teachers, in collaboration with administrators, should use professional judgement to review, select and use age-appropriate instructional strategies and materials which positively represent and reflect diverse communities, including sexually and gender diverse people.

Where to Find LGBTQ+ Inclusive Instructional Texts:

- School Learning Commons
- DSBN Media Centre
- A Different Booklist (<https://www.adifferentbooklist.com>)

- Tin Lids (<http://tinlids.ca>)
- Another Story Bookshop (<https://anotherstory.ca>)
- Flamingo Rampant (<http://flamingorampant.com>)
- OK 2 Be ME (<https://ok2bme.ca/resources/kids-teens>)
- Parent Books (<https://www.parentbooks.ca>)

Addressing Bias in Instructional Materials:

Recognizing that all materials contain bias, it is important to teach students how to identify and respond to bias. Consider using the following questions to support developing students’ critical literacy skills:

- Who is represented? Who is not? Is anyone mis-represented?
- Whose point of view is missing?
- How are various identities (faith, age, sex, class, race, LGBTQ+, etc.) represented (positively, negatively, superficially, aggressively, dominantly, powerlessly, vulnerably)?
- What stereotypes are presented?
- What is the author’s purpose? Who is the author’s audience? What is the author’s background?
- Are opinions presented as facts?



- Is there information missing that you think should be included?
- Does the text present issues in an over-simplistic or exaggerated way?
- Are there terms and phrases that are used intentionally to portray certain people in a certain way (e.g., some people "roam and wander" while others "embark on an adventure")?
- Are descriptions of people balanced or overly positive or negative?
- What possible interpretations might readers or viewers take?
- Which words lead to inclusion? Which words lead to exclusion?
- What local or global context frames the information?
- Does the age of the book reflect current language / viewpoints?
- How do our own personal experiences impact how we understand this text (book/poem/video/website/podcast)?

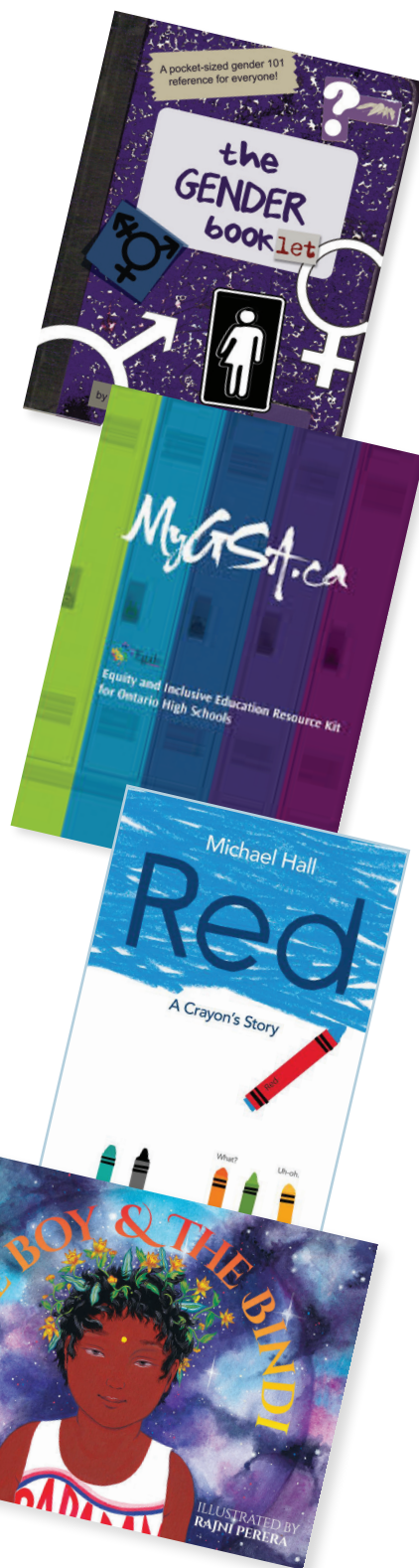


Illustration from the
The Boy and The Bindi

- How does the information/events fit or not fit with your own interests, values and beliefs?
- What would you change to make this text (book/poem/video/website/podcast) more inclusive?

Sources:

- Capacity Building Series: Critical Literacy (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/critical_literacy.pdf)
- Adolescent Literacy Guide (http://www.edugains.ca/resourcesLIT/AdolescentLiteracy/Vision/AdolescentLiteracyGuide_Interactive.pdf)
- Make Room for Evaluating Perspectives and Biases: (http://www.edugains.ca/resourcesLiteracy/CE/712/ALERT/PerspectivesBiasesALERT_Letter_Fall2013.pdf)



Student Voice

Top 5 Ways Staff Can Support Trans Students

Written by **Students** for **Staff!**

1

Use the right pronouns/name

It's very important for teachers to make sure that they use a student's preferred name and pronouns as it makes them feel valid and that the teacher cares about them. In cases where the student is out to all students and staff, be an advocate by encouraging other staff and students to use the student's preferred name and pronouns.

2

How to approach making a mistake

If you make a mistake with a student's identity or pronouns, try to not make a big deal about it. The student will understand that it's hard to break a habit. Just quickly apologize, correct yourself and move on. The less you focus on the mistake, the easier it is for everyone involved.

3

"Get to Know You" sheet

Using a "Get to Know You" sheet at the start of the year is a great way to learn if a student is trans without having to ask them about it or them having to tell you in person. Consider adding the following questions to your Get to Know You sheet: *How would you like to be addressed in class (preferred name and pronouns)?* and *How would you like to be addressed when I speak with your parent(s)/legal guardian (preferred name and pronouns)?*

4

Stop gendering situations

For trans students, games and activities where the class is separated by gender can be uncomfortable, scary, and dysphoria-inducing. Try to find other ways to group students. Instead of greeting the class as "hello boys and girls" or "welcome ladies and gentlemen", try using phrases that work for all gender identities like "hello everyone" or "welcome class".

5

What to do when you're unsure of something

If you're not sure what to do in a situation specific to a trans student, it is best to just ask that student. They'll tell you exactly how they'd like you to handle the situation you're uncertain about. Be sure to ask in a private and confidential way, **and only if the student is out to you**. You're not expected to have all the answers, and every trans person has a slightly different situation, and so asking really is the best policy.

~Laura Secord Secondary School Identity Club

Remember:

Some students are "out" about their sexual orientation or gender identity to some people and not to others. Be mindful to maintain confidentiality.





Gay-Straight / Gender-Sexuality Alliances

Gay-Straight Alliances or Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) are created to provide a place for students to gather for a variety of purposes: to have a safe space, to discuss their feelings, to meet friends, to deepen their knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues, to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion, and/or to create positive change in the school or community. Such a group can help establish positive

student relationships, conflict resolution, and the acceptance of various identities. Every GSA is different, and it's important to have students shape the goals and focus of the group. GSAs are open to students identifying as LGBTQ+, and often allies as well.

The Education Act supports the formation of GSAs in all schools. (section 303.1)

Here's what DSBN students have said about the benefits of participating in a school-based GSA:

"As someone who is a part of the LGBTQ Community, Gay-Straight Alliances are very important to the whole community because it helps to stop the "them vs. us" mindset."

"GSAs are important in schools because people keep telling us who we are, but we need to SHOW who we are and be loved for being ourselves"

"We need GSAs in our school to end the stigma around LGBTQ+"

"LGBTQ+ people need to be who they are and not hide their true colours! Everyone's colours should shine!"

"GSAs need to be implemented at a younger age. Kids need to know that it is okay/doesn't matter what sexuality people are - everyone should be treated the same, regardless of sexual and identity preference!"



"GSAs in school are very important. They are important because it's 2019, and more and more people are coming out. It is not unexpected to see a gay couple out in public. We need to have these clubs in schools so kids see that it is okay to be different and not say or pretend you are something that you are not."

"GSAs are important so that students have a safe space to go"

"At my GSA we can discuss issues of importance to LGBTQ+ students/ community in a safe place"

"LGBTQ+ students feel included in schools when staff are welcoming and willing to try to understand LGBTQ+ issues and use correct names/pronouns"

"GSAs are important because they provide a safe space for me to express myself and talk about issues I face."

"I feel accepted in my school because the teachers accept my preferred name and pronouns and are okay with me correcting them on mistakes, as well as being generally open to my identity."

"LGBTQ+ students feel comfortable mainly when teachers are supportive of them and make a smooth, safe transition (trans specifically)."

"I feel more comfortable discussing LGBTQ+ topics with people who share the same struggles as me."

How Staff Can Start a GSA:

- Discuss starting a GSA with your administrator and collaborate on logistics.
- Inform staff and counsellors about the group and find supportive co-advisors to work with you.
- Pick a safe and comfortable location to hold meetings, with privacy and security as priority. Such a setting allows members to establish a strong sense of community and freedom to openly address issues affecting all members.
- Provide snacks. Everyone loves to gather together with food and beverages as it helps establish a casual, friendly environment.
- Develop meeting ground rules or norms with students such as confidentiality and respectful dialogue during the first meeting. Provide a tentative schedule for meetings.
- Facilitate students in co-creating the group's purpose. It is important to set guidelines to help clarify the group's purpose, initiatives, and role within the community. Create an original name that represents the group's identity.
- Promote your GSA throughout the school and on your school website.
- Check out the various LGBTQ+ support materials for starting an inclusion club or GSA, resources and activities. Go to the Mental Health and Well-being icon in the Departments section of the staff portal, and explore the LGBTQ+ and Equity folders.
- Download Egale's MY GSA guide at https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/MyGSA_ON_Resource_CompleteKit.pdf
- Call Curriculum Support Services for support!

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: "What if I think a student in my class might be LGBTQ+?"

A: Make your classroom supportive, inclusive, approachable and affirming of all LGBTQ+ identities. See *Best Practices* section of this Guide.

Q: "How do we dispel fear?"

A: Demystify. Inform. Support. The culture of your class room/school will create a comfortable environment for students to be honest about who they are. See *Inclusive Education* section of this Guide.

Q: "Is it okay to talk about these issues in Elementary schools?"

A: Yes, yes, yes... The *Education Act* requires schools to "promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils, including pupils of any race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability." Students may come out as sexually or gender diverse at any age. As well, students of all ages have family members, friends, and acquaintances who identify as LGBTQ+.

Q: "How do I support parents of a LGBTQ+ student?"

A: Provide a confidential, safe space and direct to appropriate resources that may help them to address concerns or questions. The school-based social worker may also be a resource.

Q: "How do I respond to a staff member who displays inappropriate behaviour or comments?"

A: Express your concern directly to the person. Remind the person of the obligation under The *Education Act*. If it continues approach your union representative for clear procedures.

Q: "What if I say something wrong or use an incorrect term?"

A: Apologize. It's okay to explain that you are still learning, and ask for more appropriate terminology. It will also help to familiarize yourself with the Glossary in this document. Be sure to make student feel comfortable, safe and accepted.

Handling Inappropriate Language or Conduct

1. Stop the inappropriate language or conduct . All school staff have an obligation to interrupt offensive language or conduct. If the behaviour is based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression (or any other grounds protected by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*), school staff must report this to the school Principal.
2. Teach the offending student about why the comment was offensive (e.g., homophobic, transphobic, sexist, racist, etc.).
3. Check in with the victim. Ensure that the student is referred to the appropriate supports.
4. Plan for future interactions. Collaborate with the offending student about words that can be used to accurately express oneself.

(Adapted from Egale)



Days of Significance

LGBTQ+



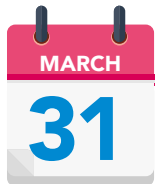
BI VISIBILITY DAY
<http://www.bivisibilityday.com>



NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY
<https://egale.ca/come-out-canada>



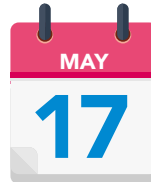
TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE
<https://egale.ca/trans-day-of-remembrance-2/>



TRANS DAY OF VISIBILITY
<https://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/trans-day-of-visibility>

2nd Wednesday of April
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PINK

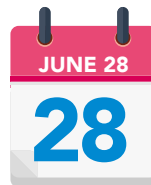
<https://dayofpink.org/about/>



**INTERNATIONAL DAY
AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA**
<https://www.fondationemergence.org/?lang=en>

Month of June
PRIDE EVENTS

<https://prideniagara.com/right-columneventsevents/events>



**STONEWALL
REBELLION**
<https://2019-worldpride-stonewall50.nycpride.org/events/stonewall-50th-com-memoration/>

*For more events please visit Egale
(Egale.ca and MyGSA.ca), Canadian
Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity
(<https://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/>), or Pride
Niagara <https://prideniagara.com/right-columneventsevents/events/>.*





Glossary

A note about terms and definitions:

The following terms and definitions are from the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Teaching human rights in Ontario - A guide for Ontario schools (2013), and Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Preventing Discrimination because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression (2014). It is important to note that the meaning and use of terms evolve and change over time. Certain terms, such as homosexual, queer, transgendered and transsexual have had negative connotations historically, and should be used with caution.

It is important to strive to use language that will affirm people's identities, so sensitivity is required when choosing language. Generally, when in doubt, privately asking a person how they self-identify is the most respectful approach.

Additional sources for terms and definitions can be found at the end of the glossary.



Ally: a member of the dominant group who acts against oppression.

Bias: a predisposition, prejudice or generalization about a group of persons based on personal characteristics or stereotypes.

Biological sex: the biological classification of people as male and/or female. A doctor usually assigns sex at birth, by visually assessing external anatomy. Sex terms are "male," "female" and "intersex."

Bisexual: a person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to members of more than one gender.

Cisgender and cisnormativity: most people are "cisgender" (not trans); that is, their gender identity is in line with or "matches" the sex they were assigned at birth. Cisnormativity ("cis" meaning "the same as") refers to the commonplace assumption that all people are cisgender and that everyone accepts this as "the norm." The term is used to describe prejudice against trans people that is less overt or direct and more widespread or systemic in society, organizations and institutions. This form of systemic prejudice may even be unintentional and unrecognized by the people or organizations responsible.

Discrimination: treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics (note: this is not a legal definition).

Equity: fairness, impartiality, even-handedness. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals, and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person's life.

Gay: people whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex. Also used as an umbrella term for the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community.

Gender: the social classification of people as masculine and/or feminine.

Gender binary: a social system whereby people are thought to have either one of two genders: man or woman. These genders are expected to correspond to birth sex: male or female. In the gender binary system, there is no room for interpretations, for living between genders, or for crossing the binary. The gender binary system is rigid and restrictive for many people who feel that their natal sex (sex they were labelled with at birth) does not match up with their gender or that their gender is fluid and not fixed.

Gender identity: a person's conscious sense of maleness and/or femaleness. This sense of self is separate and distinct from one's biological sex.

Gender non-conforming/gender variant/gender queer: individuals who do not follow gender stereotypes based on the sex they were assigned at birth. They may identify and express themselves as "feminine men" or "masculine women" or as androgynous, outside of the categories "boy/man" and "girl/woman." People who are gender non-conforming may or may not identify as trans. *See note below.

Heterosexual: a person who has emotional, physical, spiritual and sexual attraction to persons of the opposite sex.

Heterosexism: the assumption that heterosexuality is superior and preferable, and is the only right, normal or moral expression of sexuality. This definition is often used when looking at discrimination against gay, lesbian or bisexual



people that is less overt, and which may be unintentional and unrecognized by the person or organization responsible.

Homosexual: a person who has emotional, physical, spiritual and sexual attraction to persons of the "same sex." More of a medical term, it is considered outdated and often insulting to many gay people or communities. *See note below.

Homophobia: the irrational aversion to, fear or hatred of gay, lesbian or bisexual people and communities, or of behaviours stereotyped as "homosexual."

Inclusion: appreciating and using our unique differences – strengths, talents, weaknesses and frailties – in a way that shows respect for the individual and ultimately creates a dynamic multi-dimensional organization.



The Transgender Flag: Designed by Monica Helms in 1999. The stripes at the top and bottom are light blue, the traditional color for baby boys. The stripes next to them are pink, the traditional color for baby girls. The stripe in the middle is white, for those who are intersex, transitioning or consider themselves having a neutral or undefined gender. The pattern is such that no matter which way you fly it, it is always correct, signifying us finding correctness in our lives. Source: <http://point5cc.com/the-history-of-the-transgender-flag/>

Intersex: People born with unidentified or misidentified genitals. Formerly inappropriately referred to as hermaphrodites, intersex people are not easily categorized as “male” or “female” because of ambiguous genitals. Most intersex people do not possess “both” sets of genitals, rather a blending, or a different appearance that is medically difficult to categorize for many doctors.

Lesbian: a woman who has emotional, physical, spiritual and/or sexual attraction to other women.

LGBT: short for Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender. “GLBT” is also used. An acronym that also encompasses the diversity within the Trans and Queer community is LGBTTIQ2A – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, 2-spirited and Allies. *See note below.

Prejudice: negative prejudgment or preconceived feelings or notions about another person or group of persons based on perceived characteristics.

Prohibited/protected grounds: the Ontario *Human Rights Code* prohibits discrimination or harassment based on these personal characteristics. The specific protected grounds include: age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender identity and gender expression (recently added to the Code), marital status, place of origin, race, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, receipt of public assistance (in housing) and record of offences (in employment).

Queer: formerly derogatory slang term used to identify LGBT people. Some members of the LGBT community have embraced and reinvented this term as a positive and proud political identifier when speaking among and about themselves. *See note below.

Questioning: exploring one’s own sexual and/or gender identity, looking at such things as upbringing, expectations from others (family, friends, church, employers, etc.) and inner motivation.

Sexism: discrimination based on sex.

Sexual orientation: the direction of one’s sexual interest or attraction. It is a personal characteristic that forms part of who you are. It covers the range of human sexuality from lesbian and gay, to bisexual and heterosexual.

*See note below.

Stereotype: incorrect assumption based on things like race, colour, ethnic origin, place of origin, religion, etc. Stereotyping typically involves attributing the same characteristics to all members of a group regardless of their individual differences. It is often based on misconceptions, incomplete information and/or false generalizations.



Straight: people whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex. See Heterosexual.

Transgender or Trans: a person whose biological sex assigned at birth does not match their gender identity. *See note below.

Transsexual: People who are identified at birth as one sex, but who identify themselves differently. They may seek or undergo one or more medical treatments to align their bodies with their internally felt identity, such as hormone therapy, sex-reassignment surgery or other procedures. While this term is embraced by some people as an identity, it is rejected by others and should be used with caution. *See note below.

Source: Ontario Human Rights Commission:

o <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/teaching-human-rights-ontario-guide-ontario-schools/appendix-1-glossary-human-rights-terms>

o <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Policy%20on%20preventing%20discrimination%20because%20of%20gender%20identity%20and%20gender%20expression.pdf>

***Notes about the Glossary:**

- In the broad range of sexual orientations and gender identities, many other identities exist. Consult a variety of other sources listed below for other common terms such as asexual, heteronormative, fluid, pansexual and pangender among many more.
- The terms homosexual, queer, transgendered and transsexual have had negative connotations historically, and should be used with caution.

- Some people feel that 'A' in the acronym LGBTTIQQA, should stand for asexual and agender, not ally.

Additional sources for terms and definitions may be consulted:

- Ask members of your school's Gay-Straight Alliance or Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA).
- Families in Transition: A Resource Guide for Families of Transgender Youth, 2nd Edition. <https://ctys.org/wp-content/uploads/CTYS-FIT-Families-in-Transition-Guide-2nd-edition.pdf>. See Common Terms, p. 12 & 13.
- Draw the Line Against Transphobic Violence, Download from <https://egale.ca/portfolio/draw-the-line/>. See LGBTQ Terms and Concepts, p. 38-41
- My GSA. Go to https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/MyGSA_ON_Resource_CompleteKit.pdf. See Terms and Concepts section (Dark Purple), p. 6-65
- The Gender Spectrum's Understanding Gender section. Go to <https://www.genderspectrum.org/quick-links/understanding-gender/>
- It's pronounced Metrosexual. Go to <https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/>
- OHRC's Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Sexual Orientation. Go to http://www.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Policy_on_discrimination_and_harassment_because_of_sexual_orientation.pdf
- OHRC's Policy on Preventing Discrimination because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression. Go to <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Policy%20on%20preventing%20discrimination%20because%20of%20gender%20identity%20and%20gender%20expression.pdf>



LGBTQ+

PRIDE & JOY: SUPPORTING
LGBTQ+ STUDENT SUCCESS

