



PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE SCHOOL DIVISION

“Dedicated to the Pursuit of Excellence”

BOARD POLICY #14 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

For the Portage La Prairie School Division to achieve its mission statement of recognizing “the individual needs and potential of our students and” providing “these students with the opportunity to undertake schooling experiences that will contribute to the development of their full potential”, we must view our work through the lenses of diversity, equity and inclusion. Our goal must be equitable outcomes for all children, not just the provision of opportunity with the consequence of differential outcomes. We must acknowledge the challenges to equity posed by, but not limited to, negative life experiences, poverty, racism, disability, sexism and homophobia and assist children in meeting these challenges.

The Portage La Prairie School Division is committed to supporting diversity by ensuring a safe, positive and respectful learning environment for the entire learning community, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ children, students, families, staff, teachers and early childhood educators. This respects the letter and spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and The Manitoba Human Rights Code. Guided by **Safe and Inclusive Schools** legislation, our schools are proactive in developing and implementing guidelines that support safe and inclusive learning environments.

We recognize that everyone in the Portage La Prairie School Division will benefit from Indigenous education as it enriches the experiences of all learners while supporting academic success for Indigenous learners. It serves to engage all stakeholders, parents, community, schools and staff in initiatives that work to naturally weave the recommendations from the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents position statement on Aboriginal Education (2011, 2013), the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), the Canadian Council of Learning (2009) on Redefining Success for Aboriginal Learners, and Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With (2022).

Furthermore, the Portage La Prairie School Division recognizes that every individual in their community has the right to a learning environment that is free from racism, hatred, bigotry and religious persecution. Achieving equity in our school division requires that we explicitly oppose racial discrimination in all forms. We acknowledge that by not actively challenging racism we allow for it to continue and perpetuate itself. By incorporating rich anti-racist teaching and learning into our classrooms and enhancing racial diversity in all areas of school life, we can strive toward establishing equitable and anti-racist school environments where everyone can feel safe and empowered.

Adherence to this policy is a requirement for all Portage La Prairie School Division trustees, employees and individuals providing any type of service or engaging in any type of interaction with our students. Adherence to the Code of Conduct for Ethical and Effective Public Service is mandatory. (**The Public Services Act**, February 26, 2022)

Addendum attached.

Date Approved: 12/10/24	Date Reviewed: 11/26/24	Date Revised:	Page 1 of 1
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This addendum to Board Policy #14 provides a valuable list of definitions, actions and responsibilities that support the work of the Portage la Prairie School Division.

Definitions

The following are defined to ensure clarity and understanding.

- **Bullying** is behavior that is intended to cause, or should be known to cause, fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress or other forms of harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, reputation or property; or is intended to create, or should be known to create, a negative school environment for another person.
 - Bullying characteristically takes place in a context of a real or perceived power imbalance between the people involved and is typically, but need not be, repeated behavior.
 - Bullying may be direct (face to face) or indirect (through others), and it may take place through any form of expression including written, verbal, or physical, or by means of any form of electronic communication (referred to as cyberbullying) including social media, text messaging, instant messaging, websites or email.
 - A person participates in bullying if he or she directly carries out the bullying behaviour or intentionally assists or encourages the bullying behaviour in any way. [PSA 1.2(1)(2)(3)]
- **Discrimination** occurs when people are not treated based on their individual worth, but instead are treated differently based on stereotypes and prejudices, and this results in a disadvantage and barriers to equal opportunities.
 - Discrimination often involves treating someone differently on the basis of a protected characteristic, such as ancestry, age or religion.
 - Discrimination may include failure to make reasonable accommodations for the special needs of any individual or group based on the protected characteristics of the *Manitoba Human Rights Code*. [MHRC 9(2)]
- **Diversity** encompasses all the ways in which human beings are both similar and different. It means understanding and accepting the uniqueness of individuals, as well as respecting their differences. Diversity may include, but is not limited to, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic status, religion, family status, mental and physical disability.
- **Equity** refers to the provision of equitable opportunity, equitable access to programming, services and resources critical to the achievement of outcomes for all students, and the staff who serve them. Equity and equality are not necessarily synonymous, as equity can be achieved through unequal means.

- Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense or feeling male or female, which may or may not be the same as one's biological sex. (Public Health Agency of Canada)

- Harassment is any behaviour that degrades, demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions (e.g., touching, pushing), comments (e.g., jokes, name-calling), or displays (e.g., posters, cartoons). Harassment can also take place electronically (e.g., text messages, email, screensavers, or social media). *The Manitoba Human Rights Code* (MHRC) refers to harassment as a course of abusive and unwelcome conduct or comment made on the basis of any protected characteristic. [MHRC 19(2)]

- Sexual orientation is the term used to describe an individual's sexual, psychological and emotional feelings of attraction towards another person (Public Health Agency of Canada).

Staff Development

The Portage la Prairie School Division is committed to providing resources and professional learning opportunities that support all staff to increase their capacity to teach and support students on issues regarding human diversity, including areas of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Accommodation of Student Activities/Organizations

The Portage la Prairie School Division will accommodate students who want to establish and lead activities and organizations that promote areas of human diversity. To assist staff and students in instituting such activities and organizations, organizers must adhere to the following guidelines and procedures.

- Activities and Organizations are:
 - to be consistent and in compliance with Division/school policies; and
 - open to all students who wish to participate in an appropriate manner.

Reporting

Any person who is aware of bullying or cyberbullying is required to report the incident to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. Principals will investigate any reports of bullying or cyberbullying. The duty to report also includes awareness that a student may have engaged in cyberbullying or been negatively affected by cyberbullying, whether it occurs during school or not. To respond to actions that contravene this policy, the Division and school Principals shall reference, as necessary Divisional policies (see File ADA), the Manitoba Public Schools Act, The Manitoba Human Rights Code, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Responsibilities

- Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning – provide information, training and feedback to school boards and school division staff to support them in the development and implementation of human diversity policies.
- School Board – is responsible for establishing a respect for human diversity policy which complies with the legislation, and ensure its implementation in each school.
- Senior Administration – play a leading role in overall policy implementation, promoting respect for human diversity and communicating policy expectations to staff, students, parents and community.
- Principals – Principals communicate and reinforce expectations for respecting human diversity policy to teachers and school staff and encourage their participation in professional development and training on human diversity and related topics.
- Teachers and Other Staff – play a key role in communicating and reinforcing expectations of respecting human diversity to students. Under legislation, teachers and school staff have an expanded duty to report matters of cyberbullying to the principal, whether it is believed to be happening at school or outside of regular school hours.
- Students – have responsibility to monitor their own interactions and conduct in ways that ensure a welcoming, safe, caring and inclusive school environment; particularly toward those previously identified as being at higher risk for bullying or discrimination.
- Parents and guardians – play an important role in their children’s understanding and respect for human diversity.