
RACE RELATIONS

- POLICY -

Public schools serve a society which is characterized by ethnic, racial, and ideological diversity. It is the intent of the board that all district programs and operations comply with the statutory requirements and provisions of our nation's Charter of Rights, the Criminal Code of Canada, the Human Rights Code, and the School Act of British Columbia.

1. The Board of Education of School District No. 85 recognizes the importance of establishing an educational climate that:
 - 1.1 promotes an appreciation of and respect for the rights, feelings, and opinions of others, and
 - 1.2 provides the opportunity for all students to develop to their full potential by providing an environment free from racism, prejudice and discrimination.
2. All Schools shall provide a learning environment that gives all students a feeling of security and self-worth.
3. All Schools shall promote and implement programs and curriculum activities which provide opportunities for students to acquire positive attitudes toward racial diversity, cultural heritages and social economic differences..
4. The board opposes and condemns all forms of racism and prejudice by its trustees, employees, students, or any persons directly or indirectly associated with either educational programs or business of the school district.
5. Prejudicial conduct, or conduct in the schools by staff, students, or resource persons, which promotes any cause, ideology, or set of values which is likely to incite hatred, penalize, or cause injury to person or reputation shall be deemed unacceptable.
6. All students, staff and volunteers are bound by this policy and shall act in a manner that displays respect for the worth and dignity of all persons.

APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS

RACISM:

Racism is a belief, a set of values, an attitude or assumptions that view and construct in a negative way a group of people based on their racial background. Because race is a social and political construct, race may be used to describe not only racial differences, but also differences based on ethnicity, place of origin, cultural background, and other aspects of diversity. One key component regarding racism is that it creates a hierarchy of worthiness and value and accompanying power dynamics. Racism is about the power some have over others and the powerlessness of marginalized communities. Racism may be manifested in the following ways:

- any overt act, such as name-calling, graffiti, and physical violence which is aimed at depicting a particular ethnic group in an unfavourable light;
- stereotyping, slurs, and comments which lower the self-esteem of someone because of his/her ethnic or racial background;
- hiring and promotional policies which exclude members of racial/ethnic groups;
- textbooks, teaching materials, library resources which, through undue bias, stereotyping, and inaccuracy foster negative feelings toward a particular ethnic group;
- institutional practices which exclude members of racial /ethnic groups.

STEREOTYPE:

An over-simplified mental image of a trait or characteristic that individuals believe most or all members of a group of people possess. Even positive stereotypes are harmful in that they cause us to see and judge people not on their individual merits but by their group membership.

PREJUDICE:

A set of negative attitudes or beliefs about a group of people. These preconceived notions are used to justify the idea that some groups of people because of their common traits and characteristics (as in skin colour) are less worthy compared to other groups.

DISCRIMINATION:

Any action or behaviour that causes a person to be treated in an unfair, hurtful and negative way. People may discriminate because they have a prejudice against someone or because they have a stereotype of that person. People may discriminate without any intention to hurt someone but someone may still be hurt and disadvantaged by another person's actions and behaviour.

HUMAN RIGHTS CODE (from Section 15):

1. Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.
2. Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program, or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.

3. This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

– REGULATION –

1. REPORTING ALLEGED RACIAL INCIDENTS

- 1.1 It is the responsibility of the Board of Education to continue to promote harmony between peoples in positive ways. When racial incidents are reported to have occurred in our schools, whether they are instigated by students, staff, parents or other members of the community, they must be addressed.
- 1.2 To the victims, the most positive statement that the Board of Education can make is that it will not condone any expression of racial or ethnic-discrimination in any form.
- 1.3 When an offender will not alter his/her behaviour, and continues to demonstrate discrimination of a racial or ethnic nature, more severe disciplinary measures to eliminate such behaviour are necessary, and should be implemented with regard to due process.
 - 1.3.1 Principals/Supervisors will make it clear **at least** annually to their staff that racially and ethnically derogatory terms are not accepted under any circumstances.
 - 1.3.2 Principals/Teachers will make it clear at least annually to their students that racially and ethnically derogatory terms are not accepted under any circumstances.
- 1.4 The following procedures regarding the reporting alleged racial incidents are to be followed.
 - 1.4.1 Racial Incidents
 - 1.4.1 School personnel witnessing any acts of racism or discrimination will take appropriate action consistent with board policy.
 - 1.4.2 Any incident arising that contravenes this policy should be reported to the Principal, Supervisor or designate who shall undertake an investigation. Incidents should be dealt with using discretion and judgment in order to promote understanding and appreciation of differences. Discretion does not extend to either refusing to investigate reports or ignoring any incidents.

- 1.4.3 The Principal, Supervisor or designate will meet with the individual who was discriminated against to ensure that the situation has been resolved.

1.5 Students

- 1.5.1 When resolution of a racial incident is not possible and/or in the event of recurrence of such incidents, the Principal or designate involved is to arrange for a meeting with the offending student and his/her parents.
- 1.5.2 If there are further occurrences of such incidents, or if the offence is deemed to be sufficiently serious, the offending student/s should be dealt with under school district suspension policy 2-330.

1.6 Employees

- 1.6.1 An employee who repeatedly demonstrates racial or ethnic discrimination or who acts in a discriminatory manner without regard for board policy shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the School Act and/or his or her Collective Agreement
- 1.6.2 Any employee of the Vancouver Island North School District, upon observing or experiencing what he/she believes to be a form of racial/ethnic prejudice, is directed to inform the alleged offender that his/her actions appear to be contrary to board policy.

2. CURRICULUM AND STUDENT PROGRAMS

- 2.1 The board recognizes the school's responsibility in assisting students to develop a strong sense of self-esteem and pride in their own cultural heritage, as well as an appreciation for the backgrounds of others.
- 2.2 The board supports and encourages the use of appropriate aboriginal curriculum and resources at all schools and grade levels.
- 2.3 Efforts will be made to help students develop cross-cultural competencies consisting of skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed to function in the larger community while retaining an appreciation for their own background.
- 2.4 Schools will encourage activities that promote opportunities for children to learn about their own heritage and to develop positive attitudes toward Canada's multicultural diversity.
- 2.5 The board supports exchange programs which encourage the acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity.
- 2.6 The board expects that all schools will hold events during the month of October to educate students about this policy.

3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The board will provide annual opportunities for programs in race relations and human rights for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Such professional development activities will endeavour to equip employees with the skills necessary to relate to people of different racial and ethnic origins with knowledge and sensitivity.

4. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- 4.1 The board encourages the full participation of parents and students of **any** ethnic background in the life of their school.
- 4.2 Schools will seek to develop ways in which the school and community can cooperate to cultivate multicultural harmony.
- 4.3 The board encourages cooperation with other agencies in the promotion of multicultural awareness.
- 4.4. The board will engage in consultation and ongoing partnership with First Nations communities through the First Nations Education Council.

5. HIRING PRACTICES

- 5.1 The board recognizes multicultural sensitivity as one of the important criteria to be used in the process of staff selection, and will seek to hire staff who:
 - 5.1.1. demonstrate a strong sense of self-esteem and pride in their own cultural heritage as well as an appreciation of the background of others
 - 5.1.2 have a positive and accepting attitude toward the concept of a racially and culturally diverse society with equal rights and opportunities for all
 - 5.1.3 understand and are sensitive to individuals regardless of race or ethnicity
 - 5.1.4 demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of First Nations children and children of other visible and ethnic minority groups