

SOGI-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION **RESOURCE GUIDE**



DEVELOPED BY THE BC K-12 SOGI COLLABORATIVE

SOGI EDUCATION.ORG



**THANKS
TO THE BC
K-12 SOGI
COLLABORATIVE**

The Collaborative is made of representatives from the following education partners in public and independent education in BC who all contributed to the creation of this resource.

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With higher levels of discrimination and bullying, and lower levels of family, school, and community support, LGBTQ youth face higher risks for significant health challenges, including suicidal thoughts and attempts, and problem substance use. However, when LGBTQ youth experience safe and supportive schools and families, they are much less likely to report these health challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this **SOGI-Inclusive Education Resource Guide** is to concisely share practices recommended by educators who have been actively supporting students of all Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities (SOGI) for years. The BC K-12 SOGI Collaborative prioritized the development of the resource guide to support SOGI Leads and all contributed and provided substantial input.

This Resource Guide builds on the [BC Ministry of Education SOGI Policy Guide](#). While the Policy Guide focused on *what* to include, this Resource Guide provides many more details on *how* to implement and support SOGI-inclusive education efforts. This document brings together ideas gathered from meetings of the BC K-12 SOGI Collaborative, six Dialogue Circles attended by a vast range of educators and stakeholders, and input from over 2,500 SOGI Leads who, both directly and indirectly, provide feedback to ARC staff. Although written by the SOGI 1 2 3 team, the thoughts and recommendations came from these generous contributors.



The Resource Guide is broken down into six sections that SOGI-inclusive educators and members of the BC K-12 SOGI Collaborative saw as the priority needs for in-depth exploration, which are:

Policies and Procedures

Building Effective Policies and Procedures that Work Together

SOGI Teams and Committees

A Collaborative Approach to SOGI-Inclusive Education

Professional Development

A Holistic Approach to SOGI Pro-D and Ongoing Learning

Students in Transition

Facilitating a Student-Centred Support Plan

Washrooms and Changerooms

Short, Mid, and Long-Term Considerations

Rainbow Displays

Creating an Impact with your Rainbow Display

While all important, the first two are foundational building blocks that support the other four. Each section also offers a framework for how to put them to use in the form of consistent sub-sections:

1. Students' Rights & SOGI-Inclusive Policies & Procedures

2. School Leadership Planning

3. Student Dialogue

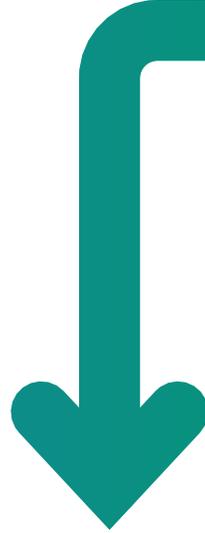
4. Student Support Team

5. Implementation

Student-centric learning and support is at the core of what great educators do every day, and the resource guide will support their work when considering all of these aspects of SOGI-inclusive education. This resource guide is based on the educators' community of learning approach and, as such, will continue to evolve with educators' ongoing feedback and development. SOGI 1 2 3 offers more peer-to-peer educator resources at sogieducation.org.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Effective SOGI-inclusive education takes into consideration a combination of policies and procedures. Policies provide explicit standards of practice; procedures direct the “how to” aspects of day-to-day operations. It is up to each school or district to determine what combination of the two are needed.



BUILDING EFFECTIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT WORK TOGETHER



When building or reviewing policies and/or procedures, consider these five phases of the process:

1. Students' Rights & SOGI-Inclusive Policies & Procedures

- Review and align with provincial standards and the Human Rights Code where relevant.
- SOGI-inclusive language is evolving, so more regular reviews may be needed compared to other policies and procedures.
- Write clear statements so that staff and students understand both what their rights are, and their responsibilities, including how the actions of educators will be supported.

2. School Leadership Planning

The work must include the top administrators (such as Superintendents, Heads of School, or Principals) and trickle down through to all levels of staff. It must also include the Board, Band Councils, or Trustees, keeping in mind that if they are elected officials, they must respond to public input.

- Ensure that a diversity of speakers and opinions are supported and considered; make a commitment to seek out quieter voices, and perspectives from more marginalized school community members.
- Communicate with and engage early and often with parents and families.
- There will always be variations from district to district or school to school; learn from those with strong industry-leading standards and those who have gone before you.

3. Student Dialogue

- Engage student perspectives early and often. Adults are often more likely to listen to students than to other adults.
- Involve a variety of stakeholders including students, educators, parents, board or trustees, Elders and cultural leaders and community groups. This can be done through a SOGI Committee. *See more on [Page 9](#)*

4. Student Support Team

- Staff must bring the policy to life. Provide SOGI Leads with the capacity and support they need to succeed in their roles.
- Address confidentiality, in particular with regards to parent communication. Parent communication typically falls under educator discretion, especially in younger years. Clear written expectations can support school staff in knowing how to proceed so that school and family are working together whenever possible, while remembering that the responsibility is always to have students' safety come first.

5. Implementation

- It may take time to devise policies and procedures as well as putting them in place. Getting a head start by opening dialogue with key stakeholders will help alleviate the sense of urgency that sometimes comes when issues emerge.
- Communicate with stakeholders, especially parents and students, and groups that have influence over schools such as churches or First Nations Band Councils. It's important to work towards a common understanding of SOGI-inclusive education to support student safety.
- Set goals and make clear commitments. Consider making statements about what will happen rather than what will be attempted. Include what you will do, how you will do it, and what will happen if the efforts fall short.
- Educate all staff. Everyone needs to have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures before they act in order to avoid many potential negative outcomes. These policies and procedures also provide confidence to educators who may be unsure if they can act or what is expected of them. *See more on [Page 11](#)*

Here are some other factors to consider when creating these documents:

- **Language:** Name SOGI specifically. Broad anti-bullying or inclusivity statements can fall short if they are not explicit enough for individual groups or needs.
- **Intersectionality:** Reflect student diversity. Recognize that identities outside of SOGI will have an impact on needs. Indigenous learners, for example, may need explicit reference in order to ensure that equity for those students remains an ongoing priority.
- **Consistency:** Ensure all policies or procedures, not just "The SOGI Policy" are consistent with the SOGI-inclusive education efforts; for example, if another procedure says that an adult of "the same gender" must accompany students on overnight trips, with no consideration for non-binary students, this is a gap that must be addressed.
- **Depth:** Do policies and procedures cover all 10 aspects of the [Ten Key Components of Effective SOGI-Inclusive Policies and Procedures?](#)
- **Commitment:** Make statements about what will happen rather than what will be attempted and be willing to include ambitious targets. Include what you will do, how you will do it, and what will happen if the efforts fall short. This will enable behaviour to match up with policies.
- **Review:** Have a written statement about the regularity of a complete overview.

Robust policies and procedures challenge everyone to do better and don't simply state basic rights. Every community is unique and starting from a different place. Everyone is on their own learning journey. This work is not about completion, but about ongoing improvement and striving to be better. The most important thing is to keep moving forward together.

SOGI TEAMS & COMMITTEES

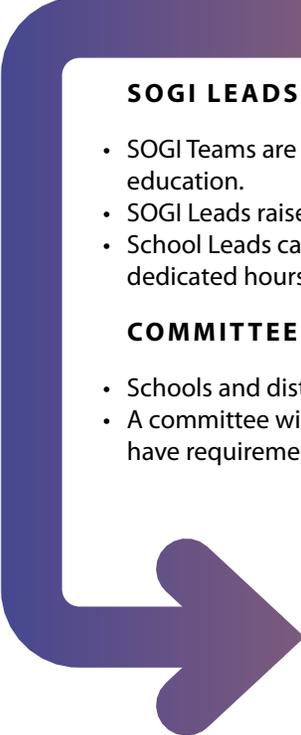
In order to have overall support and buy-in, SOGI-inclusive education must be collaborative, embraced by many people, and there must be support and resources for both direction-setting, and putting that direction into action. When SOGI Teams and Committees are referenced in this guide the definitions of these two groups are:

SOGI LEADS AND TEAMS:

- SOGI Teams are made up of more than one SOGI Lead that are working together to further the progress of SOGI-inclusive education.
- SOGI Leads raise awareness about SOGI by sharing, implementing, and developing SOGI-inclusive practices and initiatives.
- School Leads can be any staff within the school system while District Leads are appointed by the district and ideally have dedicated hours.

COMMITTEES

- Schools and districts may have informal working groups, advisory committees, official committees, or standing committees
- A committee will have an explicit mandate, (for example, to support the creation or implementation of the policy), and may have requirements about which stakeholders must be present.



A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO SOGI-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



The role of both SOGI Teams and Committees can encompass these five phases:

1. Students' Rights & SOGI-Inclusive Policies & Procedures

- Be clear on how the group supports the creation, review, or implementation of policies or procedures.
- Be aware of, and invite collaboration with, other teams or allies who may be working to achieve similar goals such as Indigenous education or other social justice working groups

2. School Leadership Planning

- Establish and reflect on your purpose. Are formal Terms of Reference needed? If so, how often will they be updated? Do you have goals and/or a work plan in place?
- Consider a systemic scan of the school or district environment to understand both what is working well and what needs exist. Pay particular attention to students who face intersecting equity concerns such as Indigenous learners or other racialized students.
- Implicit and explicit power both play a role. Those that have the power at the start – typically adults– need to direct their efforts to share their power. Create a plan on how to share decision-making power, especially before engaging with more marginalized youth.

3. Student Dialogue

- As always, ensure students feel supported and have a voice, and that they are invited to participate in meaningful way. For example, there could be roles for youth on the SOGI Team or Committee, or there could be a Team or Committee made up exclusively of youth who inform the work that adults undertake.
- Ask staff who work directly with students about who would feel comfortable at the table, what they need in order to participate, and to ensure a variety of voices are present.
- Work together to define the area of focus: diversity, inclusion, equity, 2SLGBTQ+, SOGI, Social Justice, Human Rights? There are pros and cons to all types of language.
- Ask students what they need or what they hope to see changed. Then, work together to see what can be done, what are the barriers, and how they can be overcome. Avoid the trap of assuming that educators already know what students need.

4. Student Support Team

- Recognize that members of the team are coming together with different life experiences and are at different stages of their SOGI-inclusive journey.
- In order to learn, there needs to be room for people to make mistakes. Agree as a team on how each of you will respond when mistakes happen in order to support 2SLGBTQ+ team members or others who may be negatively impacted by them.
- A discussion of privilege and marginalization may help increase everyone's ability to understand and support students of all experiences and backgrounds.
- Having adults (whether a staff member or a community member) who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ in the group is meaningful. Supportive elders can be similarly impactful.
- Reflect on the important role of allies and ensure that they have the information they need to fully participate.
- Regularly remind team members about their shared goal to support all students.

5. Implementation

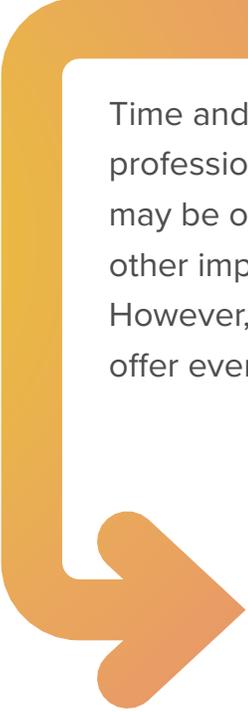
- Create space for people to have open dialogue, be respectful and sincere, and allow the conversation to happen naturally while expecting people to move forward.
- Do the work in a way that works in your community – for example, First Nations or Faith-based schools may have different conversations than a public school.
- Reflect on whether or not complacency is a concern. The work can become harder to maintain once the initial energy has faded. Examples of ongoing work projects are:
 - ▶ *Reviewing and reflecting on the role of the team or committee*
 - ▶ *Professional development for educators*
 - ▶ *Working with parents and members of the community to educate them about what SOGI 1 2 3 is and isn't.*
 - ▶ *Increasing direct support for students*

In combination, both formal committees and SOGI Teams can ensure district and school goals are reached. The work of SOGI-inclusive education must be done as a team. It is more effective when SOGI Leads have support teams around them, and if the work is shared then it will continue if an individual champion moves on to a different role.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing learning for educators will continue to be a focus of SOGI-inclusive education as it remains a new topic for many; even those who are well-versed need ongoing learning to stay current with the ever-evolving needs of all students.

Time and resources are consistently a barrier to having adequate and wide-reaching professional development on any subject. When a SOGI Pro-D session is offered, it may be one in a multitude of choices that teachers are presented with alongside many other important sessions. There are many competing priorities during Pro-D sessions. However, district or school-wide sessions, as well as creative and holistic learning, can offer everyone opportunities to learn more about SOGI.



LEVERAGING RESOURCES & SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SOGI PRO-D AND ONGOING LEARNING



When considering what learning opportunities exist for the school or district, reflect on:

1. Students' Rights & SOGI-Inclusive Policies & Procedures

- Include a note in the policies & procedures explicitly about learning. This can also help make funds available and remind committees to pay attention to professional learning.
- Rights and policies will influence priorities. There are a very limited number of opportunities to address the whole school or the whole district and this relies on priorities and funding.

2. School Leadership Planning

- Being creative and having options outside of official Pro-D days is necessary to create wide-reaching and sustained change.
- Make statements about inclusion regularly, not just when a new situation arises such as a student transitioning within the school. Use newsletters, staff meetings, school displays, and other communication channels to inform and educate the whole school community including parents and families.

3. Student Dialogue

- Students can provide direction for professional development to educators. *Read more in section #3, [Page 10](#).*
- Create opportunities for students or families to share their experiences and perspectives with educators. For example could include:
 - ▶ *Students hosting a "Lunch & Learn" for teachers*
 - ▶ *A video for school staff created by the GSA*
 - ▶ *Student-created display or posters designed for educators to learn more*

4. School Support Team

- The SOGI Lead roles discussed in the previous section on Committees and Teams encourages there to be at least one SOGI champion within each school and/or district.
- This successful model allows educators to have easy access to someone that they can refer to for day-to-day learning, outside of formal Pro-D offerings.
- Ensure that SOGI Leads are not the only person discussing the topic and instead are working alongside every educator who is expected to make their own work more SOGI-inclusive.

5. Implementation

- Integrate SOGI into all Pro-D sessions, as opposed to just having a one-time SOGI lesson. Regular and consistent collaboration helps us move out of compartmentalization, and professional learning in other key areas such as Indigenous Education may intersect with learning about SOGI.
- Promote Post-Secondary Institution opportunities such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), the SOGI Summer Institute offered by UBC, or other learning options for those who are willing or able to put in time outside of regular school hours.
- Include SOGI in the training and onboarding for new staff.
- Have a five-minute standing agenda item on staff meetings for quick updates and How To's. Another option is to include it at the start of the school year for All-Staff meetings.
- Create opportunities for professional collaboration so that all types of educators can learn from, and with, their peers.
- British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) has many free resources such as PDFs and other online resources, as well as workshops with SOGI content where they can send a facilitator.
- Promote lesson plans from TeachBC or sogieducation.org.
- Inquire about SOGI content at your professional association conferences and AGMs.
- Look to other systems of support that already exist within schools and districts and use them to increase SOGI knowledge. For example:
 - ▶ *Teacher Inquiry Project grants (BCTF)*
 - ▶ *Integration with the Adaptive Schools Initiative*
 - ▶ *Connecting with mentorship networks for new educators*
 - ▶ *Participating in a funded leadership program, with SOGI as a focus.*

The majority of educators understand that ongoing learning is needed in order to create a more SOGI-inclusive school environment. Some may want things to stay the same or assume that what worked for them is still working, as opposed to having the perspective that education can be used as a tool for positive social change. These educators can be encouraged to consider a new perspective and embrace SOGI-inclusive education.

SUPPORTING STUDENT TRANSITIONS

For the purposes of this guide, we are using the following definitions:

Gender Identity: One's internal and psychological sense of oneself as a man, woman, both, in-between, neither, or another understanding of gender.

Gender Expression: How one outwardly shows gender; i.e., through name, pronoun, style of dress, hair style, etc.

Gender Affirming: Describes actions, behaviours or supports that validate someone's gender identity (i.e. referring to a student using gender affirming language).

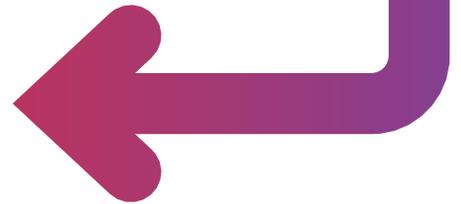
Transition: Refers to the process during which people may change their gender expression and/or bodies. The ways a person may transition can loosely be understood within three areas:

1. Social Transition – name and pronoun change, wardrobe or hairstyle, legal ID, etc.
2. Medical Transition – including hormonal therapy
3. Surgical Transition – including gender affirming surgeries

When supporting a student in transition, this guide considers only Social Transition as other types of transition (medical, surgical) are outside of the responsibility of schools.

TO LEARN MORE,
VISIT QMUNITY'S
QUEER GLOSSARY
AVAILABLE HERE.

FACILITATING A
STUDENT-CENTRED
SUPPORT PLAN



What can educators do to facilitate a supportive transition for students in schools? Here are five phases to consider when ensuring that the school-based plan is student-centred:

1. Students' Rights & SOGI-Inclusive Policies & Procedures

- The [B.C. Human Rights Code](#) protects against discrimination based on "gender identity and expression".
- It is important to be informed on relevant policies and procedures and use them as a guiding tool in supporting a student in transition.
- Including supportive parents in a school transition plan is the ideal. If a student is coming to educators without family support, the student's safety is the most important priority.

2. School Leadership Planning

- Proactively plan and communicate what supports are available.
- Students may not have the confidence to ask for what they need. Being explicit about what's available to all students makes it easier for them.
- Ensure your plan considers multiple aspects of students' school experience including diversity and intersecting identities.
- Have a plan for updating tracking systems such as MyEd.

3. Student Dialogue

- Name – If there is a name change, how will it be used? Where will it be written down? Where is it found digitally? Will it be communicated at home?
- Pronoun – Who will use it? Will it be written down? What official gender will be on file?
- What level of privacy and confidentiality is expected?
- Does the student have a supportive home environment?
- If a student speaks up at school before home, follow up questions may include:

- ▶ *Have you had conversations at home?*
- ▶ *If so, what response did you receive?*
- ▶ *If not, what approach were you planning? Do you need any support?*
- ▶ *If a student does not have support at home, they should have the right to confidentiality from the school regardless of age, although informed consent will look different depending on the age of the student.*

- What washrooms/change rooms would you prefer to use? See [Page 16](#) for additional information
- What gender-segregated activities (i.e. sports, PE) will you participate in?
- When planning an event outside of the school such as an overnight trip, create a plan to support students' needs and safety.

4. Student Support Team

- Engage other staff to provide necessary support to the student while being intentional about what is being shared.
- When informing others about a student's transition, discuss with the student first whenever possible. For example, if a student confides in a teacher, are they expected to bring in counselling support? Mental health supports can be a rewarding and sometimes necessary service that students may not be aware is available or needed. Alternatively, transitioning could be misinterpreted as being a 'mental health issue' that requires immediate medical support.
- Ensure that all staff have the level of information that they need to know. This may include Indigenous Support Workers or Indigenous Education Principals, education assistants, secretarial staff, supervisory staff, and custodians as well as teachers and administrators. Ideally it would include parents or family in some way.
- Follow up questions about communication may include:
 - ▶ *Who needs to be told? How do you want this information to be shared?*
 - ▶ *When will staff and students be told? Do you want to be present when the information is shared, or take time off and return as your true self with a new name/pronoun?*
 - ▶ *Does the student want to designate a "spokesperson" to direct questions to? Or, do they want to answer questions themselves? Or, a combination of both?*
 - ▶ *How does the student want mistakes to be corrected, such as when people don't use the new name or pronoun?*

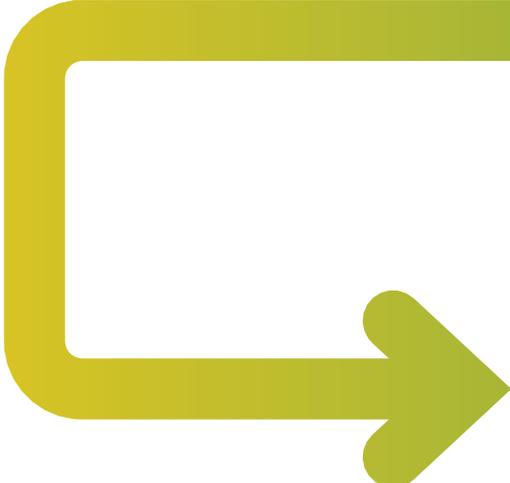
5. Implementation

- Guiding documents that are accessible to supportive educators may include:
 - ▶ *Student support plan check list*
 - ▶ *Name and gender marker technology check list*
- Implementation will always be guided by student dialogue. An educator's responsibility is to have the student's needs come first, with the support of parents as the goal.
- These plans do not all have to be static and may likely evolve. Ongoing check-ins may help, and some decisions can be left fluid.

Every student's identity is unique, so it's not surprising that this is also true for gender expression or identity. Educators are professionals who work to consider students' needs daily and offering gender affirming actions in schools is no different. Proactive dialogue and establishing support resources, such as those outlined above, will positively impact all students' school experience.

WASHROOMS & CHANGE ROOMS

When it comes to washrooms and change rooms, each school and district is at a different place in their journey, and there are many factors at play that can impact your approach to creating safe and accommodating spaces for all students. It may take time to make significant changes to facilities, or it may be relatively simple and straightforward. Most schools' facilities were built during an era to separate men and women. As access and inclusion continue to evolve along with changing social values, there is an increasing shift towards washrooms and change rooms that are more inclusive. These are often referred to as universal or all gender washroom/change rooms.



SHORT, MID, AND
LONG-TERM
CONSIDERATIONS

[CLICK HERE
FOR EXAMPLES
FROM BC
ARCHITECTS
ON WASHROOM
DESIGN](#)



Consider these five phases when evaluating the needs of students, faculty, and visitors in creating safe and SOGI-inclusive facilities.

1. Students' Rights & SOGI-Inclusive Policies & Procedures

- Everyone has the right to use a washroom that is safe and free from harassment at school.
- Part of addressing any concerns that may arise is helping identify where the concern may be coming from.

2. School Leadership Planning

- Consider accessibility – Are single stall washrooms open and available without the need for a key? If there is only one, where is it located? Convenient access matters and encourages students to actually use the available facilities.
- Will the student get in trouble for being late for class because they were changing on the other side of the school?
- Reflect on budget and the potential for a feasibility study to understand the cost of changes. Have other schools completed a study that could help you get started?

3. Student Dialogue

- Have students thought about what ideal solutions might look like? Do they understand what options exist?
- Include students in the design process when making design changes. What would they like to see? Present a few options and solicit their feedback.

4. Student Support Team

- What do students' support system look like...both inside and outside of the school?
- What type of questions might students encounter when using the facilities? What support exists to reinforce their right to use that facility?
- Are there any concerns at a school or administrator level as it pertains to potential bullying or harassment?

5. Implementation

- Once students' needs are understood, there are many possible accommodations.
- Depending on time, budget, and need, the following may all be options:
 - ▶ *Update and standardize signs. This is both cost-effective and encourages consistent experiences for all.*
 - ▶ *Ensure single-stall facilities are accessible to all genders.*
 - ▶ *Provide alternative private and safe change room spaces.*
 - ▶ *Retrofit current facilities.*
 - ▶ *During major renovations or new builds, design universal washrooms and change rooms.*
 - ▶ *Students simply using the spaces that align with their gender identity.*
- More details can be found in the BC resource [Designing for Inclusivity](#)

Clearly communicate who can use which facility, especially if there are any changes. Stakeholder groups that should be informed about these changes include:

STAFF

- How is information being shared with the school staff?
- Is the "staff washroom" made available for student use? If so, are there any considerations that need to be made such as longer breaks?
- Are the school staff prepared to support students?
- Are the school staff prepared to respond to any parent inquiries that may arise?

PEERS

- What expectations are being set around how this student will be treated by other students, and what the repercussions are for bullying or lack of acceptance?
- Is this being positioned to make it available for other students who may not have felt empowered to speak up?
- How will students be supported in managing peer expectations?

PARENT/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Communicate the reasons behind a change, such as how inclusive facilities are better for students, and that student safety is the most important priority, so that people are not creating their own stories about any changes.
- What feedback or questions do you anticipate from parents?
- There might be a need to be prepared to have information in other languages or consider other cultural practices when engaging with parents and/or the community.

Demand for these forward-thinking designs is growing; what's good for one student is often good for many. Safe and barrier-free facilities benefit all students, in particular those who have accessibility requirements, or who are looking for some additional privacy for any number of reasons, including SOGI.

RAINBOW DISPLAYS

In recent years rainbow displays have become increasingly popular. They can take many different forms and have the ability to make an impact, both in your school community, and the wider community.

A rainbow display says, “We support you and are inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities at this school.” It signifies that your school is SOGI-inclusive and that you are helping to end the oppression of 2SLGBTQ+ people and children of 2SLGBTQ+ parents. You are committing to educate the school community about homophobia and transphobia, speak out about homophobia and transphobia in your school or community, and promote equal respect and treatment for everyone. This also means that you are pledging to make school SOGI-inclusive by offering a supportive space for students to ask questions and express their concerns.



CREATING AN IMPACT WITH YOUR RAINBOW DISPLAY



There are many fun ways for your school to show support for the 2SLGBTQ+ community (i.e. rainbow flags, 2SLGBTQ+ community groups, queer artists and artwork, banners, etc.), but here are some considerations when starting out:

1. Students' Rights & SOGI-Inclusive Policies & Procedures

- Displays can bring policies and procedures to life so that students see themselves reflected in their school environment.
- This may include other aspects of student identities, and displays may reflect the intersection of SOGI and other diverse cultural representations.

2. School Leadership Planning

- There is a responsibility that comes with displaying rainbows on school property. If a school displays a rainbow flag to show that they are inclusive, but the supports aren't there, then that can actually do more harm than good.
- The act, or gesture, to display the rainbow, comes with responsibility and needs to be authentic.
- Having, and involving, a SOGI Lead is also vital to the success of a rainbow display.
- If your community and/or school would like to provide more visible support, especially pertaining to bigger investments such as crosswalks or sidewalks, here are some considerations:

- ▶ *Have you connected with your local city/municipality office to see if they have any plans in the works?*
- ▶ *Is there a "limit" on how many will be permitted on public property, or a finite amount of money dedicated for this purpose?*
- ▶ *Have you sought advice and help from your local business improvement associations and/or community groups (local pride societies, etc.)?*
- ▶ *What type of visibility are you hoping to achieve? Have you considered vehicle traffic, foot traffic, as well as lines of sight?*

3. Student Dialogue

- Mandating that every school display a rainbow can be interpreted as being inauthentic. Having a staff and student-driven process allows for greater collaboration with all stakeholders, and leads to a more authentic outcome.
- At one school, their GSA created their own "Ally" badge and assembled a list of what it means to them for an educator to be an ally. The educators were asked to pledge to follow the list of recommendations if they were to put up the badge. Not only was this an engaging activity for the GSA, but an opportunity for students to put into their own words how they want the adults in their lives to show support for them.

4. Student Support Team

- What are you doing to ensure that you are hearing from all the relevant voices at the table, as well as the ones that may not be represented? How is space made, and held, for voices that have been historically marginalized in education (i.e. Indigenous voices).
- What are cultural considerations & religious symbols currently used in your area? What are the practices for each?
- How will the purpose of the display be communicated to staff, students, parents, and the broader community? How will this continue to be communicated so that the purpose holds true?
- At one district, where plans for rainbow crosswalks were already in place, a small team of School Leads came together to brainstorm and created "Rainbow Kits." They asked the principal of each school to speak in celebration of the crosswalk when it was unveiled, and the SOGI Lead at each school to speak at a staff meeting about the contents of the Kit and how they could engage with it. Their ideas included activities about the history of the Rainbow Flag and the meaning of the colours, age-appropriate books, and posters to put up in the school.

5. Implementation

- Take this occasion to educate, acknowledge and even celebrate the 2SLGBTQ+ progress that's already been made, and to reflect on the work that still needs to be done. Why not document this moment so that in a few years, your school can reflect back on when or why this was done, or what it stood for?
- Decide what will be a permanent or a temporary display, for example during Pride Month. There are pros and cons to both options and both can be implemented simultaneously.
- You may not always get it right, but because you are trying, you will be responsive to the times when you might fall short.
- BCTF offers helpful resources on how to be an Ally such as the [safe place for 2SLGBTQ+ people sticker](#), and other [2SLGBTQ+](#) related information.

School cultures change with new students, staff, and administration, so it is important to continue the conversation about not just how/where to display a rainbow, but also what is the ongoing work, why it's there, what it means to staff and students, and even whether it has become meaningful.



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