

# Ministry of Education

## Policy Statement

### Student Alliances for Gender and Sexual Diversity in Saskatchewan Schools

**Number:** #GSD 2015

**Authority:** This policy statement is developed in accordance with the rights and responsibilities relating to children and youth articulated in the following legal and aspirational documents:

#### Legal documents

- *The Canadian Chart of Rights and Freedoms* (Section 15)
- *The Canadian Human Rights Act* (Section 2)
- *The Criminal Code of Canada* (Sections 318(4) and 718.2)
- *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*
- *The Saskatchewan Education Act*

#### Aspirational Documents

- *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Articles 1,2 and 3)
- *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Articles 2, 11, 15, 24 and 31)
- *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Articles 2, 15 and 19)

In accordance, the Government of Saskatchewan opposes all forms of prejudice, bullying and discrimination on the basis of students' and/or teachers actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

#### **Intent:**

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to ensuring safe school environments where all students feel included, protected and respected.

A student first approach means providing support for and meeting the needs of each and every student. Meeting the needs of all Saskatchewan children and youth is a shared responsibility. The Ministry of Education provides curricula, policy frameworks, guidelines and funding to support schools, while Boards of Education develop policies for school divisions.

School divisions create policies that protect the rights, safety and freedoms of students. It is important for school divisions to regularly evaluate and update existing policies to reflect safety and acceptance for sexually and/or gender diverse students and their allies.

School divisions are encouraged to develop clear, safe-school policies that explicitly include alliances, groups or clubs for students who want to work to support each other and to create safe, caring and inclusive spaces for students who are gender and/or sexually diverse and their allies. These alliances also create welcoming and respectful environments that address heterosexism, homophobia and other forms of related discrimination. Language used in policy development should specifically include the words “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Straight, Two-Spirit and Questioning” to be inclusive of all students. Students will not be expected to identify their orientation or gender while participating in an alliance.

An alliance or club should be named by the students themselves.

### **Policy Statement:**

The Ministry of Education encourages and supports school division discussions, policy development and safe school practices for all students.

The ministry expects that all school divisions will respond positively to students’ requests to establish a student alliance for gender and sexual diversity in their school.

In the event any student’s request for an alliance is denied, the ministry will work with the school division to ensure that the needs of each individual student are being met.

**Definitions:** See the support document *Deepening the Discussion: Gender and Sexual Diversity* “Definitions to Assist in Professional Discussions”.

### **Additional references:**

The Ministry of Education is in the process of preparing an online comprehensive resource document to assist school divisions to create safe and welcoming environments for all students and to respond to the needs of students who are gender and/or sexually diverse, including details of how students can initiate a student alliance on gender and sexual diversity, with the help of a supportive adult. The ministry will let all partners know when the resource is available.

For additional resources, please visit the [Be Kind Online](#) website.