

Lethbridge School Division Policy and Procedure 502.2
Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression

Background to Policy 502.2

Fall 2015

During a review of the impending Policy 502.1, *Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments*, Division School Council recommended that it was in the best interest of students to develop a separate policy for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression. It was expressed that a separate policy would provide both recognition and safety for a vulnerable group of students. The Board felt this may be a policy they could support and began to explore what a separate policy would look like. This recommendation was prior to Policy 502.1 approval in December 2015.

November 2015 to January 2016

Draft policy developed and put on website for feedback from parents, staff, and community members.

January 19, 2016: Board hosted parents' session. Approximately 130 in attendance provided feedback regarding the draft policy.

Brought to Policy Advisory Committee before Board first reading

Board Meeting February 23rd First Reading of the policy passed. During public forum individuals represented a breadth of perspectives from full support to no support of the policy. A public member presented the Board with a petition of 3,000 + signatures objecting to the policy.

Board passed the following motion: Be it resolved that an elected committee be formed for the purpose of drafting recommendations for the Board regarding Lethbridge School District No. 51 Policy 502.2.

March 23, 2016. Community Meeting organized by the School Board held at Wilson Middle School. Over 1,000 community members in attendance. Opportunity provided to public members to speak from the floor. Opportunity for community members to nominate individuals as candidates for the committee. A slate of nominated candidates was created, and a vote procedure enacted (using same confidential process as a government election with screens, ballots, and ballot boxes). The vote resulted in four members of the community being the elected committee to work with Trustee Jan Foster and Associate Superintendent Wendy Fox on recommendations/ changes to the policy.

April 26, 2016. Board meeting. Policy 502.2 changes based on some recommendations from the committee were presented to the Board. The Board unanimously passed second and third reading.

March 27, 2018. Policy reviewed by Policy Advisory Committee. Policy additions aligning the policy with Section 16.1 of the School Act (Support for Student Organizations). Policy regulation 2.5.5 clarifying communication regarding the student organization added. Revised policy circulated to stakeholders as per the practice of the Policy Advisory Committee (teachers, support staff, parents) for feedback. Revisions approved by the Board.

Background to Procedure 502.2 (Guidelines)

Guidelines: Attending to Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation on Our Schools

The Procedure Guidelines were developed and posted in November 2019.

The Procedure Guidelines were updated in December 2022. The document underwent minor changes. The most expansive area of change fell under the definitions.

Procedure 502.2

Guidelines: Attending to Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation on Our Schools

1. Purpose of the Procedure Guidelines:

A procedure, when attached to a policy, serves as a set of steps or guidelines that individuals or groups of individuals should follow to implement and comply with the policy. Procedures help ensure that policies are effectively implemented and consistently interpreted. They bridge the gap between policy intent and operational execution.

The purpose and application of the Guidelines: Attending to Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation in Our Schools, unchanged from the original 2019 document, is stated in the 2022 document on page 4.

- These guidelines are intended to assist schools in creating welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environments for all students, families, and school staff. Although there are many aspects in these guidelines that influence all three of these groups, the primary focus of these guidelines is to address the ways in which we might best support students.
- Decisions related to supporting students should be made on a case-by-case basis, recognizing each individual's uniqueness.
- Not all requests are accommodated in the same way as there are many factors that contribute to the collaborative decision-making process. When the unique needs of individual students are considered, it is possible to provide accommodations through a process that is respectful and affirming.
- The guidelines set out in this document are intended to support best practices and decision making related to sexual and gender minority students. The intention of this work is to support members in Lethbridge School Division community in our shared obligation to attend to the equality and dignity of all individuals inclusive of their gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

2. Comparison between the Guidelines first produced in January, 2019 and the Guidelines updated September, 2022

- 2.1 Introduction – no change
- 2.2 Purpose – no change
- 2.3 Definitions – Changes are at the end in a chart
- 2.4 Gender Diversity Overview – no change
- 2.5 Privacy and Confidentiality (2nd paragraph of the section)

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| <p>2019 p8</p> <p>Some transgender and gender non-conforming students are not open about their gender identity at school, at home or in the community for a variety of reasons. Similarly, many students are not open about their sexual orientation. Given the sensitivity related to one’s gender identity and sexual orientation, should a student disclose that they are a sexual or gender minority to a Lethbridge School District No. 51 staff member, the information should be held in confidence. Unless a student provides permission to share this information, the staff member should not disclose this information to anyone else, including other staff members and parents/guardians.</p> <p>By far the majority of Lethbridge School District No. 51 students who have made a disclosure to staff related to gender identity or sexual orientation have already had conversations with their parents/guardians. Many students, particularly if they are seeking accommodations such as name/pronoun changes, approach the school with their families to have these conversations.</p> <p>When school staff members contact the parent/guardians of a transgender or gender non-conforming student, whenever possible, the student should first be consulted, in private, about how they would like the school staff member to refer to them (name and pronouns).</p> | <p>2022 (p. 8)</p> <p>Most Lethbridge School Division students who have made a disclosure to staff related to gender identity or sexual orientation have already had conversations with their parents/guardians. Many students, particularly if they are seeking accommodations such as name/pronoun changes, approach the school with their families to have these conversations. Nonetheless, the student should first be consulted in private before any school staff member contacts their parent/guardians. Until consultation has occurred, an avoidance of using pronouns should be practiced</p> |
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2.6 Accommodating Gender and Sexually Diverse Students – no change

2.7 Name Changes (2022, p. 11)

Section is quite lengthy and detailed in both 2019 and 2022. In 2022, added clarification regarding AKA/preferred name and permission process to match the provincial student information system.

2.8 Pronouns No change

2.9 Changes in Gender Identification

A detailed section, one aspect of it was changed.

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| <p>2019 (p. 13) For youth, ages 12 to 17, making a change to the sex designation on the Alberta birth certificate currently requires an application from the parent/guardian. For minors, 11 years of age or younger, an application is required and must be accompanied by a statement from a registered physician, psychologist, social worker or registered nurse, indicating that the individuals' gender identity does not match the sex designation provided at birth.</p> | <p>2022 (p. 13) Making a change to the sex designation on the Alberta birth certificate currently requires a letter from a physician or psychologist indicating that the individuals' gender identity does not match the sex designation provided at birth. Students and families may or may not choose to do this while the student is still in school.</p> |
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2.10 Washrooms and Changerooms – No change

2.11 Physical Education and Sports

Added to the section (p. 15) in 2022

“Lethbridge School Division supports the provision of co-educational Physical Education and Wellness classes.

2.12 Overnight Trips

Added to section (p. 15) in 2022

“...students are ALWAYS included in school outings...”

2.13 Gay-Straight Alliances

Added to section (p. 16) in 2022

“...as supported by Section 35.1 of the Alberta Education Act, which affirms support for student organizations.”

2.14 Minimizing Gender-Segregated Activities

Added to section (p. 17) in 2022

“Implementation of the outcomes within the programs of study should promote inclusion, and it is important to note that none of them require gender segregation.”

2.15 Student Attire

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| <p>2019 p. 17 Students are free to dress and present themselves in a manner that reflects their gender identity, gender expression, personal taste and comfort. Expectations related to student dress should not be gender specific (e.g., girls must wear skirts for a formal performance while boys are allowed to wear dress pants). All students are expected to maintain standards related to appropriate attire (e.g., no offensive words or visuals on clothing, clothing that appropriately covers the body, etc.).</p> | <p>2022 p. 17 Students are free to dress and present themselves in a manner that reflects their gender identity, gender expression, personal taste, and comfort. Expectations related to student dress should not be gender specific (e.g., girls must wear skirts for a formal performance while boys are allowed to wear dress pants)</p> |
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2.16 Safety – No change

2.17 Inclusive Curriculum, Resources and Access to Information
New in 2022 (p. 18)

The existence of sexual and gender diverse people is often omitted or only included in a highly stigmatized way in classrooms, as well as in the media and popular culture. The lack of positive acknowledgment of sexual and gender diversity or queer history makes it difficult for gender and sexual diverse or questioning young people to feel that they have a place in the world. The omission of these important groups from curriculum, programs of study, resources, and assessments creates a misconception among many students that sexually and gender diverse people do not exist or are in some way inferior. Therefore, Lethbridge School Division staff members are encouraged to challenge gender and sexual orientation stereotypes and integrate positive content into teaching and learning on a regular basis.

2.18 Family Members – no change

2.19 System Supports and Contacts – no change

2.20 Roles and Responsibilities – no change

2.21 Gender Unicorn – no change

2.22 Ministry and Program Policy Memorandums

2.23 Guiding Conversation Questions
Removed from 2022

2.24 Terms and Definitions (pp 4-7 in 2022 Guidelines)

The Terminology Source used in 2019 is the same as the source used in 2022: The Alberta GSA Network - a collective of resources specific to Alberta K-12 students, teachers, and school staff. The Alberta GSA Network is jointly funded by the Government of Alberta’s Ministry of Human Services and the Ministry of Education.

The definitions were updated according to the changes in the source document:

| | 2019 Definition | 2022 Definition |
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| Ally | Someone who advocates and supports a community other than their own. Allies are not part of the communities they help. A person should not self-identify as an ally but show that they are one through action. | A person, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, who supports and stands up for the human and civil rights of sexual and gender diverse individuals. |
| Asexual | The lack of a sexual attraction, and one identifying with this orientation. This may be used as an umbrella term for other emotional attractions such as demisexual. | A person who is not interested in, or does not desire sexual activity, either within or outside of a relationship. |
| Binary | Used as an adjective to describe the genders female/male or woman/man. Since the binary genders are the only ones recognized by general society as being legitimate, they enjoy an (unfairly) privileged status. | A cisgender or transgender individual whose gender identity is either male or female. |
| Non-Binary | Preferred umbrella term for all genders other than female/male or woman/man, used as an adjective (e.g. Jesse is a nonbinary person). Not all nonbinary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as nonbinary. Sometimes (and increasingly), nonbinary can be used to describe the aesthetic/ presentation/ expression of a cisgender or transgender person. | Individuals who identify as non-binary identify as neither fully male nor female, and may identify as both, neither, a third gender, a fluid gender or something else entirely. |
| Bisexual | An umbrella term for people who experience sexual and/or emotional attraction to more than one gender (pansexual, fluid, omnisexual, queer, etc). | An individual who is emotionally, sexually and/or physically attracted to both males and females. |
| Cisgender | Adjective that means “identifies as their sex assigned at birth” derived from the Latin word meaning “on the same side.” A cisgender/cis person is not transgender. “Cisgender” does not indicate biology, gender expression, or sexuality/sexual orientation. In discussions regarding trans issues, one would differentiate between women who are trans and women who aren’t by saying trans women and cis women. Cis is not a “fake” word and is not a slur. Note that cisgender does not have an “ed” at the end. | A term for people whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. |
| Consistently Asserted Gender | The gender identity most consistently demonstrated (e.g., this includes things like the name a person chooses, the pronouns they use, the ways in which they dress and act, etc.). | The gender identity most consistently demonstrated (e.g., this includes things like the name a person chooses the pronouns they use, the ways in which they dress and act, etc.). |

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| Gender Diverse/ Gender Variant | An umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth. | An umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity is different from their natal sex. |
| Gender Dysphoria | Emotional discomfort due to internal conflicts between one's gender identity and one's assigned sex at birth. | Severe emotional distress due to internal conflicts between one's gender identity and one's natal sex. |
| Gender Identity | A personal, deeply - felt sense of being male, female, both, neither or something else. Everyone has a gender identity. | A personal, deeply felt sense of being male, female, both, neither or something else. Everyone has a gender identity. |
| Gender Expression | How a person expresses their gender through outward presentation and behaviour (e.g., a person's name, clothing, hair style, body language, mannerisms, etc.). | How a person expresses their gender through outward presentation and behaviour (e.g., a person's name, clothing, hair style, body language, mannerisms, etc.). |
| Gender Fluid | A person who at any time identifies as male, female, neutral or any other non- binary identity or some combination of identities. Their gender identity can vary at random or in response to different circumstances (other terms include multi- gender, non-binary, transgender). | A person who at any time identifies as male, female, neutral or any other non- binary identity or some combination of identities. Their gender identity can vary at random or in response to different circumstances (other terms include multi- gender, non-binary, transgender). |
| Gender Non-Conforming | A person whose behaviours or gender expression falls outside of what is generally considered typical for their assigned sex at birth. | A person whose behaviours or gender expression falls outside of what is generally considered typical for their natal sex. |
| Gender Queer | An umbrella term for those identifying with a gender that is not traditionally male or female. | An umbrella term for those identifying with a gender that is not traditionally male or female. |
| Heterosexism | The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that this is the preferred way of being. Heterosexism is often expressed in subtle forms that go unnoticed by many or unchallenged (e.g., on forms asking for the mother and father's names rather than Parent/Guardian #1 and Parent/Guardian #2). | The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that this is the preferred way of being. Heterosexism is often expressed in subtle forms that go unnoticed by many or unchallenged (e.g., on forms asking for the mother and father's names rather than Parent/Guardian #1 and Parent/Guardian #2). |
| Heterosexual | A person who is emotionally, sexually and physically attracted to someone of the opposite sex. Commonly referred to as "straight". | A person who is emotionally, sexually and physically attracted to someone of the opposite sex. Commonly referred to as "straight." |
| Homophobia | Fear and/or hatred of homosexuality, often exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, bullying and/or acts of violence. | Fear and/or hatred of homosexuality, often exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, bullying and/or acts of violence. |
| Homosexual | A person who is emotionally, sexually and physically attracted to someone of the same sex. Commonly referred to as "gay" or "lesbian". | A person who is emotionally, sexually and/or physically attracted to someone of the same sex. Commonly referred to as "gay" or "lesbian." |
| Intersex | A person born with both male and female sex characteristics (e.g., chromosomes, hormones and/or physical anatomy). | A person born with both male and female sex characteristics (e.g., chromosomes, hormones and/or physical anatomy). |
| Natal Sex | The sex a person is assigned at birth. | The sex a person is assigned at birth. |
| Pansexual | Capable of being attracted to many/any gender(s). Sometimes the term omnisexual is used in the same manner. "Pansexual" is being used more and more frequently as more people acknowledge that gender is not binary. Sometimes, the identity fails to recognize that one cannot know individuals with every existing gender identity. | A person who is emotionally, sexually and/or physically attracted to someone irrespective of their sex, gender identity or gender expression. Many refer to themselves as "gender blind." |

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| Sexual Orientation | A person’s romantic or sexual attraction to a specific gender or genders (e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual, straight, pansexual). Sexual orientation and gender identity are separate, distinct parts of one’s identity (e.g., one can be transgender and identify as gay, straight, bisexual, etc.) | A person’s romantic or sexual attraction to a specific gender or genders (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, straight, pansexual). Sexual orientation and gender identity are separate, distinct parts of one’s identity (e.g., one can be transgender and identify as gay, straight, bisexual, etc.)` |
| Transgender or Trans | A person whose gender identity is different from the assigned sex at birth. This is often used as an umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity or gender expression does not fit into conventional expectations for males and females. We use the term transgender as an expansive and inclusive term in these guidelines to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions. Note that transgender does not have an “ed” at the end. | A person whose gender identity is different from their natal sex. This is often used as an umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity or gender expression does not fit into conventional expectations for males and females. We use the term transgender as an expansive and inclusive term in these guidelines to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions. Note that transgender does not have an “ed” at the end. |
| Transition | The process through which transgender people begin to live as the gender with which they identify rather than the sex assigned at birth. Social transition may include name and pronoun changes, hairstyles, clothing, behaviours/mannerisms, etc. Medical transition may include hormone suppressants to delay puberty, hormone replacement therapy to develop secondary sex characteristics consistent with the individuals’ gender identity, and surgery. Each individual’s transition is deeply personal and unique. | The process through which transgender people begin to live as the gender with which they identify rather than the natal sex. Social transition may include name and pronoun changes, hairstyles, clothing, behaviours/mannerisms, etc. Medical transition may include hormone suppressants to delay puberty, hormone replacement therapy to develop secondary sex characteristics consistent with the individuals’ gender identity, and surgery. Each individual’s transition is deeply personal and unique. |
| Transphobia | Systemic violence against trans people, associated with attitudes such as fear, discomfort, distrust, or disdain. This word is used similarly to homophobia, xenophobia, misogyny, etc. | Fear or hatred of, or violence, harassment or discrimination perpetrated against transgender people. |
| Two-Spirited | An umbrella term indexing various indigenous gender identities in North America. Some Aboriginal people identify themselves as two-spirited rather than as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. | Two-spirit is an umbrella term that refers to a person who identifies as both a feminine and masculine spirit and is used by some Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity. |