



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy Saplings Nature School July 2023

Rationale

Diversity, inclusion and equity practices are based on the principles of respect, acceptance, safety, and equity. This policy complies with government policies, codes of conduct, the BC Human Rights Code and the Independent School Act. SAP Outdoor Association (SAP) and Saplings Nature School will maintain conditions that foster success for all students and promote fair and equitable treatment for all.

SAP and Saplings Nature School recognize that certain groups in our society are treated inequitably and are committed to creating an inclusive and equitable environment for all students, families, and staff. Saplings Nature School and SAP recognizes that there needs to be specific planning to ensure equity for the following students:

These principles include, but are not limited to, the following dimensions of diversity and their intersections: ancestry, culture, dis/ability, ethnicity, gender identity & expression, language, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status

Policy

All members of SAP and Saplings Nature School have the right to expect that policies, regulations, processes, programs, and communication are inclusive and respectful. Consideration will be given to visible and invisible diversities including but not limited to: race, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity & expression, religion, culture and socio-economic status.

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

- **Indigenous Students:** students who self-identify as indigenous.
- **Visible Minorities:** persons, other than indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour
- **Invisible Minorities:** A group whose minority status is not always immediately visible, i.e. whose members are not known to each other, is an unorganized minority group having the same thoughts, culture, creed, race etc.
- **Students with Diversities:** Students who have significant difficulties in accessing the regular curriculum and need targeted support to reach their personal potential. This includes students with significant difficulties in the following domains: intellectual, physical, social & emotional, behaviour, communication, self-determination and for new English language Learners.
- **Gender Identity (refers to one's understanding of their gender):** this is the gender that the student expresses publicly while at school, socializing, accessing services, and in the broader community. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender Expression:** the way in which a person expresses their gender identity, typically through their appearance, dress, and behavior.
- **Sexual Orientation:** is an enduring pattern of romantic or sexual attraction (or a combination of these) to persons of the opposite sex or gender, the same sex or gender, or to both sexes or more than one gender.

There is an expectation that all members of the school community will:

- Adhere to a code of conduct that is educative, preventive, and restorative in practice and response;
- Foster school cultures that are responsive to the diverse social and cultural needs of individuals and groups;
- Understand how the characteristics of diversity impact the access to, and outcomes of, education;
- Recognize the injustice of marginalization and promote human rights; and
- Participate in the ongoing development of practices that promote equitable treatment for everyone, cultivating mutual respect and a sense of belonging.

There is an expectation that specific and intentional planning occurs in order to ensure equity for the following students:

- Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) who experience inequity:
 - As we strive to create racism-free environments in our schools we must recognize that racism is pervasive in our society and present in our schools. Without that recognition, we deny the lived experience of students, staff, and community members. We must ensure that our practices at SAP and Saplings Nature School do not perpetuate stereotyping, discrimination, or inequality. Creating a racism-free environment requires:
 - Knowledge of the stereotype assumptions and practices which can operate in the classroom, hallways and on school grounds (explicit bias);
 - Self-awareness of the ways in which we, as individuals, may perpetuate these stereotype assumptions and how they impact our decisions and actions (implicit bias)
 - Development of skills necessary to challenge racism through the honoring of diversity;
 - Saplings Nature School and SAP personnel will acknowledge Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́lilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations at the opening of important functions;
 - Saplings will ensure that the curriculum continues to provide a program that is above and beyond the requirements of the K-12 provincial curriculum and constantly monitors achievement data to address any areas of inequity:
 - Partnerships are maintained with Indigenous peoples including storytellers, leaders, and elders from the xʷməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́lilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and other Nations and Metis communities and all of our Indigenous families.
- Students with Diversities:
 - Advocate for each student's success through respectful support, recognition of individual learning needs in all domains, and preparation for life-long learning in the development of individual educational or learning plans;
 - Placement in the learning environment that best supports growth to independence;
 - Ensure a collaborative planning model as a means to align our practices to support student learning. This model is meant to assist us both in understanding the complexities and power relations of educational policies and practices, and, at the same time, employ critical approaches to document the interruptions, actions, and movements that continually challenge the dominant forms of policy and practice that generate and/or reproduce inequalities.

- Students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions will have:
 - The right to privacy;
 - The right to determine their own name and pronouns;
 - The right to their gender expression
 - Choices for gender specific (traditional) washrooms as well as gender neutral washrooms when available. Students may choose to use a traditional bathroom based on their lived gender as defined in this policy;
 - Support and advocacy;
 - Education: through providing information, resources etc

The conditions that foster success for all students include the following:

- equitable access to and equitable participation in quality education for all students
- school cultures that value diversity and respond to the diverse social, physical, and cultural needs of the communities they serve
- school cultures that promote understanding of others and respect for all
- learning and working environments that are safe and welcoming, free from discrimination, harassment, and violence
- decision-making processes that give a voice to all members of the school community
- policies and practices that promote fair and equitable treatment

Procedures related to policy

In order to carry out their responsibility to address increasing diversity, educational leaders should examine and have a good working knowledge of the Board of Education and school policies pertaining to Bullying and Harassment prevention and management, Student Code of Conduct, Student Safety and the accompanying procedures and practices. This diversity should be addressed in both the educational and operational aspects of the school. The following steps can guide this examination:

- Leaders should determine if the diverse needs of students and employees are being addressed comprehensively
- Areas that require improvement are identified
- Plans are made for both school board and school-specific changes
- Plans are then implemented
- To be effective, policies, procedures, and practices should be regularly reviewed and communicated