

Statement of Policy

“Our schools share a foundational belief that all children are loved by God, created in God's image, and individually unique. As such, all human beings are inherently sacred and must be treated with dignity and respect. Our schools have a mission to help students grow as children of God in all aspects of their person: physically, academically, socially, emotionally, morally, and spiritually.” (Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association Pastoral Response to Transgender Students, p.1)

Consistent with its mission and vision, the Board of Trustees of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division (“Board”) is committed to fostering communities of faith, love, freedom, and service that inspire hope by encouraging the growth and affirming the dignity of each person in accordance with Board Policy 1 – Educational Commitment.

Rationale

“Every human being has been created by our loving God as a unique person. Every human being is created equal in dignity and human rights. A major part of our Catholic educational tradition is to form our students both in self-awareness of these truths and in respect for all others in accordance with these truths.” (Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association Caring for Students and Staff: Creating an Atmosphere of Trust and Respect around Issues of Sexual Orientation, Appendix A, p.7)

1. GSCS recognizes that students must be respected within a safe, caring, and welcoming school environment. This document is intended to provide guidance for school teams when a student requests a change in preferred name and/or pronouns. It also recognizes the important role that parents and guardians have in supporting their children as they grow and develop: *“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children”* (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2223).
2. This document has been developed to:
 - 2.1. Support and affirm the dignity of all students in every aspect of school life;
 - 2.2. Strengthen respect for human dignity; and
 - 2.3. Provide guidance consistent with the Catholic faith for all staff with respect to gender identity and/or gender expression.
3. Circumstances involving gender identity and/or gender expression, as they affect a student, are to be addressed with a high degree of care and sensitivity.

4. Staff are committed to creating a student learning environment that is safe, caring and committed to the truths and mission of our Catholic faith. To this end, staff may:
 - 4.1. Take into consideration a continuum of supports and services; and
 - 4.2. Collaborate with families and approved community support services.

Authority

- Saskatchewan Human Rights Code
- The Education Act, 1995
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- GSCS Division Code of Conduct

Principles

“Jesus Christ came to call his disciples to live within the reign of God. By imitating Christ, all Christians are to transform this world into a place where the ideals of respect, individual dignity, mutual support, encouragement in learning and personal growth, faith, hope and love give witness to God's loving presence in our midst "on earth as it is in heaven". Our communities, including our schools, are to take this responsibility seriously that we might all be brothers and sisters in Christ, with one Father in heaven. May the Holy Spirit give us the strength and the courage to live this discipleship. We, the Bishops of Saskatchewan, support the staff and students of our Catholic Schools in living these principles and values for the good and holiness of all in our community of faith.”

(Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association Caring for Students and Staff: Creating an Atmosphere of Trust and Respect around Issues of Sexual Orientation, Appendix A, p.9)

- All students in our schools must be treated with respect.
 - All students are invited into a deeper participation in the life of Christ and His Church.
 - All students have a right to – and all schools have a duty and obligation to provide – an environment that is free from unjust discrimination of any type including, but not limited to, discrimination based on religious belief, age, race, colour, cultural identity, nationality, family status, disability, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation, or discrimination on any grounds prohibited by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.
1. A teacher and/or administrator who is approached by a student with a request for assistance and support must respond in a timely manner with sensitivity, respect, and compassion.
 2. Circumstances involving issues with gender identity and/or gender expression as it affects a student shall:
 - 2.1. Be addressed with fairness, sensitivity, and respect;
 - 2.2. Be addressed in a manner where students have supports available to them without fear of reprisal when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying and/or violence; and

2.3. Be addressed by protecting student and parental/guardian confidentiality to support the process outlined in this document (subject to circumstances which require disclosure on a need-to-know basis).

3. The school team will collaborate with families when developing a support plan at the school.

Procedures/Guidelines

The following procedures identify practices for responding to requests from students to publicly change their gender identity and/or expression at school. Because gender identity and/or gender expression issues are complex, delicate, and highly personal, a parent/guardian or independent student (age 16 or older) who works to submit a request for a name or pronoun change is required to work with school administration on the process for accommodation.

Responsibilities:

1. Division Leadership shall:

1.1. Ensure that this administrative procedure is made available to school communities.

2. Principals shall:

2.1. Create a school culture that reflects a supportive, inclusive, and respectful learning environment for all.

2.2. Ensure all staff recognize and ensure the confidentiality of all students' personal information as outlined in Administrative Policy DJB - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy.

2.3. Ensure that:

2.3.1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students under the age of 16 have submitted a signed Authority for the Use of Preferred Name(s) form provided by the principal, and that the documentation is stored securely according to the division's records management procedures.

2.3.2. Students who are 16 or older have submitted a signed authorization form provided by the principal and that the documentation is stored securely according to the division's records management procedures.

3. School Staff shall:

3.1. Live out the division's commitment to respectful learning and working environments.

3.2. Respond with sensitivity and compassion to a student's request to change their gender identification and/or gender expression at school, and immediately make the school principal aware of the student request.

3.3. Work to create a school culture that reflects a supportive, inclusive, and respectful learning environment.

4. Students and/or parents/guardians shall:
 - 4.1. Submit the “Authority for Use of Preferred Name” form provided by the principal.
 - 4.2. Work with the principal on any concerns about failure to follow division policy and procedures.

Change of Preferred Name or Pronouns

1. When a student requests that their preferred name, gender identity, and/or gender expression be used at school, the following shall occur:
 - 1.1. If the student is under the age of 16, school administration will request parental/guardian consent using the “Authority for Use of Preferred Name(s)” form provided by the principal; or
 - 1.2. If the student is 16 or older, school personnel will gain formal consent from the student using the “Authority for Use of Preferred Name(s)” form provided by the principal.
2. The principal shall:
 - 2.1. Inform school staff of the student's preferred first name or pronouns once parental/guardian consent is received.
3. If a student requests assistance in gaining parental/guardian consent a support team consisting of appropriate personnel will be established to support the student in developing a plan to speak with their parent(s)/guardian(s).
 - 3.1. The make-up of the support team will be determined by the principal based on the student's individual needs and situation.
 - 3.2. The plan to speak to parent(s)/guardian(s) will be created with the student's needs and interests at the centre. The student should be made aware that until authorization is in place, their preferred name and pronouns will not be changed.

Official Records and Student Information

1. When parental/guardian authorization has been received, only the student's school-based records will be changed to reflect their preferred name(s) and pronouns. All school forms and records shall be changed to ensure that a student's preferred name(s) and gender markers are current on class lists, timetables, school-based files, identification cards, cumulative record, etc.

Documents/Forms

- Authority for Use of Preferred Name

References

- Deepening the Discussion: Gender and Sexual Diversity, *Saskatchewan Ministry of Education 2015*
- Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards' Association (SCSBA) Student Alliances for Gender and Sexual Diversity – Formation Protocol, 2015
- SCSBA Caring for Students and Staff: Creating an Atmosphere of Trust and Respect around Issues of Sexual Orientation
- SCSBA Pastoral Response to Transgender Students
- GSCS Board Policy Manual, 1 Educational Commitment
- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- *The Education Act, 1995*

Date Approved

November 2023

Amended

September 2024