

## **AP309 – ACCOMMODATING AND RESPECTING GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION**

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### **Background**

Consistent with its mission and vision, the Board of Trustees of the Lloydminster Catholic School Division (“Board”) is committed to a safe, caring, respectful, inclusive and welcoming learning and teaching environment for all students in accordance with School Board Policy 1 (Division Foundational Statements).

To ensure all members of the Division’s school communities work together in an atmosphere of respect for the dignity of all students, this Administrative Procedure (“AP309”) is adopted for the safety, health and educational needs of all students, regardless of gender identity and/or gender expression.

The Board will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation or discrimination on the basis of a student’s actual or perceived differences, gender identity and/or gender expression. To achieve this goal, the Board requires that its schools and staff and students promote a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe learning environment that respects diversity, and fosters a sense of belonging.

### **Rationale**

1. This AP has been developed to:
  - 1.1. Support and affirm the dignity of all students in every aspect of school life;
  - 1.2. Improve the understanding of the lives of all students and find ways to increase respect for the dignity of each other in ways appropriate to the Catholic school setting;
  - 1.3. Provide training consistent with the Catholic faith for all teachers and other staff with respect to gender identity and/or gender expression; and
  - 1.4. Provide resources consistent with Catholic teaching, to support students who require assistance as a result of their gender identity and/or gender expression.
2. Given that all students are created in the divine image and likeness, and are therefore endowed with an inalienable worth that cannot be violated, circumstances involving gender identity and/or gender expression, as they affect a student, are to be addressed with a high degree of sensitivity, respect, and inclusion, and where required, expertise (in the context of the school’s resources).
3. The goal of any reasonable accommodation made by a school in this area is to afford dignity and success in learning for a student who has advised the school of their gender identity and/or gender expression needs.
4. Within this context and based on available school resources, staff are committed to creating a student learning environment that is inclusive, flexible and responsive to the student’s needs. To this end, staff may:
  - 4.1. Take into consideration a continuum of supports and services in the context of a reasonable accommodation; and
  - 4.2. Collaborate with families and, if permissible, community support services for accommodation purposes.

## Principles

1. Students at all grade levels may need support and guidance with respect to their gender identity and/or gender expression.
2. A teacher and/or administrator who is approached with a request for assistance, support and/or an accommodation must respond in a timely manner with sensitivity, respect, mercy and compassion.
3. Since all students have been created in the divine image and likeness, and are therefore endowed with an inalienable worth that cannot be violated, circumstances involving issues with gender identity and/or gender expression as it affects a student shall:
  - 3.1. Be addressed with fairness, sensitivity, respect and inclusion;
  - 3.2. Be addressed in a positive manner by all school personnel;
  - 3.3. Be addressed in a manner where students have reasonable resources available to them without fear of reprisal, when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying and/or violence; and
  - 3.4. Protect student confidentiality (subject to circumstances which require disclosure on a need to know basis).
4. The goal of a reasonable accommodation in this area is to afford dignity and success in learning for a student who has gender identity and/or gender expression needs. To this end, based on available resources, staff may collaborate with families and, with the student and/or families' permission, community support serves to reasonably address student needs and take into consideration a continuum of available reasonable supports and services.

## Procedures

These accommodation guidelines explain the Division's best practices related to support and/or accommodation based on gender identity and/or gender expression.

1. Schools will provide opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge, awareness, skills and attitudes in promoting respect for human rights, respecting diversity and understanding issues related to gender identity and/or gender expression in relation to the Catholic faith as well as the greater society.
2. Further to the references set out in this AP, staff will refer any matter that could be a barrier in furthering the understanding to or support of a student requiring gender identity and/or gender expressing accommodation to the school learning team via the school principal. The school principal, in consultation with the school learning team, specialists, professional staff, and/or parents, will provide appropriate guidance to staff to proceed in addressing these student needs.
3. Where an accommodation request is received on the basis of gender identity and/or gender expression will be treated on case by case basis.
4. Because gender identity and/or gender expression issues are complex, delicate and highly personal, a parent/guardian, or independent student who wishes to submit an accommodation request on the basis of gender identity and/or gender expression is required to reference the "SCSBA Pastoral Response to Transgender Students" found in Appendix A of this AP 309.
5. A staff member approached with an accommodation request should respond with sensitivity and compassion. The staff member has a responsibility to immediately make the school principal aware of any student request made with respect to gender identification and/or gender expression needs. The principal will make arrangements for the student to submit an accommodation request according to the principles and guidelines set out in this AP.

**References:** Caring for Students and Staff: Creating an Atmosphere of Trust and Respect Around Issues of Sexual Orientation  
Catechism of the Catholic Church  
Deepening the Discussion: Gender and Sexual Diversity, *Saskatchewan Ministry of Education 2015*  
SCSBA Student Alliances for Gender and Sexual Diversity – Formation Protocol