

AP 350 – Honouring Diversity and Challenging Racism

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Purpose

The *NLPS Inclusion Policy (2.10)* is based on the principles of respect, acceptance, safety, and equity. It is the recognition and honouring of diversity, and valuing the contributions of all members of our school communities, mandates that learning environments are safe, caring and inclusive.

As we strive to create racism free environments in our schools, we must recognize racism is pervasive in our society and present in our schools. Without that recognition, we deny the lived experience of Indigenous and other students, staff and community members. NLPS has a responsibility in its teaching and operational practices to ensure that schools 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 classrooms, in hallways and on school grounds;

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- self awareness of the ways in which we, as individuals or a group, may perpetuate these stereotype assumptions and how they impact our decisions and actions
- development of the skills necessary to challenge racism through the honouring of diversity .

AP 350 is a guideline to ensure that all programs, activities, and interactions are free from discrimination based race or culture. This procedure does not anticipate every situation that might occur with respect to race, culture or ethnicity therefore, the response to each student must be assessed on an individual basis with the intent to protect the rights and safety of all students.

The procedure covers conduct that takes place in the school, on school property, at school - sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles and at bus stops. It also pertains to usage of electronic technology and electronic communication that occurs in the school, on school property, at school - sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles, and at bus stops, as well as, on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists.

Objectives

- To support the implementation of the Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools Inclusion Policy;
- To affirm the Board's commitment to creating respectful, accepting, safe, and supportive educational environments for everyone who learns and works in NLPS regardless of race, culture or ethnicity.
- To acknowledge the wealth of diversity in NLPS school communities
- To promote fair and equitable treatment of those who may be potential targets of racism and discrimination including families who are new to Canada.
- To create school environments that value diversity and are free from racism, discrimination, harassment and violence
- To provide equitable access to and equitable participation in quality education for all students
- To give a voice and recognition to all members of our school community
- To develop strategies that foster mutual understanding and respect for cultural differences,
- To facilitate compliance with district policies and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, the *B.C. Human Rights Code*, the *School Act* and, the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in respecting the rights of all persons in accordance with the law and to take action against racism and discrimination.

Definitions for the purpose of the AP 350 – Honouring Diversity and Challenging Racism

Diversity exists...Inclusion does not.

Inclusion is created through ongoing, open, honest and courageous conversations.

Diversity - an overarching concept that relies on a philosophy of equitable participation and an appreciation of the contributions of all. It is a concept that refers both to our uniqueness as individuals and to our sense of belonging or identification within a group or groups. Diversity refers to the ways in which we differ from each other. Some of these differences may be visible (race, ethnicity), while others may be invisible (culture, ancestry).

Multiculturalism - recognizes and values the ethno-cultural diversity of our society. It is an acknowledgement and valuing of diverse ethnic heritages as well as an appreciation an incorporation of diverse approaches to learning and working environments. Multiculturalism encourages understanding, acceptance, mutual respect and inclusion, in order to make society more equitable for all people.

Human Rights – the provision for every individual to have the right to live, work, and learn in an

environment free from fear, discrimination and harassment. Human rights emphasizes the rights of the individual, the responsibilities of employers (the Board of Education) and service providers (Employees of the Board), and the need for preventive action. Human rights policy goals generally focus on prevention, remedial action and correction, and are guided by the principle that human rights violations are harmful to an entire organization and community, and not simply to those who are directly affected.

Social Justice - a philosophy that extends beyond the protection of rights. Social justice advocates for the full participation of all people, as well as for their basic legal, civil and human rights. The aim of social justice is to achieve a just and equitable society. It is pursued by individuals and groups – through collaborative social action – so that all persons share in the prosperity of society.

Honouring Diversity - is based on the principle that if these differences are acknowledged and utilized in a positive way, it is of benefit to the quality of our learning and working environments.

Cultural awareness, sensitivity and safety

Awareness: the acknowledgement of differences in people (diversity)

Sensitivity: refers to a set of skills that allows you to understand and learn about people whose cultural background is not the same as yours. In any organization cultural sensitivity reflects an environment that respects diversity. It is a recognition that there is an appropriate response to the cultural expectations and needs of any given individual or group within a diverse community. Given the diversity that exists in schools and the community, staffs need to give consideration to developing plans and strategies that are flexible and best address this diversity.

Safety: reflects a value and a way of 'being'. It is an individual or collective value that sends the message to each person that they are respected, honoured, valued, cared for, included and belong. It is less about learning the cultural aspects of a person or group, but more about being self-reflective in looking at our own attitudes, biases and behaviour towards others. Asking ourselves the question - how do my attitudes align in relation to this value and what do I need to adjust in myself to genuinely respond in a way that others feel they are in a safe place.

Racism – poor treatment of or violence against people because of their race; the belief that some races of people are better than others; and, derogatory references regarding any race or uniqueness of any individual or group

Discrimination - treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favour of or against, a person or thing based on the race, culture, or ethnicity to which that person or thing is perceived to belong to rather than on individual merit.

General Guidelines

Goals for Human Right (of individuals or groups):

- prevent discrimination through education
- correct persistent patterns of inequality and take action against discrimination
- provide an effective, efficient and timely remedy for incidents or situations in which human rights are threatened, through a fair process

Goals for Social Justice:

- ensure that socioeconomic background does not preclude any person from achieving the full benefits of participation in society
- work in a way that acknowledges the complexity of social issues and the need for collaborative action

Goals for Diversity:

- take into account visible and invisible differences among individuals and cultural groups
- encourage understanding, acceptance, mutual respect and inclusion, in order to make school communities and society as a whole more equitable for all people

Goals for both Multiculturalism and Aboriginal Peoples:

- develop cross-cultural understanding to create sensitivity to and respect for differences
- eliminate racism by addressing the effects of historic, organizational, systemic and attitudinal racism
 - create an awareness of racism
 - educate about what we all can do about racism
 - develop strategies that take action against racism
- eliminate systemic and attitudinal barriers that prevent full and equitable participation in education and community activities such as:
 - practices that intentionally or unintentionally exclude, limit and discriminate against individuals and groups
 - attitudinal barriers that create an environment where people may act out their prejudices, assumptions and biases
- develop culturally responsive services to meet the changing needs of the diverse school community

Protocol for acknowledging First Nation Territory at the opening of important functions:

NLPS recognizes that we are on the territories of a number of First Nations and wishes to acknowledge that with respect. This is a protocol still followed by First Nations communities and it is a way of honouring the First Peoples of these lands on which we live, learn and play.

Acknowledgement is expected to be the first item on the agenda. NLPS staff, students, and community members will acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of local First Nation at the start of any important function, such as a school assembly, awards night, graduation, a celebration including Aboriginal communities or at an important meeting or presentation (e.g. beginning of school board meetings). If you forget at the beginning, a later acknowledgement is better than none.

School district personnel acknowledge the territory. The host is the person who acknowledges territory; do not ask a guest to acknowledge territory, as it is not their function/event. It is not necessary to have an Aboriginal person acknowledge territory.

Sample Acknowledgements:

- “I would like to begin today by acknowledging that we are on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the _____ First Nation.”
- “I’d like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional territory of the _____ people. We are honoured to live, learn, work and play on their ancestral and unceded lands”.

The wording is flexible and should be done in the most natural and respectful way possible by the speaker, but it is important that the words **traditional**, **ancestral**, and **unceded** are used to recognize that this territory was never conquered in war and that no treaty exists. **Note:** The spirit of these words and your sincerity/intention with which they are said means more than the words themselves

For larger events or ceremonies it is always respectful and recommended to have a member of the local First Nation, preferably an Elder, welcome everyone to the territory. A welcome is different from an acknowledgement of territory. The only people who would give a welcome to a territory are the First Nations people who are from that territory. Protocol requires that the person’s knowledge and respect within the community be recognized through an honorarium.

Territories of NLPS schools

Snuneymuxw: DAC/NDSS, Cedar Secondary, John Barsby, Wellington, Bayview, Brechin, Chase River, Cilaire, Cinnabar Valley, Coal Tyee, Departure Bay, Fairview, Forest Park, Frank J Ney, Gabriola, Georgia Ave., Hammond Bay, Mt. View, North Cedar, Park Ave., Pauline Haarer, Pleasant Valley*, Quarterway, Randerson Ridge, Rock City, Rutherford, Uplands Park

Snaw Naw As: Seaview, Dover Bay, McGirr, Pleasant Valley*

Stz'uminus: Ladysmith Primary, Ladysmith Intermediate, Ladysmith Secondary, North Oyster

* Cross Boundary

Note: *If you have questions about pronunciation, gifts or amounts of honorariums please contact the NLPS Aboriginal Education staff.*

Immigration Integration

Increasingly children who are new immigrants or the children of new immigrants enrolling in our schools. While acknowledging and valuing our district's cultural and linguistic diversity it is essential to recognize the importance first language and prior educational experiences these students bring to our schools. Some of these students may experience multiple barriers – not only the barriers of adapting to a new culture and learning a new language, but may also experience being viewed and treated negatively due to stereotypes related to their race, culture or ethnicity .

NLPS is committed to easing the integration of new immigrants into the school community by creating and maintaining school environments where these students and their families are welcomed as an integral part of the life of the school.

Respecting First Language

NLPS recognizes the role of language in learning and affirms the importance of the learner's first language and will:

- value the importance of first language(s) and prior educational experiences of students
- Develop communication strategies that will assist and inform parents in their first language about their children's progress
- Be proactive in involving students and parents in the life of the school community
- Ensure that every effort is made to have students become fluent in the English language

International Students

Students must be placed into families where they feel safe and accepted and who are knowledgeable about individuals' culture, race or ethnicity. Direction must be also be taken from the students themselves. It must be acknowledged and accepted that each case is different and that a student knows best what they need to for them to feel safe and comfortable in a new home environment.

Media and Community Communication

When the school district is communicating to the media or community about issues related to racism or discrimination, the school or district will designate a single spokesperson as the key contact person. All other district and school staff will direct community members and the media to the designated spokesperson. Protecting the privacy of all students is a top priority. Any violation of confidentiality of information contravenes the privacy law *Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA).

Support for Students

NLPS is committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive learning environment which actively seeks to support to students diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. All staff employed by, or providing services within the district will be educated in the knowledge and skills required to support students of diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. They will be informed about the *NLPS Inclusion Policy (2.10)* and Procedures including *AP 350 – Honouring Diversity and Challenging Racism and; AP 312 - Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying and Discrimination; and AP 344 - Code of Conduct*. School administrators have the primary responsibility for ensuring that all school staff, Parent Advisory Committees and students are familiar with and understand the content of the Inclusion policy and these procedures. The Board of Education is responsible for ensuring that employees who represent the district in other areas are equally as informed.

Cultural Appropriation

NLPS recognizes that in our schools are those who have a right to wear cultural specific dress or regalia as they are from that culture or nation. In an educational setting, the wearing of traditional regalia or dress for cultural performances and for other educational purposes can encourage greater understanding.

Cultural appropriation, however, is prohibited and is defined as follows:

“Taking intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone else’s culture without permission. This can include unauthorized use of another culture’s dance, dress, music, language, folklore, cuisine, traditional medicine, religious symbols, etc. It’s most likely to be harmful when the source community is a minority group that has been oppressed or exploited in other ways or when the object of appropriation is particularly sensitive, e.g. sacred objects.” -Susan Scafidi; *Who Owns Culture? Appropriation and Authenticity in American Law*

In the context of NLPS, here are some examples of cultural appropriation

- Using cultural attire, artifacts, or activities to create comedy.
- Adopting sacred regalia or items that represent an earned honour as an accessory.
- Forgetting to give credit for things that are inspired by other cultures.
- Mimicking another culture.
- Wearing attire that represents a culture as a costume (unless you are accurately portraying that culture in a play). If in doubt, check with district resource personnel.

Appropriate Intervention - Responding to Incidents

Students and other members the NLPS community have the right to expect a respectful and safe school environment free of harassment, intimidation, bullying, discrimination and racism. In 2007 the Ministry of Education mandated that schools districts establish procedures that align with the *Ministerial Order M276/07 Code of Conduct*. NLPS *AP 344 Code of Conduct* outlines the safe, caring and inclusive behaviour guidelines for acceptable student conduct that respects the rights, dignity and diversity of others and promotes civility. *Section 3.0* of the procedure outlines the appropriate intervention guidelines that must be educative, preventative and/or restorative in focus and purpose.

Each school must, in consultation with staff, parents and students. establish their own Code of Conduct based on the Ministerial Order and the guidelines outlined in *AP 344*, including a section on appropriate intervention. Schools may also refer to *AP 312 Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying and Discrimination -1. Complaints, section 3.* to guide the decision on the most appropriate intervention.

Students and members of the NLPS community expect that all employees have the duty to intervene in any interactions involving the use of offensive racist or discriminatory language, regardless of the speaker's intention, and to be educative, preventative and restorative in conveying that such comments do not align with the NLPS Inclusion Policy; are prohibited under the B.C. Human Rights Code; and are unacceptable in our educational community.

Students can report incidents of harassment, bullying, intimidation, racism and discrimination through the *Erase Bullying Website*. Access to this site is on each school's website and information is available through school administration

Should an incident potentially contravene the Criminal Code of Canada (hate propaganda, public incitement of hatred, wilful promotion of hatred, etc.) the RCMP should be contacted to consult regarding appropriate action.

Board of Education Responsibilities

Inclusion Policy (2.10) expects that all employees will reflect on how their interactions can create a respectful, accepting, safe, and supportive environment for the students, staff and families of our school communities. Therefore, the Board of Education is committed to:

- provide opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and skills in:
 - promoting respect for human rights,
 - supporting and honouring diversity,
 - addressing racism and discrimination in schools through a code of conduct that is educative, preventative and restorative and,
 - understanding of the scope and impact of discrimination against people of diverse race, culture or ethnicity
 - understanding the importance of advancing the value of cultural safety in our school communities
- develop and implement respectful and proactive strategies to support students, staff and community members of all races, cultures and ethnicities.
- establish consistent, widely understood and maintained school based practices to ensure that members of school communities and families of all races, cultures and ethnicities are welcomed, accepted and included in all aspects of education and school life.
- ensure that all schools include in their school codes of conduct clear statements reflecting honouring diversity and the commitment to bias, discrimination and racism free environments;
- provide training to all new personnel as part of its employee orientation workshops focussing on the NLPS *Inclusion Policy* and procedural guidelines regarding honouring diversity and challenging racism.

Staff Development and Education

Education is the primary purpose of the district. The educational programs in NLPS will include curricular topics and learning resources that reaffirm the inclusion of all members of our community regardless of race, culture, or ethnicity. In addition, staff will have resources and training available to help them teach and promote the safe, caring and inclusive values of the district.

Schools will conduct annual staff training for all staff members on their responsibilities under applicable laws, policies and administrative procedures. This will include teachers, educational assistants, administrators, counsellors, and child, youth, and family support workers, and other staff as deemed

necessary. Information regarding this administrative procedure shall be incorporated into information sessions for new school employees. All staff share the collective responsibility of creating safe, supportive and inclusive learning environments for individuals of diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.

Educators and school support staff will be expected to:

- be familiar with and know where to access the NLPS Inclusion Policy and Administrative Procedures
- have a general understanding of definitions regarding race, culture, and ethnicity;
- develop appropriate communication strategies to interact with students and families from diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds;
- fully understand the concepts of protection of privacy for students and families;
- be aware of strategies and procedures for intervening with issues harassment, bullying, intimidation and/or discrimination; and
- model and teach inclusive, respectful practises that honour diversity and promote human rights.
- promote the value of cultural safety in their workplace(s).

Educators have an important role to play in teaching and modeling respect for racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity. It is expected that teachers will create a classrooms where students can see a commitment to creating a safe, caring and discrimination-free environment. Students need to see that teachers are striving to challenge racism by:

- using inclusive curriculum designed to challenge racism;
- present a global view of society from diverse perspectives, including the experiences and achievements of culturally diverse groups;
- encourage all students to develop pride in their own identity and to value the identities and ancestors of others;
- following up on all allegations of racism or discrimination in consultation with the student(s), school principal, and others as necessary;

All students need to see themselves, their lives and the lives of their families positively reflected in the curriculum through resources that honour diversity. Textbooks, storybooks, novels, worksheets, videos, music, and websites are tools to show people with diverse appearances, behaviours and/or interests. It is expected that the curriculum will be taught in a manner that addresses the impact of racism and discrimination and promotes the expectation that students will treat each other respectfully.

Educators are encouraged to include positive images and accurate information about history and culture which reflects the accomplishments and contributions of people of diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.

Recommended Resource: *DIVERSITY IN BC SCHOOLS: A FRAMEWORK*

Learning, Curriculum and Library Resources

Learning, curriculum and library resources need to reflect and value the diversity of NLPS. Resources should be chosen or updated to promote critical thinking and include materials that promote an understanding and respect of the impact of discrimination based upon race, culture and/or ethnicity. All members of the school community will see themselves included in the language of resources that are:

- inclusive and free from bias and stereotypes
- supportive of equitable access to quality programs for all learners;
- in language that respects the racial, cultural and ethnic diversity of its communities

School-Community Involvement

The Board of Education and district employees will work to increase parental awareness of the rights of students and families from diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity in our school communities. NLPS communications to students, staff, and the community can build awareness regarding these groups and ensure they are positively recognized and included in all aspects of school and that here is a commitment to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue about inclusiveness, honouring diversity and challenging racism.

The Board of Education further encourages and supports Parent Advisory Councils and community partnerships / stakeholders to enhance the Board's commitment to inclusivity.

Process of Appeal

The Board of Education recognizes and respects the fact that students and /or parents or guardians may sometimes disagree with decisions made by employees. The *School Act* of British Columbia gives parents or guardians and students (with parental consent) the right to express concerns or appeal certain decisions. This right of appeal applies to decisions that significantly affect the health, education or welfare of students. Information regarding the Board's appeal procedure and a copy of the formal appeal bylaw can be accessed at sd68.bc.ca / Board Policies / 1000 Board Governance / 4.0 Bylaws. Prior to an appeal it is expected that school administration, students and parents or guardians will work to try to resolve concerns at the school level.

Adopted:

References: *School Act*

B.C. Human Rights Code

Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canadian Multiculturalism Act

United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples