

GENERAL 3100

**EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE
EDUCATION 3130**

1. Rationale

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is committed to upholding the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (OHRC) and to ensuring equitable and inclusive learning and working environments that uphold and reflect the following seven guiding principles of *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009)*.

- 1.1 Equitable and inclusive education
 - 1.1.1 is a foundation of excellence;
 - 1.1.2 meets individual needs;
 - 1.1.3 identifies and eliminates barriers;
 - 1.1.4 promotes a sense of belonging;
 - 1.1.5 involves the broader community;
 - 1.1.6 builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives; and,
 - 1.1.7 is demonstrated throughout the system.

2. Policy statement

It is the policy of the SCDSB to ensure equitable and inclusive learning and working environments that create a culture of belonging, engagement, and success for all through deliberate actions and an intentional focus in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and Indigeneity.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Discrimination - unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of grounds set out in the OHRC. Discrimination includes treatment that results in disadvantage, violates dignity, or perpetuates prejudice against a person or group in an SCDSB environment in relation to one or more protected grounds. Discrimination can be direct or indirect, individual, or systemic, and need not be intended. It also includes hate activity in SCDSB environments.

Discrimination does not include the existence of measures designed to relieve disadvantage or systemic discrimination, or to assist persons or groups who experience disadvantage to achieve or attempt to achieve equal opportunity.

- 3.2 Diversity - the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, race, language, physical and intellectual ability, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Page 2

3.3 Equity – a condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

3.4 Harassment - “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome” (section 10 (1) of the OHRC). The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) defines workplace harassment in section 1 (1) as “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome or workplace sexual harassment.”

The SCDSB interprets this to include any behaviour which is known or ought reasonably to be known to the perpetrator to be offensive, embarrassing, or humiliating to other individuals but does not include legitimate performance management or discipline. Such conduct may include written, verbal, and/or physical conduct and may relate to, but is not limited to, any of the grounds of discrimination prohibited in employment by the SCDSB Administrative Procedures Memorandum (APM) A4075 – Dispute Resolution Procedure Arising from Workplace Harassment or Objectionable Behaviour, and the OHRC. These grounds include the following: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, disability or the receipt of public assistance, and other grounds as amended in the legislation, or identified in case law, or by policy of the Human Rights Commission from time to time.

3.5 Inclusive education - based on the principle of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

4. Guidelines

The board regards the following areas of focus as important in an equitable and inclusive educational environment:

4.1 Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices

All board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices will serve students, families, and staff in all communities by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices, consistent with the OHRC principles.

4.2 Shared and committed leadership

The board will work with all educational partners to provide leadership responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario’s communities by identifying and removing

discriminatory biases and/or systemic barriers to student achievement and well-being.

4.3 School-community relationships

The board will establish and maintain collaborative relationships with all communities so that the perspectives and needs of all students, families, and staff are recognized and addressed through shared and committed leadership and school-community relationships.

4.4 Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices

The board will review curriculum and resources, instruction, and assessment/evaluation practices to identify and address discriminatory biases to ensure equity of opportunity and access for each student.

The board will ensure the implementation of an inclusive curriculum supported by resources, instructional strategies, and assessment and evaluation practices that reflect and respond to the diverse needs of all learners.

4.5 Religious accommodation

The board acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour and will take reasonable steps to provide religious accommodation to students and staff.

4.6 School and workplace climate and prevention of discrimination and harassment

The board is committed to the principle that everyone is entitled to a respectful, positive working and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and exclusion.

4.7 Professional learning

The board will provide students, staff, and other members of the SCDSB community, including parents/guardians, visitors, contractors, third parties, and others, with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the OHRC.

Page 4

4.8 Accountability and transparency

The board will ensure that assessment and monitoring processes are in place to gauge the implementation of *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009)*, embedding these principles into all board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices, and communicating these results to the community.

4.9 Indigenous education

The board will create and nurture an academic environment for Indigenous students that promotes the development of a positive personal and cultural identity and a sense of belonging to both Indigenous and wider communities. The board acknowledges the diversity found in Indigenous communities and endorses learning about Indigenous cultures, sovereignty, histories, and perspectives.

5. Linkage to Employment Equity Action Plan

The SCDSB is committed to creating a culture of belonging, engagement, and success for all through deliberate actions and an intentional focus in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and indigeneity in alignment with the goals of the SCDSB Employment Equity Action Plan (EEAP). Current employment policies, practices, and protocols have been examined and potential barriers have been removed to the hiring, advancement, and full inclusion of SCDSB employees. All SCDSB employees must have equal access to opportunities and participate fully in the workforce, inclusive of race, religion, ethnicity, ability, gender, and all of the protected grounds under the OHRC. All SCDSB employees are to engage in this work to create a human rights culture free from systemic discrimination.

6. Administrative procedures

The Director of Education is authorized to establish administrative procedures to implement this policy.

**ADOPTED JUNE 23, 2010
REVISED DEC. 18, 2013
REVISED MARCH 22, 2017
REVISED FEB. 28, 2018
REVISED APRIL 24, 2024**

[APM A1460](#)
[APM A4075](#)
[APM A7125](#)
[APM A7230](#)
[APM A7635](#)
[APM A9000](#)