



POLICY TITLE: Human Rights

LAST REVIEWED: NEW

BACKGROUND:

This plan is for a new policy that addresses human rights; the inherent rights of all individuals in the UGDSB community to be treated with dignity and respect, honouring the principles of equality, equity and non-discrimination. Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, the *Education Act*, and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the UGDSB is responsible for ensuring that learning and work environments are safe, inclusive, and free from discrimination, bias, harassment, and all forms of oppression.

This new policy will aim to support all UGDSB community members in understanding their human rights, roles and responsibilities in learning and working spaces, and establish a clear, fair, and effective process for receiving and resolving complaints of discrimination and harassment based on grounds protected under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

A Policy Development Plan is attached for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Upper Grand District School Board approve the Policy Development Plan for Human Rights.

Policy Development Plan

POLICY INFORMATION

Proposed Policy Title: [Human Rights](#)

POLICY BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the Code), the *Education Act*, and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the UGDSB is responsible for ensuring that learning and work environments are safe, inclusive, and free from discrimination, bias, harassment, and all forms of oppression. In addition to this provincial legislation, the responsibilities and accountabilities for upholding human rights and preventing discrimination and harassment are set out in various international and Canadian legislations and policies:

- [UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#)
- [Canadian Human Rights Act](#)
- [Canadian Human Rights Commission Accessibility Plan](#)
- [Anti-Racism Act](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)

With the existence and impacts of historical and ongoing systemic discrimination and oppression (including colonialism, racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of discrimination), the need for a board policy that addresses the inherent right of all individuals in the UGDSB community to be treated with dignity and respect, honouring the principles of equality, equity and non-discrimination, is at its highest. This policy need coincides with the establishment of the Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility Office (HREA-O) and the Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility Commissioner role at the UGDSB.

As both a service provider and employer, the UGDSB has a legal duty to support and protect human rights for students and employees. Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) prohibits all workplace violence, and workplace

harassment even if not on the basis of a protected Code ground. To help the board meet its obligations under OHSA, board Policy 408 Harassment in the Workplace addresses workplace harassment of employees and defines behaviours that are regarded as harassment. Policy 417 Violence in the Workplace addresses workplace violence as it relates to employees, including sexual violence, domestic violence, and bullying. Other board policies that support human rights and equity include Policy 504 Equity and Inclusive Education and Policy 519 First Nation, Métis, Inuit Self-Identification and Education. These policies however do not specifically set out human rights related requirements (or complaints processes) to support safe, equitable, respectful and inclusive services, employment and learning and working environments free from discrimination and harassment.

In alignment with the board's strategic pillars of "Champion Health and Wellbeing" and "Ensure Equity of Access and Outcomes," a human rights policy and associated procedures will support all members of the UGDSB community (e.g., students, employees, parents/guardians/caregivers, school volunteers, trustees, service providers) in understanding their human rights, roles and responsibilities in learning and working spaces, and establish a clear, fair, consistent, and effective process for receiving and resolving complaints of code-based discrimination and harassment. Such a policy will demonstrate the board's commitment to protecting, upholding, and promoting the human rights of all individuals in the UGDSB community and contribute to creating a climate of understanding and mutual respect, advancing equity, building trust, remedying harm, and fostering spaces of belonging where everyone is valued and able to participate fully when learning, working, or accessing services.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To promote safe, healthy, equitable, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and accessible learning and working environments free from discrimination, harassment, bias, and oppression.
- To outline the system's shared responsibility for discrimination-free services, learning environments, employment and workplaces.
- To ensure that human rights is embedded throughout all UGDSB functions, policies, and procedures.
- To identify, address, and prevent all forms of discrimination, harassment, racism, bias, and oppression.
- To promote proactive approaches to identify, prevent and address different

forms of systemic discrimination, harassment and oppression.

- To provide clear procedures for reporting and responding to human rights complaints in a timely, fair, and effective manner using culturally responsive approaches.
- To track and report on UGDSB incidents occurring annually and provide transparent data to the UGDSB community through a public report.

POLICY SCOPE AND CONSIDERATIONS

A clear delineation of the application of a new human rights policy and associated reporting process for all UGDSB community members relative to other board policies addressing prohibited behaviours on Code-based grounds will need to be made.

Considerations during policy development:

- Services for students, families, and community members
- Workplace/employment for employees, other workers, volunteers
- Current policies and applications (gaps and opportunities, priorities and sequencing)
 - 103 (Trustee Code of Conduct), 213 (Code of Conduct), 408 (Harassment in the Workplace), 417 (Violence in the Workplace), 420 (Recruitment and Selection), 503 (Safe Schools), 504 (Equity and Inclusive Education), 519 (First Nation, Métis, Inuit Self-Identification and Education)
- Ontario Human Rights Commission's policies, guidelines and resources
- Other boards and organizations (best practices, challenges, reviews and recommendations)
- Collective agreements
- Roll out and implementation, including communications and training

Key policy elements:

- Board commitment statement
- Objectives and principles
- Application/scope
- Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
- Key concepts and overview of procedural principles

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To permit the board to develop a policy that addresses human rights.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A policy draft will be made available on the website for the public to comment on and provide input/feedback as part of the public consultation process.

Public consultation will include:

1. Posting of the working draft policy on the UGDSB website for public feedback (30-45 days)
2. Ensuring the following groups are informed of the feedback opportunity (i.e., provide public survey link):

- Student Senate
- Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- First Nations, Métis, Inuit Education Council (FNMIEC)
- Other advisory committees as needed (e.g., Equity of Access)
- School councils
- Professional associations and unions
- Students and parents
- Other (e.g., community partners/groups that would be impacted by this policy)

The following methods will be applied in the public consultations:

- Survey (30-45 days)
- Posting on the UGDSB website (30-45 days)

COMMITTEE/BOARD APPROVALS

Dates for the draft policy to be reviewed by Policy and Priorities Committee and Board are to be determined.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Following Board approval, the new policy will be communicated through:

- Posting on the UGDSB website

- ✘ Sharing policy feedback opportunity with link to draft policy with staff through posts to SharePoint (responsibility of the Policy Development Officer) and communications at staff meetings (responsibility of supervisors/managers/principals)

- ✘ Implementation of a broad communication plan for internal and external audiences, include summary of policy provisions and expected outcomes

Policy implementation will include:

- ✘ Development of associated procedures
(may include a review of existing associated procedures)

- ✘ Development of training modules