

## **Purpose/Background**

RVS affirms the rights of each staff member employed by RVS and each student enrolled in a school operated by RVS, as provided for under the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Staff members employed by RVS and students enrolled in a school operated by RVS, will not be discriminated against, as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

All RVS schools will ensure students have the understanding, skills and opportunities to contribute to welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and positive sense of self. Every student, including those students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, queer, questioning and/or gender diverse, will be provided the educational opportunities and supports needed to be successful in school.

## **Procedures**

1. For the purpose of accommodating the diverse needs of students in a school, an individual's self-identification is the sole measure of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
2. Schools will ensure all families are welcomed and supported as valued members of the school community and that parents/guardians are encouraged to play an active role in their child's education. Creating an education system that is truly inclusive ensures the safety, belonging and full participation of all members of the school community.
3. Staff will maintain school records in a way that respects student's privacy and confidentiality.
  - 3.1. Students will be informed of any limitations regarding their chosen name and gender identity or gender expression in relation to official school records that require legal name and designation;
  - 3.2. Whenever possible and permitted by law, requests made by a student, or the parent/guardian, to change the student's official record to reflect their preferred name and/or gender identity will be accommodated.
  - 3.3. Whenever possible, at the request of a student or their parent/guardian, the student's preferred name and/or gender identity will be included on class lists, timetables, student files, identification cards, etc.
  - 3.4. Unless the student or their parent/guardian has specified otherwise communications between school and home shall use a student's legal name and pronoun corresponding to the student's gender assigned at birth.
  - 3.5. RVS will only disclose personal information when legally required to do so.
4. Students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity expression. School staff will utilize gender-neutral language when addressing dress codes described in the school's student handbook.
5. In rare situations where students are segregated by gender, students will have the option to be included in the group that corresponds to their gender identity.

6. All students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, have the right to participate in all curricular and extra-curricular activities. All students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, may participate fully and safely in gender separated sport activities in accordance with their lived gender identity.
7. Schools will identify an easily accessible gender-neutral single stall washroom for use by any student who desires increased privacy. For school activities that require disrobing a gender neutral changing area will be provided.
8. Staff will be provided with professional learning to develop the awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to:
  - 8.2. Create learning environments that respect diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.
  - 8.3. Identify and address discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that create barriers to participation and learning for students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.
  - 8.4. Support and advocate for the needs of students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.
9. Schools will utilize a comprehensive school wide approach to foster social-emotional learning to promote healthy relationships and prevent and respond to bullying behaviour.
10. Any student requesting the formation of a student organization or activity at their school intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, including Gay-Straight Alliance Club or Queer-Straight Alliance Club, will have a staff member assigned to support the organization and operation of the club. The formation of the student organization will follow the requirements in the School Act s. 16.1(1), (3), (3.1), (4) and (6):

*16.1.(1) If one or more students attending a school operated by a Board request a staff member employed by the Board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall;*

- a) *immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and*
- b) *subject to subsection (4), within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.*

*16.1.(3) The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name "gay-straight alliance" or "queer-straight alliance", after consulting with the principal.*

*16.1.(3.1) For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes "gay-straight alliance" or "queer-straight alliance".*

*16.1.(4) The principal shall immediately inform the Board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in subsection (1), and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.*

*16.1.(6) The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection (1) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.*

11. RVS and/or its staff will not disclose the membership of any student organization formed under s.10 of this Administrative Procedure unless legally required to do so.
12. Disclosure of personal information by RVS is governed by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *School Act* and the *Student Record Regulation*.

The principal of a school will be responsible for ensuring that any notification respecting a voluntary student organization or student activity, referred to in section 10 of this Administrative Procedure, will be limited to the fact that the organization has been established or the activity is being held, and is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations and activities.

*Reference:*

- School Act Sections 12, 16.1, 20, 45.1, 61
- Alberta Human Rights Act
- RVS Policy 19: Respectful Learning and Working Environments
- Gay-Straight or Queer Straight Alliances in Schools (Alberta Education)
- Alberta's Plan for Promoting Healthy Relationships and Preventing Bullying (Alberta Human Services)
- Bill 24 An Act to Support Gay-Straight Alliances