

# ROLLING RIVER SCHOOL DIVISION POLICY

## Respect for Human Diversity

AC/P

Rolling River School Division is committed to supporting equity and respect for human diversity as fundamental values of the public education system.

It supports and accommodates the acceptance, respect and appreciation for all people for their commonalities as well as their differences. Rolling River School Division is committed to meeting the diverse needs of learners by building compassionate and empathetic learning communities where all members have the right to learn and work in a safe and inclusive environment that respects human diversity.

Rolling River School Division will create and maintain an environment in which the Board, students, parents/guardians and employees are aware of and respect the rights and human dignity of others. The Board, students, parents/guardians and employees will actively protect the dignity, values and equality of others.

Rolling River School Division recognizes and supports the principle of human rights as identified in the Manitoba Human Rights Code, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the legislative requirements from the Province of Manitoba respecting human diversity.

### **Index Regulation**

**Date Adopted:** September 17, 2014

**Date Reaffirmed:** January 16, 2019

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### Definitions

**Diversity** encompasses all the ways in which human beings are both similar and different. It means understanding and accepting the uniqueness of individuals, as well as respecting their differences. Diversity may include, but is not limited to gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic status, religion, family status, mental and physical disability.

**Equity** refers to the provision of equitable opportunity, equitable access to programming, services, and resources critical to the achievement of outcomes for all students and the staff who serve them. Equity and equality are not necessarily synonymous, as equity can be achieved through unequal means.

**Bullying** is behaviour that is intended to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress, or other forms of harm to another person's feelings, self-esteem, body, or reputation and is intended to create a negative school environment for another person.

Bullying takes place in a context of a real or perceived power imbalance between the people involved and is typically, but need not be, repeated behavior.

The bullying may be direct (face to face) or indirect (through others), and it may take place through any form of expression - including written, verbal or physical - or by means of any form of electronic communication (referred to as cyberbullying), including social media, text messaging, instant messaging, websites, or email. (Public Schools Act)

**Discrimination** occurs when people are not treated based on their individual worth, but instead are treated differently based on stereotypes and prejudices and this results in real disadvantages and barriers to equal opportunities.

- Discrimination often involves treating someone differently on the basis of a protected characteristic, including but not limited to, ancestry, age or religion.
- Discrimination may include failure to make reasonable accommodation for the special needs of any individual/group based on the protected characteristics under *The Code*. (Manitoba Human Rights Code)

**Gender identity** refers to an individual's sense of self as "male", "female", or an identity between or outside these categories. (Public Health Agency of Canada).

**Harassment** is any behaviour that degrades, demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions (e.g. touching, pushing), comments (e.g. jokes, name-calling) or displays (e.g. posters, cartoons). Harassment can also take place electronically (e.g. text messages, email or screen savers). *The Code* refers to harassment as a course of abusive and unwelcome conduct or comment made on the basis of any protected characteristic. (Manitoba Human Rights Code).

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**Prejudice** is a preconceived negative opinion and/or hostile belief about an individual or group formed beforehand or without knowledge often on the basis of stereotypes. (Manitoba Human Rights Code)

**Sexual orientation** is the term used to describe an individual's sexual, psychological and emotional feelings of attraction towards another person (Public Health Agency of Canada).

**Stereotypes** are a simplified or fixed belief (often exaggerated) that people have about what members of a group are like, without allowing for individual differences. (Manitoba Human Rights Code)

**Reasonable accommodation** is the school's obligation to address the special needs of students where these needs stem from the protected characteristics specified in the *The Code* and affect the individual's ability to access educational/school services or facilities; the measures to accommodate special needs will be reasonable and required unless they cause undue hardship due to cost, risk to safety, impact on others or other factors. (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning)

**Undue hardship** is when an accommodation becomes so difficult it becomes unreasonable. Some factors that determine whether reasonable accommodation to the point of undue hardship has been made include: financial costs, health and safety concerns, impact on other employees and service users and the impact on other protected rights. (Manitoba Human Rights Code)

### Roles and Responsibilities

Effective policy development, implementation, review and evaluation is a shared responsibility of government, school boards, school divisions, staff, principals, staff, students and parents/guardians.

**Senior Administration** will provide leadership in overall policy implementation, promoting respect for human diversity and communicating policy expectations to staff, students, parents/guardians and community. This includes enhancing divisional materials and resources, and providing training and professional development for staff on areas of human diversity.

**Principals** will provide leadership at the school level in promoting safety and acceptance to ensure a safe and inclusive school environment. Principals will communicate and reinforce expectations of respecting human diversity policy to staff and encourage their participation in professional development and training on human diversity and related topics. Principals will hold those who disrespect human diversity accountable by following established processes and protocols and maintain appropriate records at the school. Principals will accommodate requests from students who want to establish and lead activities and organizations that:

- Promote gender equity
- Promote anti-racism
- Promote awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people with Disabilities

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- Promote awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities; and
- Accept requests for groups consistent with the promotion of a positive school environment that is inclusive and accepting of all students. The names of the groups formed may vary from school to school.

**Employees** will model inclusiveness and respect for human diversity, and play a key role in communicating and reinforcing expectations of respecting human diversity policy to students. They will support students on issues of human diversity and empower them to treat each other with dignity and acceptance. Employees have a duty to report bullying, including cyberbullying, to the principal, whether it is believed to be happening at school or outside of regular school hours. Participation in professional development and training is essential in ensuring employees have the tools and knowledge they need to deal appropriately and effectively with sensitive student issues regarding human diversity.

**Students'** interactions and conduct will ensure a welcoming, safe and inclusive school environment that accepts, respects and appreciates all people, particularly those who may be marginalized in their school community.

**Parents and guardians** play an important role in their children's understanding and respect for and of human diversity. Parents/guardians have the responsibility to encourage their children to conduct themselves in ways that contribute to a safe and inclusive school environment.

It is the responsibility of the entire school community to model and ensure their conduct is consistent with the guiding principles of this Respect for Human Diversity Policy.

### **Dealing with Discrimination**

Depending on the nature of an incident of discrimination, the Rolling River School Division and/or respective school will respond to the incident under the appropriate authority as per GBCB - Harassment Policy.

### **Policy Review and Evaluation**

The Rolling River School Division Board will ensure regular policy review and evaluation of the Respect for Human Diversity Policy.

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