

NBTA Policy 598

598 — Homophobia

1 DEFINITIONS

Bisexual: an individual who is emotionally/romantically and physically attracted to persons of either sex.

Gay: a person who is emotionally/romantically and physically attracted to persons of the same sex. Gay usually refers to males, but it is also used to include females. Gay can be used interchangeably with homosexual. Gay is most often the term preferred by the gay and lesbian community when referring to homosexual males.

Gender Identity: characteristics linked to an individual's intrinsic sense of self as a man or as a woman, which may not be the same identity as one's biological sex.

Heterosexism: the assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior. Heterosexism can exist on a personal, interpersonal, institutional or cultural level.

Homophobia: the fear, and/or hatred, and/or repulsion of homosexuality in oneself or in others, often exhibited by self-hatred, prejudice, discrimination, bullying or acts of violence.

Lesbian: a female who is emotionally/romantically and physically attracted to other females. Lesbian can be used interchangeably with homosexual and gay when referring to females. Lesbian is usually the term preferred by the gay and lesbian community when referring to gay/homosexual females.

LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning & Queer

Queer: is an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities that are not heterosexual, heteronormative, or gender-binary

Questioning: is a process of exploration by people who may be unsure, still exploring, and concerned about one's gender identity, gender expression, sexual identity and sexual orientation

Sexual Minority: is a group whose sexual identity, orientation or practices differ from the majority of the surrounding society

Transphobia: is a range of negative attitudes and feelings towards transgender people, based on the expression of their internal gender identity

Sexual

Orientation: refers to an individual's psychological, emotional, and/or sexual attraction towards another person.

Gender

Expression: refers to the external attributes by which people express themselves and through which others perceive the person's gender.

Transgender: a person whose gender identity (feeling of being either male or female) does not match their physical/anatomical sex. Some describe it as being born into the wrong body.

Two-Spirited: a term referring to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals by those who

follow traditional Aboriginal teachings.

1. The New Brunswick Teachers' Association declares itself to be an anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia and anti-heterosexism, organization, which:
 - (a) promotes equity and inclusiveness for all individuals in the workplace;
 - (b) recognizes student and teacher diversity and the goals of anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia and anti-heterosexism in the selection of its priorities and programs; and,
 - (c) promotes anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia and heterosexism education.
2. NBTA advocates for educational systems that are safe, welcoming, inclusive, and affirming for all sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions.
3. NBTA believes:
 - (a) that the role of educators is critical in creating positive societal change to address the realities of LBGTQ issues for students, parents and teachers;
 - (b) that an assumption of heterosexuality as being the only sexual orientation throughout the school system denies LBGTQ students and same-gender parented families affirmation and accommodation;
 - (c) that LBGTQ students, staff and same-gender-parented families have the right to:
 - be free from harassment, discrimination and violence;
 - be treated fairly, equitably and with dignity;
 - self identification and freedom of expression;
 - be included and to be represented and affirmed in a positive and respectful manner;
 - have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, discrimination and violence;
 - have their cultures and communities valued and affirmed;
 - have flexible, gender-neutral school dress codes.
 - (d) that efforts must be made to ensure that education prepares young people to develop open, pluralistic and democratic societies, free of discrimination or aggression based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression.
4. Anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia and anti-heterosexism education seeks to promote equity through practicing the principles of inclusion, affirming the identity of individuals and groups, seeking the elimination of homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism in all its forms, and initiating comprehensive school programs supporting equity. All students regardless of real or perceived, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, culture, socio-economic status residence, strengths and challenges have the right to an appropriate education.

5. Anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia and anti-heterosexism education is an integral goal of education permeating curriculum, materials, pedagogy, policies, practices and programs.
6. For anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia and anti-heterosexism education to become effective:
 - (a) educators must accept their responsibility to educate themselves and to reflect upon their own attitudes and behaviours in modeling respect, understanding and affirmation of diversity;
 - (b) educators have a responsibility for the elimination of homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism in the working and learning environment;
 - (c) curriculum must contain positive images and accurate information about history and culture, which reflects the accomplishments and contributions of LGBTQ people.
 - (d) educators must take actions to make schools safe for LGBTQ staff, students and parents, and those who are perceived to be so, by:
 - treating everyone with respect and acceptance;
 - using language that affirms all sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression and not using disparaging remarks or language that implies one sexual orientation is superior to another;
 - challenging staff, students and parents who continue to display prejudice on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression;
 - developing an action plan to use in the event of an incident of discrimination or harassment and/or violence;
 - never making assumptions in the matter of sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression;
 - making a commitment to confidentiality in the event of a disclosure of sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression;
 - not assuming the superiority of heterosexuality.
 - (e) schools and school systems must adopt anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia, and anti-heterosexism policies recognizing that homophobia plays an integral role in bullying and harassment in school;
 - (f) LGBTQ students must have the right to counseling that is supportive, affirming and free from efforts on the part of counsellors to change their sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression through the use of or the referral to aversion, reparative, or conversion therapies;
 - (g) teacher preparation programs must include:
 - knowledge, awareness and affirmation of those who identify as LGBTQ;
 - strategies, lesson plans and curriculum that assist teachers in addressing LGBTQ issues in classrooms and schools.
 - (h) educators must have access to professional development programs, which provide assistance in addressing LGBTQ issues in classrooms and schools.
 - (i) the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development must become visible advocates of anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia and anti-heterosexism of anti-homophobia and anti-heterosexism education through the provision of:
 - (i) curriculum documents, training and directives that incorporate anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia and anti-heterosexism perspectives;
 - (ii) resources to enable school systems to effect change.
 - (j) Transgendered people have the right to:
 - (i) have the transgender/gender non-conforming status kept confidential;
 - (ii) be addressed by a name and pronoun corresponding to his/her gender identity;
 - (iii) safe restroom facilities and the right to use a washroom that best corresponds to the student's gender identity, regardless of the student's sex assigned at birth;
 - (iv) application of a flexible, gender-neutral school dress codes.