

<b>Procedure Title</b>	<b>Equity and Inclusive Education</b>		
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<b>Review Date</b>		<b>Originator</b>	Administrative Council
<b>References</b>			
<p>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the Constitution Act, 1982; Ontario Human Rights Code; Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (the “Strategy”); Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119; BP 1411-D “Accessibility Standards”; BP 6820-D “Safe and Accepting Schools”; AP 6820-D “Suspensions and Expulsions”; AP 6821-D “Bullying Prevention and Intervention”; AP 6825-D “Progressive Discipline - Students”; BP 7520-D “Human Rights”; AP 7520-D “Religious Accommodation”; AP 7520-D “Prevention and Resolution of Harassment, Discrimination, Objectionable Behaviour and Human Rights Violations”; Combined MOE OSR Guidelines and Bluewater District School Board Administrative Procedure AP 6701-D; <a href="https://egale.ca">www.egale.ca</a> ‘2SLGBTQI Terms and Concepts’ <a href="https://egale.ca/awareness/terms-and-concepts-updated/">https://egale.ca/awareness/terms-and-concepts-updated/</a>; Gender Galaxy Activity <a href="https://klinik.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Gender-Galaxy-pdf.pdf">https://klinik.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Gender-Galaxy-pdf.pdf</a>; Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Preventing Discrimination because of Gender Identity and Gender, <a href="https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression#:~:text=Under%20the%20Ontario%20Human%20Rights%20Code%20%28the%20Code%29,and%20membership%20in%20unions%2C%20trade%20or%20professional%20associations">https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression#:~:text=Under%20the%20Ontario%20Human%20Rights%20Code%20%28the%20Code%29,and%20membership%20in%20unions%2C%20trade%20or%20professional%20associations</a></p>			

**1.0 RATIONALE**

- 1.1 Bluewater District School Board believes that all students can learn, and our mission is to enable each and every student to learn effectively, to reduce achievement gaps, and to improve learning outcomes for all, regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and other historical forms of marginalization.
- 1.2 Bluewater District School Board upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, 1982 and confirmed in the Ontario Human Rights Code (the “Code”). The board and its staff are also committed to the elimination of all types of discrimination as outlined in Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (the “Strategy”) and the Ontario Ministry of Education (the “Ministry”) Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119.
- 1.3 Bluewater District School Board recognizes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of programs, the delivery of services, and resources are critical to the achievement of successful educational and social outcomes for those served by the school system as well as those who serve the system.
- 1.4 Bluewater District School Board is therefore committed to an equitable education system that upholds and reflects the principles of fair and inclusive education which should permeate all policies, programs, practices, and operations.

**2.0 AREAS OF FOCUS**

Bluewater District School Board, and its schools, are committed to addressing the following eight areas of focus, as outlined in Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 119 “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools”.

**2.1 Policies, Programs, Guidelines, and Practices****2.1.1 Bluewater District School Board will:**

- i. establish the foundational framework that will inform their review and/or development and implementation of a comprehensive equity and inclusive education policy that recognizes and addresses biases related to race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, family status, and religious and linguistic differences as well as socio-economic factors;
- ii. review existing equity and inclusive education policies and/or extend or develop such policies to fulfill the requirements of existing regulations, the Strategy, Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, and the Code;
- iii. ensure that principles of equity and inclusive education permeate and are explicitly stated in all board policies, programs, guidelines, operations, practices, and board improvement plans;
- iv. ensure all future policies, guidelines, and practices are drafted and implemented in accordance with the board’s equity and inclusive education policy;
- v. collect information needed to monitor the effects of the implementation of the equity and inclusion education policy by the board;
- vi. ensure persons with disabilities are accommodated appropriately, and in a manner consistent with the Code;
- vii. provide opportunities for the diverse school community, including students, staff, parents, trustees, and community members, to provide active input into board policies and improvement plans on an ongoing basis; and
- viii. investigate in a thorough and timely manner any claims of discrimination and/or racism and take appropriate action, consistent with the principles of the Code.

**2.1.2 Bluewater District School Board schools will:**

- i. review existing school policies, for example, codes of conduct and discipline procedures, to determine that they include the principles of equity and inclusive education;
- ii. extend, develop, and implement strategies to actively engage students, parents, families, and the wider community in the review, development, and implementation of initiatives to support and promote equity and inclusive education; and
- iii. implement board equity and inclusive education policies, procedures, programs, and school improvement plans that are consistent with the Code and reflect the needs of their diverse students and school communities.

**2.2 Shared and Committed Leadership****2.2.1 Bluewater District School Board will:**

- i. develop a system plan to build and sustain staff capacity in the areas of equity and inclusive education in curriculum and instruction, human resources, and governance;
- ii. identify and appoint a contact person to liaise with the Ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources;
- iii. provide ongoing education and training for students, administrators, teachers (including guidance counsellors), support staff and trustees in implementing equity and inclusive education and leadership initiatives;
- iv. establish selection criteria for leadership positions that prioritize demonstrated commitment, knowledge and skills related to equity and inclusive education implementation and inclusive leadership, and cognizant of Code compliance;
- v. provide ongoing training for all staff that reflects comprehensive attention to the principles of human rights and their fundamental role in an equitable and inclusive environment; and
- vi. strive to ensure members of communities that are underserved and /or marginalized are included in the shared leadership.

2.2.2 Bluewater District School Board schools will:

- i. establish a collaborative culture where the collective capabilities and voices of all stakeholders are used to develop and implement equity and inclusive education goals;
- ii. promote equity minded student leadership related to issues of social justice; and
- iii. demonstrate leadership in setting the tone for the positive and proactive implementation of the Equity Strategy within the school.

### 2.3 School-Community Relationships

2.3.1 Bluewater District School Board will:

- i. review and/or initiate tools, for example, school climate surveys, to determine stakeholders' views on school environments and act upon relevant next steps;
- ii. review existing committees, for example, Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), to assess the levels of representation of the diversity of the board and the wider community;
- iii. review and /or deepen existing community partnerships to ensure that they reflect the principles of equity and inclusive education;
- iv. expand community outreach efforts to foster new partnerships that engage a cross-section of diverse students, parents, staff, community members and various community organizations, including business groups to foster and support an inclusive environment; and
- v. establish processes to identify and address systemic barriers that limit or prevent all sectors of the school community from opportunities for board representation and involvement in board activity.

2.3.2 Bluewater District School Board schools will:

- i. implement strategies to review existing community partnerships to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the broader community;
- ii. invite and support representation of diverse groups on school committees, including school improvement planning; and
- iii. engage stakeholders in community forums to listen and address concerns and suggestions.

### 2.4 Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices

2.4.1 Bluewater District School Board will:

- i. review student assessment and evaluation policies and practices to identify and address bias that may exist in the way of student's work is assessed and evaluated in order to reduce the achievement gap. The principles of such a review will be consistent with the Code; and
- ii. support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote culturally responsive teaching, school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices specifically addressing areas of discrimination under the Code (e.g., race, gender, culture, differing ability, creed/religion, sexual orientation)

2.4.2 Bluewater District School Board schools will:

- i. review student assessment and evaluation policies and practices to identify and address systemic bias that may exist in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated; the principles of such a review will be consistent with the Code;
- ii. provide for assessment and evaluation to support growth and learning, with the belief that each and every student can achieve and be successful given the appropriate time and support;
- iii. provide education and training based on the belief that all students can learn and that it is reflected in the expectations of students' assessment and evaluation practices, counselling about available program options, and other counselling practices;
- iv. use a variety of assessment strategies and instruments to inform short-and long-term planning to reduce gaps in student achievement and improve student learning;
- v. provide multiple opportunities for assessment (self, peer, teacher, student-led conferencing and /or parent/student and teacher interviews);

- vi. instruction should be adjusted based on the results of formative assessment; feedback to students should be specific, timely and promote further learning;
- vii. provide a learning environment that recognizes and supports a variety of learning styles found in students; provide for consistent monitoring of the growth of students who are on Individual Education Plans and/or are English Language Learners to meet the specific needs of students are addressed through the accuracy of programming based on best practices in assessment; all needed accommodations and modifications must be in place to assist the student in accessing the curriculum;
- viii. provide an education program for students who have English language learning needs that aligns with their specific needs and that provides equity of access to the curriculum;
- ix. provide access and use of assistive technologies for students who require accommodations to support achievement and success;
- x. engage students as active participants in their learning through culturally responsive teaching (e.g., students seeing and hearing themselves in the curriculum; gender-specific teaching practices; culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy; research-based practices in assessment and evaluation);
- xi. review and reflect upon classroom practices and revise them as needed to help ensure that they are aligned with school-wide equity and inclusive education policies; and
- xii. make certain that resources and instructional strategies are respectful (show people of different race and ethnicity, gender, place of origin, religion, cultural and linguistic background, social and economic status, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical and intellectual ability/disability and other forms of marginalization) in non-stereotypical settings, occupations, and activities; explore the roles and contributions of all peoples in Canada, and the factors that shaped these roles; encourage open discussion of the prohibited grounds in society, the community, and the school.

## **2.5 School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment - (see also BP 7520-D Human Rights")**

### **2.5.1 Bluewater District School Board will:**

- i. implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have board-level representation and access to board initiatives;
- ii. put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely (e.g., AP 7520-D "Prevention and Resolution of Harassment, Discrimination, Objectionable Behaviour and Human Rights Violations") and that will also enable boards to respond in a timely and effective manner as required in board policy and administrative procedure AP 6825-D "Progressive Discipline-Students", and promoting positive student behaviour;
- iii. promote positive behaviour through initiating or strengthening proactive programs to reduce suspensions and expulsions, and as required by administrative procedure AP 6821-D "Bullying Prevention and Intervention"; and
- iv. create a culture of high expectations in which excellence is continually strived for and respect permeates the environment.

### **2.5.2 Bluewater District School Board schools will:**

- i. revise codes of conduct to identify and address any evidence of racism or discrimination;
- ii. use progressive discipline practice which may include peer mediation and restorative justice;
- iii. welcome, respect and validate the contributions of all students, parents, and other members of the school community;
- iv. ensure that every student is supported as identified in Student Success strategies, Learning for All, Reach Every Student, including the Code, and is inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning;
- v. ensure that school codes of conduct are developed with the active consultation and involvement of students, staff, parents, and a representative cross-section of community members to address the needs of diverse communities;
- vi. follow the 'Gender Identity and Expression Guidelines' outlined in Appendix A;
- vii. follow the 'Inclusive Language Guidelines' outlined in Appendix B;

- viii. follow the “N-Word Guidelines - Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments”, outlined in Appendix C: and
- ix. assure the school community that board procedure will enable students and staff to report incidents of harassment and discrimination safely and to have confidence that they will receive a timely and appropriate response in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act.

2.5.3 The use of any/all racial slurs, other slurs, or epithets (e.g., pejorative terms used to describe people, racial, ethnic, religious, sex, gender, sexual orientation, and/or disability attributes, or any other terms that may be interpreted to have a negative impact on the school/work climate etc.) in any manner, including when reading aloud texts, quoting, or teaching course content, is prohibited in Bluewater District School Board. All staff have an obligation to intervene and respond sensitively if they hear racial or other slurs or epithets uttered or used by others. Responses will be guided by a progressive discipline approach (AP 6825-D “Progressive Discipline – Students” and/or AP 7530-D “Progressive Discipline – Employees”).

## 2.6 Faith/Religious/Cultural Accommodation – see AP 7521-D “Religious Accommodation”

2.6.1 Bluewater District School Board will:

- i. inform students and their parents/guardians and staff of their right to request accommodation for religious/cultural beliefs and practices;
- ii. prepare a religious accommodation procedure (AP 7521-D “Religious Accommodation”) in keeping with the *Code*, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of creed, and other *Code* protected grounds, and provides a duty to accommodate; and
- iii. provide religious/cultural accommodation for students and staff consistent with the *Code*.

2.6.2 Bluewater District School Board schools will:

- i. revise / implement their religious/cultural accommodation practices to align with administrative procedure AP 7521-D “Religious Accommodation”.

## 2.7 Professional Learning

2.7.1 Bluewater District School Board will:

- i. support the schools’ review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices;
- ii. allocate resources to provide ongoing opportunities for students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education training and leadership initiatives;
- iii. provide antiracism and antidiscrimination training to students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees;
- iv. provide training to facilitate equitable recruitment and hiring practice to reflect Ontario’s diverse society; and
- v. ensure that the principles of equity and inclusive education are modelled and incorporated in professional learning programs.

2.7.2 Bluewater District School Board schools will:

- i. review classroom strategies and revise them as needed to help ensure that they are aligned with and reflect board policy BP 6303-D “Equity and Inclusive Education”;
- ii. promote collaboration among staff to select and implement best practices in equity and inclusive education;
- iii. build staff capacity through ongoing professional learning that is based on needs determined through results-oriented and evidence-based research;
- iv. encourage and support students in their efforts to promote social justice, equity, antiracism, and antidiscrimination in schools and classrooms; and
- v. undertake initiatives which promote a welcoming and respectful school environment and provide timely and specific feedback that will further school-wide equitable practices.

**2.8 Accountability and Transparency**

2.8.1 Bluewater District School Board will:

- i. embed the principles of equity and inclusive education into all board policies, administrative procedures, board learning plans, programs, guidelines, and practices;
- ii. actively communicate the equity and inclusive education policy to students, teachers, parents, staff, school councils, community partners, and volunteers and post it on the board's website; seek and use feedback to improve the policy, in the spirit of continuous improvement;
- iii. ensure persons with disabilities are accommodated appropriately and in a manner consistent with the Code;
- i. investigate in a thorough and timely manner any claims of discrimination and/or racism and take appropriate action, consistent with the principles of the Code;
- ii. engage board and school teams in school improvement planning with particular emphasis on identifying and removing barriers to student achievement;
- iii. establish processes to monitor progress and assess effectiveness of policies, programs, and procedures;
- iv. report on the progress of implementation of The Strategy and its impact on student achievement using specific criteria to the Ministry of Education and the local community; and
- v. ensure the transparency of the Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process, inform, and support parents through this process.

2.8.2 Bluewater District School Board schools will:

- i. report student achievement data annually to the board and intervene at all levels to ensure the achievement and success of all students;
- ii. develop and communicate evidence-based school improvement plans that are aligned with The Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy; and
- iii. review and establish self-reflection and self-assessment tools to determine the effectiveness of the school's equity and inclusive education plans and procedures.

**APPENDIX A: GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION GUIDELINES**

The **Gender Identity and Expression Guidelines** affirm Bluewater District School Board's (BWDSB) commitment to valuing the diversity of our students, staff, and community by offering parameters to better support the transgender and gender-diverse community. Gender identity is a large part of how people engage and relate to the world around them, and BWDSB and its schools wish for all gender identities to be recognized and celebrated in their spaces.

Bluewater District School Board upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, 1982 and confirmed in the Ontario Human Rights Code (the "Code"), and board policy BP 7520-D "Human Rights". The board and its staff are also committed to the elimination of all types of discrimination as outlined in Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (the "Strategy") and the Ontario Ministry of Education (the "Ministry") Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119.

**1.0 GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- 1.1 Transgender and gender-diverse individuals have the right to openly affirm who they are without judgment. This includes expressing gender identity without fear of adverse consequences, as well as the right to be always treated with dignity and respect.
- 1.2 Every student, whether transgender or not, has the right to equitable access and full participation in all aspects of school life (i.e., academic, extracurricular, social).
- 1.3 Each transgender and/or gender non-conforming student is unique and has different needs. Supporting individuals in the process is best; what works for one may not work for another and may change overtime.
- 1.4 All students have a right to privacy. BWDSB schools must ensure that a student's transgender or gender diverse status remains confidential.
  - 1.4.1 This means that school staff should not disclose a student's transgender or gender diverse status to others. Some transgender and gender diverse students are not out openly at home because of safety, cultural, religious and/or other reasons. Therefore, schools should be mindful of the consequences disclosure of a student's gender diversity or transgender status to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), other students, staff, or other parties without the student's explicit prior consent.
  - 1.4.2 It is always best practice not to disclose unless the student provides consent. When school staff contact the home of a transgender or gender diverse student, the student should be consulted first to determine an appropriate way to reference the student's gender identity.
  - 1.4.3 If students have first disclosed their gender diverse or transgender status to staff, it is strongly suggested that staff privately ask transgender or gender diverse students at the beginning of the school year how they want to be addressed in:
    - i. correspondence to the home or at meetings with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s); and
    - ii. groups settings such as the classroom.

**2.0 NAMES AND PRONOUNS** (Please refer to Appendix B 'Inclusive Language Guidelines' for more information.)

- 2.1 Transgender and gender-diverse students have the right to be addressed by their chosen name and pronoun corresponding to their gender identity. Where possible, the chosen name and/or self-identified gender should be used.
  - 2.1.1 A student's pronouns may change several times, and schools must affirm the student's evolving identity throughout this fluid process.

**APPENDIX A: GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION GUIDELINES continued...**

- 2.1.2 Staff must use a student's chosen pronoun (e.g., he, she, or a gender-diverse singular pronoun such as they or other pronouns, as requested by the student). This is true regardless of whether the student has obtained a court ordered name or gender change.
- 2.2 Students may indicate that they would like to have their chosen name changed on different platforms used by BWDSB documents (e.g., report cards).
- 2.2.1 Section 10 of the [Combined MOE OSR Guidelines and Bluewater District School Board Administrative Procedure AP 6701-D](#) will be followed.
- i. Students aged 15 and under whose parents are supportive or students over 16 years of age (who do not require parent/guardian approval) can make a change in the student information system and the OEN to reflect the student's chosen name, using the preferred name field(s), and/or gender. The chosen name and/or gender may also be reflected on attendance sheets, timetables, class lists, etc.
  - ii. A student's legal name can be changed by the school upon receipt of a document that establishes that the student has had their name and/or gender changed in accordance with the law of the province, state, or country in which the document was made.
- 2.2.2 It is important to engage in a conversation with students to ensure that they understand that parent(s)/guardian(s) would be able to see the change reflected on these platforms and documents. This ensures that we are not inadvertently disclosing a student's transgender or gender-diverse status. However, if the student indicates that they would like their chosen name to appear on these platforms and documents, the school would honour the request.
- 2.3 Intentionally addressing a student by the incorrect name or pronoun may be considered disrespectful, and, if done repeatedly, could be deemed as discrimination. For many students who have chosen to be addressed by a name or pronouns different from their assigned-at-birth name and pronouns, it is important to remember the following:
- 2.3.1 This directive does not prohibit inadvertent slips or honest mistakes, but it does apply to the intentional and/or persistent refusal to acknowledge or use a student's name and/or pronouns. NOTE: Students who wish to use gender-diverse and gender-inclusive language in BWDSB schools should be supported in doing so. For example, some people do not feel included in the generic binary of 'he' or 'she.' Students may wish to write in such a way as to avoid it;
- 2.3.2 An increasingly common and accepted strategy is to use "they" as a gender-diverse singular pronoun; and
- 2.3.3 Many students consider their assigned-at-birth name a 'dead' name.

**3.0 ACCOMMODATIONS and ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MEASURES**

- 3.1 As stated in the Ontario Human Rights Code, every individual has the right to be treated fairly and equitably regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability.
- 3.2 Each student, school, and district staff have a responsibility to ensure that transgender and gender-diverse students have a safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment. This includes making sure that any incident of exclusion, bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence is handled in accordance with BWDSB policies and procedures.



**APPENDIX A: GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION GUIDELINES continued...**

3.3 Bluewater District School Board and its schools will ensure that:

- 3.3.1 accommodation requests, based on the guidelines outlined in this document, regarding gender identity or gender expression made to the school principal are honoured. The request may come directly from the student or the student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s). The school will work together with the student and/or family on an accommodation that best respects dignity, meets individual needs, and promotes inclusion.
- 3.3.2 all students, regardless of gender identity and/or expression, have the right to safe washroom facilities.
- i. All students have the right to enter a washroom that best corresponds to the student's gender identity, regardless of the student's assigned sex at birth or gender expression.
  - ii. Students should not be required to 'prove' their gender.
  - iii. An individual's self-identification is the sole determination of their gender. In instances where there are concerns specific to health and safety and/or competing human rights issues, it is advisable to contact the school principal for guidance.
  - iv. Where possible, schools will provide an easily accessible single stall all-gender washroom for use by any student who desires increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason.
  - v. Use of an all-gender single stall washroom should be an option students may choose but should not be imposed upon an individual by the school because of their gender identity. It should be made clear that such facilities are available and accessible to all students.
- 3.3.3 all students can exercise their right to participate in gender-segregated physical education (P.E.) class activities in accordance with each student's gender identity.
- i. All students have the right to a safe change-room that corresponds to their gender identity. Transgender and gender diverse students have the right to enter the change room that corresponds to their gender identity. In addition, transgender and gender diverse students are entitled to an accommodation, if requested, that best meets the individual student's particular needs. Such accommodations may include: (a) use of a private area within the public area (a bathroom stall with a door; an area separated by a curtain; (b) a separate changing schedule in the private area (either utilizing the change room before or after the other students); (c) use of a nearby private area (a nearby washroom).
- 3.3.4 all students have the right to play for the sports team that best aligns with their gender identity, regardless of their assigned sex at birth. Students shall be permitted to participate in accordance with their gender identity, subject to Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association (OFSAA) rules.
- i. Special attention must be given to accommodations necessary for a student to participate in physical education, school organized sports, and certain classes.
  - ii. Dress codes for sports play should be flexible but must adhere to safety guidelines as determined by the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA).

**APPENDIX A: GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION GUIDELINES continued...**

- iii. Determining an accommodation for a sport may require sensitive forms of inquiry into a person's identity, creed, belief, or practice. According to the OHRC, accommodation providers should take requests for accommodation in good faith. The most appropriate accommodation is the one that most:
  - a. respects dignity (including autonomy, comfort, and confidentiality);
  - b. responds to a person's individualized needs; and
  - c. allows for integration and full participation.
- 3.3.5 in any other circumstances where students are separated by gender in school activities (e.g., class discussions), students shall be permitted to participate in accordance with their gender identity.
- 3.3.6 in any circumstances where accommodation is needed, student privacy concerns will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
  - i. In such circumstances, staff shall make every reasonable effort to provide an accommodation that is acceptable to the student.
  - ii. If transgender or gender diverse students object to or feel uncomfortable with standard gender-separated housing accommodations or shared accommodations for reasons of privacy or safety, private accommodations should be made available to the student at no additional cost to the student.
- 3.3.7 the incorporation of inclusive classroom practices such as the teacher modelling being comfortable with changes in pronouns/ name, i.e., "Sounds good – thanks for letting me know, \_\_\_\_." Include pronouns in get-to-know-you and other classroom activities and not allowing students to giggle/ chatter about changes in pronouns/ names.

**4.0 DEFINITIONS**

**Biological Sex or Sex Assigned at Birth:** generally, refers to the sex assigned at birth based on external genitalia but also includes internal reproductive structures, chromosomes, hormone levels, and secondary sex characteristics such as breasts, facial and body hair, and fat distribution.

**Cisgendered:** is an individual having a gender-identity that is congruent with one's biological sex (e.g., one's biological sex is female and one's gender-identity is as a woman)

**Gender:** is a social construction relating to behaviours and attributes based on labels of masculinity and femininity.

**Gender Dysphoria:** refers to individuals who feel that their gender assigned at birth does not align with the gender with which they identify.

**Gender Identity:** is linked to an individual's intrinsic sense of self and their sense of being female, male, a combination of both, or neither regardless of their biological sex.

**Gender Expression:** refers to the way an individual expresses their gender identity (e.g., in the way they dress, the length and style of their hair, the way they act or speak, the volume of their voice, and in their choice of whether to wear make-up or not.) Understandings of gender expression are **culturally specific and will change over time.**

**APPENDIX A: GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION GUIDELINES continued...**

**Gender Non-Conforming:** refers to individuals who do not follow other people's ideas, social norms, or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on the female or male sex they were assigned at birth (also called Gender Variance, Gender Independence, and Gender Creativity). For example, this includes "feminine boys," "masculine girls," and individuals who are androgynous. Another example might be a male who comes to school in clothing that some might perceive as "girls' clothing," or the girl who plays games on the playground that some might perceive as "boys' games."

**Heteronormativity:** is the assumption that everyone is straight. It is the idea that all romantic relationships are between a man and a woman. It is the belief that heterosexuality is the only normal and natural expression of sexuality.

**Intersex:** refers to a person who has male and female genetic and/or physical sex characteristics.

**Misgendering:** means referring to someone with words, such as pronouns or names that do not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify.

**Sex:** refers to the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, which is produced by their chromosomes, hormones, and the interactions of these.

**Transgender:** refers to individuals whose gender identity is different from what is assumed based on their biological sex at birth, and/or whose gender expression is different from the way males or females are stereotypically expected to look or behave.

**Transition:** is the process (which for some people may also be referred to as "gender reassignment") whereby people change their appearance, bodies, and identity documents to match their internal (gender) identity, while living their lives full-time in the gender role they know themselves to be. Individuals can transition in two ways: social transitioning involves changing their name and pronouns, whereas medical transitioning is changing their body through hormone therapy or surgery.

**Transsexual:** a term for a person who identifies as a sex other than the one they were assigned at birth. Many transsexuals desire to undergo a medical sex conformation process (sometimes referred to as a sex reassignment) to change their birth-assigned sex.

**Two-spirit:** is an English term coined to reflect specific cultural words used by First Nations and other Indigenous peoples for individuals who have both a male and female spirit. Many two-spirit people are understood by settler society to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or transsexual, or have multiple gender identities.

**5.0 RESOURCES**

[Additional 2SLGBTQIA+ Terms and Concepts](#)

[Gender Galaxy](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)

**APPENDIX B: INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDELINES**

The following Inclusive Language Guidelines affirm Bluewater District School Board's (BWDSB) commitment to valuing the diversity of our students, staff, and school community through the use of inclusive language.

It is BWDSB's expectation that members of our school community will utilize inclusive language in all forms of communications, as supported by these guidelines, BP 7520-D "Human Rights", BP/AP 6303-D "Equity and Inclusive Education", and relevant legislation.

These guidelines are not intended to detract from an environment of mutual respect, nor are they intended to change the way a student addresses their teachers. Also, these guidelines are not suggesting that literary works, already published, should be re-written. However, it is suggesting that teaching staff should encourage discussions and analysis of language use with their students (please refer to BP/AP 5450-D for additional information in this regard).

**1.0 GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- i. Staff have a responsibility to ensure that guests who are invited to speak at our schools are aware of applicable board policies, procedures, and the need to use inclusive language.
- ii. Assume that you will have a diverse audience and make an effort to reflect this diversity in your work (written, verbal or visual). One must consider varying ages, gender and sexual orientations, and disabilities (visible or not), as well as the different ethnic, religious, cultural, or racial backgrounds that of audience.
- iii. Only use descriptors that refer to a person's outward characteristics (e.g., race, disability, sexual orientation) when there is relevance to context.
  - o e.g., noting that a student uses a wheelchair would be appropriate in a story regarding school accessibility concerns.
- iv. It is the expectation that BWDSB school community members will be respectful of the way in which others identify themselves and respond accordingly.
  - o e.g., when replying to external correspondence, use the form/title/name used by the originator.
  - o e.g., use preferred pronouns such as they/them/their, or he/him/his, or she/her/hers

**2.0 ABILITIES/DISABILITIES**

- i. Use language that emphasizes abilities and conveys a positive message whenever possible, rather than focusing on a person's limitations or disabilities.
- ii. Avoid labeling or defining people by their disabilities.
- iii. The word 'disabled' is an adjective, not a noun. It would not be appropriate to say 'the disabled'. It may be more appropriate to explain a disability, rather than focusing on the descriptor 'disabled'.
  - o e.g., Joey has a neurological disorder and requires the use of wheelchair.

**3.0 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

- i. There are three distinct groups of Indigenous Peoples in Canada: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (sometimes shortened to the acronym FNMI).
- ii. The Ministry of Education uses the term Indigenous when referring to FNMI Peoples.
- iii. When possible, include someone's specific Nation, community, or band along with their name.

## APPENDIX B: INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDELINES continued...

**4.0 RACE AND ETHNICITY**

- i. Avoid identifying individuals by their colour, race, or ethnic origin, unless it is contextually appropriate.
- ii. When references are necessary and relevant, ensure you utilize the appropriate and currently accepted terminology.
- iii. Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, races, tribes etc.
  - o e.g., Indigenous Peoples, French-Canadian.

**5.0 SEX, GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY, AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

- i. Avoid making distinctions based upon sex, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- ii. Use gender-neutral terms rather than those that make sex distinctions.
  - o e.g., humankind not mankind; ancestors not forefathers; partner/spouse not husband/wife; parent/guardian not mom/dad; police officer not policeman
- iii. Most occupations/roles can be gender undefined.
  - o e.g., chair not chairman
- iv. Where appropriate, replace masculine/feminine pronouns (he/she or his/hers) with the appropriate plural (their/they).
  - o e.g., 'principals are expected to evaluate their staff' not 'the principal is expected to evaluate his staff'
- v. Forms of address and occupational descriptions should identify the positions or the role, rather than the gender of the person. Titles such as Mr., Mrs., or Ms. can be omitted, where appropriate, and the person's full name may be used. Position titles should be used where appropriate.
  - o e.g., 'Jane Smith, Superintendent of Education' not 'Mrs. J. Smith'
  - o e.g., when initiating correspondence, if the name of the addressee is not known, use 'To Whom It May Concern'
  - o e.g., it would be still appropriate for students to refer to their teacher using the appropriate title: Mrs. Smith or Mr. Jones

(The Queen's University Style Guide - Inclusive Language Guidelines were used in the creation of these guidelines)

**APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines****Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments****Background**

Bluewater District School Board is committed to providing inclusive learning and working environments and curricula that actively promote and support the dignity, worth, belonging, and human rights of all students, staff, and community members. The delivery of education must ensure that no student experiences harm from the words or actions of board staff or others. Exposure to discriminatory slurs and epithets in learning or working environments, or in the process of instruction is harmful to the well-being of students, caregivers, and staff. It produces inequities in educational outcomes, and contributes to the creation of poisoned learning and working environments, contrary to the [Human Rights Code](#) and the [BWDSB Human Rights Policy](#).

The use of discriminatory slurs and epithets must not be condoned in BWDSB learning or working environment. This is supported through administrative procedure AP6303-D.

Due to the extensive harms associated with the use of the N-word, we want to emphasize that these words (N-words ending in 'er' and sometimes a slang 'ga') are not condoned in their unabbreviated form. The N-word is a racist, hateful, derogatory term used to dehumanize Black people. It is linked to a sordid history of enslavement, violence, loss of life, colonization, and other forms of oppression of Black people. The use of the N-word has harmful implications for school and workplace culture, especially for members of the BWDSB community who identify as Black.

**Guideline**

The N-word in its unabbreviated form should not be used by anyone in any context at BWDSB.

**Staff**

Bluewater District School Board staff must not utter, read out, write, or present the unabbreviated N-word in any context. Where a reference to the N-word may be required for instructional purposes, the word should be referenced in its abbreviated form ("the N-word"). This is because of the significant historical and ongoing trauma associated with and triggered by this word, as well as the underlying context of ongoing, widespread individual and systemic anti-Black racism.

Please see below regarding staff responsibilities to respond to incidents involving the use of the N-word.

**Non-Black Students**

White and non-Black racialized students are prohibited from using any version of the N-word (Including N---a) in any BWDSB environment for any reason and are prohibited from requesting a "pass" from Black students to use the N-word (i.e., requesting that Black students to give "permission" to use the N-word, which is a form of harassment). Staff are required not to tolerate or condone this conduct, and they must act to address it in a manner appropriate to their role (see below). The type of consequences that would be appropriate to impose will vary and is highly contextual. Please refer to the [Progressive Discipline Administrative Procedure](#).

**Black Students**

The use of the N-word by any student at school is not acceptable. However, it is important that we remember that context matters. If a Black student uses the N-word, a full assessment of the circumstances is necessary to determine the appropriate response. There is a long history of Black communities reclaiming the N-word and this must be considered when addressing the use of the word

**APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines****Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments  
continued**

by Black students, as well as taking context into account. For instance, was the N-word with the “a” ending being used consensually as a term of endearment, was the N-word with a hard “r” used as a slur, or something in between?

Black students should generally not be subject to suspensions or expulsions for using the N-word or variations of it (e.g., N---a). This does not mean that the usage is acceptable in school. However, the focus should generally be on providing non-judgmental guidance and education around the non-usage of the word at school in order to promote a safe learning environment for all Black students.

Caution must be undertaken to ensure that this message does not result in heightened surveillance of Black students and Black culture in schools. Prior to imposing any form of discipline, whether formal or informal, a fulsome consideration of the context must be undertaken, with the involvement of the school principal and superintendent, to determine an appropriate response. The superintendent and/or school administrator may reach out to the human rights and equity advisor if contextualizing a situation becomes complexed.

**Responding to Incidents**

Students or parent/guardian(s) who become aware of the discriminatory usage of the N-word in a BWDSB environment should advise a BWDSB staff member. All staff who witness or become aware of the usage of the N-word in a BWDSB environment have an obligation to act. Staff who become aware of the discriminatory usage of the N-word:

- ❖ Must Inform the relevant school principal, vice-principal, or manager.
- ❖ If they directly witness it, they should act immediately to denounce and disrupt the conduct if it is safe to do so. If they are in a position of authority over students, this is a requirement.

When relaying or documenting a human rights or disciplinary incident involving the N-word, staff must refrain from recounting or writing out the full slur. Staff can specify by writing “N-word,” or “the N-word with the ‘a’ ending” was used. In some instances, it may be necessary to preserve primary evidence of the usage of the word, such as by taking a photograph of graffiti, screenshots, etc.

**Rationale**

This Guideline is rooted in the rights of all students to access education on the basis of equal opportunity, without harassment or discrimination, and that develops them to their fullest potential.

These rights are guaranteed by the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), protected by the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), and reflected in the [Education Act](#).

This Guideline is also aligned with the [Professional Misconduct Regulation \(O. Reg. 437/97\)](#) under the [Ontario College of Teachers Act](#), [and the Ontario College of Teachers Professional Advisory on Anti-Black Racism](#), which states:

OCTs can be found guilty of professional misconduct if they play a role in creating a poisoned educational environment where students are likely to feel isolated and/or suffer a loss of self-esteem on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination.

APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines

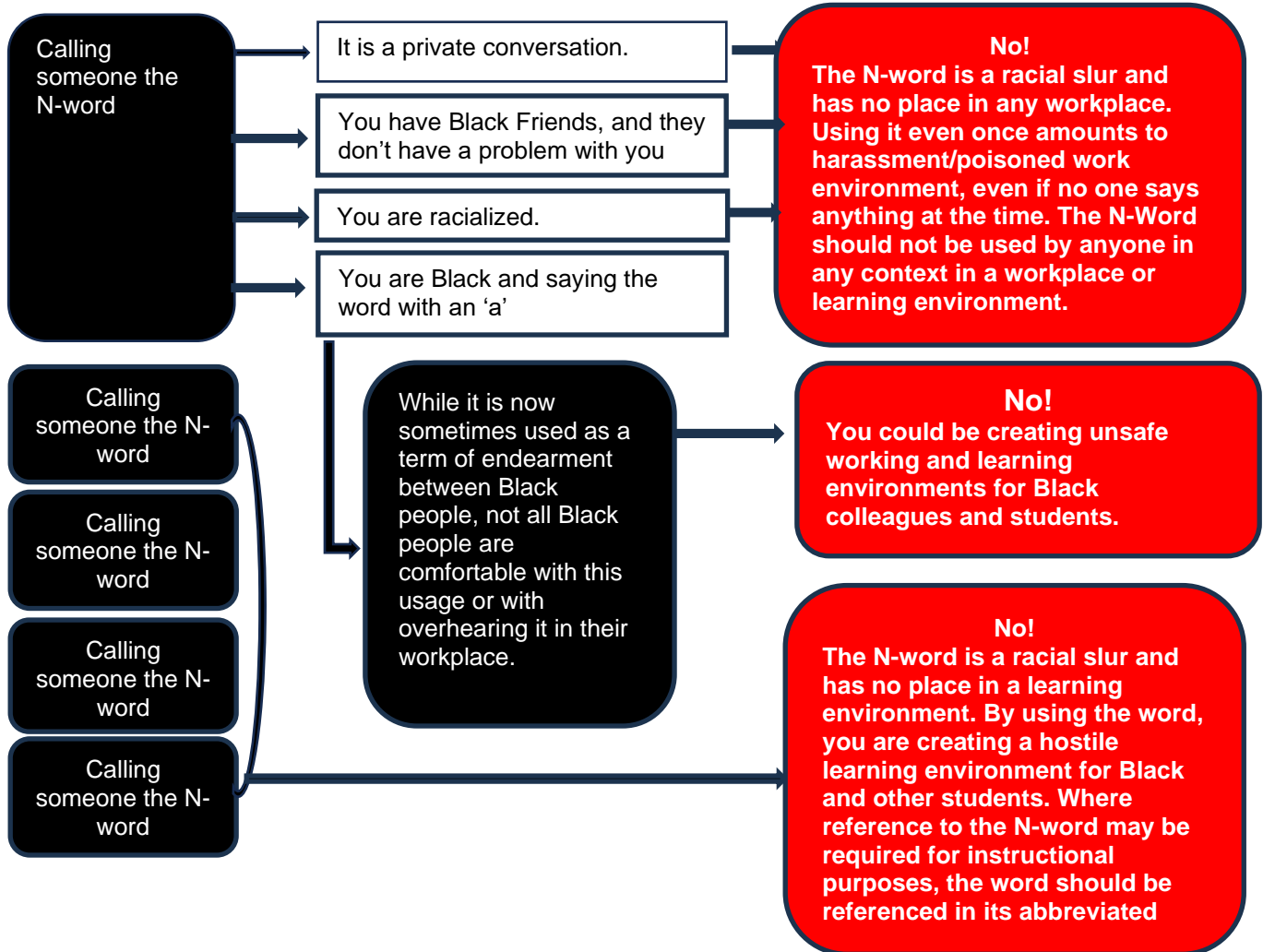
Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments continued

This Guideline is also rooted in the right of BWDSB staff to a discrimination and harassment-free work environment in accordance with the *Human Rights Code* and the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#).

Staff may be subject to disciplinary action if they use the N-word or fail to act to address the usage of the N-word in accordance with this Guideline. Please refer to the administrative procedure AP 7530-D "[Progressive Discipline - Employees](#)".

# As a teacher, can I use the N-word at school?

Are you...





## APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines

Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments  
continued

## THE N-WORD GUIDELINE – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Contents

- 1) What exactly needs to happen when students hear the n-word used as a racial slur? [Answer](#)
- 2) Does this Guideline mean Black students can say the n-word in school? Why aren't we disciplining Black students who are using the reclaimed word? [Answer](#)
- 3) But isn't it discrimination not to treat everyone the same? What about consistency? [Answer](#)
- 4) What if a Black student persists in using the reclaimed word in school? [Answer](#)
- 5) What if I, as a Black or racialized staff, am called the n-word by a student? [Answer](#)
- 6) You said I need to report a staff who uses the word. What about the requirement for a teacher to notify another teacher before making an adverse report? [Answer](#)
- 7) What if I'm not comfortable with how my school administrator or supervisor/manager addressed the usage of the n-word? [Answer](#)
- 8) How do I know if a student identifies as Black? [Answer](#)
- 9) What about books, films, and other classroom resources that use the n-word? [Answer](#)
- 10) What about students or staff playing music containing the N-word? [Answer](#)
- 11) What about using or reading the term "Negro" or "Coloured"? [Answer](#)
  - ❖ [Words highlighted in RED are not to be used in its unabbreviated form.](#)

**Question 1: What exactly needs to happen when students hear the n-word used as a racial slur?**

School staff have a duty of care to create safe learning environments and to protect Black students from the use of the n-word.

When the n-word is uttered in school environments, Black students can be pushed out of school and/or become depressed or suicidal due to the harms resulting from the use of the word. Tragic outcomes for Black students are more likely when school staff fail to act to stop and fully address the use of the word. Students understand condonation by staff (the failure to act) to mean that they are not valued and are not viewed as worthy of care and protection.

Below is general guidance for responding to any human rights concerns impacting students, including the usage of the n-word. This guidance applies to the use of slurs, harassment, and other discriminatory incidents that impact students in relation to a protected human rights ground. Protected human rights grounds include race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, and creed (religion) for example. Please see the BWDSB [Human Rights Policy](#) for a full list of the protected grounds. Discrimination in relation to these protected grounds is prohibited under the *Human Rights Code* and *Human Rights Policy*.

When a student is experiencing discrimination in relation to a protected human rights ground, there is a set of obligations staff must fulfil in order to comply with the *Human Rights Code*. The appropriate response will be different for each situation. Some of the below action items would be done by the school administrator. It is therefore important to be in communication as to who will do what.

This guidance supports your obligation to act as required under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. The order in which the below steps take place may vary depending on the circumstances.

- 1) **STOP AND INTERRUPT.** If you witness the incident, whenever possible, immediately intervene to stop the discriminatory act.

## APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines

Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments  
continued

- 2) **NAME THE DISCRIMINATORY ACT.** For example: “the use of that term is extremely racist and is not permitted.” Everyone who heard the n-word uttered should also hear the conduct denounced as a violent, racist, anti-Black word. Additional communication could include a statement such as: “The n-word was created as a form of anti-Black hate to justify the enslavement of Black people and other violent forms of harm. It is harmful for our school community to hear it, especially, our Black students and staff. No one is allowed to use this word in our school. The use of the word is against our values of inclusive schools that are welcoming, safe, and caring for all. We value, care for, and welcome our Black students and staff and all of our students and staff. The use of the n-word will not be tolerated in this school.”
- 3) **SUPPORT THE AFFECTED INDIVIDUAL(S).** Secure the safety of the affected individual. Remove the alleged perpetrator(s) from the area and separate the parties if necessary and as appropriate. Staff should support individuals who have been affected by or witnessed discrimination. Ask how you can support their well-being. When the n-word is used, Black students should be followed up with over time to assess the impact, and when needed, supports put in place to help them heal from their experiences of anti-Black racism.

**Other school/Board supports could include:**

Social worker and/or community worker and/or guidance counsellor for the impacted individual, or other relevant services. Board employees needing support may access the employee assistance program at [Telushealth.com](https://www.telushealth.com) or call 1-844-671-3327.

4) **REPORT AND/OR DOCUMENT WHAT OCCURRED.**

- ❖ **Mandatory report to school administration.** Anytime a student has an experience that involves a slur or any other potential human rights violation, there is a mandatory obligation to notify school administration through the Safe Schools Incident Reporting process.
- ❖ **Report to parents.** Parents of Black students who experience or who witness a human rights violation at school should be notified and informed of what is being done to address it, and asked what supports their child needs. This would usually be done by school administration. Parents will not trust the school system if the harms their children experience are hidden from them.
- ❖ **Record** names of witnesses and preserve any other pertinent evidence and information. (Papers, pictures, etc.)

5) **EXAMINE, RESTORE, EDUCATE, PREVENT.**

- ❖ Rebuild positive climates for learning. Restore the environment and support collective healing from the experience. Never instruct the harmed student that they need to “forgive”. Instead, ask what they need to heal from the experience and to feel safe in the classroom and at school.
- ❖ Examine and reassess your school/classroom culture and climate for root causes of the violation.
- ❖ Create and promote welcoming, inclusive, and safe spaces for all students.
- ❖ An education plan should be put in place not only for the perpetrator, but for all students, in order to support learning and empowerment and to prevent recurrence. Consider a specific classroom or school intervention focused on the N-word, and also think more generally about culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy, including anti-racism/anti-oppression/human rights interwoven into day-to-day learning. The Board will be developing supportive lesson plans, and the human rights and equity advisor will be working on PD for staff.

## APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines

Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments  
continued

- 6) **ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY.** Staff and administration would apply progressive discipline as appropriate.
- 7) **PLAN, PROTECT, MONITOR.** Put in place a plan to continue to support the impacted students, to protect from further harassment and discrimination, and to make sure the students are comfortable to report any future violations through a trusted adult. Arrange for check-ins to assess whether there have been more incidents.

[Return to Question and Answers](#)

**Question 2: Does this Guideline mean Black students can say the n-word in school? Why aren't we disciplining Black students who are using the reclaimed word?**

No, the Guideline does not mean that Black students can say the word. The Guideline says:

- “The n-word should not be used by anyone in any context at BWDSB”; and
- “The use of the n-word by any student at school is not acceptable”.

Although many Black people do not agree with reclaiming the n-word and feel harmed by hearing the reclaimed word, outside of our schools, it is considered socially acceptable among some Black people or groups to use variations of the n-word as a term of endearment. In this sense, the reclaimed n-word is like many other words that we understand can only be said by people who have historically been targeted by the word. For example, there are misogynist or homophobic slurs that have been reclaimed and we understand that only women or 2SLGBTQIA+ people can use those words. Against this backdrop, the idea that non-Black people should have equal entitlement to the n-word (or equal consequences for using it) deviates from this social understanding that we readily apply to other words. This discrepancy may be based in a sense of racial privilege and entitlement.

It is useful to reflect on the meaning of the term “*discipline*”. The true meaning of the word is *to teach or to provide guidance, which calls upon us to think about education and transformative justice*.

If a Black student is in the habit of using the reclaimed n-word, know and expect that it may take some time, education, and reminders to change, and some conscious effort and remembering on the part of the student.

*“I have seen a lot of grace extended to cisgender adults who inadvertently misgender people out of habit. This grace was also extended to me in the past. But this is not to say that misgendering is appropriate or acceptable. It really isn't. So, the idea of punishing Black students whose culture and vernacular includes the n-word does not match up. It's the juxtaposition of these two different responses, one of grace toward a dominant group, and one of punishment toward one of the most marginalized groups in our board. This really highlights for me the need for us to be conscious of bias, and the need to question who we see as deserving of grace versus who we see as deserving of punishment.”*

- Avion Campbell, Human Rights and Equity Advisor

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## APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines

Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments  
continued**Question 3: But isn't it discrimination not to treat everyone the same? What about consistency?**

Treating everyone the same is called “formal equality”. It is similar to saying “I don't see colour”, which often means choosing to exercise the privilege of overlooking people's cultures, histories, and experiences of racism and racial trauma, and instead, assuming everyone is the same (usually meaning the same as those in the dominant group, who are positioned as the norm).

Our courts have recognized that formal equality can cause “adverse effects discrimination”. This happens when a seemingly neutral rule, requirement, or practice has a disproportionate negative effect on a person or group because of race, disability, sex, creed, gender identity, sexual orientation, or another [protected human rights ground](#).

Black students in Ontario are already disproportionately monitored, suspended, expelled, and pushed out of schools. Black students are living the adverse effects of the combination of personal biases and pervasive systemic racism. For resources or discussions regarding experiences of anti-Black racism, please contact [Avion Campbell, HREA](#).

For some Black people, the usage of the n-word among Black people, particularly with the “a” ending, is part of their Black culture and vernacular. It could violate the Human Rights Code if the Guideline were carried out in a way that resulted in effectively punishing students in relation to their Black culture, or disproportionately punishing Black students.

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**Question 4: What if a Black student persists in using the reclaimed word in school?**

It is helpful to begin by remembering the history. The n-word was created by white people's hatred and imposed on Black people to serve white interests in abducting, dehumanizing, buying, selling, and killing Black people. Many white people have persisted in using this word to harm Black people.

Black people's reclaiming of the word has been a way to try to de-weaponize it. A Black student may understandably perceive that now a white person or a white dominated institution has decided that the de-weaponized word can no longer be used and is imposing this new rule on Black people as a form of colonial control. That is a reasonable interpretation even though it is not the rationale behind the Guideline.

If a Black student is perceiving you as authoritarian, as policing or controlling Black culture, they are more likely to react and resist. Consider the importance of taking a humbled approach and seeking to educate and support Black students. It is important that students know they are being asked not to use the word in order to protect other Black students and Black staff from harm, and that they understand the source and the history of that harm.

“When I taught children about the history and the power of the word, they made conscious efforts to stop using it. I taught them about the strong relationship between the n-word and anti-Blackness and just what it meant to our ancestors, and once they received that knowledge, they were able to make more informed choices when it came to using language to refer to friends. This change to some time, but it did happen.”

- Avion Campbell Human Rights and Equity Advisor

## APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines

**Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments  
continued**

Sometimes, regardless of your approach, your identity or your position may understandably cause an adverse reaction. Reflect on who may be the best person to work with the student on this issue and connect with your principal or vice-principal who can reach out to superintendents for support.

The answer to [question 2](#) is also relevant in response to this question.

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**Question 5: What if I, as a Black or racialized staff, am called the n-word by a student?**

If you feel able to, act immediately to denounce and disrupt the conduct if it is safe to do so. Notify your school administration so they can consequence the student. They also need to put a plan in place to offer necessary supports and make sure you are emotionally safe in your work environment.

**Question 6: You said I need to report a staff who uses the word. What about the requirement for a teacher to notify another teacher before making an adverse report?**

This notice requirement does not apply to human rights concerns. The Human Rights Code supersedes other laws including this notice requirement under the *Regulation to the Teaching Profession Act*. The *Human Rights Code* prohibits reprisal. If someone penalizes you or treats you badly for reporting a human rights concern or for advocating for a human right to be respected or addressed, then they are violating the *Human Rights Code*.

If you experience reprisal for reporting or standing up for a human right, please tell your school administrator. If your school administrator is the person, you believe you have experienced reprisal from, please contact your school superintendent. You can find the name of your superintendent on your school or board website.

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**Question 7: What if I'm not comfortable with how my school administrator or supervisor/manager addressed the usage of the N-word?**

If comfortable to do so, you can share your concerns with them. Otherwise, or if that does not resolve the issue, please let your school superintendent or next level manager know.

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**Question 8: How do I know if a student identifies as Black?**

Before imposing discipline, ask the student why they thought it was acceptable to use the N-word. Consider verifying the student's identity with parents if appropriate.

Be aware of relative racial privilege/light skin privilege. No one should use the N-word as a slur to harm another student. In situations where both students are Black, but the student who used the word has relative racial privilege (e.g., light skin, passes as white), the difference in relative privilege may significantly increase harm to the student who was called the N-word.

**APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines****Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments  
continued**

If the reclaimed word is being used as a term of endearment, in thinking about how to respond, consider whether the usage was consensual, and if not, as above, the impact could be even more significant if the student who used the word has relative racial privilege. These are just a few complexities to consider and many more arise in relation to the use of the N-word. Please ensure your school administration is aware so they can support.

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**Question 9: What about books, films, and other classroom resources that use the N-word?**

The [Human Rights and Equity Advisor](#) is working with the Board to develop specific guidance and training on this. At this time, please connect with your school administration for support before using such a resource, or any resource that depicts racism or racialized violence. Six principles to keep in mind are:

1. Students and parents should be alerted in advance, and education around the history and nature of the word must be provided in the classroom before students encounter it in classroom resources. Discussions leading up to using these resources need to be done carefully so that trust and a sense of safety is built.
2. Black students should never be compelled to hear the N-word in a BWDSB environment.
3. The importance of continuing to have authentic Black works in our schools (some of which recount experiences of harm in relation to the N-word or include the reclaimed word).
4. Inclusion so that Black students who are not consenting to exposure to a particular resource containing the N-word are not excluded from programming and are not penalized.
5. Black students are entitled to an inclusive education, free from harm. The education of our students should never take place at the expense of the well-being of our Black students.
6. When an occasional teacher is coming into the classroom for a short time, serious harms can result from leaving sensitive subject matter for the teacher to cover with the students, including films, books or other resources that include the use of the N-word. The teacher will not have had the time to build trust and to engage in the above advanced preparations.

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**Question 10: What about students or staff playing music containing the N-word?**

Students must not play music with the N-word in it at school. For Black students, see the above discussion cautioning against surveilling or policing Black culture, and be cautious in how students are approached.

It impacts many of our Black students to hear the N-word word referenced even if it is beeped out. After careful discussion with school administration, sometimes this approach may be taken for educational purposes if the inclusion of the work is expected to benefit our Black students and it is not feasible to only watch the segments that do not contain the N-word (however please also refer to question 9). If it is not educational, then the net result is harm.

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## APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines

Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments  
continuedQuestion 11: What about using or reading the term “**Negro**” or “**Coloured**”?

- ❖ **Words highlighted in red are not to be used in its unabbreviated form.**

Today, it is unacceptable to refer to Black people by these terms due to their history and connection to anti-Black racism. (Note that the term “Coloured,” previously used to refer to a Black person, is different from the term “person of colour,” which is a term Black and brown people use in the context of political organizing, although Black people sometimes do not prefer this term due to the similarity to the term “Coloured.”)

There are important historical works by Black authors that use these terms. However, some Black students feel quite harmed by hearing the term “**Negro**” = **(Spanish word meaning Black)** read aloud and may react to it in the same way as the N-word, likely because they are aware of the racist history connected with the term.

The term sounds similar to the N-word, and Black students may not have the same familiarity with it being previously considered acceptable because that was not the case in their lifetime. No Black student should be hearing this term. Please check in with your students, physically showing them that the term will be seen in learning material, but not read aloud and will also be referenced as “**people of colour or Black people**” in order to verify consent and ensure safety. It is also important to note that one would never reference the word “**Negro**” as the term “**Blacks**” because that reference would be a characterization of all Black people and is the same as using the word “**Coloured.**” The word “**Black**” is ok to use. It is necessary to educate students that the word is not to be used and why. Similar caution and education are important in relation to the now unacceptable term “**Coloured.**”

The words “**Negro**” and “**Coloured**” are not slurs. These words are written in their unabbreviated form because they are actual words with meanings that you can find in a dictionary; nonetheless, the known racist history connected to them may cause harm.

A Human Rights and Equity Systems Advisor in Ontario was quoted as saying, “The term “**Negro**” is outdated and offensive today because of its historical association with racism and discrimination. The word referred to people of African descent in derogatory and disrespectful ways. As educators of the future generation, we must understand that language evolves, and words that were once commonly used can become inappropriate or offensive over time due to their historical connotations.”

**Message to Students Before Content Presentation**

Before we start today’s lesson, it is essential to address the significance of the language we use. We are about to explore material that holds historical value despite some of the terminology it contains. One term you may encounter is the Spanish word meaning Black. (Students can be shown the word after explaining that it is the Spanish word meaning Black), which is no longer deemed appropriate due to its association with racism and discrimination. Although we will not use this term, it is crucial to understand its historical context to enhance our learning experience.

## APPENDIX C: N-Word Guidelines

Prohibiting the use of the N-Word in Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Environments  
continued

It is recommended that educators develop a process to allow students to make it known or excuse themselves from class in a safe manner if they find any content or material to be distressing. Our priority is to create a respectful and inclusive learning environment where everyone feels valued and supported. Let us proceed mindfully, ensuring that our learning journey is informative and respectful to all individuals.

[Return to Question and Answers](#)

References

- ❖ The guidance set out in steps 1-7 is adapted from the *Expected Practices Guide produced by the Toronto District School Board*.
- ❖ Dr. Carl James and Tana Turner, [Toward Race Equity in Education: The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area](#).
- ❖ Toronto, Ontario, Canada: York University, 2017; Dr. Carl James: [The crisis of anti-Black racism in schools persists across generations](#), York University, 2019.