

Equity and Inclusive Education Procedures Manual 504-A



Category:	Students
Administered by:	Superintendent of Education
First Adopted:	Oct 2010
Revision History:	Feb 2011, May 2016
Next Review:	2020-2021 School Year

1. General

These procedures have been developed in accordance with the Ministry of Education's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 and the Upper Grand District School Board Equity and Inclusive Education Policy #504 which is consistent with the principles of the Human Rights Code.

2. Definitions

Barrier: An obstacle to equity that may be overt or subtle, intended or unintended, and systemic or specific to an individual or group, and that prevents or limits access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society.

Bias: An opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgments.

Bullying: Under the Education Act (s.1(1)), "aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil, where (a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of, (i) causing harm, fear, or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social, or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation, or harm to the individual's property, or (ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and (b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression,

race, disability, or the receipt of special education” and where the intimidation includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written, or other means.

Creed is often referred to as religious beliefs and practices. Creed may also include non-religious belief systems that, like religion, substantially influence a person’s identity, worldview and way of life. A creed is a particular and comprehensive, overarching system of belief that governs one’s conduct and practices. Creed has a connection to an organization or community that professes a shared system of belief.

Discrimination: Unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of grounds set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g., race, sexual orientation, disability) or on the basis of other factors. Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, has the effect of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society. Discrimination may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

Diversity: The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

Gender identity is based on attributes reflected in the person's psychological, behavioural and/or cognitive state; may also refer to one’s intrinsic sense of manhood or womanhood. It is fundamentally different from, and not determinative of, sexual orientation.

Gender expression is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender. Others perceive a person’s gender through these attributes.

Harassment: A form of discrimination that may include unwelcome attention and remarks, jokes, threats, name-calling, touching, or other behaviour (including the display of pictures) that insults, offends, or demeans someone because of his or her identity. Harassment involves conduct or comments that are known to be, or should reasonably be known to be, offensive, inappropriate, intimidating, and hostile.

Inclusive education: Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curricula, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

School climate refers to the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect.

School community refers to staff, students and families, and local residents and organizations that have an interest in the success of the school.

The Code refers to Ontario's *Human Rights Code*, which identifies the prohibited actions that discriminate against people based on a protected *ground in a protected social area*. The *Code* states that it is public policy in Ontario to recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every person and to provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination.

3. Details

The Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) Policy is divided into 8 sections: board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices, shared and committed leadership, school-community relationships, inclusive curriculum and assessment practices, religious accommodation, school climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment, professional learning, and accountability and transparency.

3.1 Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines, and Practices

3.1.1 The Board of Trustees will:

- support student achievement and well being by ensuring the EIE principles are embedded in system policies
- support board and school practices that facilitate the effective implementation of EIE principles

3.1.2 The Director of Education will:

- support board and school practices that facilitate the effective implementation of EIE principles

3.1.3 Superintendents of Education will:

- provide leadership to the district and schools by ensuring the effective implementation of equitable and inclusive policies, procedures and guidelines
- commit to equitable hiring, mentoring, retention, promotion and succession planning
- review board and school improvement plans to ensure that they uphold the 8 EIE principles

3.1.4 School Principals, Managers and Supervisors will:

- provide leadership to staff and school community by ensuring the effective implementation of equitable and inclusive policies, procedures and guidelines
- commit to equitable hiring, mentoring, retention, promotion and succession planning
- develop, review and implement school improvement plans to ensure that they uphold the 8 EIE principles
- support staff and school community in understanding, using and communicating fair, transparent and equitable practices at the school and community level

3.1.5 All Board employees will:

- foster and model a commitment to the effective implementation of equitable and inclusive policies, procedures and guidelines
- actively embed the EIE strategy in their own daily practice
- support the school community in understanding the use of fair, transparent and equitable practices and inclusive language at the school and community level

3.1.6 Parents/guardians will:

- be informed and actively support equity policies, procedures, practices and guidelines
- support their children in using fair, transparent and equitable practices and inclusive language in the school and community

3.1.7 Students will:

- understand and respect school policies, procedures and guidelines regarding equity and inclusion
- demonstrate use of fair, transparent and equitable practices and inclusive language at the school and community level

3.2 Shared and Committed Leadership

3.2.1 The UGDSB will:

- provide staffing for a contact person to liaise with the Ministry and other boards
- maintain an Equity of Access Committee to financially support elementary students in need
- monitor effectiveness of equity policy and practices
- build effective leadership capacity to foster shared responsibility for safe, inclusive, and accepting school and work environments

3.2.2 Schools will:

- foster shared responsibility for safe, inclusive, and accepting school environments
- identify an equity representative
- encourage the development of student leaders in the area of equity and inclusion

3.2.3 Students will:

- be encouraged to participate in leadership opportunities so that their perspectives are reflected in the school environment and community
- express themselves in an inclusive and respectful manner to positively influence their peers

3.3 School-Community Relationships

3.3.1 The UGDSB will:

- consult with diverse community groups to support the principles of equity and inclusive education and to reflect the diversity of the broader community (e.g., First Nations, Métis, Inuit Advisory Committee, LGBTQ community)
- encourage representation from diverse communities on existing board committees (e.g., Special Education Advisory Committee, Parent Involvement Committee)
- establish mechanisms to determine if parents/guardians and community members feel welcomed and valued in the schools and at the board offices
- establish processes to identify and address systemic barriers that may deter or prevent parents/guardians and community members from participating in board and school activities (e.g., accessible communications to school community)

3.3.2 Schools will:

- partner with diverse community members to support the principles of equity and inclusive education and to reflect the diversity of the broader community
- encourage representation from diverse communities on existing school committees (e.g., School Council, Safe Schools Team)
- participate in mechanisms to determine if students, parents/guardians and community members feel welcome and valued in the schools
- implement strategies to identify and address systemic barriers that may deter or prevent community members from participating in board and school activities
- ensure communication is accessible to the school community

3.4 Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices

3.4.1 The UGDSB will:

- provide support and resources to schools through the Equity Curriculum Lead and the Equity Steering Committee
- identify and address systemic bias that may exist in the way students are taught and students' work is assessed, evaluated, and reported
- encourage the selection and use of learning resources that are culturally respectful and relevant, recognizing and affirming the life experiences of all students
- support a culture of high expectations for the achievement and well-being of all students
- implement mechanisms to identify why there are gaps in student achievement and make plans to reduce the gaps

3.4.2 Schools will:

- foster a learning environment that gives students a sense of safety and belonging
- maintain a culture of high expectations for the achievement and well-being of all students
- align instructional and assessment strategies with equity and inclusive education principles
- use learning resources that recognize and affirm the life experiences of all students
- provide support and resources to staff and students through the Equity Representative
- consider the school and classroom diversity (e.g., cultural or religious observances, socio-economic status, special education needs) in the planning of field trips and extracurricular activities to ensure that all students have equity of access
- reflect the cultural, racial and religious diversity of the school community (e.g., school calendar, celebrations, food service, athletics, assemblies, concerts, announcements, bulletin boards, displays, libraries/learning commons, offices, websites)

3.5 Creed Accommodation (Religious/Faith Accommodation)

3.5.1 The UGDSB will:

- develop and distribute a common calendar of faith-based events
- review and revise existing creed accommodations guidelines with input from stakeholders and communicate these guidelines to the school community
- provide Board and Community resource information to school staff about the creed faith needs of individuals in the school and school community

- increase the awareness and understanding of the legislation regarding creed accommodation

3.5.2 Schools will:

- use the multi-faith calendar provided as a resource
- provide information about Board and Community resources to school staff about the creed faith needs of individuals in the school and school community
- increase awareness and understanding of the legislation regarding creed accommodation
- ensure guidelines are available and communicated to the community
- seek input about creed accommodation needs by collaborating with the school community
- provide creed accommodations in response to the needs of the school community (e.g., daily routines, religious attire, scheduling, meetings, assessment, instruction, extracurricular activities, field trips, etc.)
- take reasonable steps to accommodate students on an individual basis according to the creed accommodations guidelines

3.5.3 Students and/or families will:

- self advocate and communicate needs regarding creed accommodations

3.6 School Climate and Prevention of discrimination and harassment

3.6.1 The UGDSB will:

- ensure procedures are in place to enable students and staff to safely report incidents of bullying, discrimination and harassment
- communicate Information about existing or revised procedures to all members of the system

- use information from Climate Surveys to support a safe community for learning and working

3.6.2 Schools will:

- foster a sense of shared responsibility to create a respectful, positive school climate among students, staff, parents and community members
- embed character development into all programs and practices
- address non-inclusive, disrespectful, or discriminatory behaviours
- investigate and respond to reports of bullying, discrimination and harassment in accordance with board policies
- identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents and the community
- ensure students, parents and other members of the school community are welcomed and respected

3.6.3 Students will:

- demonstrate behaviour that shows a commitment to the values and vision of equity and inclusion
- use inclusive and respectful language and approaches in all interactions
- report incidents of bullying and harassment

3.7 Professional Learning

3.7.1 The UGDSB will:

- provide ongoing, differentiated professional learning on a variety of equity issues to meet diverse needs of staff
- provide equity resources to schools

3.7.2 Schools will:

- provide ongoing, differentiated professional learning on a variety of equity issues to meet diverse needs of staff
- have equity representatives who shall provide staff with information regarding equity initiatives

3.8 Accountability and Transparency

3.8.1 The UGDSB will:

- ensure equity policy and procedures are implemented in all work spaces
- ensure that the board improvement plan includes equity goals
- ensure that school improvement plans have equity goals aligned with the board plan
- collect and use data to monitor the progress of the equity policy implementation across the system

3.8.2 Schools will:

- ensure equity policy and procedures are implemented in the work space
- ensure there is at least one equity goal in school improvement plans
- monitor own progress of the implementation of the EIE goals in the school (through equity walks, and other measures)