



Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Policy Vancouver Island School of Innovation and Inquiry

RATIONALE

The Vancouver Island School of Innovation and Inquiry (“VISII” or “the school”), operated by the Epiphyte Educational Society (“EES” or “the society”) is committed to ensuring a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming environment for all members of the learning centre community, regardless of real or perceived sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

The term “sexual orientation and gender identity” (SOGI) is an inclusive term that encompasses all individuals regardless of where they identify on the sexual orientation, or gender identity spectrums, including identities like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two-Spirit, queer, intersex, cisgender, and asexual. The term SOGI used in this procedure includes all sexual orientations and gender identities.

VISII believes that all students, staff, and families have the following rights:

- The right to privacy and confidentiality;
- The right to self-identification and determination; and,
- The right to have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, represented, valued, and respected within all aspects of the learning centre environment.

PURPOSE

The Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity Procedure is in place to ensure that all VISII programs, activities, and actions are free from harassment and discrimination based on real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Its purpose is to prevent discrimination and harassment by setting out appropriate behaviours and actions. It shares best practices for creating more inclusive environments for all students, and improves understanding of the lives of people who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.

Safe and Caring Learning Centre

VISII expects that all individuals, adults, and students will treat each other with respect and courtesy, and conduct themselves in a manner that will promote safety and security for all learners and staff in the learning centre. Fundamental to maintaining a learning centre that cultivates excellent conduct is the adherence of individuals to the principles which foster caring, nurturing, and compassion to create the building blocks for a safe, caring, and welcoming learning environment.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Staff will respect confidentiality and privacy and not expose sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression of students.

- A student's transgender status, legal name, or gender assigned at birth may constitute confidential personal information that will be kept confidential unless its disclosure is legally required or unless authorization has been granted.
- In situations where school staff or administrators are required by law to use or to report a transgender student's legal name or sex, such as for purposes of data collection, school staff and administrators will adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such information.
- Students' rights to discuss and express their gender identity and/or gender expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much private information to share will be respected.

Self-identification

A student will be addressed using the name by which they deem appropriate for their gender identity and will be addressed and the use of pronouns that correspond to their gender identity.

- Every student has a right to be addressed by a name and the pronouns that correspond to their gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the student does not need to change their official records.
- A student who is transitioning during the time they are enrolled in the school will likely indicate their name and pronouns. Students must be addressed by the pronoun that reflects their gender identity regardless of their gender expression.
- If a student's gender identity is blended or fluid or neither, the student may request to be referred with a gender neutral pronoun such as they/them/theirs. Once a student declares their pronouns, that choice must be respected to ensure the student's sense of well-being and security.

Official Records and Student Information

- Whenever possible and permitted by law, requests made by a student, or the parent/guardian, to change the student's official record to reflect their usual name and/or gender identity will be accommodated. VISII is required by law to maintain a mandatory permanent record card which includes each students' legal name and legal sex, yet has a great deal of latitude in handling student records in the day-to-day operations of the school.
- Whenever possible, at the request of a student or of a students' parent(s)/guardian, the student's preferred name and their pronouns will be included on class lists, timetables, student files, identification cards, etc.
- In situations where VISII staff or administrators are required by law to use or to report a transgender student's legal name or assigned sex, such as for the purposes of standardized testing, learning centre staff and administrators will adopt practices to avoid inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information.

Dress

Students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression. This includes students who may dress in a manner that is not consistent with societal expectations of masculinity/femininity.

Epiphyte Educational Society

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