

How do I talk to my child about what it means to identify as gay or transgender?

Since everyone parents in different ways, you will know best on how to speak to your child about people who identify as LGBTQ.

For elementary aged children, focus your discussion on love and relationships and explain that people love each other in different ways. For secondary aged children, focus on that sometimes it takes a person more time to be comfortable to express themselves as who they really are.

Are there resources?

In 2017, the GECSDB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Committee bought kits for every elementary School titled, “Social Justice Begins With Me”. These kits are anti-bias literature-based curriculum resource kits for the Early Years to Grade 8. The kits promote: Acceptance, Respect, Hope, Peace, Empathy, Inclusion, Diversity, Human Rights and Equity. The kits addresses “isms” such as: Anti-Semitism, Ageism, Heteronormality, Sexism, Racism, Classism, Ableism, Prejudice and Faith.

Some books from the kit that are available at your child’s school as well as the local public library can help guide your conversations:

- “Molly’s Family” by Nancy Garden
- “George” by Alex Gino
- “And Tango Makes Three” by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
- “King and King” by Linda de Haan
- “My Princess Boy” by Cheryl Kilodavis
- “Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender) Teen” by Jazz Jennings
- “Red: A Crayon’s Story” by Michael Hall



Flying the Pride Flag at The Greater Essex County District School Board

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can we contact with questions or concerns?

Please contact your child’s school administration team with questions or concerns.

References

Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms
Education Act
Ontario Human Rights Code

Ministry Documents:

Ontario Equity Action Plan
Realizing the Promise of Diversity

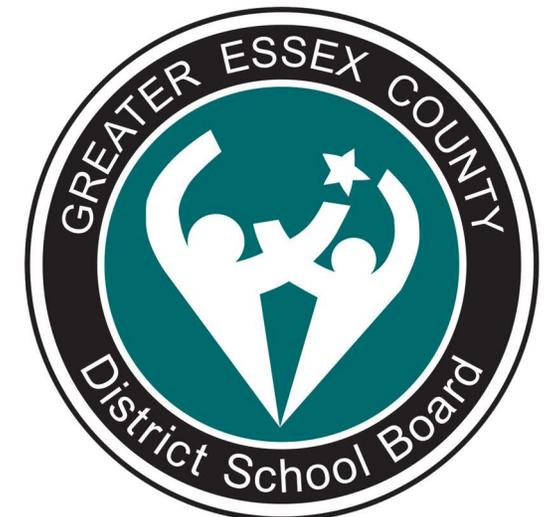
Board Documents:

Human Rights Policy (P-AD-48), Regulation (R-AD-48)
Equity & Inclusive Education Policy (P-AD-38),
Regulation (R-AD-38)

[www.publicboard.ca/community/equityandinclusi
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During the first week of June, GECDSB Elementary and Secondary Schools as well as the Board Office will be flying the Pride Flag. Please find below some frequently asked questions.

Why is my child's school flying the Pride flag?

The month of June is Pride month. Many of our students, staff, parents/guardians and community members identify as members of the Rainbow or LGBTQ+ community. Flying the Pride flag is a signal to all that our schools and workplaces are safe and inclusive spaces for everyone. It is also in keeping with our GECDSB Board Improvement Goal of Equity and Increased Well-Being and our Strategic Priority that we sustain a culture where there is a focus on student learning, student achievement, student engagement and well-being, as well as a sense of belonging in a caring learning environment.

Our school district is showing our support of the LGBTQ community by raising the Pride flag. We continue to raise awareness and support inclusion of other marginalized groups in other ways. We continue to work to ensure the equity and inclusion of all our students and staff, regardless of age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, place of origin, race, receipt of public assistance*, record of offences, sex, sexual orientation. *only in respect to housing / accommodation.

What if flying the Pride flag is against my personal values and beliefs?

We believe that our schools are safe spaces for everyone. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Regardless of your personal

values and beliefs, we follow the Ontario Human Rights Code that protects marginalized groups from discrimination and harassment. We are flying the Pride flag to demonstrate our commitment to our community that discrimination and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in our schools.

Are you allowed to fly another flag on the same mast as the Canadian flag?

The Federal Government of Canada sets guidelines in terms of how Canadian flag is displayed in Canada, which are not mandatory for individuals or organizations. Heritage Canada confirmed that where schools only have one mast we fly the Canadian flag first and the Pride flag underneath.

Flying the Pride flag is just one example that all of our schools and workplaces are safe and inclusive for everyone.

What does LGBTQ+ mean?

LGBTQ+ refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning. The + refers to people who identify as Intersex, Asexual or an Ally. Other common terms used to describe people in these communities who do not identify as heterosexual are the Queer Community or Rainbow Community. It is important to be respectful and use the terms that people prefer when identifying a person as part of this community. Please see the glossary of terms as a reference that is available on the GECDSB Equity Portal.

How are schools supporting equity and inclusion throughout the year?

Each of our schools is committed to providing its students with a positive school climate. We know that when students feel safe and supported in a healthy school climate, they have greater success.

Each of our 15 secondary schools have Gay Straight Alliances or Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs). These clubs are safe spaces for our students, staff, and allies of the Rainbow community to come together and discuss issues they may be facing and topics that matter to them. Our GSAs are places that our students feel comfortable being themselves and can have open and honest conversations with their peers.

What are supports available to students and staff in schools?

In addition to our schools having a GSA as a safe space and resource for students, our administrators and teachers have access to resources that we developed in partnership with local agencies. Our local partners include Windsor Essex PrideFest, Windsor Pride, Run for Rocky, Windsor Essex Transgender & Allied Support and the provincial teacher unions OSSTF and ETFO to name a few.

In 2016, the GECDSB introduced procedures to help our staff learn about the implications of identifying as a trans student in our schools. This procedure helps to ensure that transitions are done with respect and dignity.

Throughout the past few years we have been pleased to participate in Professional Development sessions with EGALE Canada, Windsor Pride and the Run for Rocky. Further, Equity has been identified as a Board Improvement Goal so intensive training at all levels of the organization have been ongoing to support and equity and inclusion for all.