



POLICY

Title: **EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Policy No.: **2022**

Effective Date: **2010 Sept 1**

Department: Director's Services

Reference(s):

- PPM No. 119 – Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools
- Procedure – Religious and Creed-Based Accommodations of Staff
- Procedure – Religious and Creed-Based Accommodations of Students
- Policy – Safe Schools
- Procedure – Advertising and Distribution of Political/ Religious/ Sectarian/ Commercial and Non-Commercial Material in Schools
- Policy – Harassment
- Policy – Self-Identification for Aboriginal Students
- Procedure – First Nations Language Instruction
- Procedure – ESL/ ELD Teacher Staffing Allocations
- Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Creed
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Constitution Act, 1982
- Ontario Human Rights Code

It is the policy of the Board to commit to excellence in education and equitable educational outcomes for all students. The Thames Valley District School Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and in PPM No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools" (June 24, 2009).

The Thames Valley District School Board believes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to all programs, services, and resources are critical to the well-being of those who serve the school system and to the achievement of successful outcomes by all those who are served.

The Thames Valley District School Board recognizes that groups in our communities face systemic and individual biases that may be related to race, colour, culture, ethnicity, linguistic origin, disability, socio-economic class, age, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, religion, faith, sex, gender, sexual orientation, family status, and/or marital status. As the original peoples of Canada, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities face similar and unique biases.

To the extent that the Thames Valley District School Board recognizes that these biases exist within the school system, it is committed to fairness, equity, and inclusive education as essential principles of the system. All Board policies, programs, operations, and practices will reflect these values.

Administered By: Director's Services

Amendment Date(s): 2018 Jan 23

The Thames Valley District School Board will not tolerate discrimination or any expression of discrimination by members of our school communities.

The Thames Valley District School Board values and welcomes the contributions of diverse community members in strengthening educational opportunities for all students and ensuring a respectful, supportive, and welcoming learning and working environment for all students and employees.

1.0 **Definitions**

The Ministry of Education and the Thames Valley District School Board recognize the following definitions for the purposes of this policy:

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, gender identity, 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.

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

2.0 **Areas of Focus**

2.1 Thames Valley District School Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines, and Practices

The Thames Valley District School Board is committed to incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its operations, structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices. The Thames Valley District School Board is committed to the removal of systemic barriers to improve student learning, close achievement gaps, and to ensure equitable opportunities for students and staff.

2.2 Shared and Committed Leadership

The Thames Valley District School Board shall provide informed and committed leadership at all levels by assisting administrators, teachers, support staff, student leaders, trustees, and educational partners to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required to implement this policy. The Thames Valley District School Board is committed to building the capacity within leaders to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing, removing, and preventing all forms of discrimination.

2.3 School-Community Relationships

The Thames Valley District School Board is committed to developing new relationships and building upon existing partnerships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized and valued. The Thames Valley District School Board recognizes that effective school-community partnerships enable representation and active participation from diverse communities and ensure the inclusion of their perspectives and experiences to enhance educational opportunities and equitable decision making.

2.4 Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices

The Thames Valley District School Board is committed to implementing an inclusive curriculum through the development and review of resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices, in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that students may maximize their learning. Through the development and implementation of inclusive curriculum and assessment practices, staff will recognize and support students with diverse backgrounds and differing abilities.

2.5 Religious and Creed-based Accommodation

The Thames Valley District School Board acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not follow religious and/ or spiritual beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious and creed-based accommodation to students and staff aligned with board policy.

2.6 School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

The Thames Valley District School Board is committed to the principle that every person within our District, as stated in board policy, is entitled to a respectful, positive, supportive learning and working environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

2.7 Professional Learning

The Thames Valley District School Board is committed to providing staff and community partners with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify, eliminate, and prevent discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.

2.8 Accountability and Transparency

The Thames Valley District School Board is committed to assessing and monitoring its progress in implementing the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy;

to embedding its principles into all other Thames Valley District School Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices; and to communicating these results to our school communities, the Ministry of Education, the Board, and the public. The Equity and Inclusive Education Steering Committee will lead the annual review of the Equity and Inclusive Education Board Action Plan.