



What exactly is SOGI education?

There is no separate and distinct SOGI program or curriculum. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) are important topics that are interwoven through several curriculum areas, most notably, Physical and Health Education, language arts, and social studies. How the topics are introduced to students is dependent on the age and stage of their development. These topics may also be discussed as they arise in the daily lives of students.



Are discussions about sex or sexual practices taking place in elementary classrooms?

No, sexuality as a concept is discussed starting in grade 4 (with the onset of puberty) but does not include discussions about sexual acts or practices. Secondary students need accurate information about relationships and safe sex. Lack of information can have significant consequences for youth health and emotional wellbeing.



Are school aged children too young to be learning about gender?

When discussing gender, the conversations are largely about what people like to wear, the activities they engage in and how they feel about themselves. Gender is about self-identity. When students learn about the diversity found in gender, they have an opportunity to explore a greater range of interests, ideas and activities.



Aren't elementary aged children too young to be talking about sexual orientation and gender identity? Why can't you just teach about bullying instead of talking about sexual orientation and gender identity?

It's important that all students feel safe and welcomed in school. In order to do that, it's important that everyone has the opportunity to learn about each other and celebrate each other's differences. Unfortunately, children are already learning homophobic and transphobic slurs starting in the primary years. The job of educators is to make schools safe by opposing all bullying and name calling.



Won't talking about sexual orientation and gender identity confuse children/youth?

Information and discussion will not make anyone gay or straight. No one decides to be gay or straight, it is not a "lifestyle choice". As students grow older, some will identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. All of our students need to feel safe, welcome and positively reflected in the curriculum.



Are students being told not to use “boy” or “girl” to describe themselves?

No, students have never been told this. Teachers have been asked to think about using more inclusive strategies for grouping students or speaking collectively about a class. For example, instead of saying “good morning boys and girls” a teacher may use a phrase such as “good morning students”. This allows for all students to feel included regardless of their gender identity.



Are students being told not to call their parents “mom” or “dad”?

No, students have never been told this.



Why is SD75 working on ensuring sexual orientation and gender identity are being taught in schools?

The work that is being done in the district is the Ministry of Education’s curriculum, it is not unique to SD75, it is province-wide. This work has been mandated in both public and private school systems. SD75 is merely ensuring that the diversity that exists in school is reflected in the conversations in the classroom – there has been no addition to the curriculum. There is nothing overly new about this, a new subject area is not being introduced. Teachers have been teaching this curriculum for years, but there is an increasing awareness to be inclusive. It is important that these conversations are respectful and inclusive.



Can parents “opt-out” of education related to sexuality, sexual orientation and gender orientation?

The Provincial Government has allowed for some flexibility in the delivery of certain ‘sensitive areas’ of the curriculum, specifically topics related to reproduction and sexuality that some students and their parents/guardians may feel more comfortable addressing by means other than instruction by a teacher in a regular classroom setting. These topics do

not include lessons and topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity, unless they relate to reproduction and sexuality.

[Read the BC Government provided information about Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity here.](#)



Is SOGI 123 going to require teachers to teach my child sexually explicit acts?

The simple answer is no. SOGI 123 is NOT Sexual Health Education. Sexual Health Education is Ministry approved curriculum that is embedded in the Physical Health Education and taught by specialist teachers for the elementary, middle and secondary school students. The Sexual Health Education curriculum is age appropriate, and is taught with sensitivity and has a focus on healthy relationships.

The Sexual Health Education lessons begin in Grade 4 (as learners begin to experience puberty) but do not include discussions about sexual acts or practices at the elementary level. Teachers and students discuss more details of sexual practices at the secondary level because learners require information to support healthy relationships.



With the introduction of SOGI 123, is the Board of Education going to have boys and girls use group washrooms together?

No, there is no plan to have group gender-neutral washrooms. District sites and schools have both Male and Female group washrooms, and where possible, single use gender neutral washrooms. New buildings will have all three washroom types in schools. Single use washrooms are identified as "washroom" and do not use gender, handicap or any other specific identifier.



If you are worried about children feeling unsafe or excluded, why not just focus on bullying?

Just as adults do, children tend to fear or dislike what they do not understand. Sadly, at a young age some children already learn to use homophobic and transphobic slurs against people who appear to be different. SOGI education builds respect and acceptance of diversity, so that every single child in Mission Public Schools feels safe and welcome.



I have concerns about what is being taught in my child's classroom. Who should I talk to?

The best place to start is always with your child's teacher. As with all areas of the curriculum, the classroom teacher is the most knowledgeable about the subjects being taught in individual classes. The school-based administrator can also be an excellent source of information.



I think my child may be transgender. What should I do next?

The Canadian Pediatric Society says:

"There is nothing medically or psychologically wrong with your child. Gender diversity is not a result of illness or parenting style. It isn't caused by letting your son play with dolls, or your daughter play with trucks.

If your child is transgender or gender-creative, they can live a happy and healthy life. Get support from other parents of transgender and gender-creative children or talk to a mental health professional who specializes in the care of transgender and gender-creative children (if available in your community). Indigenous families can talk to a two-spirit elder or leader."

For further information, visit the Canadian Pediatric Society – Caring for Kids website at

<https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/>



Does the implementation of SOGI 123 interfere with parental rights and the protections under the Human Rights Code for religion?

No, the District respects the diversity and the Human Rights Code that protects all individuals from discrimination. It will support and defend the inclusion of all persons it serves with the voice of legislation, policy and practices. Schools are to be safe, inclusive environments for all, free of discrimination. Public school districts are secular by legislation. Parents wishing to teach particular religious perspectives will need to do so at home. There is no provision within the School Act or SOGI 123 that prevents parents from exercising their rights as parents to raise their children and influence their growth and development with values and beliefs that are part of their religion or culture.

The education of our communities children and youth is a community effort that involves parents/guardians, teachers, and the children and youth themselves, and their views and values. Many people in the community will have views that influence our children and youth. Some ideas will be in opposition of others. It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to have discussions at home that help form the values of the children/youth in their care. It is the School District's responsibility to educate students using the filter of approved curricula or resources to meet the Ministry's goal of preparing the "Educated Citizen."