



ASD-W

Anglophone School District West

Appendix B – A Guide to using Gender Inclusive Language in ASD-W Policy

Policy Name and Number: ASD-W-ER 4 - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities

A Guide to Using Gender Inclusive Language in ASD-W Policy

In February 2018, *ASD-W DEC-ER4 - Sexual Identity and Gender Orientation* policy was approved. In January 2024 it was revised. The overarching purpose of the policy is to address heterosexism/cisnormativity and ensure respect for human rights, support diversity and address discrimination for ASD-W LGBTQI2S+ community members. One action required to support policy compliance is –

- District policies reflect respect and consideration of LGBTQI2S+ School Community Members.
- The A guide developed for the 2019-2020 policy review cycle which has been used to address heterosexist/cisnormative language in all ASD-W policies has been updated in Spring of 2024. (*See terms and definitions.*)

Many common words contain assumptions about gender or sexuality that detract from the creation of safer school spaces. While there may be no intention to cause harm or discriminate, use of these words can perpetuate a cisnormative, heterosexist worldview/perspective which disrespects the human rights and safety of LGBTQI2S+ community members.

The following table shows examples of *heterosexist*, *cisnormative* language and some alternative sex and gender inclusive language-

Heterosexist, Cisnormative Language	Gender Inclusive Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Man, mankind, ladies and gentlemen, guys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Folks, people, everybody, everyone, humankind
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ He/she	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ They
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Girlfriend and boyfriend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Crushes, couples
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Husband and wife	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mom and dad	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Parents, guardians
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Girls and boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Children

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chairman ○ Fireman ○ Waiter/waitress ○ Actress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chairperson or Chair ○ Firefighter ○ Server ○ Actor
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Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2014

When conducting ASD-W policy reviews, care should be taken to ensure that the language of the policy reflects sex and gender inclusive language throughout each policy.

Terms and Definitions

Terms and definitions to support understanding of application of gender inclusive language use.

Sexual Orientation describes a person's capacity for profound emotional or sexual attraction to another person based on their sex and/or gender. (*Egale*)

Heterosexism is defined as prejudice and discrimination in favour of heterosexuality. This includes the presumption of heterosexuality as the superior and more desirable sexual orientation. Heteronormativity refers to the cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are straight and so privileges heterosexuality and ignores or underrepresents same-gender relationships. (*Egale*)

Gender Identity refers to a person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender – their internal sense of being man, woman, or another gendered being entirely. A person's gender may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others. (*Egale*)

Transgender refers to a person who does not identify either fully or in part with the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex – often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions. Transgender people (just like cisgender people) may identify as straight, gay, etc. (*Egale*)

Cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity corresponds to birth-assigned sex. (*Egale*).

Non-binary refers to a person whose gender identity may not correspond with social and societal gender expectations. Individuals who identify as non-binary may identify with both male and female genders, move between genders, or may reject the gender binary or gender altogether. Those who identify as non-binary may or may not also identify as trans. Other terms may include but are not limited to **genderqueer**, **gender non-conforming**, **gender-creative**, and **gender fluid**. (*Egale*)

Cisnormativity is defined as a cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are *cisgender* (gender identity corresponds to birth-assigned sex) and so privileges cisgender identities and ignores or underrepresents gender variance. (*Egale*)

Further terms and definitions are available in the [NB LGBTQ Inclusive Education Resource](#) .