

# DEALING DIRECTLY WITH DISCRIMINATION IN OUR SCHOOLS

The WRDSB stands firm against incidents of discrimination. We must take incidents of discrimination very seriously. Through policies, guidelines and procedures, the WRDSB has outlined the steps that school administrators and staff must take to understand, address and prevent discrimination in our schools. WRDSB staff are expected to deal directly with discrimination in our schools by stopping, interrupting, naming, and reporting discrimination (IS-15-03-WRDSB-Incident-Reporting).

This is a tool to support staff in dealing directly with discrimination. If an incident of discrimination occurs, follow these **DIRECT** steps:

**D**

**Dialogue** with everyone involved in the incident.

**I**

**Identify** the behaviour(s) and make it clear how the behaviour(s) is harmful, discriminatory, inappropriate, and not acceptable.

**R**

**Reinforce** our commitment to human rights, equity, and safe and inclusive schools. Explain Safe and Inclusive School policies.

**E**

**Educate** those involved as to why the behaviour was discriminatory.

**C**

**Communicate** to those impacted when appropriate action has been taken.

**T**

**Transform** the situation by examining the school culture, providing opportunities for individual, group and school-wide learning, and identifying and eliminating barriers to student well-being and achievement.

# A CLOSER LOOK AT THE **DIRECT** TOOL

## DIALOGUE

Talk with everyone who was involved in the incident, including the people who were being discriminatory, the people who were who were discriminated against, and those who witnessed or were bystanders to the incident. Make a clear statement about the behaviour (e.g. That behaviour/language is not acceptable). Ensure witnesses and bystanders understand that their silence implies acceptance and approval. Document what you have learned. Support those who were targeted and experienced harm. Ask how they can be best supported and follow through with these supports. Consult parent(s)/guardian(s) about student and family needs. Refer students to appropriate mental health supports (e.g. CYW) if necessary.

## IDENTIFY

Name the harmful behaviours' (e.g. anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, etc.), and acknowledge the power imbalances - both individual and systemic - in play. Explain how the behaviour is discriminatory and inappropriate. Prioritize justice before conflict resolution and peace.

## REINFORCE

Human rights, equity and safety are a priority for our schools. Reference school board policies that outline this behaviour as unacceptable (Equity and Inclusion Policy 1008, Safe Schools Policy 6000, Code of Conduct Policy 6001). Apply progressive discipline, taking mitigating and contextual factors into consideration.

## EDUCATE

Deepen student's awareness and understanding of the discriminatory nature of the incident. In-school or out-of-school suspensions should always include an educational component whereby the student(s) can learn more about the inappropriateness of their actions.

## COMMUNICATE

Ensure that those who have been harmed are made aware when action has been taken and those responsible have been made accountable. Due to privacy issues, it may not be possible to provide details, but they should at least know that the situation has been addressed. Keep staff informed so that they are able to monitor the situation and potential reprisals.

## TRANSFORM

Take advantage of the teachable moments that arise from these incidents. Restore the learning environment and rebuild relationships in consultation and collaboration with staff, students, superintendents, parents/guardians and community. Examine your school culture and climate for root causes of discrimination, identify them, and work to eliminate them.



Click here for support on how to deal directly with discrimination in our schools from the Equity Working Team (EWT).

