

CCSSA Commitment to Inclusive Communities

Introduction

As members of the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta we believe in the inherent dignity of all people, the richness of our humanity, the importance of developing school communities that are welcome to all, and our call to live out the radical love embodied in the person of Jesus Christ. By openly supporting inclusive communities we must remember that we are an inclusive community. “Persons with same sex attractions are our sons and daughters, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, friends and neighbours, and are part of our community.” (Bishop Henry)¹

In the eyes of the church, every human person is a unique and irreplaceable gift created by our loving God and called to be his son or daughter. Created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ, every person possesses an intrinsic dignity which must always be respected. The Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms that persons with same sex attractions “must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God’s will in their lives.”²

Belief Statements

- All our schools strive to build inclusive communities where respect for one another, our community and our diversity are celebrated.
- We model care and compassion and are pastoral in our actions.
- We believe all persons, share the same rights and dignity and are called to live as God’s children. All persons deserve to feel welcome, safe, included and respected in our schools.
- We acknowledge that students who identify as belonging to sexual minorities are an “at risk” group that deserves special care and attention. Our organization, like many other organizations, is continually striving to better serve the needs of our communities. At the same time, we do not support a reductionist view of humanity in which we risk identifying individuals by a single trait. We risk losing sight of their many gifts.

¹ *Supporting Inclusive Communities: Resources & References in Alberta*, Calgary Catholic School District

² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2358

Vision Statement

“The Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta is a community of disciples providing a valuable and valued voice that influences the development and direction of Catholic Education in Alberta”

- Our schools, and student groups within our schools, address a number of diversity and justice issues – including issues associated with human sexuality. We do so in a comprehensive manner that involves the entire school community.
- We grow as caring and compassionate communities by choosing strategies and tools that best meet the needs of our students within each of our unique Catholic school communities.
- We are concerned about properly supporting students who may require counseling or guidance related to questions about sexual orientation or gender identity. We are committed to investing in our staff through professional development, community supports and training to better serve our students.

We support:

- The teaching of the Catholic Church on human sexuality.
- The sacredness of the individual.
- The promotion of justice.
- The creation of a safe and caring school environment.
- The promotion of inclusive respectful language; ensuring that pejorative and hurtful language is not accepted and is appropriately dealt with.
- The establishment of student groups dedicated to the inclusive nature of our schools which serve to promote safe and caring school communities that:
 - Are sensitive to the safety of those students who may be at risk,
 - Respect that parents are the primary educators, and
 - Reflect through name and action the philosophy of communion and emphasize inclusion, hospitality, respect and justice.
 - Are comprehensive in their approach to inclusion and open to discussion of a variety of issues, including bullying, justice, respectful relationships and language, and human sexuality issues.

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