

The Division supports and encourages student participation in extra-curricular, co-curricular activities, student government and student organizations where appropriate. Each school shall implement guidelines and procedures for these activities and organizations as necessary.

Note: This Administrative Procedure (AP) does NOT address off-site activities. All off-site activities are guided by [AP 60-03 Field Trips, Excursions, National and International Tours](#).

General Student Activities

1. All school-sponsored student activities shall be supervised by teachers or responsible adults designated by a School Principal.
2. A lead teacher must ensure that they have clearly communicated the post-event pick-up procedure to parents, and if other arrangements are made, that the lead teacher has received communication from the parents.
3. The following general student activities are recognized:
 - 3.1. Contests for Students: The Division recognizes the benefit of school-sponsored contests to student development.
 - 3.1.1. All such contests must be approved by the School Principal or designate that will ensure the contest is fair and just.
 - 3.1.2. Additional participation in extra-school contests is encouraged (i.e. writing contests).
 - 3.2. Student Social Events: The Division supports student social events.
 - 3.2.1. Events that degrade or ridicule fellow students are prohibited.
 - 3.3. Interscholastic Programs / Competitions:
 - 3.3.1. School Principals and teachers may use classrooms for activities that include the students and are of a general educational value such as school concerts, school parties, school clubs, etc.
 - 3.3.2. All such activities must be under the supervision of a teacher or responsible adult who is responsible for the conduct of the students and the general care of the property.
 - 3.4. Community Events involving Students: The Division supports students participating in community activities as it believes that students benefit by exposure to the inner workings of community groups and from the benefits associated with organizing personal contributions.
 - 3.4.1. The public benefits from the injection of youth into activities and gains a first-hand opportunity of contributing to a student's development.
 - 3.4.2. The school capitalizes on students demonstrating their skills as this also enhances the school curriculum and individual student development.

Support for Student Organizations

1. As per *School Act*, Section 16.1:
16.1(1) *If one or more students attending a school operated by a board request a staff member employed by the board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a*

welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall

- (a) immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and
- (b) subject to subsection (4), within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), an organization or activity includes an organization or activity that promotes equality and non-discrimination with respect to, without limitation, race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, including but not limited to organizations such as gay-straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs and anti-bullying clubs.

(3) The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”, after consulting with the principal.

(3.1) For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”.

(4) The principal shall immediately inform the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in subsection (1), and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a reasonable adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.

(6) The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection (1) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.

2. Because some students, especially those with same sex attractions, and those who identify with different genders, as well as those who experience discrimination or isolation based on body image, race, culture, language, performance in school, social anxiety/lack of social connection, or other individual attributes, may be at-risk, it is advised that every school be well prepared to establish student groups to address these needs. Such groups should be formed when there is a student request. Schools in the Division will align practices with Section 16.1 of the *School Act* and with the following Guidelines for the Formation of Student Groups:
 - 2.1. Student Groups shall be facilitated and led by trained certificated staff, approved by the School Principal and assisted when possible by counsellors or social workers.
 - 2.1.1. The facilitator(s) shall attend every meeting.
 - 2.2. In each type of group, issues that result in discrimination and bullying may be addressed, including, but not limited to:
 - 2.2.1. Sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, body image, race, culture or language, performance in school, social rejection, peer acceptance
 - 2.3. Establish the purpose of the student group through conversations with the students involved. Student groups may be formed for Advocacy, Peer Support or Group Counselling.

- 2.4. The Purpose of Advocacy Groups is to: Advocate against forms of discrimination and/or behaviors that cause students to feel isolated or excluded and to discuss issues and conditions that cause harm to youth.
- 2.5. The Purpose of Peer Support Groups is to: Connect with students who experience discrimination, isolation or exclusion within the school community or society with students who offer support via active advocacy.
- 2.6. The Purpose of Counselling Groups is to: Support students experiencing a variety of challenges related to feelings of belonging, self-worth, identity, friendship, etc. And/or to support students who may be marginalized as a result of bullying or social exclusion based on gender, sexual orientation, culture, size, physical or academic ability, etc. And/or to support students in understanding their sexual identities who may be experiencing a variety of challenges related to their sexuality or gender identity (e.g. how to talk to parents, friends, etc.).
- 2.7. General norms will govern all types of student groups. Groups shall:
 - 2.7.1. Support the mission, vision and core values of the school and Division while upholding the dignity of individuals in the context of a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging in the group's discussions, activities, and social action.
 - 2.7.2. Establish boundaries prior to the discussion of sensitive topics.
 - 2.7.3. Invite, not pressure, other students to join.
 - 2.7.4. Maintain the right of confidentiality (unless student wellbeing is at risk).
 - 2.7.5. Be sensitive to the safety of students at risk.
 - 2.7.6. Refrain from labelling or discussing students who are not members.
- 2.8. Activities must be facilitated by the certificated staff member who is supporting the group and who ensures that activities reflect the norms defined above. Activities could include but are not limited to:
 - 2.8.1. Exploring how inclusive practices enhance the life of school.
 - 2.8.2. Sponsoring activities throughout the school year to address issues such as bullying awareness week, guest speakers, and liaison with the School Principal.
 - 2.8.3. Promoting social justice activities to address local, national and international issues.
 - 2.8.4. Group counselling strategies to address group needs.
- 2.9. Informing Parents: Bill 10 recognizes that parents have both the right and responsibility to make informed decisions respecting the education of their children. (*Alberta Bill of Rights*, s.1 (g); *School Act*, preamble, paragraph 2; *Education Act*, preamble, paragraph 8 upon proclamation). If a student group is formed under the above conditions, notification of the formation of the club shall inform all parents (not naming of any students involved in the formation of the clubs) in the school newsletter.
 - 2.9.1. This notification will describe the responsibility of parents to discuss with their child the purpose and nature of the club, whether their child wishes to become a member and their child's obligation to both refrain from bullying behavior and contribute to a safe learning school environment that respects diversity.
- 2.10. Resources for teachers: Please consider the ATA Publication, "GSAs and QSAs in Alberta Schools: A Guide for Teachers" (2015).
- 2.11. Boards, charter schools, and Regional authorities are public bodies under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and are bound by the provisions of that Act.

Reference

[School Act](#), Sections 1(1)(b.1), 12, 16.1, 16.2, 45.1

[Alberta Bill of Rights](#), s.1 (g); School Act, preamble, par. 2;

[Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

[Policy 19 Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Environments](#)

[AP 60-03 Field Trips, Excursions, National and International Tours](#)

[Form 6-03-C: Informed Consent/Permission for Extra-Curricular or Co-Curricular Trips, Field Trips, National and International Tours](#)

[Edmonton Catholic Schools: LIFE Framework](#)

[Bill 10: An Act to Amend the Alberta Bill of Rights to Protect our Children Amendments to the School Act Support for student organizations 16.1\(1\)](#)

[GSAs and QSAs in Alberta Schools: A Guide for Teachers](#)