



SEP 18 2017

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MLA, NAHENDEH

Oral Question 816-18(2) Healthy Relations Training for Educators

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on June 02, 2017 regarding healthy relationships training for educators.

As committed during our discussions, I am providing you and Members of the Legislative Assembly an information package regarding healthy relationships programming in Northwest Territories (NWT) schools, as well as other aspects of the Safe and Caring Schools initiative which this programming is part of (Attachment 1).

Ensuring that all NWT students have access to healthy relationships programming is part of Safe School planning in the NWT and stems from the 2013 Safe School amendments to the *Education Act* and associated Regulations. This commitment is taken very seriously as the safety and wellbeing of our students is paramount to their outcomes and success.

I am also including a copy of the information package (Attachment 2) provided to members following my Education Renewal update presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Development.

Alfred Moses
Minister, Education, Culture
and Employment

Attachments

- c. Distribution List

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Healthy Relationships Programs

Many behaviours that put youth at risk, such as violence, bullying, unsafe sexual behavior and substance abuse, occur in the context of relationships with peers. This is why healthy relationship skills, versus simply anti-bullying behaviours, are being taught in NWT schools. The 2013 Safe Schools legislation and 2016 Regulations require NWT schools to offer healthy relationship programming to all students.

Healthy Relationships Programming

- The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) supports schools to provide healthy relationships programming to their students. A number of evidenced-based programs are recommended. ECE explicitly offers training to teachers and school staff in two such programs: the 4th R and WITS.
- WITS — which stands for *Walk away, Ignore, Talk it out, & Seek help* — is a program intended for kindergarten to grade 6 students. The 4th R is a grades 7-10 program. Both programs have been formally evaluated (peer reviewed) and recognized across Canada for their effectiveness.
- Both programs teach relationship skills and target risk behaviours through encouraging safe decisions about substance use, sexual relationships, bullying, and violence. The program is highly engaging for youth, with an emphasis on role play, allowing students to practice decision-making skills in life-like situations.
- Research has shown the 4th R program to be effective when implemented correctly. In a 2009 study, students who received 4th R programming in grade 9 had less than half the amount of dating violence and unsafe sex, even 2 years after being in the program.

The 4th R

- This training and the related school resources are provided free of charge to NWT teachers through a partnership between ECE and the University of Western Ontario's Centre for School Mental Health, as part of a federally funded research project on youth mental health.
- Since 2011, approximately 225 NWT teachers and school staff have been trained to deliver one of 2 4th R programs: Healthy Relationships Programming (HRP), or Healthy Relationships Programming Plus (HRPP). HRP is for delivery in classrooms, and is usually integrated into health curriculum, while HRPP is for delivery to small groups, often to high risk youth, and can be delivered outside of the classroom, in community settings.
- The 4th R has developed HRP and HRPP programming specifically designed for Indigenous contexts; this new version of the programs has been used in some NWT schools.
- ECE works closely with Ray Hughes, the National Education Coordinator for the 4th R on this important program. For more information on the 4th R: <https://youthrelationships.org/>

Updated June 2017



Support for LGBTQ2+ Students & Staff

NWT schools are required to provide a safe and caring environment for all students and staff. Due to the challenges LGBTQ2+ students and school staff face in having a feeling of safety and belonging in their schools, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, under its Education Renewal initiative, is developing a new ministerial directive, along with resources and training, to help schools better support LGBTQ2+ students and staff.

Supporting LGBTQ2+ Students and Staff in the NWT

Research has shown that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Questioning and 2 Spirited (LGBTQ2+) students have a higher level of mental health issues, suicide and school drop out rates. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is committed to developing the mechanisms and supports necessary to ensure NWT schools offer a welcoming, safe and caring environment for all students, including the LGBTQ2+ community.

As with all Education Renewal initiatives, this work is being guided through an extended working group of partner organizations and NGOs such as the Rainbow Coalition, NWT Pride, the Northwest Territories Teachers Association, FOXY and SMASH, along with departmental staff.

The Start: The NWT Rainbow Youth Conference

The first ever NWT Rainbow Youth Conference, held March 6-10, 2017 in Yellowknife, gathered LGBTQ2+ students from every region of the NWT to develop, music, visual art, spoken word poetry and video which expressed a message of support and inclusivity for LGBTQ2+ students in NWT schools. The students also benefited from a wide range of informational sessions and shared their ideas on what needs to happen to ensure their schools are inclusive and safe.

Policy

Building on what was heard from students during the conference, a territorial policy applicable to all NWT schools is now being developed that addresses the safety and inclusion of LGBTQ2+ students and staff. This work will include a jurisdictional scan of provincial and territorial policies, guidance from working group members, and public consultation. The policy will be in the form of a ministerial directive and will align with Safe Schools legislation (2013), Regulations (2016), and the Territorial School Code of Conduct (2016). This directive will be implemented during the 2018-19 school year, and will include accountability measures ensure Education Bodies are meeting the requirements of the new policy.

Furthermore, a new section will be added to the Safe and Caring Schools Manual to guide schools in the implementation of the new directive.

Resources and training

Finally, in order to support school staff in supporting the LGBTQ2+ community in their schools, ECE will also provide age-appropriate resources and training which are a good fit for the NWT context. The roll out of these resources and training will also begin in the 2018-19 school year.

Updated June 2017



NWT Safe Schools Regulations

To ensure that student wellness and the development of a positive sense of identity are promoted and embedded in school experiences, programming and environments, the new *Safe Schools Regulations*, including a Territorial School Code of Conduct came into effect on September 1, 2016. Building on the 2013 Safe Schools legislation, the *Safe Schools Regulations* set a standard of behaviour for students, school staff and the entire school community.

2016 Regulations and School Code of Conduct

The 2016 *Safe Schools Regulations*, along with the Territorial School Code of Conduct, came into effect on September 1, 2016, and prescribe required components of Safe School Plans in every NWT School, including:

- Mechanisms for reporting, documenting and responding to incidents of bullying;
- Bullying prevention, intervention and education strategies such as evidenced-based healthy relationships programming; and
- Identified school staff to oversee all Safe School matters in each school (ie. a Safe School Committee)

To help schools meet these requirements, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) has offered many levels of support:

- Providing a Safe Schools Plan template and exemplar
- Review and feedback of all Safe School Plans
- Extended offer to provide awareness and support to principals on their responsibilities
- In-service for superintendents for their role in monitoring and approving plans developed in schools
- Covering costs for healthy relationships program training and resources

The 2016 *Safe Schools Regulations* and Territorial School Code of Conduct addressed the following:

- NWT students and teachers have a right to learn and work in safe, caring environments that are free of bullying.
- NWT students and teachers are dealing with high rates of bullying. Support was needed to help reduce incidents of bullying over time.
- Alignment with the requirement that schools comply with Occupational Health and Safety requirements as per the *Safety Act* and Regulations.

During the 2016-17 school year, ECE worked with Education Bodies to renew and implement Safe School Plans and policies to align with the Regulations. Direct support and feedback on school plans was provided to each school through ECE and a recognized national expert.

To prevent duplication of efforts, ECE coordinated the development of the Regulations, the Code of Conduct and the implementation of this initiatives with Occupational Health and Safety requirements. This allowed schools to meet both the legislated and the Occupational Health and Safety requirements through a coordinated effort.

Find the 2016 *Safe Schools Regulations* and Territorial School Code of Conduct here: <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/education/education.r55.pdf>

Updated June 2017



Safe Schools Regulations

R-010-2016
In force September 1, 2016
Schedule (Section 1)

Territorial School Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Territorial School Code of Conduct is to promote a positive learning environment in the Northwest Territories. Students, parents, elders, school staff and all members of the school community have the shared responsibility to establish an effective education system in a safe, respectful and caring atmosphere.

School Community Responsibilities and Rights:

1. To refrain from engaging in activity that disrupts or threatens to disrupt school operation.
2. To refrain from engaging in activity that interferes or threatens to interfere with the public or private rights of others.
3. To take a sense of ownership and responsibility for excellence in academics.
4. To ensure the physical safety and personal security of oneself and all others, exercising respect and self-discipline, and to refrain from engaging in assaultive behaviour.
5. To promote equity and fair treatment of oneself and others.
6. To refrain from discriminating against others, including on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, nationality, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, family affiliation, political belief, political association or social condition.
7. To recognize Canada's and the Northwest Territories' multi-cultural heritage, and to respect the value of different linguistic, cultural, historical, political and spiritual backgrounds.
8. To respect the different ideas and perspectives of others.
9. To develop meaningful relationships with self and others.
10. To build a strong sense of self, school and community.
11. To encourage and practice ethical behaviour with honesty and integrity.
12. To use kind and respectful language and conduct when communicating with others.
13. To respect one's own property and the property of others and of the school.
14. To personally refrain from and discourage others from possessing or using any kind of weapon at school.
15. To refrain from possessing, using, selling, purchasing or exchanging any illegal substances or paraphernalia.
16. To refrain from possessing, using, selling, purchasing, exchanging or being under the influence of intoxicating substances while at school.

This consolidation is not an official statement of the law. It is a consolidation prepared by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, for convenience of reference only. The authoritative text of regulations can be ascertained from the *Revised Regulations of the Northwest Territories, 1990* and the monthly publication of Part II of the *Northwest Territories Gazette*. This consolidation and other G.N.W.T. legislation can be accessed on-line at <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/browse/laws-and-legislation/>

Règlement sur la sécurité dans les écoles

R-010-2016

En vigueur le 1^{er} septembre 2016

ANNEXE (article 1)



Code de conduite de l'école territoriale

L'objectif du code de conduite de l'école territoriale est de promouvoir un environnement d'apprentissage positif dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest. Les étudiants, les parents, les personnes âgées, le personnel d'école et tous les membres de la communauté scolaire ont une responsabilité partagée afin d'établir un système d'éducation efficace dans une atmosphère sécuritaire, respectueuse et bienveillante.

Responsabilités et droits de la communauté scolaire :

1. S'abstenir de s'engager dans une activité qui perturbe ou menace de perturber les activités scolaires.
2. S'abstenir de s'engager dans une activité qui entrave ou menace d'entraver les droits publics ou privés d'autrui.
3. Avoir un sentiment d'appartenance et de responsabilité pour l'excellence académique.
4. Assurer la sécurité physique et la sécurité personnelle de soi-même et d'autrui, exerçant le respect et l'auto-discipline, et s'abstenir de comportement agressif.
5. Promouvoir le traitement juste et équitable envers soi-même et autrui.
6. S'abstenir de discriminer autrui, notamment sur la base de la race, la couleur, l'ascendance, la nationalité, l'origine ethnique, le lieu d'origine, les croyances, la religion, l'âge, l'incapacité, le genre, l'orientation sexuelle, l'identité sexuelle, la situation familiale, l'appartenance familiale, les convictions politiques, les associations politiques ou la condition sociale.
7. Reconnaître le patrimoine multiculturel du Canada et des Territoires du Nord-Ouest et respecter la diversité quant aux antécédents linguistiques, culturels, historiques, politiques et spirituels.
8. Respecter les idées et les points de vue différents d'autrui.
9. Développer une relation significative avec soi-même et autrui.
10. Bâtir une bonne estime de soi et un fort sentiment d'appartenance à l'école et à la collectivité.
11. Encourager et adopter un comportement éthique qui fait preuve d'honnêteté et d'intégrité.
12. Utiliser un langage et une conduite courtois et respectueux lors des communications avec autrui.
13. Respecter ses propres biens, les biens d'autrui et ceux qui appartiennent à l'école.
14. S'abstenir de posséder ou d'utiliser, et décourager autrui de posséder ou d'utiliser, toute arme à l'école.
15. S'abstenir de posséder, d'utiliser, de vendre, d'acheter ou d'échanger toute substance illégale ou accessoires.
16. S'abstenir de posséder, d'utiliser, de vendre, d'acheter, d'échanger ou d'être sous l'influence de substance intoxicante à l'école.

La présente codification administrative ne constitue pas le texte officiel de la loi; elle n'est établie qu'à titre documentaire par du Ministère de l'Éducation, de la Culture et de la Formation. Seuls les règlements contenus dans les *Règlements révisés des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (1990)* et dans les parutions mensuelles de la Partie II de la *Gazette des Territoires du Nord-Ouest* ont force de loi. La présente codification administrative et les autres lois et règlements du G.T.N.-O. sont disponibles en direct à l'adresse suivante : <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/browse/laws-and-legislation/>