Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Definition:

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (KPR) values equity, diversity, inclusiveness and the dignity and humanity of each individual in its policies, practices, programs and interactions.

Equity refers to the fair and respectful treatment of all people. This means that we do everything we can to identify and eliminate unfair biases, stereotypes or barriers that may limit full participation in our education system. A barrier is anything that keeps someone from participating fully in all aspects of society. In education, barriers limit opportunities and successful outcomes. Barriers can be visible or invisible. They can relate to physical factors like inaccessible building features, social factors like co-curricular programs that focus on one area of interest or academic factors such as instruction that accounts for only one learning style.

Valuing diversity means that we recognize and respect everyone’s unique qualities and attributes.

Inclusion means that all individuals feel respected, accepted and valued.

What does this mean?

In an inclusive, equitable environment:

- All members of the school community and workplace feel welcome, wanted, that they belong and are appreciated.
- The school environment and workplace honours diversity and respects individuals. Planning, programming and processes reflect and support the diversity of the community.
- Harassment or discriminatory behaviours such as racist, homophobic, heterosexist and ableist comments are identified and addressed.
- All individuals are welcome to, and respectfully encouraged to, participate in all activities.
- Individuals with particular needs are accommodated and included with dignity and respect.

Why is it important?

A focus on excellence for everyone, through inclusion and equity, prepares students to be critical thinkers and succeed in a rapidly-changing world. Inclusive and equitable approaches in recruitment, hiring, appraisal and promotion builds our reputation as a top employer in a highly-competitive labour market.
• People with diverse experiences and perspectives bring forward new ideas, and enhance problem-solving and innovation, which are integral to the success of students and staff, and to the achievement of our mission.

• Inclusive practices improve workplace and school climates, which can reduce bullying and other negative behaviours.

In addition to the positive benefits associated with inclusive and equitable practices, legislation supports these values. Specific legislation includes: Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ontario Human Rights Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and the Ministry of Education’s Equity and Inclusive Education strategy. According the Ontario Human Rights Code, every person has a right to equal treatment without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or record of offences.

When people are excluded or harassed, the effects can include:
  1. Negative impact on individual sense of self-worth
  2. Reduced success and achievement for students
  3. Reduced productivity for staff
  4. Limited staff retention and recruitment, and
  5. Poor quality of service being provided.

How can you develop it?

• Understand the relationships among bias, stereotypes and prejudice.
• Be more aware of your interactions with people and reflect on your thoughts and body language.
• Learn about your own history and explore the histories of communities different from your own in order to develop local and global awareness.
• Think about your perspectives on controversial issues – identify your own biases and address them by suspending judgement until you gather more information.
• Move outside of your comfort zone by exposing yourself to new situations, engaging in meaningful dialogue, and using active listening.
• Become aware of KPR policies on equity, diversity and inclusion, workplace harassment and safe schools. Copies of the KPR brochures on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Character Development; Bullying and Accessibility are available at every school. Electronic copies of these resources and links to relevant KPR policies are available on the board website at www.kprschools.ca.
• Visit the online version of the KPR Equity and Diversity Calendar. Here you will find information about significant equity and diversity dates, and dates of significance to communities within the KPR district (e.g. First Nations)
• Participate in training and development opportunities offered by the school board. For example, Hidden In Plain Sight is a multimedia training session available on mykpr that examines bias.
• Get involved – volunteer for the role of Equity Contact or sit on the Equity and Diversity Committee