

Common Questions About SOGI in Schools

Curious about what students are learning about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in school?

There is a lot of incorrect information shared about gender and sexuality in schools. SOGI-inclusive schools are places where every student, teacher, and family are welcome and respected.



What is sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in school?

SOGI is one of many topics about diversity discussed regularly at schools. It allows students to learn about the diversity of identities that exist, as well as provides an opportunity for students to see themselves, and their families, reflected in their learning environment.

SOGI-inclusive education can include topics like:

- Family diversity
- Respecting differences
- Understanding identities
- Anti-bullying
- Inclusion
- Empathy

Unfortunately, schools are not always safe places for all genders and sexualities. SOGI-inclusive education helps reduce bullying and discrimination and has a positive impact on all students.

Are teachers encouraging my child to get surgery or hormones without my knowledge?

No. Medical decisions, including those related to gender-affirming care, are made between families and your healthcare professionals, not teachers or schools.

Just like any other health-related question, teachers can only connect students to resources, or recommend that they speak to a trusted adult such as a doctor or the school counsellor if they have questions.

Will teaching children about SOGI in school encourage them to question their identity?

No. Learning about people that are different from you doesn't change who you are as a person. It helps them better understand the world around them.

Children see and wonder about people's differences from a very young age. Trying to hide the existence of gay, lesbian, or transgender people leads to confusion.

SOGI-inclusive education helps to keep kids safe because it is fact-based, age-appropriate, and benefits all students, including those that are straight.

Will I be notified if my child comes out at school?

Teachers understand that kids thrive when parents and educators work together. If a teacher finds out new information about a student's gender or sexuality before you do as parents, they can help the youth share the information with their parents when they are ready.

Even in loving homes, young people can feel nervous about how their family might react to new information about their gender or sexuality. Talking to a trusted teacher first can allow them to work through these feelings before having that important conversation with you.

Allowing students to decide how and when they share this kind of important information builds trust between schools, students, and parents.

Can I stop my child's school from being SOGI-inclusive if I don't support it?

No one can prevent a school from being SOGI-inclusive. SOGI is protected in the Canadian Human Rights Act, which applies to schools.

Schools aren't allowed to choose which human rights belong in the classroom. All students have a right to feel safe and included at school.

Can I pull my child from any SOGI-related discussions in class?

No, that isn't possible. SOGI is about inclusion and diversity in ALL subjects, it's not a single class or one part of the curriculum.

Pulling a child from SOGI-related discussions isn't possible because it happens naturally in everyday classroom discussions, such as:

- A student with two dads talking about their family in class.
- Allowing students to choose their costume for a school play, without fear of being bullied.
- A job fair presentation that encourages students to pursue any job they want, regardless of gender stereotypes.

Schools have the responsibility to proactively create safe, inclusive learning environments for all students.