

Excerpt from Ministry of Education Document
Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools Guidelines for Policy
Development and Implementation - Realizing the Promise of Diversity 2014

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This glossary is provided to assist educators in understanding various terms used in this document, as well as terms they may encounter in the context of discussions of equity and inclusive education.

Terminology in the area of equity and inclusive education is constantly evolving. The Ministry of Education recognizes that terms and usages favoured by various groups and individuals, in various contexts, and at different points in time may differ. Educators may find the definitions provided here helpful for use in contexts such as training and professional learning.

ableism. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against people who have developmental, emotional, physical, sensory, or health-related disabilities. Ableism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

Aboriginal peoples. The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, states: “In this Act, ‘Aboriginal peoples of Canada’ includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada”. These separate groups have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. Their common link is their indigenous ancestry.

acceptance. An affirmation and recognition of people whose race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, abilities, or other, similar characteristics or attributes are different from one’s own. Acceptance goes beyond tolerance, in that it implies a positive and welcoming attitude.

accommodation. An adjustment made to policies, programs, guidelines, or practices, including adjustments to physical settings and various types of criteria, that enables individuals to benefit from and take part in the provision of services equally and to participate equally and perform to the best of their ability in the workplace or an educational setting. Accommodations are provided so that individuals are not disadvantaged or discriminated against on the basis of the prohibited grounds of discrimination identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code or other factors. (Refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s *Guidelines on Accessible Education and Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate*, at www.ohrc.on.ca.)

accommodations for students with special education needs. The term *accommodations* has a specific meaning in special education. Accommodations for students with special education needs include special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment that help the student learn and demonstrate learning.

ageism. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination against older adults, youth, and children, based on age. Ageism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

anti-Black racism. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against Black people, including people of African descent. Anti-Black racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

antidiscrimination education. An approach that seeks to eliminate from an educational system and its practices all forms of discrimination based on the prohibited grounds identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code and other factors. Anti-discrimination education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that may unintentionally condone or foster discrimination, as well as the attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. It provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to critically examine issues related to discrimination, power, and privilege. Antidiscrimination education promotes the removal of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.

antiracist. Seeking the elimination of racism in all its forms, including systemic racism.

antiracist education. An approach that integrates the perspectives of Aboriginal and racialized communities into an educational system and its practices. Antiracist education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that may foster racism, as well as the racist attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. It provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to critically examine issues related to racism, power, and privilege. Antiracist education promotes the removal of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers based on race.

antisemitism. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against individual Jews or the Jewish people on the basis of their culture and religion. Antisemitism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

barrier. An obstacle to equity that may be overt or subtle, intended or unintended, and systemic or specific to an individual or group, and that prevents or limits access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society.

bias. An opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgements.

bisexual. A person who is emotionally/romantically/sexually/physically attracted to and/or involved with both men and women.

bullying. Under the Education Act (s.1(1)), "aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil, where (a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of, (i) causing harm, fear, or distress to another

individual, including physical, psychological, social, or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation, or harm to the individual's property, or (ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and (b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability, or the receipt of special education" and where the intimidation includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written, or other means.

Code grounds. The grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed (religion), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, age, marital status (including same-sex partners), family status, receipt of public assistance (in housing accommodation only), and record of offences (in employment only). People are also protected from discrimination based on intersecting grounds (*see intersectionality*), or association with someone who identifies with a Code ground, or when they are perceived to be a member of a group identified by a Code ground. (Refer to www.ohrc.on.ca/en/commission/about.)

creed. One of the prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Ontario Human Rights Code, interpreted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to mean "religious creed" or "religion". Creed is "a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship" that is "sincerely held" and includes non-deistic belief systems. Creed does not include "secular, moral, or ethical beliefs or political convictions" or "religions that promote violence or hate towards others or that violate criminal law". Individuals who do not belong to a religion or practise any specific faith are also protected by the Code. (Refer to the *Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances*, at www.ohrc.on.ca.)

culture. The totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, language, and way of life of a group of people who share a certain historical background.

cyber-bullying. Under the Education Act (s.1.0.0.2), bullying by electronic means, including by "(a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person; (b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and (c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals." Cyber-bullying can involve the use of email, cell phones, text messages, and/or social media sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, socially exclude, or damage reputations and friendships. It may include put-downs or insults and can also involve spreading rumours; sharing private information, photos, or videos; or threatening to harm someone. Cyber-bullying is always aggressive and hurtful. (Refer to *Bullying – We Can All Help Stop It: A Guide for Parents of Elementary and Secondary School Students*, at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/multi/english/BullyingEN.pdf.)

disability. A term that covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and others not (e.g., physical, mental, and learning disabilities; hearing or vision disabilities; epilepsy; environmental sensitivities). A disability may be present from birth, may be caused by an accident, or may develop over time. (Refer to www.ohrc.on.ca/en/issues/disability.)

discrimination. Unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of grounds set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g., race, sexual orientation, disability) or on the basis of other factors. Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, has the effect of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society. Discrimination may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

diversity. The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

dominant group. A group that is considered the most powerful and privileged of groups in a particular society and that exercises power and influence over others through social and political means.

duty to accommodate. The legal obligation that school boards, employers, unions, and service providers have under the Ontario Human Rights Code to take measures that enable people to benefit from and take part in the provision of services equally and to participate equally and perform to the best of their ability in the workplace or an educational setting. (Refer to www.ohrc.on.ca.)

equity. A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

ethnicity. The shared national, ethno-cultural, racial, linguistic, and/or religious heritage of a group of people, whether or not they live in their country of origin.

First Nation. A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word Indian, which many found offensive. The term *First Nation* has been adopted to replace the word “band” in the names of communities.

gay. An individual who is emotionally/romantically/sexually/physically attracted to and/or involved with other individuals of the same sex.

gender. A term that refers to those characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed. (See also *sex and gender identity*.)

gender expression. The manner in which individuals express their gender identity to others. A person's gender expression is often based on a social construct of gender, which is either stereotypically male or female. However, some individuals who do not see themselves as being either male or female but as some combination of the two genders, or as *without gender*, choose to express their identity in terms of a multiple model of gender, mixing both male and female expressions.

gender identity. A person's sense of self, with respect to being male or female. Gender identity is different from sexual orientation, and may be different from birth-assigned sex. (Refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity*, at www.ohrc.on.ca.)

harassment. A form of discrimination that may include unwelcome attention and remarks, jokes, threats, name-calling, touching, or other behaviour (including the display of pictures) that insults, offends, or demeans someone because of his or her identity. Harassment involves conduct or comments that are known to be, or should reasonably be known to be, offensive, inappropriate, intimidating, and hostile.

hate crime. A criminal offence, perpetrated on a person or property, that is motivated by bias or prejudice based on actual or perceived race, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other, similar factors. Hate crimes can involve intimidation, harassment, physical force, or threats of physical force against a person or an entire group to which the person belongs. (Any act, including an act of omission, that is not a criminal offence but otherwise shares the characteristics of a hate crime is referred to as a *hate incident*.)

hate propaganda. Ideas, beliefs, and ideologies transmitted in written, oral, or electronic form for the purpose of creating, promoting, perpetuating, or exacerbating antagonistic, hateful, and belligerent attitudes or actions against a particular group or groups of people.

homophobia. A disparaging or hostile attitude or a negative bias, which may be overt or unspoken and which may exist at an individual and/or a systemic level, towards people who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). (*See also LGBT.*)

human rights. Rights that recognize the dignity and worth of every person, and provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or other factors.

inclusive education. Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

or more prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code, or other factors, which may result in additional biases or barriers to equity for that individual or group.

Inuit. Aboriginal people in northern Canada, living mainly in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec, and Labrador. Ontario has a very small Inuit population. The Inuit are not covered by the Indian Act.

invisible minority. People who may experience social inequities on the basis of factors that may not be visible, such as a disability or sexual orientation. The term may refer to a group that is small in number or it may connote inferior social position.

Islamophobia. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against Muslims or Arabs on the basis of their culture and religion. Islamophobia may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

lesbian. A woman who is emotionally/romantically/sexually/physically attracted to and/or involved with another woman.

LGBT. The initialism used to refer to *lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender* people. A broader range of identities is also sometimes implied, or may be represented more explicitly by the initialism *LGBT2SIQ*, which stands for *lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual or two-spirited, intersex, and questioning.* (See also ***homophobia.***)

Métis. People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry. The Métis culture draws on diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, Irish, French, Ojibwe, and Cree.

minority group. A group of people within a given society that has little or no access to social, economic, political, cultural, or religious power. The term may refer to a group that is small in number or it may connote inferior social position.

multicultural education. An approach to education, including administrative policies and procedures, curriculum, and learning activities, that recognizes the experience and contributions of diverse cultural groups. One of the aims of multicultural education is to promote the understanding of and respect for cultural and racial diversity.

Ontario Human Rights Code (“the Code”). A provincial law that gives everyone equal rights and opportunities, without discrimination, in specific areas such as education, jobs, housing, and services. The goal of the Code is to address and prevent discrimination and harassment. (Refer to www.ohrc.on.ca.)

positive school climate. The school climate may be defined as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect.

power dynamics. The process by which one group defines and subordinates other groups and subjects them to differential and unequal treatment.

power imbalance. A situation in which an individual or group is able to influence others and impose its beliefs, subjecting other individuals and/or groups to differential and unequal treatment.

prejudice. The pre-judgement (usually negative) of groups or individuals, or preconceived notions about them, based on misinformation, bias, or stereotypes.

privilege. The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access, and/or opportunities on the basis of group membership or social context, which is denied or not extended to members of all groups.

progressive discipline. A whole-school approach that uses a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour, as well as a variety of strategies to promote and foster positive behaviours. Disciplinary measures are applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive.

queer. A term for homosexuality that was once a pejorative but that has more recently been reclaimed by some or many of the LGBT movement to be used for self-identification in a positive way.

race. A social construct that groups people on the basis of common ancestry and characteristics such as colour of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture, and/or facial features. The term is used to designate the social categories into which societies divide people according to such characteristics. Race is often confused with ethnicity (a group of people who share a particular cultural heritage or background); there may be several ethnic groups within a racial group. (Refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s *Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination*, at www.ohrc.on.ca.)

racialization. The process through which groups come to be seen as different, and may be subjected to differential and unequal treatment.

racialized group. A group of people who may experience social inequities on the basis of race, colour, and/or ethnicity, and who may be subjected to differential treatment.

racism. A set of erroneous assumptions, opinions, and actions stemming from the belief that one race is inherently superior to another. Racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

racist. A term referring to the beliefs and/or actions of an individual, institution, or organization that imply (directly or indirectly) that certain groups are inherently superior to others.

religion. *See creed.*

religious accommodation. An obligation under the Ontario Human Rights Code to provide reasonable accommodation for students and employees who wish to observe the tenets or practices of their faith, as well as for those who wish not to participate in any form of religious observance. (*See also accommodation.*)

sex. The category of male or female based on characteristics that are biologically determined. (*See also gender, gender expression, and gender identity.*)

sexism. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against people on the basis of their sex or gender. Sexism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

sexual orientation. A person's sense of sexual attraction to people of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both sexes. (*See also LGBT, and refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Sexual Orientation, at www.ohrc.on.ca.*)

social justice. A concept based on the belief that each individual and group within a given society has a right to equal opportunity, civil liberties, and full participation in the social, educational, economic, institutional, and moral freedoms and responsibilities of that society.

stereotype. A false or generalized, and usually negative, conception of a group of people that results in the unconscious or conscious categorization of each member of that group, without regard for individual differences. Stereotyping may be based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital

status, family status, or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or on the basis of other factors.

systemic discrimination. A pattern of discrimination that arises out of apparently neutral institutional policies or practices, that is reinforced by institutional structures and power dynamics, and that results in the differential and unequal treatment of members of certain groups.

transgender. A transgender person is a person whose gender identity, outward appearance, gender expression, and/or anatomy are not consistent with the conventional definitions or expectations of male and female; often used to represent a wide range of gender identities and behaviours.

two-spirited. A term used by First Nations people to refer to a person having both the feminine and masculine spirits. It includes sexual or gender identity, sexual orientation, social roles, and a broad range of identities, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. (*See also LGBT.*)

visible minority. A group of people who may experience social inequities on the basis of factors that may be visible, such as race, colour, and ethnicity, and who may be subjected to differential treatment. The term may refer to a group that is small in number or it may connote inferior social position. (*See also racialized group.*)