



## **May 17 International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOTB) - Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q: What is the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOTB)?**

The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOTB) commemorates the date (May 17) of the [World Health Organization](#)'s decision in 1990 to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder.

On this day, communities and organizations across the globe recognize the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOTB) to celebrate sexual and gender diversities and draw attention to the discrimination and violence experienced by LGBTQ+ people.

### **Q: Why is the LKDSB observing the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia on May 17?**

The LKDSB is committed to supporting safe, equitable and inclusive learning and work environments. The LKDSB's Strategic Priority, "[Inclusive Diversity: Champion anti-oppressive education](#)," the [Safe Schools Act](#) and the protected grounds under the Ontario [Human Rights Code](#) further reinforce the importance of recognizing and affirming the rights of LGBTQ+ communities, particularly the human rights of everyone to be treated equally and with dignity and respect.

As supported by LKDSB Trustees during the May 26, 2020 Board Meeting, the LKDSB joins organizations globally in recognition of the [International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia \(IDAHOTB\)](#) on May 17. This date will continue to be observed within LKDSB schools annually.

The LKDSB denounces discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identities or sexual orientation. The LKDSB also considers homophobia, gender-based violence, and harassment on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, (...) and/or any other immutable characteristic or ground protected by the *Human Rights Code*, as well as sexualized behaviour, to be unacceptable. The LKDSB supports the use of positive practices to prevent such behaviour.

### **Q: How is the May 17 focus on homophobia, transphobia and biphobia connected to the LKDSB's Strategic Priority of "Inclusive Diversity: Champion anti-oppressive education"?**

The LKDSB's [Strategic Priority, "Inclusive Diversity: Champion anti-oppressive education,"](#) requires that the LKDSB staff and students take action to raise awareness, understanding and work to eliminate all forms of oppression with our schools and work environments. Through championing anti-oppressive education, we ensure that all students have an opportunity to learn in an environment free of all forms of oppression, which create barriers to student success and

well-being. Through championing anti-oppressive education, staff are also able to work in safe, welcoming and inclusive work environments that respect the human rights and dignities of all.

**Q: How has the LKDSB supported staff and students in education and awareness about May 17?**

On May 17 and throughout the school year, the LKDSB is committed to increasing awareness and understanding about homophobia, transphobia and biphobia. The Ontario [Human Rights Code](#) prohibits actions that discriminate against people based on a protected *ground* in a protected *social* area. Protected grounds include gender identity, gender expression; sex; and sexual orientation.

In order to further promote awareness and understanding of protections under the Ontario *Human Right Code*, LKDSB staff have had opportunities to engage in professional development opportunities and provided information through staff newsletters. Additionally, Gender Identity sessions for staff were held in November 2020 and January 2021, involving former LKDSB students who shared their academic knowledge and person experiences within LKDSB schools. All LKDSB staff also participated in a professional development opportunity provided by the Ministry of Education on an “Introduction to Human Rights and Equity in Education: Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination.” Throughout the school year and in age-appropriate ways, staff provide information and resources to support student education and understanding of homophobia, transphobia and biphobia.

In order to support student success and well-being, it is important to respect the diverse and intersecting identities of all LKDSB students, staff and community members and promote learning and work environments that ensures everyone feels safe, welcome and is able to maintain their dignity.

**Q: Why is it important to use a person’s pronouns correctly or gender-neutral pronouns in our learning and workspaces?**

As we examine our current practices, policies and procedures, we also need to [review the use of pronouns](#) in the language used in our daily work, in order to be more inclusive. Everyone has the right to self-identify with whatever pronouns they feel comfortable with or to avoid identifying altogether. It is important to use gender-neutral pronouns in our learning and workspaces.

Gender-neutral pronouns are words that do not specify gender. “They” for instance, is a third-person pronoun that is gender neutral. Other gender-neutral pronouns include ‘them’, this person, and everyone. If you are not sure which pronoun to use, use the person’s name.

One way to help normalize the practice and demonstrate a willingness to respect people’s indicated pronouns is by identifying your personal pronouns. By using a person’s pronouns, you demonstrate that you affirm and respect their identity. [Click here for additional information about gender identity and pronouns from the Ontario Human Rights Commission.](#)

**Q: I have concerns about instances of homophobia, transphobia and biphobia in the school community, what should I do?**

Should you have any concerns about a student’s safety and well-being, we encourage you to contact your school directly to discuss your concerns and learn more about student supports that are available.

## **Additional Resources:**

- [Lambton Kent District School Board – Equity & Inclusive Education Policy, Regulation and Information Resources](#)
- [Lambton Kent District School Board - Safe Schools Policy, Regulation, and Informational Resources](#)
- [May 17 International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia](#)
- [CUPE – Allies on gender diversity](#)
- [CUPE – Report: Making public services better for LGBTQ+ workers and seniors](#)
- [ETFO – 2SLGBTQ+ Resources](#)
- [Government of Canada – Rights of LGBTI person](#)
- [Government of Canada – Statement on International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia \(2020\)](#)
- [Government of Canada - The human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, 2-spirit and intersex persons](#)
- [Ministry of Education - Human Development and Sexual Health education by grade](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Commission – Gender identity and gender expression](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Commission – Sexual harassment and your education \(fact sheet\)](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Commission – Questions and answers about gender identity and pronouns](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Commission – Policy on preventing sexual and gender-based harassment](#)
- [Ontario Safe Schools Act](#)
- [OSSTF - Shout Out Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia and Heterosexism](#)
- [OSSTF – Still Not Laughing: Challenging Sexual Harassment in Our Schools](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada – Gender Identity in Schools: Questions and Answers](#)
- [United Nations Human Rights - Combatting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity](#)