

There are 6 “checklists” in the chapter, dealing with things such as sexism, racism, etc... The fourth checklist is based on a sexual orientation:

		YES	SOME-TIMES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1.	Is the school's selection process for the hiring and promotion of staff free of discrimination based on sexual orientation?				
2 (a)	Does the school's provision for compassionate and other leave for employees apply equally to persons whose partners are of the same gender?				
(b)	Does the school's employee benefit plan apply equally to employees whose partners are of the same gender?				
3.	Does the school respect the rights of students, their parents and of staff: (a) To invite companions of their choice to school functions, such as dances and graduations?				
	(b) To make reference to all persons who are significant in their lives?				
4 (a)	Does the school have a clearly communicated policy prohibiting harassment based on sexual orientation?				
(b)	Do staff respond effectively to stop harassment based on sexual orientation that is directed against students or staff				
5.	Do staff actively discourage the use of homophobic jokes, images or statements?				
6.	Are school counselors informed and qualified to provide students with information in response to questions concerning sexual orientation?				
7.	Is the school's sex education program balanced and informative with respect to all sexual orientations?				
8.	Are the books in the school library balanced with respect to all sexual orientations?				
9.	Is there a selection of books in the school library that is of particular interest to gay or lesbian students, and to students whose parents are lesbian or gay?				
10.	Are classes taught in a manner that is respectful of the dignity and worth of all individuals regardless of sexual orientation?				

## Equality

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights begins with the assertion that all individuals are equal in dignity and rights.<sup>33</sup> Freedom from discrimination, a principle articulated in Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is essential to equality.

Many groups in our society do not participate proportionately in those areas considered most economically rewarding and politically powerful.<sup>34</sup> Statistics confirm these inequities. Discrimination based on gender, race, physical and mental disability and other group factors, is one of the barriers which restrict life choices for certain groups of individuals and which prevent such groups from fully participating in society.<sup>35</sup> Society suffers as well, since discrimination prevents all of us from enjoying the benefits of the work and talents of all of its members.

It can be said that there are two forms of discrimination, direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination involves a clear act of unequal treatment. It may be an intentional, purposeful and overt act of discrimination or one which is less overt. It may even be unintentional and stem from ignorance on the part of the perpetrator. An example of direct discrimination is the intentional or unintentional ignoring by a teacher of her or his visible minority students for favoured assignments.

Not all discrimination, however, is apparent on its face. Some is more telling in its effects. Systemic discrimination that is indirect is built into the rules and structures of an organization in an apparently unintentional way. Systemic discrimination results where a general practice which is applied to all similarly, is in fact a disadvantage to a particular group. An example is a hiring policy which specifies that applicants must be over 5'11" (or 1.7 meters) tall. Such a policy would disproportionately exclude female and Asian applicants, the majority of whom are shorter than 5'11". Favoured by this policy are Caucasian men, a substantial proportion of whom are taller than 5'11". (Such discrimination may be justified, however, if being over 5'11" in height is proven to be a reasonable requirement for the job and is imposed in good faith.<sup>36</sup>)

In order to ensure that everyone is being treated equally, we must re-examine not only our intentions and our policies and practices but the results of a given system.<sup>37</sup> For example, if a school division wishes to determine whether women and men have equal access to administrative positions within the division, it should examine its hiring practices for gender bias as well as determine the percentage of women employed in administration and in various hierarchical categories within its administration (e.g. senior vs. junior management). A low percentage of women in any given job category, though not conclusive, is a strong signal that discriminatory barriers exist. These barriers may be the result of discriminatory practices of the school division itself, or they may stem from discriminatory practices of powers outside the control of the division. Only a thorough examination will reveal the source or sources of the problem.

Equality does not necessarily mean treating everyone the same. True equality is achieved when everyone has equal access to the benefits that society has to offer. This may require different treatment in order to accommodate the special needs of individuals and groups. For example, ensuring that a student who is learning disabled receives an education comparable to that of non-disabled peers may require that the school or school division not only integrate the students into a 'regular' classroom, but also provide additional resources for that student. The following set of checklists contain questions designed to determine the degree to which a school incorporates the principle of equality in its school management practices. The first checklist is an overview covering general equality issues. Schools seeking to have a large number of people complete the survey may wish to administer this section alone to a portion of participants, as a "short form" to the equality checklist. The following six checklists address issues of equality as they relate to those groups most likely affected by discrimination. The checklists cover equality issues related to gender/sex, race, ethnic origin and cultural background, disability, sexual orientation, family status and economic and social status.

A school which is characterized by equality is more likely to graduate students who are committed to the principle of equality, and who are empowered to make life choices based on their own individual interests and abilities regardless of sex, race, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, religion, cultural background, family, economic or other status. We will all benefit from a society which maximizes the contribution of each one of its citizens.