

# RESOURCES AND LINKS

## THE ALBERTA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

[www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)

Visit the ATA's **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity** webpage at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) and go to Professional Development → Diversity, Equity and Human Rights, then scroll down to find the link. The webpage provides useful links and information resources, including:

- A Guide for Teachers: Gay-Straight Student Alliances in Alberta Schools
- PRISM Toolkit for Safe and Caring Discussions About Sexual and Gender Minorities

The ATA also offers professional development workshops on supporting LGBTQ students and staff.

For more information about these resources and services, or to order Safe Spaces posters and stickers, contact the ATA Professional Development office at (780) 447-9400 or 1-800-232-7208 (toll-free).

## THE SOCIETY FOR SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

[www.safeandcaring.ca](http://www.safeandcaring.ca)

Visit Safe and Caring's dedicated **Resources** hub to access tip sheets, guides and tools on: Supporting LGBTQ Children and Youth, Creating Safe Spaces, Understanding Alberta's School Act, and more!

## THE INSTITUTE FOR SEXUAL MINORITY STUDIES AND SERVICES

[www.ismss.ualberta.ca](http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca)

iSMSS provides evidence-based resources that serve as a starting point to help increase knowledge and enhance services designed to support sexual and gender minority children, youth and families, and the professionals that serve them.



# SAFE SPACES

# WHY DO WE NEED SAFE SPACES?

## SAFER SCHOOLS AND BETTER OUTCOMES

The value of a positive and diverse school culture is incalculable. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) students often face discrimination and prejudice at school. Research shows that LGBTQ students have higher rates of suicide, drug and alcohol use, smoking and feelings of isolation and despair. When students feel safe and welcome in their learning environments, they have higher rates of academic success, attendance and school completion, as well as improved social, emotional, mental and physical health outcomes.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is prohibited by both the *Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Honour and advocate human rights in your school. LGBTQ rights affect us all.

## INDIVIDUAL RESPECT

Alberta's teachers are bound by the Professional Code of Conduct, which requires teachers to show respect for all students, including sexual and gender minority populations.

## EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone in the school is responsible for creating welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments, and for reducing homophobia and heterosexism. In Alberta, we believe every child belongs equally, and want to help our sexual and gender minority children and youth thrive. The amended *School Act* (2015) and other legislation outlines the respective responsibilities for school staff, students and parents and guardians.

# HOW CAN YOU HELP?

## SAFE SPACES INITIATIVE

The Safe Spaces Initiative is the collective effort of the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities and the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services. The Initiative provides supports to teachers and other members of school communities in their efforts to create safe, caring and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ students and teachers, as well as their allies and families.

## SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

Fostering a caring and inclusive school culture where students feel safe and accepted is essential for creating a space where students can thrive. A good place to start is posting the Safe Spaces posters and stickers in your classroom or on your door. This shows other members of the school that you are an LGBTQ ally, and that you are committed to cultivating a safe, caring and inclusive school environment.

## TAKE ACTION

There are lots of ways you can help make LGBTQ students feel safe and accepted at school. Here are a few other steps you can take to make a positive difference in your own school:

- Educate yourself about LGBTQ issues by checking out the resources and links listed in this brochure.
- Model positive behaviour and attitudes: use gender inclusive language and treat everyone with caring and respect.
- Be ready to respond to homophobic behaviour when you witness it.
- Help students establish a gay-straight alliance (GSA) or a designated safe space.
- Request an ATA LGBTQ workshop at your school.