



# Huron-Superior Catholic

## DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

### PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

#### Guiding Principles for Using Inclusive Language in the Workplace

Inclusive language is language that is free from words, phrases or tones that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped or discriminatory views of particular people or groups. It is also language that does not deliberately or inadvertently exclude people from feeling accepted. The following principles below are adopted from *Words Matter: Guidelines on Using Inclusive Language in the Workplace*. In using inclusive language, it is helpful to keep these principles in mind:

- People first  
Many general principles provided in this guide involve seeing the person as an individual first and becoming aware of diverse audiences.
- Words matter  
Not only do terms and expressions allow people or groups to feel excluded, but they can also convey or embed stereotypes, expectations or limitations.
- Language changes  
All language changes reflect the values of society. As language changes, so do the norms that deem what is socially and grammatically acceptable.
- Mindset matters  
It is important to keep a curious and empathetic mindset. Most languages have evolved to reflect the values and norms of the mainstream or dominant culture, and if a person is a member of that culture, they have had the privilege to feel included the majority of the time. That is not the case for everyone.
- Inclusive terms  
Try to make your language and your message as inclusive as possible. For example, when speaking to an audience, make sure your speech relates to all your listeners and uses gender-inclusive language.
- Use of generalizations or stereotypes  
No matter what your audience, be cautious about making sweeping statements about any social group. This includes making personal assumptions based on gender, culture, ancestry, age and other categories as identified in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

- Use of prejudiced language

Take time to educate yourself about what words, phrases, or perspectives may offend your listeners. One goal of an audience-centered, inclusive speaker is to be cautious about prejudiced language or remarks.

- Self-reflection

Bring self-awareness to the times when you use words and expressions in writing. Think about your intentions for using a phrase, whether it has any origins, and whether there is a more inclusive way to state what you are trying to say.

It may also be helpful to ask:

- Have I considered lived experiences?
- Does the individual or group have preferred terms?
- Does the language reflect the diversity of the intended audience?
- Is reference to a person's gender, culture, ethnicity, age, etc. relevant?
- Am I staying open and curious, and encouraging others to do the same?
- Is there a need to consult a formal style guide such as The Canadian Press Stylebook, APA Style, Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples for guidance on written communication standards?