

Egale Canada Calls on all Schools to Fly the Pride Flag in Solidarity with 2SLGBTQI Students and Educators

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Egale Responds to Homophobic and Transphobic Disruption at York Catholic District School Board Meeting

Following the disruption of a York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) meeting this week by a delegation including parents who oppose flying the Pride Flag at YCDSB schools, Egale Canada is urging all schools to strengthen their efforts to foster safe and inclusive learning environments for all students by flying the Pride Flag this Pride Season. The YCDSB meeting was disrupted by parents shouting homophobic and transphobic language.

Catholic schools, like all educational institutions, have a responsibility to create a safe and inclusive environment for all students, families, and staff, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The disruptive parents' extreme views are not in line with the official policy, nor with the human rights obligations, of Catholic school boards in Ontario.

Full inclusion and acceptance of 2SLGBTQI students, staff and families at Catholic schools are paramount. Egale's national study, [*Still In Every Class in Every School \(2021\)*](#), found that 2SLGBTQI students at Catholic schools experienced more incidents of homophobic and transphobic harassment than students at other schools and were less likely to disclose these occurrences to school staff. Furthermore, Catholic school students were twice as likely to report experiencing verbal harassment based on their perceived sexual orientation (35%) than students who did not attend a Catholic school (18%). Similar differences were observed regarding verbal harassment based on gender identity (28% for students from Catholic schools versus 15% for students not attending a Catholic school).

2SLGBTQI students face discrimination and marginalization in society, which can lead to negative health outcomes, including higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. It is essential that Catholic schools work to support these students and provide them with the resources and support they need to thrive.

Inclusive policies and practices, such as providing all-gender washrooms, implementing anti-bullying policies, providing resources and support for 2SLGBTQI students and their families, and raising the Pride Flag can help to create a safe and welcoming environment for all students. It's the right thing to do!