



# Nanaimo Pride Society

## Safe Space Directive

### I. Policy Statement

The Nanaimo Pride Society's mission and core values are to empower, celebrate, promote and create inclusivity, acceptance, and respect among persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities through advocacy, education, cultural activities and events in Nanaimo and surrounding communities. Fulfilling this mission at events whether held in person or virtually requires a safe space directive.

### II. Definition

A safe space is an environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm. Everyone has the right to feel safe at any event they attend, regardless of age, ancestry, colour, gender identity, gender expression, mental disability, physical disability, place of origin, race, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation. Event spaces, and all spaces, should be non-threatening and supportive to all attendees. Oppressive behaviour that makes others feel unsafe will not be tolerated.

Such behaviours include, but are not limited to:

1. Offensive, derogatory, threatening, aggressive, or silencing comments (related to gender, gender identity + expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, age, language, body size, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic standing, or otherwise)
2. Violence, intimidation, stalking, or unwanted following of a person
3. Persistent, abusive, and non-constructive criticism with regard to any project(s) any participant may show during an event, space, or program
4. Persistent micro-aggressions in the form of comments, jokes, material, or otherwise
5. Harassing photography or recording
6. Disruption of events, programs, or space functionality
7. Inappropriate physical contact without consent
8. Unwelcome sexual attention
9. Sexually demeaning imagery
10. Advocating or encouraging any of the above behaviour

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\*Last updated March 26th, 2022.

## II. Application

The Nanaimo Pride Society's Safe Space Directive applies to all gatherings, in person or virtual, that the Nanaimo Pride Society's Board of Directors, members, and/or volunteers plan, hold, host, publicise, co-sponsor, partner with, and/or promote. All Nanaimo Pride Society Board of Directors, members, and volunteers must abide by this Directive at all events and gatherings including meetings, annual general membership meetings, and all forms of communication while representing the Nanaimo Pride Society.

## III. Reporting

Please do not hesitate to contact the Nanaimo Pride Society at any time, if you feel unsafe or you notice another person who feels or is being made to feel unsafe. Being made "unsafe" means that you are experiencing discomfort, unease, or harassment caused by another individual or group of individuals. You can contact or report this behaviour by:

1. Speaking on-site to the organizer's representative, coordinator, or volunteer
2. Emailing the organizers at [hello@nanaimopride.ca](mailto:hello@nanaimopride.ca)
3. Privately messaging Nanaimo Pride Society's Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/pridenanaimo>
4. Anonymously report via online contact form <https://www.nanaimopride.ca/reach-out>

As needed, we will seek out the space's security employees, provide an escort, translate, call a taxi, or assist you in any other way. Upon personal request, we are willing to contact law enforcement on your behalf, but will not do so unprompted, except in situations that threaten the immediate safety and health of a member. Any in-person conversations will be held in confidence. Any reports will be handled privately and will be acted upon with your safety in mind first. Messages sent to Nanaimo Pride Society will be reviewed by the Board of Directors including the Board Secretary who is part of the Executive Committee. Any report of an alleged violation of safe space will be investigated as soon as possible. Law enforcement should be the last resort unless absolutely necessary given the traumatic history of RCMP interactions with the 2SLGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities as well as concerns of excessive force and escalation if the RCMP are called. De-escalation is a priority if possible. Depending upon the situation, If a medical or criminal emergency happens at an event, first responders should and will be notified immediately for the safety of all attending the event.

Nanaimo Pride Society acknowledges and understands that white supremacy, colonialism, and racism are connected to other forms of structural violence, including, but not limited to, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, sexism, homophobia, heteronormativity, transphobia, xenophobia, cisnormativity, ableism, classism, and ageism.

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*The BC Human Rights Code protects people in British Columbia from discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, family status or (in the case of employment) an unrelated criminal conviction*

## **IV. Forms of Harassment**

1. **Verbal harassment** includes, but is not limited to the following conduct: foul or obscene language, verbal aggression, or insults; calling someone derogatory names; demeaning restrictive jokes or slurs; and spreading malicious rumours.
1. **Physical harassment** includes, but is not limited to the following conduct: Practical jokes; vandalizing personal belongings; pushing, shoving, aggressive behaviour, and the like; and physical interference with movement.
2. **Sexual harassment** is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that detrimentally affects the work environment or leads to negative job-related consequences. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to: unwanted touching like patting, grabbing, or pinching; offensive comments or gestures including insulting nicknames, innuendo, taunting or jokes; sexual requests or suggestions; staring at or making unwelcome comments about a person's appearance or body; spreading rumours about a person's sex-life or morals; questions about a person's sex-life or preferences; being abusive to someone because of gender identity or gender expression; implied or express promises of reward for complying with, or threats of reprisal for not complying with, a sexually-oriented request; and sexual assault (which is also a criminal matter).
3. **Visual Harassment** includes, but is not limited to: obscene gestures, demeaning posters, photos, pictures, cartoons, graffiti, or drawings, which are shown to an individual or a group or displayed in plain view. Where these have a sexual orientation, this will constitute sexual harassment.
4. **Other Harassment** includes but is not limited to sabotaging work, humiliating hazing or initiation practices, and cyber bullying. "Discrimination" means any adverse treatment that is based on personal characteristics including, but not limited to, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical disability, etc.
5. **Peer Pressure** is a form of bullying especially if minors and/or alcohol is involved.

Bullying, harassment and discrimination do not have to be intentional to be against the law or against this Directive. For instance, even well-intended jokes or compliments can be humiliating or intimidating to the recipient. A good approach is to put yourself in the other person's shoes and carefully avoid comments or actions that have any potential for being misinterpreted.

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## V. Inclusion Ground Rules

In order to enable us to come together and celebrate community, there are a few ground rules to ensure that everyone feels as welcome and comfortable and included as possible at all times.

1. **Photos**, no photos, audio or video recordings, or screenshots should be shared or posted unless permission is granted. Posting or sharing without permission is a serious infringement of confidentiality and can result in unsafe conditions depending on the situation, participants, and gathering.
2. **Age limit**- Participants must be cognizant and sensitive to the fact that our community includes underage minors and their safety and protection is paramount.
3. **Pronouns**- A pronoun is how you refer to someone, for example using she or they. Please ask people what their pronouns are if you are meeting them for the first time. Use their correct pronouns, even if the words are unfamiliar to you. If you make a mistake and refer to someone with the wrong pronoun, apologise and move on.
4. **Assumptions**- Don't make assumptions about someone's identity and think about the ways that people from minority groups may be impacted in different ways by the issues you discuss. Be aware that your experiences are not necessarily the same as everybody else in the room/space. Be aware of any position and privileges you may bring regarding for example your race, your class, your gender identity, your ability or your age. Try not to make generalising statements such as 'All women hate X'.
5. **Neurodivergent folx**- Please give a choice for people to interact without having to talk if they don't want to, especially If they are neurodivergent, give space to people to go at their own pace.
6. **Accessible Language**- Try to use clear, uncomplicated language and to avoid any acronyms and in-jokes. Please give brief descriptions as needed and don't assume everyone knows or understands your statements or intentions. Be clear and be kind.
7. **Content Warning**- Give people a heads up if you are going to discuss something that others might find upsetting. Sometimes upsetting things happen and we need to be able to talk about how we deal with them as a community. It's important to have a space where we feel able to do this, and this Directive hopefully helps that happen consistently. However, not everyone is able to talk about everything all the time, so let people know if you are going to talk about something potentially upsetting like trauma or domestic abuse. During breaks and other less formal settings, you can also do this informally by asking 'is it okay if I talk about X thing?'
8. **Space to Speak**- Please be aware that it is difficult for those belonging to marginalised groups or minority groups to participate in discussions both online and in person. Do not talk over people and try to gauge whether it is appropriate for you to speak on certain topics. Try to give less confident and quieter people a chance to speak.
9. **Privacy and Confidentiality**- We will ask everybody to respect the fact that not everybody is "out" everywhere outside of a community gathering, so if you use social

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media, please do not share any contact information or identifiable information of other people without their explicit consent.

10. **Social Media-** Everything in this Directive also extends to all social media platforms so keep that in mind when using social media on behalf or in partner with the Nanaimo Pride Society events.
11. **Accessibility/Accommodation-** All public and private events will be held with folk of different abilities in mind and all meeting spaces must be wheelchair accessible in order to have the Nanaimo Pride Society officially sponsor or partner.

## **V. Violation of Directive**

The Board of Directors of the Nanaimo Pride Society take this Directive seriously. Creating safe spaces where all members of our communities can feel safe, welcome, and included requires everyone to take personal responsibility and accountability for their actions and words. Violations of this Directive will have serious consequences that may include being banned from attending Nanaimo Pride Society private events and gatherings in the future as well as having your Nanaimo Pride membership revoked. Any vendor or community partner who violates this Directive will run the risk of losing eligibility to partner with the Nanaimo Pride Society for future events.

## **VI. Frivolous, Vexatious or Malicious Allegations or Complaints**

Complaints of bullying, harassment and discrimination are serious matters. Anyone who is found to have made a frivolous, vexatious or malicious allegation or complaint, whether formal or informal, of bullying, harassment or discrimination may be subject to having their membership revoked as well as being banned from Nanaimo Pride Society events. We seek to have open, honest, and respectful dialogue at all times, especially at Nanaimo Pride Society events and slander and libel are legal matters that may require investigators.

## **VII. Minors**

Nanaimo Pride Society supports the safety, peace of mind, and mental health of our community members, especially 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. Any behaviour that infringes on the safety and well being of minors will have serious and potentially legal consequences.

## **VII. Questions, concerns, feedback**

For any questions, concerns, and/or feedback please email [hello@nanaimopride.ca](mailto:hello@nanaimopride.ca) We are a volunteer Board but someone will respond to you as soon as possible.

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