



STANDARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

<p>POLICY NAME CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES</p>	<p>Section: D Policy Number: 1 Effective Date: 11/21/05 Review Date: 2/2021 Updated: 4/1/2021</p>
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POLICY:

La Academia de Esperanza (LADE) encourages the objective study of controversial issues. Learning about controversial issues can build skills such as listening, debate, handling conflict, self-awareness, distinguishing between fact and opinion, creative problem solving, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, recognizing bias, evaluating evidence, justifying an argument, logical reasoning, etc. These critical skills are necessary in an increasingly complex world. Equally important, students develop empathy and a willingness to perceive and understand the interests, beliefs and viewpoints of others.

“Controversial Issue” for the purpose of this Policy means a point or matter about which there exist significant opposing viewpoints and/or multiple perspectives.

PROCEDURES:

1. Provisions will be made for review of student or parent/guardian objections to presentations, to print or multi-media instructional materials.
2. Addressing controversial issues provides the opportunity to combine knowledge, skills, evidence, theory, application, people, ideas, values and emotion. Students can experience the hard realities of our world with a safety net of a supportive, encouraging environment.
3. LADE affirms that the involvement of family and community partners is critical to student success, especially when addressing controversial topics. To better engage our families and community partners, LADE shall strive to utilize the histories and cultures of our families, community and students as the foundation of an educational program. This ensures every student is eager to be a world-class citizen who has the ability to engage in respectful, knowledgeable discourse based on effective critical thinking skills. Collaborative decision-making processes shall be incorporated in appropriate school actions to improve student outcomes.
4. LADE shall strive to actively build partnerships with families and the community by:
 - Fostering safe and welcoming environments
 - Strengthening relationships with families, teachers, school administrators and community partners
 - Expanding communication between families, community partners and schools
 - Cultivating equitable and effective systems
 - Communicating clearly when controversial topics are introduced and openly accepting parental and family objection by providing relevant alternative content

TEACHERS

Teachers will observe the following:

- Without minimizing the importance of generally accepted truths and values, LADE agrees to foster dispassionate, unprejudiced, scientific, research-based studies of controversial issues in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.
- The teacher will serve as an impartial moderator and will not attempt, directly or indirectly, to limit or control the opinion of pupils on controversial issues. It is the intent of the policy that the teacher will foster the study of such issues rather than teach particular viewpoints.
- Freedom to teach is essential to the accomplishment of LADE's goals. Therefore, teachers have the right and responsibility to exercise professional judgement, within the limits of the above guidelines, in initiating and actively pursuing consideration of controversial issues.
- Teacher must inform the Head Administrator of guest speakers appearing in their classrooms.
- Teachers will consult with the Head Administrator when a complaint is received about classroom content or activities to determine an appropriate alternative activity or another course of action.
- In the event the Head Administrator believes that a teacher's presentation (oral, written or visual) of a controversial issue falls outside this policy, the Head Administrator will so advise the teacher, discuss the basis of his/her objections and recommend an alternative approach to the issue. The teacher and the Head Administrator will determine an appropriate solution.

STUDENTS

In accordance with policy, the following standards will apply:

- Students have the right to encounter and share diverse points of view. They will have opportunities to hear speakers and view presentations representing a wide range of views in classes, clubs, and assemblies under guidelines established by LADE.
- If it is established that when a student and/or parent/guardian objects to participation in an activity assigned by school personnel, an alternative activity will be assigned without penalty or embarrassment to the student.
- As a public institution, the school has a commitment to objectivity and fairness in the presentation of all sides of an issue.