



ArtStarts in Schools

ANTI-OPPRESSION GUIDELINES

ArtStarts is committed to using its privilege as a well-established organization to address systemic oppression and colonial practices, especially those that we perpetuate. We are committed to providing students with accessible arts-based experiences in their schools and believe that intentional representation of equity-seeking groups an important part of this commitment. We take cultural safety and cultural appropriation seriously and are committed to ensuring that students are thoughtfully engaging with traditional knowledge and stories in context.

This document seeks to outline some of the ways ArtStarts is applying anti-oppression frameworks to our practices in order to:

- reduce barriers for equity-seeking groups to access our programs, services and facility;
- determine who we work with and how;
- engage in the broader conversation in our communities; and
- clarify the expectations of our staff, board and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this document, we use the following definitions:

Diversity

The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, some of which are visible and others that are not. Diversity looks as who is at the table, and focuses on numbers and representation.

Inclusion

Describes any effort to include people and value the diversity of their differences. Inclusion looks at how people are able to contribute when they are at the table.

Equity

Considers the appropriate allocation of resources and opportunity for access and outcomes. Equity is about accommodating differences to address barriers or disadvantages faced due to social inequalities in order to achieve the same goal. Equity looks at the barriers and obstacles that are in the way for people to come to the table.

Justice

A critical analysis of power in society. Justice incorporates an institutional, organizational and social analysis to address systemic issues that cannot be resolved at an individual level. Justice looks at the systems that prevent people from being at the table.



ArtStarts in Schools provides innovative arts programs for young people, practical resources for teachers and artists, and leadership in advocacy for arts in education.

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Oppression

The use of power or privilege by a socially, politically, economically, culturally dominant group (or groups) to disempower (take away or reduce power), marginalize, silence or otherwise subordinate one social group or category.

Systemic Oppression

Consists of practices, policies, laws and standards that disadvantage a particular group or category of people.

Individual Oppression

DemEANing and oppressive behaviour towards and treatment of a particular group or category of people, expressed through individual attitudes, beliefs and values.

Anti-Oppression

The work of actively challenging and removing oppression perpetuated by power inequalities in society, both systemic oppression and individual expressions of oppression.

We are grateful to the Canadian Council for Refugees for their work in this arena and providing the thoughtful definitions above. Source: <http://ccrweb.ca/en/ccr-anti-oppression-policy>

Cultural Appropriation

Includes use of cultural motifs, themes, "voices," images, knowledge, stories, songs, drama, and so on without permission or without appropriate context or in a way that may misrepresent the real experience of the people from whose culture they are drawn.

Source: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/overview>

Equity-seeking groups

Communities that face significant collective challenges in participating in society. This marginalization could be created by attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. Equity-seeking groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.

Source: <https://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/equity-seeking-groups>

ARTSTARTS' COMMITMENT

ArtStarts will work to ensure that:

- We develop and improve policies to promote anti-oppression.
- We identify and challenge barriers to our programs, services and facility.
- We encourage thoughtful, carefully considered conversations about anti-oppression and decolonization with stakeholders.
- We build our capacity and the capacity of our network to challenge unequal distribution of power and biases that lead to oppression.
- We support artists and educators who thoughtfully engage with traditional knowledge and stories in context.
- We dedicate resources to serve equity-seeking artists.
- We do not provide services to artists who practice cultural appropriation.
- We do not fund projects that are culturally unsafe and perpetuate systems of oppression.
- We provide staff, board and volunteers with anti-oppression training tailored to their role.

- We ensure staff, board and volunteers can challenge oppressive and colonial practices without harassment and discrimination.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We do not work in isolation; ArtStarts works through a variety of different relationships with artists, educators, schools, school districts, families, arts and community organizations. We ask that members of the ArtStarts community read and understand this document. We ask artists who are contracted with ArtStarts to hold us and themselves accountable to these practices.

THIS IS A WORKING DOCUMENT

This document is one step in our fight against oppression. We plan on evolving it into a formal policy to be adopted by our Board of Directors. We recognize that this will be an ongoing process and no document will abolish oppression. We also recognize the inherent contradiction in using policies and hierarchical structures to combat oppression. This is our effort to create organizational practices that are self-reflective, rooted in community and guided by a commitment to anti-oppression.