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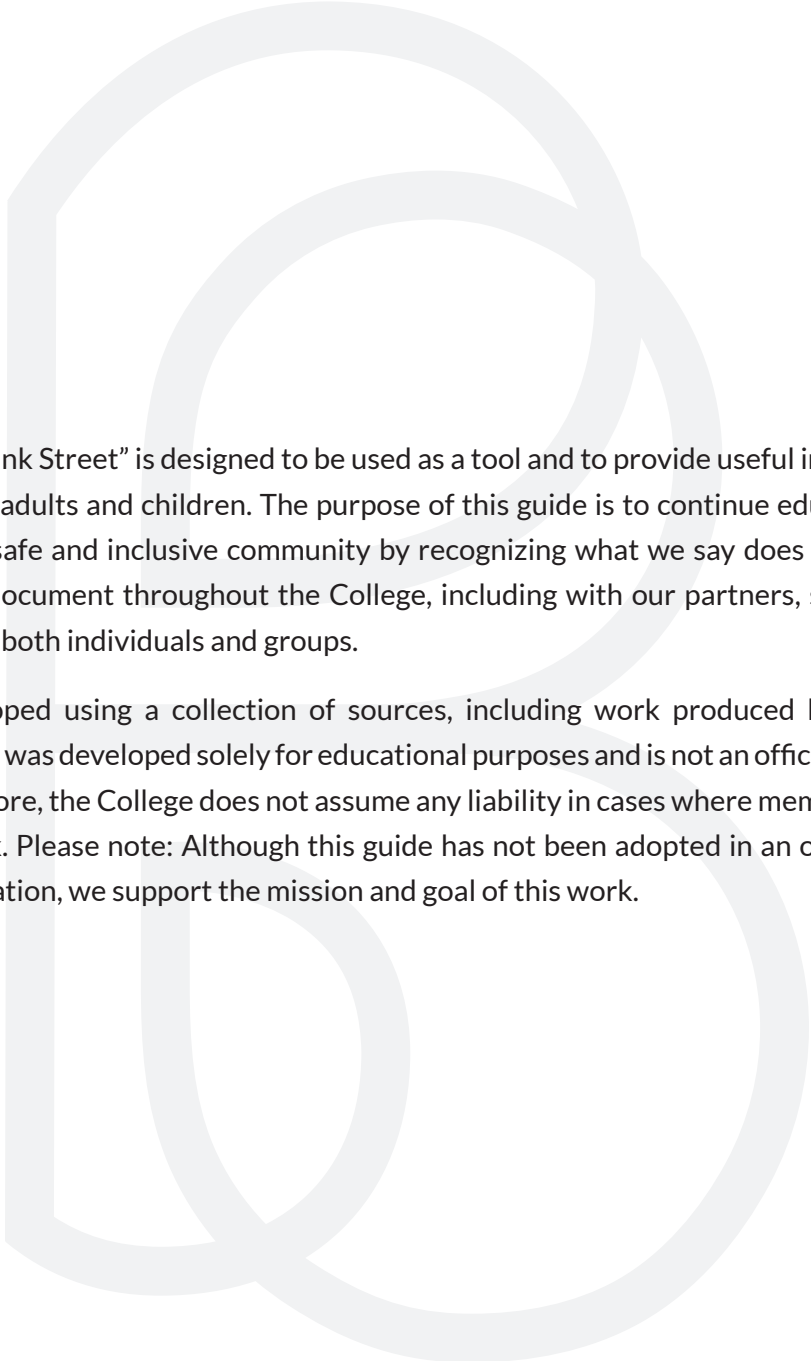


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LANGUAGE VALUES AT BANK STREET

October 2018



“Language Values at Bank Street” is designed to be used as a tool and to provide useful information on our daily interactions with both adults and children. The purpose of this guide is to continue educating our community toward maintaining a safe and inclusive community by recognizing what we say does matter. This guide will be used as a support document throughout the College, including with our partners, so we share a common language that respects both individuals and groups.

This guide was developed using a collection of sources, including work produced by colleagues at other independent schools. It was developed solely for educational purposes and is not an official or mandatory part of our curriculum. Therefore, the College does not assume any liability in cases where members of the community do not adopt this work. Please note: Although this guide has not been adopted in an official capacity at Bank Street College of Education, we support the mission and goal of this work.

In our interactions with each other as adults and with children, what we say matters. At the Bank Street School for Children, we have developed the following guidelines for the purposes of ensuring a safe and inclusive community for all individuals and groups of people. We use these guidelines as a tool for professional development, parent education, and orienting visiting educators, artists, and authors who spend time with our children.

Here are guidelines for language use within our community.

Remember:

- Be mindful of the language you use to avoid making assumptions about people.
- Take care of mistakes that happen.
- Children and adults are in charge of the language and terms they use to identify themselves—and these decisions can change.

This booklet provides language guidelines for gender, family structure, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, ability, religion, and socioeconomic status. The goal is to shift our default language when addressing people we don't know and larger groups of people so that our language is as inclusive as possible. We also don't know everything about the people we do know, so this language shift is useful for everyone. For example, young children may not have settled into a gender yet (if they ever intend to), and language that affirms them may change. Since language is always changing, this document will be modified periodically.





GENDER

Human beings exist along a gender-identity continuum. At Bank Street, we use inclusive language that values gender diversity.

<i>Instead of...</i>	<i>Say...</i>
Boys and girls, ladies and gentlemen, miss or mister, brothers and sisters	9/10s, folks, people, Room 206, readers, writers, dramatic players, scientists, mathematicians, community members, campers, friends
You guys	You, you all, y'all
he or she	they
(When reading a book) The girl / the boy on this page...	The child, kid, person, friend...
Sweetheart, handsome, beautiful	The child's name, you, the person in the blue shirt
Using a boy-girl pattern to seat/line up students, etc.	Find other ways to group students (such as by shoes or sandals, patterns on clothing, etc.) or make line/seat spots by calling on students by table, interest, numbers
tomboy	a girl in my class who likes to play [insert sport] (describe what the girls does, rather than using the label "tomboy")
mailman, fireman, caveman	mail carrier, firefighter, cave dweller
complimenting appearance	"Tell me why that dress is special to you," "You look so happy today," "I can see that you are very excited about your new hair cut," "I bet you can run really fast in those new sneakers."
lining up for swim—girls and boys	From "if you use the girl's locker room" to "if you get ready with Ms. Sams" From "if you use the boy's locker room" to "if you get ready with Mr. Jones"
boy things / girl things	kids' things, there are no boy or girl things Or just name the things—playing with trucks, or superheroes, or dolls
Referring to someone by their dead name (birth name that they no longer use)	Following an individual's lead on name and pronouns
Someone is not trans	Someone is cisgender

FAMILIES

Families are formed and structured in many ways. At Bank Street, we use inclusive language that reflects this human diversity. It's important to refrain from making assumptions about who kids live with, whether they sleep in the same place every night, whether they see their parents, etc.

<i>Instead of...</i>	<i>Say...</i>
mom and dad	grownups at home, your family
parents	parents and guardians (with older students) grownups (with younger students)
nanny, babysitter	caregiver
is adopted	was adopted
husband, wife, girlfriend, boyfriend	spouse, significant other, partner

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Human beings exist along a sexual orientation continuum. At Bank Street, we use inclusive language that values sexual orientation diversity.

Don't make assumptions about heteronormativity; i.e., boys have or want girlfriends, girls have or want boyfriends. Avoid phrases like "ladies' man," "boys will love those eyelashes," or "your mom and dad must be so proud."

People get to love who they want to love. If you are not sure about what language to use, you can ask, "What do you call the person(s) you are with?" "Are you in a relationship?"

Work to avoid making assumptions about how adults identify themselves in the present or how children might identify themselves in the future. Sexuality can be fluid along the course of a person's life.





RACE*/ETHNICITY

People have racial/ethnic identities that are personal and familial. At Bank Street, we work to be mindful of the language we use in order to avoid making assumptions about people as we engage in conversation that touches on race and ethnicity.

Instead of...	Say...
A person is a minority (in regards to race/ethnicity)	They are a person of color (if they identify as such)
What are you? Where are you from? Where are you really from?	What is your cultural or ethnic background? Where are your ancestors from?
Referring to mixed race people as “half” anything.	They are “fully” both.
<p>Outdated terms with updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorblind—No one is color blind as it pertains to race. We also see the skin tones of people and assumptions are made about how someone identifies racially. • Caucasian—The correct term is White. White is a more accurate description of light-skinned people of European descent. • Diverse person/student—referencing a person of color. A person is not diverse. A group of people can be diverse. • The act of avoiding saying someone’s race— instead use, “A person appears to be [insert race].” We can’t always be sure of someone’s race based solely on appearance. If you really need to know how someone identifies racially, you could follow up and ask that person. 	

**Race is a social construct, but racism is real. Before inquiring about how someone identifies racially, ask yourself, “why do I need to know this?”*

RELIGION

At Bank Street, we work to be mindful of the language we use in order to avoid making assumptions about people as we engage in conversation that touches on religion. As a guiding framework, it may be helpful to say, “Some people believe in a god or many gods and some people do not believe in any god.” Also, not all religions celebrate specific days, and many religions have significant holy days that are not about celebration.

Instead of...	Say...
What religion are you?	Do you have religious or spiritual beliefs? Are there any religious or spiritual traditions that are important to you?
What did you get for Christmas/Hannukah [or any religious holiday]?	What did you do over break? Do you celebrate holidays?
Happy Holidays!	Have a great break!

BEING ABLE

People have different learning styles, needs, and preferences. Everyone has different ways that they feel help them to learn successfully. However, our society is built for able-bodied and able-minded people. At Bank Street, we work to be mindful of the language we use as to avoid making assumptions about people as we engage in conversation that touches on ability.

Instead of...	Say...
A person is learning disabled	A person has a learning difference *
A person is handicapped (physically)	A person has a physical disability or is someone living with a physical disability
A person is ADHD	A person has ADHD
A person is not disabled	A person is Temporarily Able-Bodied, instead of not disabled, as a way of acknowledging that our bodies and their needs will change over time.

*The goal of this is to emphasize and acknowledge the person first. Using "difference" does not mean that a person does not have a diagnosed disability. This is the language we use with younger children, to support them from an affirmative stance rather than from a deficit model. If a child has been diagnosed by a licensed professional, we work to provide all of the necessary accommodations to support this child's learning.

**This changes rapidly with advances in advocacy movements. As with other sections, it is important to follow the lead of the individual and respect how they wish to be addressed.

SOCIOECONOMICS

At Bank Street, we work to be mindful of the language we use in order to avoid making assumptions about people as we engage in conversations that touch on socioeconomics.

Instead of...	Say...
Where did you go for break?	What was a meaningful interaction from your break? Name something you learned over break?
Everyone has the [insert item]	Some people have the [insert item] or Not everyone has the [insert item]
Saying or implying that public schools are bad and private schools are good	There are many school options open to students and families We can't make assumptions about a school that we do not attend
To describe status, someone is upper, middle, or lower class.	Use enough, more than enough, less than enough to inquire about or in conversations about status.

NOTE: This guide does not cover all situations. Polite and thoughtful questions are usually the best way to get information, and that information is a solution to saying incorrect and ignorant things. Be aware that people may not always welcome questions and a response is not something they are obligated to give.



