



Most schools in the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows School District in B.C. have gender-neutral bathrooms but this one at the Samuel Robertson Technical Secondary School in Maple Ridge has a unique sign on its door. MAPLE RIDGE-PITT MEADOWS SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Gender-neutral sign adds dash of humour

The Canadian Press

**MAPLE RIDGE** — A gender-neutral bathroom in a British Columbia high school is providing some chuckles with a lesson in hygiene.

A large, blue sticker on the washroom door has an image of a person wearing both pants and a dress standing next to a person in a wheelchair.

Underneath it reads: "Whatever. Just wash your hands."

Some students at Samuel Robertson Technical Secondary School in Maple Ridge, east of Vancouver, came up with the idea and the sign was made as part of an art project.

It was recently put up on a former staff-only, single-use washroom.

A spokeswoman with the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows School District says many of its schools have added gender-neutral or all-gender washrooms, but this one is unique.

The other bathrooms all have the same district-approved sign — an image of a toilet and a handicapped symbol, says Irena Pochop.

That sign went up beside the gender-neutral bathroom at Samuel Robertson school last year and a small rainbow sticker was put in the corner of its door. But not many people noticed.

"We needed to promote that it was there," says Aaron, a member of the school's gay-straight alliance group, who asked that his last name not be published because he is still coming out as transgender to people in his life.

The 16-year-old says the school's art teacher came up with the design from others like it posted on the Internet.

Different gender-neutral signs have been popping up on bathrooms around the world in response to transgender rights.

A sign on washrooms at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto made a splash in August. Under the image of a person wearing half pants and a half dress, it said: "We don't care."

Aaron says the new sign in his school injects some humour while conveying the bathroom is for everyone.

And, so far, it's turning heads.

Last week, Aaron saw people stopping in the hallway to take photos of the sign.

"They're like, 'Oh my gosh. That's so cool!' Like they're so proud of our school for being able to come that far."

The sign is also making rounds on Facebook and other social media sites, says Aaron.

And, maybe in the end, it's keeping everyone a bit cleaner too.

"I always wash my hands," Aaron says with a laugh.