

WELCOMING, CARING, RESPECTFUL AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Board is committed to providing a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. Each student and staff member within the Division has the right to learn and work in facilities that promote equality of opportunity, dignity and respect.

The Board is obligated to protect all members of the school community from harassment, discrimination, and violence or threat thereof during the Division's school-related activities. All those involved with the Division including trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, contractors and visitors must share in the responsibility for eliminating bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence. The Board prohibits bullying, harassment, discriminatory, and violent behaviors and expects allegations of such behaviors to be investigated in a timely and respectful manner.

Inclusion and a sense of belonging stems from creating an environment that focuses on our right to learn, acknowledges and celebrates diversity, and allows students and staff to focus on their individual success.

Specifically

1. The Board acknowledges its responsibility to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments for all students and staff. It recognizes the importance of students' and staffs' emotional, social, intellectual and physical wellness to their success in school and expects students to adhere to the Division Code of Conduct, Policy 19 - Appendix and Student Code of Conduct.
2. The Board affirms rights as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of each staff member employed by the board and each student enrolled in a school operated by the board.
3. Staff members employed by the board will not be discriminated against as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and
4. Students enrolled in a school operated by the board will not be discriminated against as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
5. The Board expects all trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, visitors, and contractors to embrace and support this policy. This policy covers behavior at Division schools, any school-related functions, and school-related communications whether face-to-face, by phone, fax, e-mail, Internet or Intranet, or by any other means of communication. Behaviour which is threatening, harassing, intimidating, assaulting or bullying, in any way,

toward any person within the school community including aggressive behaviors such as “cyber” hate messaging and websites created in the student’s home, in cyber cafes or other settings is prohibited.

- 5.1 The Board is supportive of the establishment of student organizations and student-led activities that promote equality and non-discrimination, including but not limited to gay-straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs and anti-bullying clubs. If one or more students attending a school operated by a board request a staff member employed by the board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall:
 - 5.1.1 Immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school and
 - 5.1.2 Subject to subsection (5.3), within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.
- 5.2 For the purpose of subsection (5.1), an organization or activity includes an organization or activity that promotes equality and non-discrimination with respect to, without limitation, race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, including but not limited to organizations such as gay-straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs and anti-bullying clubs.
- 5.3 The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”, after consulting with the principal.
 - 5.3.1 For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance.”
- 5.4 The principal shall immediately inform the Board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in subsection 5.1, and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.
- 5.5 The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection 5.1.1 is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity. It is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations and activities.
6. The Board encourages reporting to a responsible adult all incidents of threats, bullying, harassment, violence or intimidation regardless of the identity of the alleged harasser or offender.

7. The Board considers the following guidelines based on the Minister of Education's "Guidelines for Best Practices: Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities, and Gender Expressions" to create a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments for all members of the school community regardless of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender identity, gender expression, physical (dis)ability, sexual orientation, mental (dis)ability, marital status, age, ancestry, place of origin, family status, or socioeconomic status:
 - 7.1 Providing supports that respond to a student's individual needs.
 - 7.2 Respecting an individual's right to self-identification.
 - 7.3 Maintaining school records in a way that respects privacy and confidentiality.
 - 7.4 Ensuring dress codes respect an individual's gender identity, gender expression, religion, cultural background etc.
 - 7.5 Minimizing gender-segregated activities.
 - 7.6 Enabling all students to have full, safe and equitable participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities.
 - 7.7 Providing safe access to washroom and change-room facilities.
 - 7.8 Providing professional learning opportunities that build the capacity of staff to understand and support diversity in areas including but not limited to sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, cultural background, religious beliefs etc.
 - 7.9 Using a comprehensive, whole-school approach to promote healthy relationships and prevent and respond to bullying behaviour.
 - 7.10 Ensuring students have the understanding, skills and opportunities to contribute to welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self.
 - 7.11 Ensuring all families are welcomed and supported as valued members of the school community.
 - 7.12 Ensuring that school staff have work environments where they are protected from discrimination.

8. All information is protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Adopted/Revised: APR 2016/JAN 2017/MAR 2018/JAN 2019/NOV 2019/APR 2021/DEC 2021

Legal Reference: Section 11, 31, 33, 35.1, 36, 37, 52, 53, 58, 196, 197, 213, 222 Education Act
Alberta Bill of Rights
Alberta Human Rights Act
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Teaching Profession Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Criminal Code
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)