

SAFE, CARING AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS

1. PHILOSOPHY

The Board of Education (“Board”) recognizes that each member of the school and community must share the responsibility for supporting all students in addressing and facing challenges, and that the School District (“District”) is responsible for providing an educational system that is safe, welcoming, inclusive, and affirming for all students, families and staff.

The Board recognizes and values the diversity found within its school communities and believes that each individual contributes to the strength of the district’s culture.

Through ongoing educational initiatives and opportunities for all students and employees, the District is committed to raising awareness and improving the understanding of the lives of people who are identified above as well as all persons who experience challenges within our schools as a result of their race, religion or other personal characteristics.

The Board recognizes that students identifying as: Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-Spirit, Intersex, Queer, or questioning (“LGBTTIQ”) face a unique set of challenges within our schools and communities including being targets for discriminatory behaviours.

This policy is meant to be congruent with the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, BC Human Rights Code, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom.

The Board is committed to providing safe, caring and socially responsible school environments in which all learners can achieve academic excellence, personal growth and responsible citizenship.

Safe, caring and socially responsible school environments are free of acts of:

- (a) Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, threat and intimidation;
- (b) Violence of any form;
- (c) Verbal, physical or sexual abuse;
- (d) Discrimination in any form;
- (e) Theft; and
- (f) Vandalism.

Safe, caring and socially responsible school environments do not tolerate the presence of:

- (a) Intoxicating or banned substances;
- (b) Weapons (or replica weapons) and explosives; and
- (c) Intruders or trespassers.

2. DISTRICT-WIDE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Board promotes a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination to ensure that all members of our school community are equally welcomed and are included in all aspects of their educational and school life.

The Board promotes clearly defined behavioural expectations representing the highest standards of respectful and responsible citizenship leading to a culture of acceptance and tolerance among all persons in all schools and at all school-authorized events and activities.

To this end, the Board expects persons will:

- (a) Comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws, and with District policy and regulations;
- (b) Value and encourage learning and working environments that are inclusive and respectful of the diverse social and cultural needs of our community;
- (c) Treat one another with dignity and respect;
- (d) Refrain from engaging in, or encouraging any acts of bullying, discrimination, harassment and violence of any form;
- (e) Show care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- (f) Take appropriate measures to help those in need; and
- (g) Respect those in positions of authority.

3. SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT

- (a) Each school shall establish a School Code of Conduct including statements of expectations regarding behavior. These Codes of Conduct shall be displayed in a prominent area in the school visible to visitors and ambassadors of the school (e.g. coaches, volunteers).
- (b) School Codes of Conduct shall be consistent with the *School Act* and relevant District policy and regulations.
- (c) Behavioural expectations and Codes of Conduct shall be communicated and distributed to employees of the Board at the school, students and parents/guardians in written form at the beginning of each school year.
- (d) Any language (oral or written) or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes or incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination or harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity will not be tolerated. Schools will be expected to specifically include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in their student Codes of Conduct.
- (e) School Codes of Conduct shall be reviewed annually to assess the effectiveness and relevance in addressing current school safety issues with staff, parents and students.
- (f) Disciplinary actions arising as a result of persons not adhering to the School Code of Conduct shall be based on District policy and regulation.
- (g) Each school shall adopt a dress code that attempts to balance individual liberty, social convention, functionality and school community values.
- (h) Schools should include in their Codes of Conduct, specific reference to discrimination on the basis of the following (but not limited to): appearance, capacity, disability, colour, ethnicity, religion, real and/or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

4. IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

This policy expects all members of the school community to model respectful and inclusive conduct and refuses to tolerate any form of discrimination.

The following guidelines will assist the School District with the implementation of this policy:

- (a) The School District should provide opportunities for school communities to increase awareness of the scope and impact of discrimination against LGBTTIQ and to create an inclusive environment.

- (b) Schools are expected to ensure that students and staff are educated in and free to discuss the areas of understanding diversity, harassment, discrimination, anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia, and anti-heterosexism in ways that are curricularly relevant and age appropriate.
- (c) The schools should provide support or direct people to appropriate community support for any student or employee in their school communities.
- (d) The Board in the regular course of reviewing policy ensures language is representative of the diversity in our community.
- (e) The Board shall promote opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and skills in promoting respect for human rights, supporting diversity, and addressing discrimination in schools.
- (f) In the interest of safe and supportive environments, the Board is committed to ensuring that the confidentiality of the sexual orientation and gender identity of students and employees will be protected.

5. SAFETY AND SECURITY

- (a) The Threat Assessment Protocol (“TAP”) shall be followed when anyone displays threat-making behaviour.
- (b) With the exception of peace officers, no person shall possess or use any weapon on any school premises or at any activity off school premises that is organized or sponsored by a school.
- (c) No person shall possess or use any replica or toy weapon on any school premises or at any activity off school premises that is organized so sponsored by a school, except as a prop in a theatrical production. If the replica or toy weapon is used in a school theatrical production, it shall be stored appropriately when not required for the production.
- (d) Students shall not attend school or any school organized or sponsored event while under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating or controlled substance (exceptions to this are for adult sponsored alcohol related events organized in accordance with existing Consumption of Alcohol policies).
- (e) No person shall buy, sell, distribute or possess any intoxicating or controlled substances on or off school premises at any event that is organized or sponsored by a school.
- (f) Anyone violating this policy shall be subject to discipline in accordance with relevant district regulations and a school Code of Conduct established pursuant to this policy.
- (g) For purposes of enforcing school rules, Principals and Vice-Principals may conduct searches of students, lockers, and any other property found on school premises in accordance with the procedures set out in relevant district regulations.
- (h) The procedures set out in relevant District regulations shall apply with respect to the presence of intruders or trespassers on school property.

Glossary

Ally: An individual who is supportive of the LGBTTIQ community. They believe in the dignity and respect of all people, and are willing to stand up in that role.

Banned Substance: Any pharmacological substance with no current approval by any governmental regulatory health authority for human therapeutic use.

Bisexual: Generally used to describe people who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one sex or gender.

Bully: One habitually cruel to others who are weaker; to treat abusively; to affect by means of force or coercion.

Bullying: Differs greatly from conflict as a confirmed incident of bullying will contain one or more of these specific elements: an imbalance of power, intention to harm, feelings of distress on the part of the victim, and repeated incidents over a certain time period.

Conflicts: Generally a disagreement or a difference of opinion between peers who typically have equal or close to equal power within their relationships.

Cyberbullying: The electronic posting of mean-spirited messages about a person (as a student) often done anonymously.

Discrimination: The act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually; prejudiced or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment.

Gay: A man who is romantically and sexually attracted to other men. It is sometimes used to refer to the general GLBTQ community, but most often refers to gay men.

Gender Identity: A person's gender identity is the way in which they define and act on their gender. Gender Expression is how they express their gender.

Genderism: Refers to the assumption that one's gender identity or gender expression will conform to traditionally held stereotypes associated with one's biological sex.

Harassment: To annoy persistently; to create an unpleasant or hostile situation for especially by uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct.

Heterosexism and Homophobia: The term heterosexism refers to the assumption that all people are heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior and more desirable than homosexuality. "Homophobia" is defined as "the irrational fear and hatred of homosexuals." Both of these are perpetuated by negative stereotypes and are dangerous to individuals and communities.

Heterosexual: Created around the same time as 'homosexual' to describe individuals who are sexually attracted to the opposite sex/gender.

Homosexual: A scientific term invented in the 1800's to refer to individuals who are sexually attracted to their own sex/gender.

Inclusive: Broad in orientation or scope; all-embracing; complete; global; universal.

Intersex: An intersex individual may have biological characteristics of both the male and the female sexes.

Intimidation: To make timid or fearful; to compel or deter by or as if by threats.

Intoxicating: To stupefy or excite by the action of a chemical substance such as alcohol; to stimulate or excite; to poison.

Intruding: To thrust or force in or upon someone or something especially without permission, welcome, or fitness; to cause to enter as if by force.

Lesbian: A woman who is romantically and sexually attracted to other women. This term originates with the female poet Sappho who lived in a community comprised predominantly of women on the Isle of Lesbos in ancient Greece.

Liberty: The quality or state of being free; the power to do as one pleases; freedom from physical restraint; freedom from arbitrary or despotic control; the positive enjoyment of various social, political, or economic rights and privileges.

Queer: The term queer has a history of being used as a derogatory name for members of the LGBTTIQ (and Ally) community and those whose sexual orientation is perceived as such. Many people use this word in a positive way to refer to the community; they have reclaimed the term as their own. Not everyone believes this and sensitivity should be used when using or hearing it as there are still many negative connotations with this term and its use by anyone other than someone who is proud to identify as queer.

Questioning: People who are in the process of questioning their sexual orientation are often in need of support and understanding during this stage of their identity. They are seeking information and guidance in their self-discovery.

Sex & Gender: It is easy to confuse these two concepts and terms; however, they are different. Sex refers to the biological sex of a person. Gender refers to their social appearance, mannerisms, and roles.

Sexual Orientation: A personal characteristic that covers the range of human sexuality from gay and lesbian to bisexual, transgender and heterosexual orientations.

Social Convention: Accepted conduct; in a way in which something is usually done; behaviour that is considered acceptable or polite to most members of a society.

Straight: A slang word used to refer to the heterosexual members of our community.

Threat: an expression of intention to inflict injury or damage.

Threat Assessment Protocol (“TAP”): Threat assessment is applicable if students or staff members are threatened. The role of the Administrator is to gather preliminary information in consultation with the school-based threat assessment team to determine if a more comprehensive assessment is warranted. Any School District employee having knowledge of threat making behavior (either toward staff or students) will promptly report the information to the Principal or designate who will respond accordingly. School-Based Threat Assessment Procedures will be followed.

Transgender: An umbrella term used to refer to people who transcend the traditional concept of gender. Many feel as though they are neither a man nor a woman specifically, and many feel as though their biological sex (male, female, etc.) and their socialized gender (man, woman, etc.) don't match. Some opt to change or reassign their sex through hormones and/or surgery and some change their outward appearance, or gender expression, through clothing, hairstyles, mannerisms, etc.

Transsexual: Used to describe those individuals who use hormone therapy and/or surgery to alter their sex.

Transvestite: More appropriately referred to as “cross-dressing”, the term transvestite most often refers to males who dress in the clothing of women. The term drag usually refers to dressing in the clothing and styles of another gender for entertainment purposes.

Transphobia: Is the irrational fear of hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against people who are transgender or who otherwise transgress traditional gender norms.

Trespasser: An unlawful act committed on the person, property, or rights of another.

Two-Spirit: Used by some First Nations to describe people in their culture who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

Vandalism: Willful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property.

Violence: An Exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse; injury by or as if by distortion, infringement, or profanation; intense, turbulent, or furious and often destructive action or force.

Weapons: Any item used to injure, defeat, or destroy; a means of contending against another.

Date of Board Approval:

Date Amended:

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