

351 SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL CULTURE

Background

A safe and caring school exists with the full support and assistance of all members of the school community. We seek to develop a just, peaceful and democratic society in our schools, in accordance with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *School Act*. The Division commits to ensure that all are treated with respect and dignity, and where everyone feels they belong. The Division expects employees, students, volunteers, parents, community members - any person - who visits Division facilities to conduct themselves in a manner which promotes and protects the best interests of student, staff, and colleagues.

Definitions

A positive school culture

One in which each individual is valued, trusted, respected and involved. The operating ethos is one of collaboration, high expectations, mutual trust, caring and support for all individuals.

An Inclusive education system

A way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance of, and belonging for all students.

A safe and caring school learning environment

One that is physically, emotionally and psychologically safe, characterized by:

- a. respect for the uniqueness of each individual
- b. respect for democratic values, rights and responsibilities
- c. appropriate modelling by staff and students
- d. clear, consistent expectations for behavior
- e. appropriate responses to misconduct which are clearly communicated

Bullying

A conscious, persistent and repeated behaviour by one or more people, which is intended to harm others. Bullying takes many forms and can include a variety behaviours and can include physical, verbal, social and cyber bullying. Bullying is the assertion of power through aggression.

Cyber bullying

Includes the use of email, cell phones, text messages, and internet sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, socially exclude. or damage reputations and friendships.

Bystander

A person who observes a conflict or unacceptable behavior. This group includes everyone, other than the bully and victim, who is present during a bullying incident.

Harassment

Any unwelcome or unwanted act or comment that is hurtful, degrading, humiliating, or offensive to another person. Of particular concern is such behaviour that persists after the aggressor has been asked to stop.

Please refer also to AP 172: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

Defamation

Any action that attacks or injures the reputation or honour of an individual or group by false and malicious statements.

Responsibilities

1. The Superintendent shall:

- a. Ensure all schools are safe and caring for all students and staff; and visitors.
- b. Develop, implement and regularly evaluate policy, procedures, programs and practices to support safe and caring schools.
- c. Provide support for education and training for staff, elected trustees, and parents to develop their knowledge, skills, awareness and behaviours to create and maintain safe and caring schools.

2. The Principal shall:

- a. Ensure their school is safe and caring for all by working in collaboration with parents, students, schools staff and community agencies: verify teachers complete PD required by the district.
- b. Work in collaboration with the Crisis Response Team, to support a safe and caring school environment.
- c. Provide information on school expectations that support a safe and caring environment.
- d. Establish learning environments where students and staff feel physically, psychologically, socially and culturally safe.

3. Teachers shall:

- a. Create and maintain classroom environments that are safe and caring for all.
- b. Provide information on school expectations that support a safe and caring environment: complete PD required by the Division.

- c. Support, model and uphold the expected behaviours and guide students to do the same.
 - d. Establish learning environments where students feel physically, psychologically, socially and culturally safe.
4. Support Staff, and Bus Drivers shall:
- a. Work in partnership to ensure school, bus or field trips are environments where students feel physically, psychologically, socially safe.
5. Parents are responsible for:
- a. Understanding school expectations for student behavior.
 - b. Supporting the school in the upholding of these expectations, procedures and regulations at all school functions, both on-campus and off campus or by electronic means.
 - c. Instilling in their child, respect for the rights and the property of others.
 - d. Respecting the authority of the school staff to provide a safe, respectful, and caring environment.
6. Students are responsible for:
- a. Conducting themselves in a manner that supports a safe and caring environment for all.
 - b. Conducting themselves so as to comply with the code of conduct specified in Section 31 of the Education Act.

Intervention Strategies

Developmentally appropriate responses to inappropriate choices will be based on what the student can learn from the incident and how to support a safe and caring environment for all. The goal is to encourage empathy, to make amends and to help students associate power with kindness and pro-social activities. Responses may include:

- *an Interview with students*
- *problem solve with all parties involved with the goal of restoring the relationship(s)*
- *verbal warning*
- *detention*
- *temporary removal from class*
- *parent communication and/or meeting*
- *outside agency involvement (Child and Family Services, Mental Health, RCMP, etc as necessary or required by law)*

- *counselling*
- *restitution*
- *In school /out of school suspension*
- *expulsion to alternative education program*

References:

Section 3,11,19,,36,37,52,53,196,197,222

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Alberta Human Rights Act

Canadian Rockies Public Schools Administrative Procedures 170, 171, 172, 352, 380, 409

Guidelines for Best Practices: Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities, and Gender Expressions (Alberta Government)

Canadian Rockies Public Schools Code of Conduct

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Bill 24 - An Act to Support Gay Straight Alliances

History

Developed: August 2003

Amended: May 2018

Amended: February 2020