

INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES PROVIDING SAFE AND CARING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Background

The Division is committed to ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the Division and each Division employee is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

The mission of our Division speaks to students' gifts and talents being celebrated and nurtured. As further outlined in Board Policy 1, every effort to realize this mission is guided by beliefs and values that place the well-being of students as being at the forefront of the operation of our schools. Most importantly, our passion in this regard is motivated by our core belief that all students are "gifts from God". All efforts to further the safe and caring environment of a school must be in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The *Education Act* requires the Division to establish, implement, and maintain a policy respecting the Division's obligation under the *Education Act* to provide a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment. The *Education Act* also requires the Division to reproduce the text of certain *Education Act* sections in the policy. The Division's policy is this Administrative Procedure together with the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA) LIFE Framework.

The *Education Act* also requires the Division to establish a Student Code of Conduct that addresses bullying behaviour. The Division's student code of conduct is Administrative Procedure 350 – Student Code of Conduct.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Administrative Procedure:

Bullying has the same meaning as under the *Education Act*. The Board is responsible to Section 33(2) of the *Education Act*, which stipulates that it must provide a safe and caring environment for all students. Bullying means repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by a student where the behaviour is intended by the student to cause harm, fear or distress to another individual in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to the individual's reputation. Bullying often occurs in circumstances where one party endeavors to maintain power and control over another based upon systemic inequalities within a social setting. Parameters for addressing bullying are outlined within this procedure.

Division means the Elk Island Catholic Separate School Division.

Parent includes legal guardian.

Conflict in Relationship occurs through single episodic acts of breakdowns in relationship between students. Conflict is an inevitable component of students learning to grow within social relationships. Disagreement and misunderstanding between parties is at the heart of conflict. However, conflict does not constitute premeditated efforts to cause harm, fear, or distress. Parameters for addressing conflict in relationship between students may be dealt with through counseling, and/or Administrative Procedure 351 – Student Discipline.

Personal Harassment refers to unwelcome, discriminatory conduct or behaviour which is known or ought to be known to cause offense to another person. It is not a relationship of mutual consent.

Sexual Harassment refers to unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which is known or ought to be known to impact the well-being of another person.

Harassment does not represent *conflict in relationship* and is a serious form of bullying that will be addressed through Administrative Procedure 170 – Harassment.

Restorative discipline adds to the current discipline framework of schools. It promotes values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches between students, home, church and school for being in community. These approaches validate the experiences and needs of everyone within the community, particularly those who have been marginalized, oppressed, or harmed. These approaches allow schools to act and respond in ways that are healing, rather than alienating or coercive. Restorative discipline is a strategy that a Principal may use to address bullying within a school.

Supporting Positive Behaviours is a strategy for schools to further the social responsibility and responsiveness of students in meeting behavioural expectations in a school. Within this model, pre-determined levels of support and intervention are established to enhance a positive climate of school engagement for all students. While the support model may look different at each school, three levels may be clearly identified:

- Basic/Universal Support:
Systemic teaching that produces a clear understanding of expectations is developed in a collaborative and respectful culture.
- Targeted Support:
Additional support is provided for those students who have not yet internalized appropriate responses to the expectations that they have been expected to follow.
- Individual/Intensive Support:
Highly focused support is established for those students who require ongoing adult monitoring in order to engage in appropriate behaviours.

Supporting Positive Behaviours is based upon a belief that teaching and nourishing appropriate behaviours has a far greater success than relying upon a model of consequences and punishment. This model is applied according to the age and stage of development of the learner and is a strategy that a Principal may also use to address bullying within a school.

Sanctity of Human Life – Foundational principles of all Catholic social teaching is the sanctity of human life. Recognizing each human person as the image and likeness of God, the Catholic Church believes that the inherent dignity of the human person starts with conception and extends until natural death. The value of human life is valued above all material possessions in the world. This is the lens through which the Division advocates for the safety and well-being of students within our schools.

Respect for the Human Person – Social justice can be obtained only in respecting the transcendent dignity of all. We recognize that each person is made in the image and likeness of God and is deserving of love.

Catholic teaching on social relationships recognizes all those called to a life with Christ as, simply and completely, children of God. Christians afford no other title to that giftedness other than to be called by name to a life of love and to be compelled, through discipleship, to share it abundantly with others. As St. Paul reminds us, “For in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God, through faith. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ” (Galatians 3:27-28).”

Our students must respect the unique differences of every person, extending understanding and compassion to others. We do not limit or narrow our understanding of each other to specific traits that make us different. This would be a reductionist view of the human person. Rather, each of us is recognized for the entirety of our gifts and is called forth to contribute these gifts for the betterment of creation and the building of God’s kingdom. This understanding of the human person and God’s plan for each of us defines all of our social relationships. Our relationships, therefore, are characterized by generosity of self, mutual respect, and a desire for the good of the other.

Procedures

1. Catholic Communities of Caring

1.1. Each school operated by the Division must establish a Catholic Community of Caring that:

1.1.1. focuses on building respectful and compassionate school environments rooted in Catholic values

1.1.2. is grounded in community involvement, ministry and service, student forums and conferences, parent and family involvement, integration of Catholic values, and an

emphasis on building relationships;

1.1.3. creates a climate that embraces the values of faith, caring, respect, responsibility, trust, and family; and

1.1.4. is based on the principle that students learn and understand values in three ways:

1.1.4.1. students need to “know the good” through ethical discussion;

1.1.4.2. students need to “see the good” through role modeling and “experience the good” by being a part of a caring community; and

1.1.4.3. students need to “do the good” through service learning opportunities and relationships with others.

2. Division responsibilities and bullying

2.1. Each Division employee must ensure that his or her conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

2.2. The Division and each school operated by the Division must provide support for students who are impacted by and who engage in bullying behaviour.

2.3. Each school operated by the Division must:

2.3.1. observe Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week the third week in November each year; and

2.3.2. promote awareness and understanding of bullying and its consequences in the school community throughout the school year and especially during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week.

2.4. All Principals, in consultation with staff, must enact procedures that support the following expectations with respect to bullying.

2.4.1. No action toward another student, regardless of the intent of that action, will cause harm, fear, or distress to that student.

2.4.2. No action toward another student within the school community will diminish the student’s reputation within the school community.

- 2.4.3. Any action that contributes to a perception of bullying, whether it occurs during school time or after school hours, or whether by electronic or other means, will be addressed by the Principal or designate if it is determined that the actions impact the well-being of the alleged victim within the school community.
- 2.4.4. Any action that humiliates or contributes to diminishing the reputation of a student because of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, marital status of parents, source of income of parents, family circumstances, or sexual orientation of a student is deemed to be an act of bullying.
- 2.4.5. No report by a student that he or she is being “bullied” will be ignored by a staff member. The staff member will respond as if an incident has happened and report the incident to a teacher or Principal.
- 2.4.6. The Principal will establish a distinction between those matters of bullying that will be addressed by teachers, and those to be addressed by the Principal.
- 2.4.7. Students who are bystanders to an act of bullying have a responsibility to report observed incidences to school staff. Students are expected to either exercise communication dedicated to prevent bullying behaviour or, failing this, immediately report such incidences to school staff.
- 2.4.8. Students do not have a role in disciplining other students who have allegedly participated in bullying behaviour. They are encouraged to discourage these actions by labeling the behaviour through communication to others as bullying, requesting that the behaviour cease, and report the incident to a staff member.
- 2.4.9. In establishing consequences for bullying, teachers and Principals will use corrective interventions that consider the context of the circumstance, the behavioural history of the students involved, and the age/stage of development of the student.
- 2.4.10. If in the opinion of the teacher or Principal an act of bullying has occurred, interventions will be applied dedicated to stopping the behaviour in the future, and educating the student victimized about how to address the issue in the future. Those disciplined for their involvement in bullying will be communicated what to “stop” doing, and “start” doing in order to further a safe and caring culture within the school.
- 2.4.11. Parents play a primary role in assisting with the resolution of matters pertaining to bullying. Apprising them of issues in this area as they have impacted their children should occur at the earliest opportunity
- 2.4.12. A Principal may use a Restorative Discipline or Positive Behavioural Support model to address matters of discipline.
- 2.4.13. Incidents of bullying that adversely impact the safety of individuals or are an affront to the common good of the school community may be addressed through application of Sections 36 or 37 of the Education Act.

- 2.4.14. Any and all actions by students that impact the safety and well-being of students or staff or call into question a student's success in being accountable for his/her conduct to the successful operation of the school will be addressed through Administrative Procedure 351 – Student Discipline
- 2.4.15. Procedures used by schools to address bullying will be placed within school handbooks, reviewed with School Councils, and evaluated for effectiveness annually
- 2.4.16. Principals and teachers must rely on EICS Central Learning Services support if existing resources or strategies are insufficient in addressing bullying within the school community.

3. Support for student organizations

- 3.1. Each Division employee must comply with all provisions under the Education Act respecting support for student organizations, including in particular the following provisions under the *Education Act*:

35.1(1) 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

(a) permit the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and

(b) 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.

[...]

(3) The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization, including the name “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”, after consulting with the principal.

(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 (1), and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.

[...]

3.2. A principal who carries out functions under section 35.1 of the *Education Act* must also follow the CCSSA LIFE Framework as amended from time to time.

3.2.1. The Principal will oversee supervision of student groups, as per *The Education Act* Section 197 (a.1), (b), and (f).

3.2.2. The Principal is to provide in-service for staff liaisons regarding the purpose for the student group and how the group can be supported.

3.2.3. The staff liaison is to be present for all meetings from beginning to end and use the mission, vision, the core values of the Division, and Catholic teaching. This is a non-instructional space. When matters arise within these groups that necessitate the intervention of outside agencies, these may be involved subject to their capacity to support the intention of this Administrative Procedure.

3.2.4. Student groups that further the intent of this Administrative Procedure must, through their activities, demonstrate an understanding and respect for the sanctity of human life respect for the human person, and Catholic teaching as outlined within this procedure. This implies that full cooperation with the expectations of the staff liaison is of paramount importance. Failure to work cooperatively with staff liaison in order to contribute to a positive environment within the group or school community will result in individual participation within the group being restricted, or the dissolving of the group itself.

3.3. The Division may disclose personal information only if it is authorized to do so under legislation that governs such disclosure, which, depending on the circumstances, may include the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Education Act*, the *Children First Act*, and the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

4. Student code of conduct

4.1. The Division must establish a Division-wide Student Code of Conduct that:

4.1.1. contains a statement of purpose that provides a rationale for the code of conduct, with a focus on welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments;

4.1.2. supports Catholic Communities of Caring;

4.1.3. supports the Division's Mission, Value, and Vision Statements;

4.1.4. addresses bullying behaviour;

4.1.5. contains one or more statements about what is acceptable behaviour and what is

unacceptable behaviour, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day, or by electronic means;

- 4.1.6. contains one or more statements about the consequences of unacceptable behaviour, which takes account of the student's age, maturity, and individual circumstances and ensures that the Division provides support for students who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour and students who engage in inappropriate behaviour; and
- 4.1.7. subject to the right and responsibility of the Division to provide education programs to students through separate schools in such a way that the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of Canada of separate school electors are preserved and maintained, affirms the rights of each student and employee as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and states that students and employees will not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

4.2. Each school operated by the Division must:

- 4.2.1. create a school-specific Student Code of Conduct that supplements the Division Student Code of Conduct with statements about school-specific unacceptable behaviours; and
- 4.2.2. reproduce both the Division-wide Student Code of Conduct and the school-specific Student Code of Conduct in student handbooks, agendas, or similar items or documents that the school provides to students at the start of the school year.

5. Availability of policy and code of conduct

5.1. The Division must:

- 5.1.1. make this Administrative Procedure (the policy) and Administrative Procedure 350 (Student Code of Conduct) available throughout the year in a prominent location on the Division's public website;
- 5.1.2. display the URL of this Administrative Procedure (the policy) and the Student Code of Conduct on the Division's public website in a place clearly visible to students in each school;
- 5.1.3. on request, provide a copy of this Administrative Procedure (the policy) and the student Code of Conduct to an individual;
- 5.1.4. by June 30 of each year, review this Administrative Procedure (the policy) and the

Student Code of Conduct and post it and a Board of Trustees' resolution that confirmed the review on the Division's public website;

- 5.1.5. comply with any further requirements respecting a policy or Student Code of Conduct established by the Alberta Minister of Education by order; and
- 5.1.6. make any order of the Alberta Minister of Education under section 33 of the *Education Act* available in a timely manner in a prominent location on the Division's public website.

6. Rights and discrimination

- 6.1. Subject to the right and responsibility of the Division to provide education programs to students through separate schools in such a way that the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of Canada of separate school electors are preserved and maintained, the Division affirms the rights of each student and employee as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and will not discriminate against students and employees as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

References: *Education Act, SA 2012, c E0-3*
Alberta Catholic Bishops Pastoral Guideline for the LIFE Framework

Our Catholic Procedural Response - [LIFE Framework – Living Inclusion Faithfully for Everyone](#)

Appendices:

[Administrative Procedure 160 - Appendix A](#)

School Leadership Guidelines for the LIFE (Lived Inclusion for Everyone) Framework

[Administrative Procedure 160 - Appendix B](#)

Resource for a Pastoral Approach to Supporting and Guiding Students in Inclusive Communities – Gender Identity and Expression

[Administrative Procedure 160 – Appendix C](#)

Board Responsibility - The Alberta Education Act, Current as of September 1, 2019

[Administrative Procedure 160 - Appendix D](#)

Additional Resources

[Administrative Procedure 160 - Appendix E](#)

Lived Inclusively for Everyone Support Plan