

## CODES OF CONDUCT

### Background

The district, which includes staff, parents and students, has the responsibility to provide and ensure a safe and positive climate for learning. This framework guides school communities in the development of their own codes of conduct. It is expected that all members of the school community will uphold the underlying principles of the school codes which include respect for self, others, property and the environment.

The code of conduct shall apply to all students during any school activity and may hold students responsible for their conduct on the way to and from school, at a school activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact that adversely affects a school climate or operation, including disruption of the learning environment. Such behaviour or actions shall be considered a breach of the code of conduct, warranting appropriate forms of intervention.

The code of conduct recognizes that as children grow and mature, they are more able to make appropriate decisions and to be responsible for their actions.

### Procedures

#### 1. Processes for Developing and Reviewing Codes of Conduct

- 1.1 When developing a code of conduct, schools will take the following into consideration:
  - the district's mission, core values, goals, policies, and regulations
  - the school's mission and goals
  - the *School Act*, Regulations, and Ministerial Order 276/07
  - the Ministry of Education's characteristics of an educated citizen (to be found in the *Mandate for the School System* as referred in the Statement of Education Policy Order 1280/89)
- 1.2 Principals should be aware that there could be a need for mid-year amendments in codes of conduct based on emergent situations.
- 1.3 Once developed, school codes of conduct will be reviewed annually using a collaborative process. Other school community partner groups may be included in the process.
- 1.4 Schools will submit their codes of conduct for the next school year to the safe schools coordinator by May 15 of each year. All school codes of conduct and changes therein will be approved by the Board of Education annually. The codes of conduct and related operational procedures will be reviewed annually by school principals and vice principals and the District Parent Advisory Council; recommendations for amendment will be referred to the superintendent of schools.
- 1.5 Once approved by the safe schools coordinator, each school's code of conduct shall be filed with the superintendent's office.
- 1.6 The safe schools coordinator will monitor the compatibility of codes of conduct across all elementary, middle and secondary schools.

## 2. Code of Conduct Content Standards

2.1 The following elements must be included in schools' codes of conduct:

- A statement of purpose that provides a rationale for the code of conduct, with a focus on safe, caring, and orderly school environments the school's mission and goals.
- A statement clarifying the circumstances in which the expectations in the code of conduct apply, including the right of the school to apply interventions in situations where engaging in an activity outside of regular school times will have an impact on the school environment.
- Specific reference to each of the following prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in Section 7 (Discriminatory Publication) and Section 8 (Discrimination in Accommodation, Service and Facility) of the BC Human Rights Code: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person or class of persons.
- One or more statements about what is acceptable behaviour, including expectations for:
  - respecting self, others and the school;
  - demonstrating respect and tolerance for all people, both in and outside school in compliance with the BC Human Rights Code;
  - complying with the reasonable directives of a teacher, vice-principal or principal or other school district employee;
  - helping to make the school a safe, caring, and orderly place;
  - informing a 'tellable' adult in a timely manner of incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation;
  - engaging in purposeful learning activities and working diligently on school work without disrupting the work of others;
  - complying with the Tobacco Control Act, the Cannabis Act, and the Cannabis Control and Licensing Act prohibiting smoking and the use of smoking products on school property; and
  - acting in a manner that brings credit to the school.
- One or more statements about what is unacceptable behaviour, including:
  - Behaviours that: interfere with the learning of others, including their emotional well-being; interfere with an orderly environment; and create unsafe conditions.
  - Acts, such as: bullying (including cyberbullying), harassment or intimidation; discrimination contrary to the BC Human Rights Code; physical violence; possession, use or distribution of alcohol; engaging in

conduct contrary to the school code of conduct and/or any school rule or board policy; retribution against a person who has reported incidents.

- Illegal acts, such as: possession, use or distribution of illegal or restricted substances; possession or use of weapons; theft of, or damage to, property.

It should be acknowledged in the code of conduct that all behaviours are not listed, but that those cited are examples.

- One or more statements about appropriate interventions for unacceptable behaviours, including:
  - A statement that interventions will be consistent, fair and pre-planned to the extent possible.
  - A statement that to the extent possible the focus for interventions will be preventative and restorative, rather than punitive.
  - A statement acknowledging that interventions must take into account the student's age and maturity, as well as the nature of the misconduct.
  - A statement that serious and/or repeated misconduct may result in suspension from the school.
  - A statement that the school will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation against an individual who has reported a code of conduct breach.
- One or more statements about appropriate interventions for unacceptable behaviours of special needs students, including:
  - A statement acknowledging that special considerations may apply to students with special needs if these students are unable to comply with a code of conduct due to having a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature and that interventions will take account of a student's special needs, as well as the nature of the misconduct.
- One or more statements to explain that school officials may have responsibility to advise other parties of breaches of the code of conduct.

### 3. **Communications**

- 3.1 Each school must publish its code of conduct on the school website and distribute it to all staff, parents and students at the beginning of each school year.
- 3.2 When students enrol during the school year, they and their parents will be provided with a copy of the code of conduct.
- 3.3 District employees who are assigned to a school after the start of the school year will be provided with a copy of the school's code of conduct upon the commencement of their assignment.

- 3.4 Each school will display its code of conduct in a prominent location in the school where visitors to the school and people who are regularly in the school can read it.
- 3.5 Behavioural expectations outlined in codes of conduct will be consistently modeled by staff, and taught and actively promoted in classrooms and at school events throughout the school year.

#### 4. Notification and Record Keeping

- 4.1 Accurate records are to be kept by the principal or designate of significant infractions of school rules and related disciplinary consequences.
- 4.2 If, in the judgement of the school principal or designate, there has been a serious breach of the code of conduct, the principal or designate – bearing in mind a responsibility for confidentiality – will advise other parties, in accordance with the following:
  - Parents of students directly involved in the incident – in every instance.
  - School district officials and school based personnel – in the judgement of the principal or designate.
  - Police and/or other agencies – as required by law.
  - Appropriate district personnel (the superintendent, or designate, will determine who should be notified and who will notify them).
  - At the discretion of the superintendent, all parents – when it is deemed to be important to reassure members of the school community that school officials are aware of a serious situation or incident and are taking appropriate action to address it

A report of an offence to the RCMP does not preclude the school from exercising some form of intervention or referring the matter to the Student Suspension Review Committee.

- 4.3 Principals have the overall responsibility to see that codes of conduct are enforced and have paramount authority for the discipline of students in accordance with Operational Procedure 361 (Student Discipline).

Reference: Ministerial Order No: (M276/07) – Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct  
BC Ministry of Education – Developing and Reviewing of Codes of Conduct: A Companion to the Provincial Standards for Codes of conduct Ministerial Order and Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide (2004)  
School Act  
BC Human Rights Code, Sections 7 & 8

## Operational Procedure 360 – Appendix A

**CODES OF CONDUCT DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions may be useful to enhance shared understanding in the development of codes of conduct.

**“Bullying behaviour”**: a pattern of repeated aggressive behaviour, with negative intent, directed from one person to another where there is a perceived power imbalance.

Bullying behaviour is a type of harassment and intimidation. This aggressive behaviour includes physical or verbal behaviour, and is an intentional and purposeful act meant to inflict injury or discomfort on the other person. There are three critical conditions that distinguish bullying from other forms of aggressive behaviour including:

Power: involves a power imbalance. A power imbalance may be based on such elements as age, gender, ethnicity, size and strength, status within the peer group, or support from the peer group.

Frequency: is repeated over time. Bullying is characterized by frequent and repeated events which create anticipatory fear in the mind of the person being bullied. This can be detrimental and can have debilitating long-term effects.

Intent to Harm: is intended to hurt. Individuals who bully generally do so with the intent to either physically or emotionally harm the other person.

**“Cyber bullying”**: bullying behaviour which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, blog, discussion group or instant messaging. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies and new internet technologies in the future.

**“Harassment”**: any unwelcome or unwanted act or comment that is hurtful, degrading, humiliating, or offensive to another person is an act of harassment. Of particular concern is such behaviour that persists after the aggressor has been asked to stop.

Any of the following behaviours could be considered harassment:

- Condescending treatment that undermines another’s self-respect, name- calling, teasing, disrespectful comments.
- Gossiping, spreading malicious rumours, “dirty” looks, social ridicule, public embarrassment
- social isolation (“freezing out” or rejecting others), exclusion from a group, threatening to withdraw friendship.
- Repeated unwanted communication.
- Unwelcome jokes, innuendoes, insults, or put downs; taunts about a person’s body, disability, religion, attire, age, economic status, gender, ethnic or national origin, and real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Insulting graffiti directed at an individual or group.
- Unwanted and uninvited sexual attention, particularly when it is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to the recipient.

**“Intimidation”**: Intimidation is the act of instilling fear in someone as a means of controlling that person. For example, any of the following behaviours could be considered intimidation:

- Verbal threats: threatening phone calls, threats of violence against a person or property
- Physical threats: showing a weapon, jostling, threatening to punch, stalking or following
- Defacing or stealing victim’s property
- Daring or coercing victim to do something dangerous or illegal

- Extortion (demanding payment or goods for a victim's safety)
- Inciting hatred toward a victim
- "Setting up" a victim to take the blame for an offence

**"Safe schools"**: schools in which members of the school community are free of the fear of harm, including potential threats from inside or outside the school. The attitudes and actions of students, staff and parents support an environment that is resistant to disruption and intrusion, and enable a constant focus on student achievement.

**"Caring schools"**: schools where it is known that a sense of belonging and connectedness – not just for students, but for everyone in the school community – is a necessary element in the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment. Caring schools are ones in which members of the school community feel a sense of belonging and have opportunities to relate to one another in positive, supportive ways. All aspects of school life embrace and reflect diversity. The school is an inviting place for students, staff, parents and visitors. Staff members make conscious and concerted efforts to help other members of the school community feel connected.

**"Orderly schools"**: schools that are free from chaos and confusion, and alive with the sights and sounds of purposeful learning activities. Routines for repetitious activities are well established so students' minds and bodies are free to focus on the learning and development work at hand. A businesslike atmosphere exists, yet there is creativity and fun in abundance. Everyone in the school has work to do and does it in a timely way – and in a way that doesn't interfere with the learning and development of others. Everyone feels a sense of meaningful accomplishment, and feels the school is a good place to be. All members of the school community are informed about and exercise their rights and responsibilities as school citizens.