

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE NO. 103

WELCOMING, CARING, RESPECTFUL AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Nothing in this administrative procedure is to be interpreted so as to limit or be a waiver of the Red Deer Catholic Regional Division rights and powers pursuant to the *Constitution Act, 1867* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to maintain the denominational character of Catholic schools.

If any of the provisions in this administrative procedure conflict with the Red Deer Catholic Regional Division rights and powers pursuant to the *Constitution Act, 1867*, and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to maintain the denominational character of Catholic schools, the Red Deer Catholic Regional Division rights and powers pursuant to the *Constitution Act, 1867* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to maintain the denominational character of Catholic schools will govern.

Background

The Division believes everyone in the school community shares in the responsibility of creating, maintaining and promoting a Christ-centered, welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity, equity and human rights and fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging.

The Division's goal is to develop responsible, caring and respectful members of a just, peaceful and democratic society. Student and staff self-discipline and appropriate conduct, consistent with our Catholic Christian morals and beliefs, is an essential part of a positive school climate. The Division affirms the rights of each student and staff member, as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and will not discriminate against students or staff members as provided for in the *Alberta Human Right Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

All efforts to further enhance welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments of schools must be in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church. Schools will be comprehensive and holistic in their approach to inclusion and other potential student issues including bullying, justice and respectful relationships.

Definitions

1. **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 and staff within our schools.

2. **Catholic teaching on social relationships** recognizes all those called to a life with Christ as simply and completely, children of God. Our students and staff must respect the unique differences of every person, extending understanding and compassion to others. 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.
3. **Respect for the Human Person** - Social justice can be obtained only in respecting the transcendent dignity of all students, staff and community members.
4. **Bullying** means repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual's reputation. It often involves an imbalance of social or physical power.

Bullying behaviours are a form of aggression and can be:

- Physical – For example: poking, elbowing, hitting
 - Verbal – For example: name calling, insults, racist, sexist or homophobic comments, put-downs
 - Social – For example: gossiping, spreading rumours, excluding someone from the group, isolating, ganging up
 - Cyber – For example: social or verbal bullying through the use of email, text messages, social media including the sharing of intimate images.
5. **Harassment:** Any behavior that in effect or intent disparages, humiliates, or harms another person or class of persons. It is behaviour that denies dignity and respect, and is demeaning and/or humiliating to another person or class of persons. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, references related to age, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race and/or sources of income, family status or citizenship. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome behavior that is sexual in nature. Such behavior may directly or indirectly affect or threaten to affect in an adverse manner a student's well-being and/or learning environment. The behavior does not need to be intended as harassing to be considered as personal harassment. It is sufficient that one knows, or ought reasonably to know, that his/her behaviour is offensive and unwelcome. Harassment is not a relationship of mutual consent. It is any action including, but not limited to verbal, physical, written and cyber messaging that is unwelcome or intimidating and denies individual dignity and respect.
 6. **Restorative Discipline** adds to the current discipline framework of our schools. It promotes values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches between students, home, church and the school for being in community. This approach validates 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 can be used to address bullying within a school.

7. **Supporting Positive Behaviours** is a strategy to further the social responsibility and responsiveness of students in meeting behavioural expectations of their school. Within this model, predetermined 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 are identified as part of the intervention protocol:

7.1 Basic/Universal Support:

Systemic teaching that produces a clear understanding of expectations is developed in a collaborative and respectful culture.

7.2 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.

7.3 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 student's age, maturity, and individual circumstances and is a strategy that can be used to address bullying within a school.

Guidelines

1. Ensure that the CCSSA *Living Inclusion Faithfully for Everyone* (LIFE) Framework document is utilized as a resource to continue creating, maintaining and promoting a Christ-centered, welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity, equity and human rights and fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging.
2. 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 No. 362 Student Conduct*.
3. All schools and classrooms must enact procedures that support the following expectations with respect to bullying or harassment.
 - 3.1 No action toward another student, regardless of the intent of that action will cause harm, fear, or distress to that student.
 - 3.2 No action toward another student within the school community will diminish the student's reputation within the school community.
 - 3.3 Any action that contributes to a perception of bullying, whether or not the behaviour occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic or other means, will be addressed by the school if it is determined that the actions impact the well-being of the alleged victim within the school community.

- 3.4 Any action that humiliates or contributes to diminishing the reputation of a student on the basis of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation of that person or class of persons is deemed to be an act of bullying or harassment.
- 3.5 No report by a student that he/ or she is being “bullied” will be ignored by a school official. The official will respond as if an incident has happened and report the incident to a teacher or principal.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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 school official.
- 3.9 Each individual and each situation will be resolved based on the specific circumstances of the situation and taking into account the student’s age, maturity, and individual circumstances.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 A principal may use a Restorative Discipline or Positive Behavioural Support model to address matters of discipline.
- 3.13 Incidences 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 the application of sections 33(2) and 33(3) of the Education Act.

Procedures

1. Procedures used by schools to address bullying will be placed within school handbooks, reviewed with school councils, and evaluated for effectiveness annually.
2. Schools must rely on Division support if existing resources or strategies are insufficient in addressing bullying within the school community.
3. Students will be provided with support that meet individual needs.
4. In maintaining a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and Catholic environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging for all students and staff, each incident will be considered on its individual circumstances using a comprehensive and holistic approach to inclusion and meeting all students' needs.
5. Discipline is seen as the change from unacceptable conduct to acceptable behaviour through the use of reasonable and just consequences. In any disciplinary situation, each student will be dealt with on an individual basis.
6. Parent/legal guardian involvement may be necessary to support school discipline procedures. In responsibility as indicated in the Education Act:
 - 6.1 To take an active role in the student's educational success, including complying with the Student Code of Conduct (*Administrative Procedure No. 362 Student Conduct*);
 - 6.2 To ensure that the parent's/legal guardian's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging for all students and staff;
 - 6.3 To co-operate and collaborate with school staff to support the delivery of specialized supports and services to students;
 - 6.4 To encourage, foster and advance collaborative, positive and respectful relationships with teachers, principals, other school staff and professionals providing supports and services in schools;
 - 6.5 To engage in the student's community.
7. The school will outline expectations, consequences, and the progression of actions to be taken depending on the severity and/or frequency of the occurrences and must take into account the student's age, maturity and individual circumstances and must ensure that support is provided for students who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour, as well as for students who engage in inappropriate behaviour. At all times, teachers and administrators will use their professional judgment in applying consequences.

Support for Student Organizations

Procedures

1. The Principal shall:

1.1 Ensure that the CCSSA *Living Inclusion Faithfully for Everyone* (LIFE) Framework document is utilized as a resource to continue creating, maintaining and promoting a Christ-centered, welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity, equity and human rights and fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging.

2. Principals will support the establishment of student organizations or activities in accordance with Section 35.1 of the Education Act:

2.1 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 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. For the purposes of subsection 2.1, an organization or activity includes an organization or activity that promotes equity 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.

4. 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. The principal shall immediately inform the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to section (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.

6. If a staff member indicates to the principal a willingness to act as a staff liaison under subsection (1),

- (a) a principal shall not inform a board or the Minister under subsection (5) that no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison, and
- (b) that staff member shall be deemed to be available to serve as the staff liaison.

Staff shall:

5. Overnight Trips and/or Field Trips;

Ensure that in planning for field trips or school outings the needs of students who have diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions are taken into consideration. It is important to make decisions regarding washroom and change room access prior to embarking on any field trips or school outings, in consultation with the student(s). Gender and sexual minority students may feel comfortable using public washrooms that align with their gender identity. Some students, however, may not feel comfortable with this option. Best efforts should be made to research the availability of gender or private washrooms at field trip or out of school destinations.

When planning activities that involve the need for overnight or housing accommodations, staff shall ensure these issues are addressed on a case-by-case basis. There is no “one way” in which students are accommodated. Many factors are carefully considered including the needs and wishes of the student and their parents/guardians (where the student has consented), the facilities where students will be sleeping, the beds in which students would be sleeping, the supervision provided, etc.

School staff will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations that are inclusive, respectful and acceptable to the student and that do not impose any additional expense or burden for the student and or their family. The privacy and confidentiality of the student will be maintained at all times.

6. Extra-Curricular and Physical Education Activities

Ensure that students who choose to or are required to participate in physical education or extracurricular activities, including competitive and recreational athletic teams, can do so in ways that are comfortable for them and supportive of their diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. In circumstances where activities are organized by gender, students who are transgender and gender-diverse have the support they need to participate safely in accordance with their gender identity and/or gender expression. Students also have full access to recreational or competitive athletic activities in accordance with their self-declared gender identity. This is fully supported by the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association in their 2018-2019 Policy Handbook <https://www.asaa.ca/news/2018-2019-asaa-policy-handbook-available-now>,

7. Student Records – maintain student records in a way that respects student's privacy and confidentiality and is in compliance with Alberta's privacy legislation and the *Student Record Regulation*.

7.1 Students will be informed of any limitations regarding their chosen name and gender identity or gender expression in relation to official school records that require legal name and designation;

- 7.2 School staff may use a student's chosen (i.e., preferred) name and pronouns on report cards or individualized learning plans or other school issued documents, provided the student has requested this.
- 7.3 Students should be advised that a legal name change is required if they desire their official Alberta Education documents to reflect their new name.

References:

- Stutzman, Lorraine, Mullet, Judy H. (2005). *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools*.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- Alberta Catholic School Trustees 'Association (ND). *Safe and caring learning environments for students: A policy exemplar*. Alberta, Canada
- Pastoral Guideline for the LIFE Framework
- Alberta Bill of Rights, s.1 (g)
- Education Act, Sections 8, 31, 33, 35, 35.1, 36, 37, 41, 51, 52, 53, 222

Revisions:
April 2013, March 2016, May 2018, September 2019