

## **WELCOMING, CARING, RESPECTFUL AND SAFE LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS**

### **Background**

The Board of Trustees is committed to ensuring that each student enrolled in a school operated by the Board and each staff member employed by the Board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging free of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying and violence. As provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*; *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*; *Education Act*; and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, regulations and code, students, staff and all individuals within the Division have the right to learn and work in settings that promote equality of opportunity, dignity and respect regardless of race, age, ancestry, place of origin, colour, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, marital status, family status, socio-economic status and sexual orientation.

The Board values all members of EIPS' educational community where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The Board values and respects diversity and strives to treat others with kindness, caring and tolerance by appreciating and accepting all those it encounters in the school community. To this end, the Board supports the creation of voluntary student organizations that promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. Further, the Board recognizes its responsibilities around the disclosure of personal information by the school authority as governed by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Personal Information Protection Act*.

The Board affirms the rights of each student enrolled in a school operated by the Board and each staff member employed by the Board. The Board is committed to protecting students, staff and all individuals in the Division from discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation and violence during the Division's work and school-related activities. The Board acknowledges its responsibility to support and assist any employee, volunteer, person providing goods and services, or student who is subjected to harassment or violence within its schools or workplaces. All those involved within the Division, including trustees, employees, students, parents and guardians, volunteers, contractors and visitors must be instrumental in creating a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe working and learning environment.

To this end, the Board will not tolerate harassment, discrimination, bullying, intimidation and violence, and encourages reporting of all incidents of this nature, regardless of the identity of the alleged harasser or offender. In addition, the Board requires the reporting of allegations of harassment, discrimination, bullying, intimidation or violence to be investigated in a timely and respectful manner.

## **Definitions**

### **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.

### **Culpable and non-culpable behaviours:**

*Culpable behaviours* – those in which the person is in control, and responsible and blameworthy for their actions.

*Non-culpable behaviours* – those in which the person is not in control, responsible or blameworthy for their behaviours, such as the case in some situations involving students with special needs.

### **Discrimination:**

treating a person negatively or disrespectfully, or refusing, without lawful excuse, to provide an opportunity or benefit with respect to access to learning or access to any term or condition of employment because of any of the protected categories in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. The behaviour giving rise to a complaint of discrimination need not be intentional to be considered discrimination. With respect to student placement decisions, the above does not apply to a refusal, limitation, specification or preference based on a bona fide educational requirement. With respect to employment, the above does not apply to a refusal, limitation, specification or preference based on a bona fide occupational requirement.

### **Harassment:**

unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, including discrimination. Usually, it must be repeated to constitute harassment, but single acts can be harassing if they are severe or involve an obvious power imbalance. Harassment is insulting, demeaning or intimidating. The behaviour giving rise to a complaint need not be intentional to be considered harassment—it is sufficient that the offender knows, or ought reasonably to know, that the behaviour is offensive and unwelcome.

### **Harassment and Violence Prevention Plan:**

a written plan that includes policy and procedures for harassment and violence prevention that involve the Division health and safety committee and site occupational health and safety representatives in the development and review.

### **Intimidation:**

intentional behaviour that would cause a person of ordinary sensibilities to fear injury or harm.

### **Sexual harassment:**

any unwelcome behaviour that is sexual in nature.

**Violence:**

the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes, or is likely to cause, physical and psychological harm, including culpable and non-culpable violent behaviours.

**Guidelines**

**1. Policy application**

- 1.1. Application of this policy includes, but is not limited to, trustees, employees, students, parents and guardians, volunteers, visitors and contractors. The policy covers behaviour not only at Division schools and offices, but also at any Board or school-related function, including field trips, conferences, training sessions, work done off-site and social functions. This applies to any form or means of communication.

**2. Ensuring whole-Division policy adoption**

- 2.1. To ensure application of this policy, the Board directed administration to create an applicable:
  - 2.1.1. administrative procedure, as specified in the *Education Act*, specific to student organizations and activities intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment—in accordance with Section 35.1 of the *Education Act*;
  - 2.1.2. administrative procedure for employees, as specified by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, that addresses harassment and violence prevention plans;
  - 2.1.3. administrative procedure specific to adults; and
  - 2.1.4. administrative procedure dealing with the student code of conduct that addresses:
    - 2.1.4.1. resolving issues peacefully;
    - 2.1.4.2. developing empathy; and
    - 2.1.4.3. contributing to welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that foster diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self.

**References**

Section 11, 31, 33, 35, 35.1, 36, 37, 58, 196, 197, 213, 257 *Education Act*

Last reviewed:	Last updated:
March 17, 2016	March 17, 2016
Dec. 12, 2016	
Feb. 12, 2018	April 19, 2018

Aug. 30, 2018	Aug. 30, 2018
April 18, 2019	
Dec. 19, 2019	Dec. 19, 2019
April 14, 2020	June 18, 2020
April 13, 2021	
April 12, 2022	May 25, 2022
April 11, 2023	