

502.1 Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments

Policy

The Board is committed to providing a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. Every school community member within the Division has the right to learn and work in schools that promote equality of opportunity, dignity, and respect.

The Board affirms the rights, as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, of each student enrolled in a school operated by the Board. Students enrolled in the school operated by the Board will not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The Board is further committed to protect all students from harassment, discrimination, and violence during the Division's school-related activities. All those involved with the Division including trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, contractors, and visitors must share in the responsibility for eliminating bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence. The Board does not condone bullying, harassment, discriminatory, or violent behaviours, and expects allegations of such behaviours to be investigated in a timely and respectful manner.

Regulations

1. The Board acknowledges its responsibility to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments for all students. It recognizes the importance of students' emotional, social, intellectual and physical wellness to their success in school and expects students to adhere to the Division Student Code of Conduct (see Appendix A) and schools' codes of conduct.
2. The Board expects all trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, visitors, and contractors to embrace and support this policy. This policy covers behaviour not only at Division schools, but also at any school-related activities, or while engaging in other non-school activities that have a direct influence on maintaining a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment in the school. This applies whether contact is face-to-face, by phone, fax, e-mail, internet or intranet, or by any other means of communication.

This policy also covers threatening, harassing, intimidating, assaulting or bullying, in any way, any person within the school community including aggressive behaviours such as “cyber” hate messaging and websites created in the student’s home, in cyber cafes or other settings.

3. The Board expects reporting to a responsible adult all incidents of threats, bullying, harassment, violence or intimidation regardless of the identity of the alleged harasser or offender.
4. The Board expects that Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol Response and/or Section 27 of the School Act will be activated when warranted.
5. The Student Code of Conduct outlines behavioural expectations and consequences of unacceptable behaviour. See Appendix A – Student Code of Conduct.
6. The procedures will be regularly reviewed to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environments.
 - 6.1. Student Safety:
Each school shall implement procedures designed to provide a safe environment for students while at school or participating in school sponsored activities. See Procedure 502.1.1.
 - 6.2. Supervision:
The principal shall ensure that students are properly supervised while attending school and/or at school sponsored/authorized activities. See Procedure 502.1.2.
 - 6.3. Conduct on Authorized Transit:
Students shall comply with Division and school expectations for student conduct while on school authorized transit. See Procedure 502.1.3.
 - 6.4. Use of Physical Restraint:
Seclusion and physical restraint, should be used only in exceptional circumstances as a safety or crisis management procedure to manage behaviour that is likely to cause injury or harm to self or others.
Lethbridge School Division does not allow seclusion rooms in schools, but recognizes that a student engaging in crisis-level behaviour may need to be physically prevented from leaving a room when the behaviour poses an immediate threat to self or others. See Procedure 502.1.4.
 - 6.5. Use of Time-out:
The well-being, safety and dignity of students should be preserved at all times. Before the use of time-out as a behavioural management strategy, staff should employ every possible positive and pro-active means of engaging the student in learning and in appropriately interacting with others. See Procedure 502.1.5.

- 6.6. Searches:
From time to time in order to discharge the duty of maintaining a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment, it is necessary to conduct student searches. Procedure 502.1.6 outlines the process to use when conducting student searches.
- 6.7. Vandalism of School Property:
Individuals or groups causing damage to Division property shall be held responsible for the payment of costs related to repair or replacement of the property. See Procedure 502.1.7.
- 6.8. Possession and/or Misuse of Controlled Substances:
The following are prohibited on school property and at authorized student activities:
- possession and/or use of alcohol;
 - possession and/or use of illicit drugs;
 - possession and/or use of non-prescription cannabis;
 - use of tobacco and/or electronic smoking products;
 - inappropriate use of prescription and non-prescription medication; and
 - persons under the influence of alcohol, non-prescribed cannabis, or illegal drugs. See Procedure 502.1.8.
- 6.9. Weapons:
All persons, with the exception of police officers, are prohibited from bringing weapons, or having weapons in their possession at the following: schools, school grounds, school busses, and school-sponsored activities. See Procedure 502.1.9.
- 6.10. Threat-making and Worrisome Behaviour:
The principal of each school shall ensure that threat-making and/or worrisome behaviour are addressed with the VTRA Protocol when warranted. See VTRA Protocol.
- 6.10 Student Discipline:
The principal of each school shall ensure that a Student Code of Conduct is developed or reviewed annually and communicated to students and parents. See Procedure 502.1.10.

The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to develop the procedures necessary to implement this policy.

References

Alberta School Act: Sections 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 24, 27, 51, 57(1), 60

Division Policies: 500.1 Rights and Responsibilities; 501.1 Attendance at School; 502.1 Appendix A-Student Code of Conduct; 502.1 Procedures; 502.3 Suspensions and Expulsions; 504.8 Involvement with Authorized Agencies; 400.3 Whistleblower Protection; 607.1 Fieldtrips, off-campus activities and Student Travel; 607.4 Responsible Use of Technology;

700.6 Emergency Response Planning; 802.2 Student Fees, Fines and Charges; 1003.1 Channels of Communication and Disputes Resolution; 1005.6 School Generated Funds

Other: Alberta Human Rights Act, Section 4; Criminal Code of Canada, Section 43; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; Narcotics Control Act; Young Offenders Act; Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools. Southwest Regional Collaborative Service Delivery VTRA Protocol