

## SD 42 POLICY: 9410

### SAFE, CARING, AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS

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#### 1. PHILOSOPHY

The Board of Education ("Board") recognizes that each member of the school and community must share the responsibility for supporting all students in addressing and facing challenges, and that the School District ("District") is responsible for providing an educational system that is safe, welcoming, inclusive, and affirming for all students, families, and staff.

The Board recognizes and values the diversity found within its school communities and believes that each individual contributes to the strength of the District's culture.

The Board recognizes that students identifying as Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, plus ("2SLGBTQI+") face a unique set of challenges within our schools and communities including being targets for discriminatory behaviours.

Through ongoing educational initiatives and opportunities for all students and employees, the District is committed to raising awareness and improving the understanding of the lives of people who are identified above as well as all persons who experience challenges within our schools as a result of their race, religion, or other personal characteristics.

This policy is meant to be congruent with the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, BC Human Rights Code, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom.

The Board is committed to providing safe, caring and socially responsible school environments in which all learners can achieve academic excellence, personal growth and responsible citizenship.

Safe, caring and socially responsible school environments are free of acts of:

- (a) Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, threat and intimidation.
- (b) Violence of any form.
- (c) Verbal, physical or sexual abuse.
- (d) Discrimination in any form.
- (e) Theft.
- (f) Vandalism.

Safe, caring and socially responsible school environments do not tolerate the presence of:

- (a) Intoxicating or banned substances.
- (b) Weapons (or replica weapons) and explosives.
- (c) Intruders or trespassers.

## **2. DISTRICT-WIDE CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Board promotes a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination to ensure that all members of our school community are equally welcomed and are included in all aspects of their educational and school life.

The Board promotes clearly defined behavioural expectations representing the highest standards of respectful and responsible citizenship leading to a culture of acceptance and tolerance among all persons in all schools and at all school-authorized events and activities.

To this end, the Board expects persons will:

- (a) Comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws, and with District policy and procedures.
- (b) Value and encourage learning and working environments that are inclusive and respectful of the diverse social and cultural needs of our community.
- (c) Treat one another with dignity and respect.
- (d) Refrain from engaging in, or encouraging any acts of bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence of any form.
- (e) Show care and regard for school property and the property of others.
- (f) Take appropriate measures to help those in need.
- (g) Respect those in positions of authority.

## **3. SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT**

- (a) Each school shall establish a School Code of Conduct including statements of expectations regarding behavior. These Codes of Conduct shall be displayed in a prominent area in the school visible to visitors and ambassadors of the school (e.g., coaches, volunteers).
- (b) School Codes of Conduct shall be consistent with the *School Act* and relevant District policy and procedures.
- (c) Behavioural expectations and Codes of Conduct shall be communicated and distributed to employees of the Board at the school, students, and parents/guardians in written form at the beginning of each school year.
- (d) Any language (oral or written) or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes or incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination or harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity will not be tolerated. Schools will be expected to specifically include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in their student Codes of Conduct.
- (e) School Codes of Conduct shall be reviewed annually to assess the effectiveness and relevance in addressing current school safety issues with staff, parents, and students.
- (f) Disciplinary actions arising as a result of persons not adhering to the School Code of Conduct shall be based on District policy and procedure.
- (g) Each school shall adopt a dress code that attempts to balance individual liberty, social convention, functionality, and school community values.
- (h) Schools should include in their Codes of Conduct, specific reference to discrimination on the basis of the following (but not limited to): appearance, capacity, disability, colour, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

This policy expects all members of the school community to model respectful and inclusive conduct and refuses to tolerate any form of discrimination.

The following guidelines will assist the District with the implementation of this policy:

- (a) The District should provide opportunities for school communities to increase awareness of the scope and impact of discrimination against 2SLGBTQI+ and to create an inclusive environment.
- (b) Schools are expected to ensure that students and staff are educated in and free to discuss the areas of understanding diversity, harassment, discrimination, anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia, and anti-heterosexism in ways that are relevant to the curriculum and age appropriate.
- (c) The schools should provide support or direct people to appropriate community support for any student or employee in their school communities.
- (d) The Board in the regular course of reviewing policy ensures language is representative of the diversity in our community.
- (e) The Board shall promote opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and skills in promoting respect for human rights, supporting diversity, and addressing discrimination in schools.
- (f) In the interest of safe and supportive environments, the Board is committed to ensuring that the confidentiality of the sexual orientation and gender identity of students and employees will be protected.

#### **5. SAFETY AND SECURITY**

- (a) The Threat Risk Assessment ("TRA") shall be followed when anyone displays threat-making behaviour.
- (b) With the exception of peace officers, no person shall possess or use any weapon on any school premises or at any activity off school premises that is organized or sponsored by a school.
- (c) No person shall possess or use any replica or toy weapon on any school premises or at any activity off school premises that is organized or sponsored by a school, except as a prop in a theatrical production. If the replica or toy weapon is used in a school theatrical production, it shall be stored appropriately when not required for the production.
- (d) Students shall not attend school, or any school organized or sponsored event, while under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating or controlled substance.
- (e) No person shall buy, sell, distribute, or possess any intoxicating or controlled substances on or off school premises at any event that is organized or sponsored by a school.
- (f) Anyone violating this policy shall be subject to discipline in accordance with relevant District procedures and a school Code of Conduct established pursuant to this policy.
- (g) For purposes of enforcing school rules, Principals and Vice-Principals may conduct searches of students, lockers, and any other property found on school premises in accordance with the procedures set out in relevant district regulations.
- (h) The procedures set out in relevant District regulations shall apply with respect to the presence of intruders or trespassers on school property.

## 6. GLOSSARY

**Ally:** An individual who is supportive of the 2SLGBTQI+ community. They believe in the dignity and respect of all people and are willing to stand up in that role.

**Banned Substance:** Any pharmacological substance with no current approval by any governmental regulatory health authority for human therapeutic use.

**Bisexual:** Generally used to describe people who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one sex or gender.

**Bully:** One habitually cruel to others who are weaker; to treat abusively; to affect by means of force or coercion.

**Bullying:** Differs greatly from conflict as a confirmed incident of bullying will contain one or more of these specific elements: an imbalance of power, intention to harm, feelings of distress on the part of the victim, and repeated incidents over a certain period.

**Conflicts:** Generally, a disagreement or a difference of opinion between peers who typically have equal or close to equal power within their relationships.

**Cyberbullying:** The electronic posting of mean-spirited messages about a person (as a student) often done anonymously.

**Discrimination:** The act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually; prejudiced or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment.

**Gay:** A man who is romantically and sexually attracted to other men. It is sometimes used to refer to the general 2SLGBTQI+ community, but most often refers to gay men.

**Gender Identity:** A person's gender identity is the way in which they define and act on their gender. Gender Expression is how they express their gender.

**Genderism:** Refers to the assumption that one's gender identity or gender expression will conform to traditionally held stereotypes associated with one's biological sex.

**Harassment:** To annoy persistently; to create an unpleasant or hostile situation for especially by uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct.

**Heterosexism and Homophobia:** The term heterosexism refers to the assumption that all people are heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior and more desirable than homosexuality. "Homophobia" is defined as "the irrational fear and hatred of homosexuals." Both of these are perpetuated by negative stereotypes and are dangerous to individuals and communities.

**Heterosexual:** Created around the same time as "homosexual" to describe individuals who are sexually attracted to the opposite sex/gender.

**Homosexual:** A scientific term invented in the 1800's to refer to individuals who are sexually attracted to their own sex/gender.

**Inclusive:** Broad in orientation or scope; all-embracing; complete; global; universal.

**Intersex:** An intersex individual may have biological characteristics of both the male and the female sexes.

**Intimidation:** To make timid or fearful; to compel or deter by or as if by threats.

**Intoxicating:** To stupefy or excite by the action of a chemical substance such as alcohol; to stimulate or excite; to poison.

**Intruding:** To thrust or force in or upon someone or something especially without permission, welcome, or fitness; to cause to enter as if by force.

**Lesbian:** A woman who is romantically and sexually attracted to other women. This term originates with the female poet Sappho who lived in a community comprised predominantly of women on the Isle of Lesbos in ancient Greece.

**Liberty:** The quality or state of being free; the power to do as one pleases; freedom from physical restraint; freedom from arbitrary or despotic control; the positive enjoyment of various social, political, or economic rights and privileges.

**Queer:** The term queer has a history of being used as a derogatory name for members of the 2SLGBTQI+ (and Ally) community and those whose sexual orientation is perceived as such. Many people use this word in a positive way to refer to the community; they have reclaimed the term as their own. Not everyone believes this, and sensitivity should be used when using or hearing it as there are still many negative connotations with this term and its use by anyone other than someone who is proud to identify as queer.

**Questioning:** People who are in the process of questioning their sexual orientation are often in need of support and understanding during this stage of their identity. They are seeking information and guidance in their self-discovery.

**Sex & Gender:** It is easy to confuse these two concepts and terms; however, they are different. Sex refers to the biological sex of a person. Gender refers to their social appearance, mannerisms, and roles.

**Sexual Orientation:** A personal characteristic that covers the range of human sexuality from gay and lesbian to bisexual, transgender and heterosexual orientations.

**Social Convention:** Accepted conduct; in a way in which something is usually done; behaviour that is considered acceptable or polite to most members of a society.

**Straight:** A slang word used to refer to the heterosexual members of our community.

**Threat:** an expression of intention to inflict injury or damage.

**Threat Risk Assessment ("TRA"):** Threat assessment is applicable if students or staff members are threatened. The role of the Administrator is to gather preliminary information in consultation with the school-based threat assessment team to determine if a more comprehensive assessment is warranted. Any District employee having knowledge of threat making behavior (either toward staff or students) will promptly report the information to the Principal or designate who will respond accordingly. School-Based Threat Assessment Procedures will be followed.

**Transgender:** A person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transphobia:** Is the irrational fear and/or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against people who are transgender or who otherwise transgress traditional gender norms.

**Trespasser:** An unlawful act committed on the person, property, or rights of another.

**Two-Spirit:** A term used within some Indigenous communities encompassing sexual, gender, cultural, and spiritual identities.

**Vandalism:** Willful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property.

**Violence:** An exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse; injury by or as if by distortion, infringement, or profanation; intense, turbulent, or furious and often destructive action or force.

**Weapons:** Any item used to injure, defeat, or destroy; a means of contending against another.

*With appreciation to:*

- 1. The Saanich Teachers' Association for providing these definitions based upon research done by various agencies and universities; and*
- 2. Dictionary and Thesaurus - Merriam-Webster Online.*

**APPROVED: February 27, 2013**

**NON-SUBSTANTIVE UPDATES: September 2024**