

POLICY 4.10 RESPECTFUL WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

The Board of Education recognizes a fair, collaborative, inclusive and respectful workplace is a critical prerequisite to the Board's commitment to delivering high quality public education and cultivating a reputation of excellence. The Board is committed to creating and maintaining a respectful learning and working environment free from harassment and bullying, where people respect one another regardless of their roles or levels of responsibilities and are treated and treat each other respectfully and professionally in their interactions.

Everyone has a responsibility to create and sustain a respectful workplace.

1. The Board is responsible for:
 - 1.1. Supporting an environment respectful of human rights and free from bullying and harassment; and
 - 1.2. Understanding and communicating with members of the community about the Workers' Compensation Act.
 - 1.3. Ensuring that the policy is periodically reviewed and updated.
2. The Superintendent is responsible for:
 - 2.1. Implementing the Workers' Compensation Act and ensuring that the provisions of this policy are communicated to all stakeholders such that:
 - 2.1.1. A consistent understanding and expectation is developed regarding respectful and appropriate behaviour in dealing with others, including the ability to speak or act without offending;
 - 2.1.2. If bullying or harassment occurs, the process to resolve it is understood and utilized to resolve the problem in a timely and effective manner.
 - 2.2. Ensuring appropriate training is provided to all employees on the *Workers' Compensation Act*.
 - 2.3. Determining if the complaint is best handled under this policy, or if it is a matter better dealt with through other Board Collective agreement processes such as, but not limited to, performance management, professional misconduct and progressive discipline or harassment complaints under the teacher collective agreement.
 - 2.4. Conduction/assisting in investigations and the administration of corrective disciplinary action as appropriate.
 - 2.5. Reviewing and recommending updates to the policy on an annual basis.

Legislative References: Canadian Human Rights Act; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; 1 British Columbia Human Rights Code

Collective Agreement References: Nil

Date of Adoption: October 16, 2013

Date of Revision: October 19, 2016; May 14, 2025

3. Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:
 - 3.1. Communicating and reviewing this policy and related procedure with the staff they supervise or manage;
 - 3.2. Formulating, communicating and enforcing work requirements and behavioral expectations;
 - 3.3. Conducting or arranging for investigations into complaints under the *Workers' Compensation Act*;
 - 3.4. Mediating or arranging for mediation for resolution of complaints as appropriate, and;
 - 3.5. Administering corrective disciplinary action.
4. All employees are responsible for:
 - 4.1. Being aware of, and sensitive to issues of bullying and harassment, and taking proactive steps to encourage respectful, courteous behaviour with staff and students;
 - 4.2. Demonstrating professional and positive behavior consistent with individuals who are responsible for the safety, learning and well-being of staff and students;
 - 4.3. Conducting themselves in a professional manner that meets the accepted standards of practice and the spirit and intent of this policy, including in the use of electronic communication;
 - 4.4. Accessing the complaint procedure if they observe or experience bullying or harassment in the working or learning environment; and
 - 4.5. Co-operating in the investigating of complaints, and working to achieve resolution at the earliest possible stage.
5. Definitions:

The following definitions shall apply:

 - 5.1. **Bullying and Harassment** - WorkSafeBC's OHS policies use the phrase "bullying and harassment" as a single term, which:
 - 5.1.1. Includes any inappropriate, frivolous or vexatious conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated, or offended or intimidated. It may include discriminatory harassment, personal harassment (both verbal and visual), and retaliation.
 - 5.1.2. It excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment. Managers and supervisors need to ensure performance problems are

identified and addressed in a constructive, objective way that does not humiliate and intimidate.

- 5.1.3. Examples of bullying and harassment may include, but are not limited to: verbal aggression or insults, vandalizing personal belongings, sabotaging someone's work, physical or verbal threats, aggressive or threatening gestures, and spreading malicious gossip or rumours.
- 5.2. **Mediation** – Involves an unbiased third party acting as facilitator in direct communication between the parties who voluntarily agree to this process. It is an opportunity to resolve disputes in a mutually respectful manner at the Early/Site based resolution phase of a complaint.
- 5.3. **Confidentiality** – Information about a complaint will be shared only with those who need to know in order to facilitate the investigation process. The respondent(s) will be provided with a copy of the complaint and both parties will be provided with a copy of the findings at the end of the investigation. All participants in the investigation process are to keep the information in the process confidential and not disclose it to anyone other than their union representatives.
- 5.4. **Standard of Proof** – The standard of proof to be applied is the balance of probabilities. This means that on the evidence provided, the occurrence of the event was more likely than not.
6. Application:
 - 6.1. This policy covers all individuals involved in the working or learning environment regardless of their role or function. This includes School District employees, students, parents, volunteers, third parties doing business with the School District and members of the general public who interface with the School District. It is the expectation of the School District that all employees and persons invited to or visiting Board property, will strive to maintain the highest level of professional and personal courtesy when interacting with board employees.
 - 6.2. For School District employees, this policy does not supersede any provision of an applicable Collective Agreement.
 - 6.3. Inappropriate behavior by an adult toward a student is not covered by this policy. The *School Act*, The Ministry of Education – Teacher Regulation Branch, Child, Family

- and Community Service Act and the District's Collective Agreements will define and govern the standard of behavior required by adults when dealing with students.
- 6.4. The policy is not intended to address issues where the cause of the conflict or behavior is based on a personal characteristic that is protected under the *BC Human Rights Code*, such as homophobic or racist views.
 - 6.5. This policy excludes the legitimate exercise of management rights and any reasonable action taken by the District or supervisor relating to the management and direction of employees or the place of employment including supervisory decision involving work direction, evaluation, investigations and disciplinary action.
 - 6.6. This policy excludes the reasonable exercise of parent and student rights in bringing forward concerns about the treatment of students by employees when done in a respectful manner.
 - 6.7. The policy does not cover interpersonal conflicts or interpersonal relations, unless they are threatening or abusive.
7. Expected Respectful Behaviour:
- 7.1. We respect and value the contributions of all members of our community, regardless of status or role in the organization;
 - 7.2. We treat one another with the respect, civility and courtesy;
 - 7.3. We work honestly, effectively and collegially with employees and others;
 - 7.4. We respond promptly, courteously, and appropriately to request from others for assistance or information;
 - 7.5. We use conflict management skills, together with respectful and courteous verbal communication, to effectively manage disagreements among employees;
 - 7.6. We encourage and support all employees in developing their individual conflict management skills and talents;
 - 7.7. We have an open and cooperative approach in dealings with employees, recognizing and embracing individual differences;
 - 7.8. We recognize that differing social and cultural standards may mean that behavior that is acceptable to some may be perceived as unacceptable or unreasonable to others;
 - 7.9. We abide by applicable rules, regulations, legislation, policies and collective agreement provisions, and address any dissatisfaction with, or violation of these policies and procedures through appropriate channels;
 - 7.10. We demonstrate commitment to a culture where all employees cooperate and collaborate in using best practices to achieve high work-related outcomes;
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Legislative References: Canadian Human Rights Act; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; 4 British Columbia Human Rights Code

Collective Agreement References: Nil

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7.11. If we are in leadership positions, we model civility for others and clearly define expectations for how employees treat each other, and are responsive to complaints when they are brought forward.

8. Annual Review:

8.1. This policy statement will be reviewed on an annual basis. All workers will be provided with a copy.