

Section:	District Administration
Title:	Safe, Caring, and Respectful Schools Policy

Purpose

To outline the vision and expectations for safe, caring, and respectful school environments for students, staff, families, elected officials / trustees, and others interacting with schools.

Policy

Mission Public Schools actively and continuously strive to provide safe, caring, equitable, anti-racist, inclusive, and respectful learning environments where students experience a sense of belonging. Elected trustees, management, employees, students, parents, volunteers, invited guests and community members have a shared responsibility in maintaining safe, personally secure, and respectful schools that are free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, violence, or vandalism.

The District recognizes and values the diversity of people within our school communities and values the contributions each person makes to the overall culture of our district. We expect all individuals interacting with the school community to demonstrate respect for others' rights, beliefs, ideas, and property.

Mission Public Schools understands:

- each member of the school and community has a shared responsibility for modelling appropriate behaviour;
- each member of the school and community has a shared responsibility to support all students in identifying and addressing personal difficulties and/or systemic or attitudinal barriers;
- each member of the school and community has a responsibility to recognize and provide culturally safe learning environments and instruction;
- students benefit when schools, families, and community collaborate to support student learning and well-being;
- a positive school climate and culture are essential to a safe, caring, and respectful school environment;
- preventative, responsive, and repairing measures are key to maintaining safe, caring, and respectful learning environments.

1. Conduct Expectations:

- 1.1. Every person who interacts with the school district is responsible for demonstrating respectful behaviour consistent with human rights and anti-discrimination legislation and policy on and off school property and online.
- 1.2. We do not condone or accept any form of bullying or harassing conduct, intimidation, threatening or violent behaviours, nor acts of discrimination due to a person's race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, political affiliation, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age, in accordance with the B.C. *Human Rights Code* and district policies (see cross-reference below).
- 1.3. Mission Public Schools expects all individuals:
 - 1.3.1. to show respect for self, others, and property;

- 1.3.2. to demonstrate respectful and responsible behaviour that leads to a culture of safety, equity, diversity, inclusion, and respect, in schools, online, and at all school-authorized events and activities, or other spaces that will have an impact on the school environment;
- 1.3.3. to show lateral kindness, care, respect, and concern for others, and take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- 1.3.4. to show care, respect, and concern for school property, and the property of others,
- 1.3.5. to learn and engage in culturally responsive, inclusive, and anti-racist training and practices.

2. Prevention, Response, and Repair:

- 2.1. Behaviour is a form of communication and often represents unmet needs or not yet developed skills.
- 2.2. All schools will engage in proactive, preventative measures to reduce the likelihood of behaviour that can harm individuals or the learning environment.
- 2.3. Responsive measures will be taken when behaviour disrupts the learning environment or is harmful to individuals.
 - 2.3.1. Where responsive measures are required, a variety of factors will be considered, including the age of student(s) involved, the severity and frequency of the incident(s), the intent, the impact, any possible disability considerations, cultural responsiveness, and context. Responsive measures are progressive in nature and must be age appropriate and reflect the intellectual and emotional development of the student.
 - 2.3.2. We maintain the opportunity to teach skills and help students practice safe, caring, and respectful behaviour when they are included in school. Wherever possible, we seek to keep students in school. Responses to misbehaviour begin with restorative practices and only result in suspension in extreme circumstances (including repeated offences). Behaviours that affect the safety of self or others may result in immediate suspension.
- 2.4. Repairing relationships after harm has occurred is an important step in restoring safety, belonging, and care in school communities. Restorative practices are an important element in repairing harm.

3. General Guidelines

- 3.1. Processes to address student behaviour that does not meet conduct expectations, and processes for investigating behaviour that is contrary to this policy, the *School Act*, and the *BC Human Rights Code*, are explained in administrative procedures and individual school conduct expectations (codes of conduct).
- 3.2. Administrative procedures, guidelines, and processes will be developed to:
 - 3.2.1. Support equity, diversity, and inclusion when developing safe, caring, and respectful schools.
 - 3.2.2. Include guidelines for addressing student behaviour that does not meet conduct expectations. Guidelines will refer to preventative, responsive, and repairing measures.
 - 3.2.3. Address instances where members of the public interacting with schools feel bullied, harassed, or discriminated against due to actions of students or employees representing Mission Public Schools in an official capacity.
 - 3.2.4. Address an identified poisoned school environment.
- 3.3. The process for investigating and addressing complaints will be done in a timely and confidential manner.
- 3.4. Students and school employees will review school Codes of Conduct and this policy annually, in an age-appropriate and culturally responsive manner.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. **Bullying, Harassment, Peer Conflict, and Mean Behaviour** - We often call any hurtful behaviour bullying or harassment but it is important to differentiate behaviours among students, as each behaviour calls for a different response.
- 4.1.1. **Bullying** can take many forms, including cyberbullying, physical bullying, and emotional bullying. It has three key features that must be present for the situation to be considered bullying.
- 4.1.1.1. Power imbalance
- 4.1.1.2. Intention to harm
- 4.1.1.3. Repeated over time
- 4.1.2. **Harassment** is defined by the Canadian Human Rights Commission as a form of discrimination. It includes any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends or humiliates you. Generally, harassment is a behaviour that persists over time. Serious one-time incidents can also sometimes be considered harassment.
- 4.1.3. **Peer Conflict** occurs within relationships, as people learn to navigate differences. People have times when they disagree and may become so frustrated they say mean things or act out physically. Usually peer conflict occurs among students that play or hang out together, have equal power, are equally upset, are both interested in the outcome and will be able to work things out with adult help (after calming down).
- 4.1.4. **Mean Behaviour** is not planned and seems to happen spontaneously. It may be aimed at any child nearby, and the child being mean may feel bad when an adult points out the harm they have caused.
- 4.2. **Intimidation** is any action intended to induce fear in another person.
- 4.3. **Discrimination** is an action or decision that treats a person or a group badly for reasons such as a person's race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, political affiliation, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age.
- 4.4. A **Poisoned School Environment** is where there is a focused pattern of bullying, harassment, cyberbullying, intimidation, lateral violence, or discriminating behaviour, including a broad systemic problem that is tolerated, participated in, or condoned, and where no action is taken to end the bullying, harassing, or discriminatory behaviour.
- 4.5. **Lateral Violence** is a result of the impact of colonialism, residential schools, and cultural genocide that continues to result in both intergenerational and contemporary trauma for many Indigenous people. Lateral violence occurs when we direct our feelings of dissatisfaction or anger toward one another – instead of recognizing that the true adversaries are colonialism, internalized racism, and oppression in other forms. Lateral violence, also referred to as lateral “unkindness”, is expressed in many ways, such as gossip, verbal and physical assaults, passive-aggressive behaviours, blaming, shaming, attempts to socially isolate others, demeaning activities, bullying, and threatening or intimidating behaviour (First Nations Health Authority, “From Lateral Violence to Lateral Kindness”).
- 4.6. **Lateral Kindness** is an approach to addressing lateral violence based on Indigenous values that promote social harmony and healthy relationships. Lateral kindness uses First Nations teachings about respect, fairness, and the importance of relationships to create an environment built on a foundation of kindness (First Nations Health Authority, “From Lateral Violence to Lateral Kindness”).

Date of Original Board Approval: Code of Conduct - February 2009 (Policy 19)
Respectful Schools – February 2016 (Policy 25)

Date Amended: June 20, 2023 (policy 3.0)

Legal Reference: *Workers Compensation Act – Section 115, OHS Regulation*
Human Rights Code (RSBC 1996), Chapter 210

Cross Reference: *District Administration - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy*
District Administration – SOGI Policy
School Administration - Safe, Caring, and Respectful Schools Procedure
School Administration - Student and School Codes of Conduct Procedure