

## Respectful Schools Harassment and Anti-Bullying

The Board of Education mandates the purpose of this policy is to ensure to all students, staff, volunteers, parents, contractors, elected officials and employees work and attend Mission Public Schools are provided with an educational or work environment which is free from any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying. It is also the Board's expectation that all parties will be treated with dignity and respect. The policy also underlines the seriousness of inappropriate behaviours in our schools or work sites. The Board strongly urges all parties to work toward the elimination of harassment or inappropriate behaviours. It is further declared the Board believes there is no acceptable level of inappropriate behavior or actions by any party.

In the context of this policy, the person filing a complaint shall be referred to as the complainant and the alleged harasser (sometimes referred to as bully) shall be referred to as the respondent.

This policy shall apply to all Mission Public School buildings, worksites, vehicles, and includes areas like cafeterias, sport fields, gyms, events, or any other school activity. This policy also covers harassment (at times referred to as bullying) that happens away from the school setting or workplace or by way of social or electronic media if it has a negative effect on school or work relationships.

The Board of Education believes violation of any prohibited grounds of discrimination will not be tolerated.

### Types of School Environment Harassment

#### 1. Harassment (at times referred to as bullying) within the Human Rights Code

- Race
- Place of origin
- Colour
- Ancestry
- Political belief – in employment only, employment ads. and membership in a union or occupational association
- Religion
- Age (if you're 19 and above)
- Sex (Including pregnancy and childbirth)
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status
- Family status
- Criminal or summary convictions – in employment only
- Physical disability (Including dependence on alcohol or drugs, HIV & Aids)
- Mental disability
- Retaliation (taking action against a person who complained to the Tribunal, was named in a complaint, was a witness, or helped someone with a complaint)

#### 2. Harassment (at times referred to as bullying) outside of the Human Rights Code

Harassment is any comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, which serves no legitimate school or work related purpose and which:

- Denies individual dignity and respect
- Detrimentally affects students or employees within the school environment
- Has adverse job related consequences

Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation.

### 3. Poisoned School/Work Environment

Where there is a focused pattern of behaviour or a broader systemic problem that exists and is tolerated, participated in, or condoned by those employees, students or others in the school district, and that created an environment that harasses or causes persons in the environment to be treated with disrespect or discrimination as prohibited by 1 and 2 above, and the administration participates and/or condones and/or takes no action to end the harassment it shall be acknowledged as a poisoned school/work environment.

While the following is not an exhaustive list, harassment (at times referred to as bullying) under all definitions may include:

- Verbal abuse or threats
- Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes or taunting about a person's body, attire, age, marital status, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation, mental characteristics, etc.
- Displaying pornographic, racist, or other offensive or derogatory pictures
- Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment
- Unwelcome invitations or requests, whether indirect or explicit or intimidation
- Leering or other gestures
- Unnecessary physical contacts such as touching, patting, pinching, punching
- Physical assault
- Abuse of authority
- Social media abuse or harassment

#### **Guidelines for Dealing with Harassment (at times referred to as bullying)**

- Keep a record (noting dates, times, locations, witnesses and number of incidences).
- Advise the respondent to stop or have someone else advise him or her verbally or in writing.
- To initiate a complaint or for information contact: your principal, district superintendent, union representative or school counselor.

These are only guidelines and should not prohibit complaints being made that have failed to follow any or all of the above.

#### **Complaint Procedure**

An investigation will take place immediately, commencing in all cases no later than ten days subsequent to a complaint. This may include interviews of the complainant, the respondent and any witnesses, with information being shared in confidence by administrator or an independent investigator assigned to the policy with persons deemed necessary. Interview time and location will recognize the need to maintain confidentiality.

##### 1. Procedure for Dealing with Complainant

- Listen to complaint
- Take the matter seriously
- Find out what the complainants expectation is (what do they want to have happen)
- Obtain permission to go forward (if appropriate)
- Explain what is going to happen next (depends on expectations)
- Contact administrator responsible for policy to initiate investigation

## 2. Procedure for Dealing with Respondent

- Administrator/councilor to talk to respondent
- Advise of the right of union representation for bargaining unit
- Advise of right to provide explanation and to be given proper consideration of those explanations
- Advise not to discuss the matter with anyone outside the complaint (this includes electronic or social media)
- Discuss the allegation(s)
- Listen to the respondent
- Talk about aspects of retaliation
- Determine a plan of action
- Inform both parties, their supervisors, parents and the administrator responsible for the policy.

## 3. Procedure for Dealing with Poisoned School Environment

- A complainant, administrator/manager, or a co-worker, or fellow student, or any combination thereof may initiate a complaint:
- Contact school principal, manager or administrator responsible for the policy, who will initiate an investigation
- There may be a requirement for involvement of higher levels of management or administration and the union to set up an action plan.

The administrator responsible for the policy or the district superintendent may identify a poisoned school/work environment through either a series of complaints or through ongoing monitoring in a school or workplace setting after an individual complaint has been resolved.

This policy in no way denies an individual the right to access legal counsel or in the case of criminal situations the aid of police and justice services.

(The policy should have a trained designated administrator or in case of perceived conflict an independent investigator to perform investigative and perform education duties to employees and students so all in the Mission School District understand the policy and impacts of harassment/bullying in schools and workplaces.)

**Date of Board Approval: June 2013**

**Date Amended: February 16, 2016**