



Section 3: Staff

“Together We Learn”

351 - RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

Introduction

The Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining a learning and working environment where people are treated and treat each other, professionally and respectfully in their interactions. When personal conflict occurs, processes are in place to allow the conflict to be effectively resolved.

In addition to this broad objective, this policy is intended to comply with WorkSafeBC's policies on workplace bullying and harassment.

Policy

1. The Board is committed to a learning and working environment that supports the following objectives:
 - 1.1 In dealing with other people, a consistent understanding is developed regarding the proper and appropriate behaviour, including the ability to speak or act without real or perceived offence.
 - 1.2 Interactions between people are fair, professional and respectful;
 - 1.3 In a work environment where students are present, employees should be role models for appropriate behaviour towards each other and students.
 - 1.4 Individuals involved in the learning and working environment do not engage in bullying and harassing behaviours;
 - 1.5 Conflict, when it occurs, is resolved in a timely and effective manner.
2. The Superintendent of Schools/CEO is responsible for ensuring that the provisions of this policy are communicated and understood.
3. All participants engaged in School District activities are to conduct themselves in a manner that is courteous, respectful of and responsive to the needs of others. They can expect to be free from objectionable or abusive behaviour that is contrary to this policy.
4. Individuals involved in the learning and working environment are responsible for their actions and are accountable for their consequences. Individuals are responsible for ensuring that their actions and communication with others (including electronic communication) adheres to the spirit and intent of this policy.



Section 3: Staff

“Together We Learn”

5. To assist in the achievement of these objectives, the Board may provide trained Mediators/Facilitators to provide assistance in the resolution of conflict when it occurs. The partner groups will be invited to provide individuals who are interested in this role, with the understanding that all groups will have the opportunity to be equally represented.

Application

1. This policy covers all adults involved in the learning or working environment regardless of their role or function. This includes Trustees, School District employees, parents, volunteers, third parties doing business with the School District and members of the general public who interface with the School District.
2. Employees who are members of bargaining units will continue to enjoy all of the rights and privileges of their respective Collective Agreements where they are not in conflict with WorkSafeBC policies and regulations.
3. Students are not covered under this policy. Standards for student behaviour are addressed in each school's Code of Conduct.
4. Inappropriate behaviour by an adult toward a student is not covered by this policy. The following will define and govern the standard of behaviour required by adults when dealing with students:
 - The School Act
 - The Ministry of Education Teacher Regulation Branch
 - The District's Collective Agreements
 - Board Policy and Regulations 450 – Discrimination Toward and By Students
 - Board Policy and Regulations 455 – Discipline
5. Where the cause of the conflict or behaviour is based on a personal characteristic that is protected under the BC Human Rights Code, Board Policy 350 – Human Rights provides an alternate mechanism to have the concern addressed.

Examples of Policy Breaches

In order to provide further guidance, the Board considers the examples listed below to be breaches of this policy:



Section 3: Staff

“Together We Learn”

1. Unprofessional or Disrespectful Comments or Actions

When people come together to perform an activity, there may be incidents when an individual behaves inappropriately. Some examples of behaviour in the learning or working environment that would be inappropriate include:

- an action by any person which humiliates, insults or degrades another person;
- verbal abuse in any form, such as swearing at or displaying unnecessary shows of temper or anger toward another person;
- physical abuse/intimidation.

These actions are often not intended to harm another person. They may have occurred in the “heat of the moment” or with a lack of forethought regarding their consequence. However, they still have a detrimental impact on an individual or group.

2. Workplace Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person toward another person that is known or ought reasonably be known to cause humiliation or intimidation. It usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour toward a person or a group of people, but can occur as an isolated incident. Some examples would include:

- spreading malicious gossip, rumours or innuendo;
- personal insults and name calling;
- excluding or isolating someone socially;
- intimidating a person;
- physically abusing or threatening someone;
- making aggressive or threatening gestures;
- undermining, sabotaging or deliberately impeding a person’s work;
- withholding necessary information or purposefully giving the wrong information;
- making jokes that a reasonable person would find offensive by spoken word, gestures, on paper, or through electronic communication;
- intruding on a person’s privacy by pestering, spying or stalking;
- criticizing another person persistently or constantly;
- tampering with a person’s personal belongings or work equipment;
- harmful hazing or initiation practices.

These actions can be overt and obvious or subtle, and would be considered by a “reasonable person” to be unacceptable.



Section 3: Staff

“Together We Learn”

3. Abuse of Authority

Individuals involved in District activities can be given responsibility and authority for the management of resources, including people, financial and/or material resources. People in these positions are held to a higher standard of performance and are expected to exercise their authority in a fair and consistent manner. Examples of abuse of authority include:

- any of the behaviours noted previously in this section;
- addressing individual work performance issues in a public setting where others may hear;
- setting impossible deadlines that will set up the individual to fail;
- unfairly assigning unpleasant or undesirable tasks to one person.

People in positions of authority have difficult tasks to perform including assigning work, setting performance expectations, providing feedback and taking corrective or disciplinary action when necessary. These activities can create tension, but the legitimate exercise of this authority is expected.

Reasonable actions taken by an employer or a person in a position of responsibility that are related to the management and direction of people or the workplace are specifically excluded from WorkSafeBC’s definition of bullying and harassment.

4. Cyber-Bullying

Electronic communication has created a new forum for bullying and harassing behaviour. Known as cyber-bullying, it can occur through email, text messaging, social networking, and websites. It can include sending derogatory or threatening messages to the target, or sharing personal and confidential messages or images. Many of the behaviours listed as breaches of this policy can occur through electronic means and are equally unwelcome.