

## **WELCOMING, CARING, RESPECTFUL AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

### **Background**

The District is committed to ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the District and each District employee is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

The *School Act* requires the District to establish, implement, and maintain a policy respecting the District's obligation under the *School Act* to provide a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment. The *School Act* also requires the District to reproduce the text of certain *School Act* sections in the policy. The District's policy is this Administrative Procedure together with the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA) LIFE Framework.

The *School Act* also requires the District to establish a student code of conduct that addresses bullying behaviour. The District's student code of conduct is Administrative Procedure 351.

### **Definitions**

For the purpose of this Administrative Procedure: "bullying" has the same meaning as under the *School Act*;  
"District" means Grande Prairie & District Catholic Schools and "parent" includes legal guardian.

### **Procedures**

#### **1. Catholic Communities of Caring**

- 1.1. Each school operated by the District must establish a Catholic Community of Caring that:
  - 1.1.1. focuses on building respectful and compassionate school environments rooted in Catholic values;
  - 1.1.2. is grounded in community involvement, ministry and service, student forums and conferences, parent and family involvement, integration of Catholic values, and an emphasis on building relationships;
  - 1.1.3. creates a climate that embraces the values of faith, caring, respect, responsibility, trust, and family; and
  - 1.1.4. is based on the principle that students learn and understand values in three ways:
    - 1.1.4.1. students need to "know the good" through ethical discussion;

1.1.4.2. students need to “see the good” through role modeling and “experience the good” by being a part of a caring community; and

1.1.4.3. students need to “do the good” through service learning opportunities and relationships with others.

## 2. District Responsibilities and Bullying

2.1. Each District employee must ensure that his or her conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

2.2. The District and each school operated by the District must provide support for students who are impacted by and who engage in bullying behaviour.

2.3. Each school operated by the District must:

2.3.1. observe Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week the third week in November each year; and

2.3.2. promote awareness and understanding of bullying and its consequences in the school community throughout the school year and especially during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week.

## 3. Support for student organizations

3.1. Each District employee must comply with all provisions under the School Act respecting support for student organizations, including in particular the following provisions under the *School Act*:

16.1(1) If one or more students attending a school operated by a board request a staff member employed by the board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall

(a) immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and

(b) subject to subsection (4) [of section 16.1 of the *School Act*], within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.

[...]

(3) The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name “gay-straight

alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”, after consulting with the principal.

(3.1) For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”.

(4) The principal shall immediately inform the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in subsection (1) [of section 16.1 of the *School Act*], and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.

[...]

(6) The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection (1) [of section 16.1 of the *School Act*] is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.

[...]

45.1(4)(c) [...] [T]he principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in [subsection (1) of section 16.1 of the *School Act*] [...] is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations and activities[.]

- 3.2. A principal who carries out functions under section 16.1 of the *School Act* must also follow the CCSSA [LIFE Framework](#) as amended from time to time.
- 3.3. The District may disclose personal information only if it is authorized to do so under legislation that governs such disclosure, which, depending on the circumstances, may include the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *School Act*, the *Children First Act*, and the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

4. Student code of conduct

- 4.1. The District must establish a District-wide student code of conduct that:
  - 4.1.1. contains a statement of purpose that provides a rationale for the code of conduct, with a focus on welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments;
  - 4.1.2. supports Catholic Communities of Caring;
  - 4.1.3. supports the District's Mission, Value, and Vision Statements;
  - 4.1.4. addresses bullying behaviour;
  - 4.1.5. contains one or more statements about what is acceptable behaviour and what is unacceptable behaviour, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day, or by electronic means;
  - 4.1.6. contains one or more statements about the consequences of unacceptable behaviour, which takes account of the student's age, maturity, and individual circumstances and ensures that the District provides support for students who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour and students who engage in inappropriate behaviour; and
  - 4.1.7. subject to the right and responsibility of the District to provide education programs to students through separate schools in such a way that the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of Canada of separate school electors are preserved and maintained, affirms the rights of each student and employee as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and states that students and employees will not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.
- 4.2. Each school operated by the District must:
  - 4.2.1. create a school-specific student code of conduct that supplements the District student code of conduct with statements about school-specific unacceptable behaviours; and
  - 4.2.2. reproduce both the District-wide student code of conduct and the school-specific student code of conduct in student handbooks, agendas, or similar items or documents that the school provides to students at the start of the school year.

5. Availability of Policy and Code of Conduct

5.1. The District must:

- 5.1.1. make this Administrative Procedure (the policy) and Administrative Procedure 330 (Student Code of Conduct) available throughout the year in a prominent location on the District's public website;
- 5.1.2. display the URL of this policy and the student code of student conduct on the District's public website in a place clearly visible to students in each school;
- 5.1.3. on request, provide a copy of this policy and the student code of conduct to an individual;
- 5.1.4. by June 30 of each year, review this policy and the Student Code of Conduct and post it and a Board of Trustees resolution that confirmed the review on the District's public website;
- 5.1.5. comply with any further requirements respecting a policy or student code of conduct established by the Alberta Minister of Education by order; and
- 5.1.6. make any order of the Alberta Minister of Education under subsection (8) of section 45.1 of the *School Act* available in a timely manner in a prominent location on the District's public website.

6. Rights and discrimination

- 6.1. Subject to the right and responsibility of the District to provide education programs to students through separate schools in such a way that the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of Canada of separate school electors are preserved and maintained, the District affirms the rights of each student and employee as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and will not discriminate against students and employees as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Approval Date: June 2018  
References: *School Act*, RSA 2000,