

## **SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS AND WORKSITES POLICY**

### **Background**

Battle River School Division affirms the rights of each student enrolled in a BRSD school and each staff member employed by the Division, as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Battle River School Division believes that everyone within our school community must be treated equally as it relates to their dignity, rights, and responsibilities and must not be discriminated against, as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

We are committed to ensuring every student and staff member has a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging across our school division without regard to their race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation.

Battle River School Division recognizes individual and harmful biases may exist within our schools. The board believes that such biases are intolerable. Harmful biases result in behaviours that damage the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students and negatively impact their educational, social, and career outcomes. Further, they damage relationships with peers, families and community partners.

The Board believes staff play a central role in creating environments which acknowledge and promote understanding, respect, and recognition of the diversity of students and families within the school community.

We are further committed to providing a safe learning and work environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence.

This policy covers behaviour not only at Division schools, but also at any school-related activities or where behaviour has a negative impact on the individual in a school environment. The Division expects students to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct Administrative Procedure 350 and Schools' Behaviour and Conduct policies outlined in school handbooks.

### **Recognition**

Battle River School Division recognizes that every student and staff member, including those with diverse sexual orientation, gender identities, and gender expressions, are unique individuals and have differing needs. The Division expects that all members of this diverse community will be welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported in every school.

## Guidelines

Battle River School Division believes:

1. A safe school learning environment for everyone is one that is physically, emotionally and psychologically safe, characterized by:
  - a. Respect for law and order;
  - b. Respect for democratic values, rights and responsibilities;
  - c. Respect for diversity;
  - d. Community, family, student and staff involvement;
  - e. Appropriate modelling by Board, administration, parents, staff and students; and
  - f. Clear, consistent expectations for behaviour that are communicated to students, staff and parents.
2. A caring school learning environment for everyone is one that is characterized by:
  - a. Ongoing respect for the dignity of the individual; and
  - b. A presence of demonstrated concern for the physical, social, emotional and psychological well-being of all students and staff.
3. Battle River School Division believes a welcoming, safe, caring and respectful learning environment promotes understanding, respect and tolerance for others and honours the common values and beliefs of Albertans.
4. School personnel and parents are viewed as partners in providing education for students. It is expected they will collaborate, communicate and cooperate on all matters that serve the best interests of all students.

## Procedures

1. Battle River School Division will ensure this policy and related Administrative Procedures are
  - a. Made publicly available;
  - b. Brought to the attention of staff, students and parents of the Division
  - c. Reviewed annually.
2. School administration will work with students, staff and parents to create and maintain a welcoming, safe, caring, respectful and inclusive environment for all, including:
  - a. Providing inclusive and respectful services and supports;
  - b. Ensuring that every school in our division is equipped with at least one private single-stall washroom available for all students and staff to use.
  - c. Ensuring that, if one or more students attending a school operated by the Board request a staff member employed by the Board 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:

- i. grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school;
  - ii. subject to sub-section iv, 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;
  - iii. 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. The principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or queer-straight alliance”.
  - iv. *The principal shall keep the Board and the Minister informed if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in sub-section ii. 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 ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.*
  - v. The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in section 35.1 of the *Education Act* is
    - limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity; and
    - otherwise consistent with the usual notification practices of the school’s other student organizations and activities;
    - in adherence with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
  - d. Ensuring that discriminatory behaviours and complaints are taken seriously, documented and dealt with in a timely manner;
  - e. Ensuring that students are provided with adequate supervision at all approved activities and making those involved in school related activities aware of expectations for conduct;
  - f. Preparing for and implementing the division’s Crisis Response or Violent Threat Risk Assessment Protocol when a critical incident occurs.
3. In developing welcoming, safe, caring and respectful school environments for everyone, programs should be put in place which:
- a. Provide students with a nurturing environment, opportunities for and recognition of success, and enhancement of self-esteem, self-discipline and a sense of responsibility;
  - b. Assist students to develop appropriate approaches to solving problems and resolving conflict.
  - c. Ensure discipline plans are in place for students who engage in inappropriate behaviour, which are appropriate for the age and maturity level of students and take into account their personal circumstances.
  - d. Ensure appropriate supports are in place for students who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour of others.

4. At the school level, the principal shall be responsible for resolving disputes in an equitable and inclusive manner regarding issues for all students and their participation in educational programs and co-curricular/extra-curricular activities. The Principal may seek assistance from BRSD professionals such as psychologists, family school liaison workers, teachers, counsellors and might also access input from community-based professionals if necessary.

**Legal Reference:** Alberta Human Rights Act, June 11, 2018, Section 35.1, 33.1, 31 Education Act

Amended: June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020