

SECTION 500 – Personnel and Employee Relations

POLICY 503: WELCOMING, CARING, RESPECTFUL AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

BACKGROUND

Staff, students, and school community members within the Division have the right to learn and work in schools that promote equality of opportunity, dignity, and respect.

POLICY

The Board of Trustees is committed to providing a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. Employees shall be respectful in all their interactions with other Division employees, students, parents, families, community members, and contractors. The Board of Trustees is further committed to protecting all employees from harassment, violence, bullying and discrimination on Division property and during the Division's school-related activities. All Division employees must share in the responsibility for eliminating violence, bullying, harassment, and discriminatory behaviours. The Board expects allegations of such behaviours to be investigated in a timely and respectful manner.

GUIDELINES

1. The Board of Trustees acknowledges its responsibility under Section 33(1)(d) of the Education Act to ensure a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging for all employees. The Board affirms the rights, as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, of each staff member employed by the Board. The Board will not discriminate against employees as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.
2. The Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of emotional, social, intellectual, and physical wellness for employees in order for them to successfully carry out their duties.
3. The Board expects all employees to adhere to:
 - Policy 532: Healthy Interactions
 - Policy 528: Discrimination, Harassment, Violence and Bullying

4. The Board of Trustees expects all Trustees and employees to embrace and support this policy. This policy covers behaviour not only at Division schools, but also at any school-related activities, or while engaging in other non-school activities that have a direct influence on maintaining a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment within Division facilities. This applies whether the behaviour occurs, in any way, within a Division facility during operational hours or by any means outside of operational hours.
5. In an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation for individual differences, all employees in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, specifically Sections 2 and 15, have the right to:
 - 5.1. be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect;
 - 5.2. have their confidentiality protected and respected;
 - 5.3. freedom of religion, conscience, expression and association;
 - 5.4. be fully included and represented in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner;
 - 5.5. have equitable access to supports, services and protections;
 - 5.6. have avenues of recourse, without fear of reprisal, available to them when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying and/or violence; and
 - 5.7. have their unique identities, families, cultures and communities included, valued and respected within all aspects of the school environment.
6. Any individual who believes, in good conscience, that their rights, as defined above, have been infringed upon has an obligation to engage one, or both, of Policies 532 or 528 as a means to address their concerns.
7. This policy is to be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

REFERENCES

Education Act

Alberta Human Rights Act

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

[Policy 532: Healthy Interactions](#)

[Policy 528: Discrimination, Harassment, Violence and Bullying](#)

Approved: December 14, 2021

