

Administrative Procedure 311

WELCOMING, CARING, RESPECTFUL, AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS (submitted for review by Alberta Education)

Background:

Administrative Procedure 311 is currently being reviewed by Alberta Education

The Division is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community are provided with welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments that respect diversity and foster a sense of belonging. All students and staff have a right to an environment free from discrimination, threats, and personal harassment including sexually harassing behaviours.

This includes ensuring we create safe, caring environments for all irrespective of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender expression, or gender identity. This responsibility is expressed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Alberta *Human Rights Act*, and the *School Act*. Additionally, Bill 10 directs school boards to have policies and practices in place to protect the rights of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) students, families, and staff.

Incidents of harassment, bullying, or discrimination related to actual or perceived diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions of any member of the school community are taken seriously. The Division is also committed to the investigation of these reported incidents in a timely manner and taking necessary action(s) or remedies as a result of an investigation.

Definitions:

Bullying:

is repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear, or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual's reputation.

Bullying can take different forms:

- physical – pushing, hitting;
- verbal – name calling, threats;
- social – exclusion, rumors; and
- cyber – using the computer or other technology to harass or threaten.

Conflict in Relationship:

occurs through episodic acts of breakdowns in relationship between students. Conflict is an inevitable component of students learning to grow within social relationships. Disagreement and misunderstanding between parties is at the heart of conflict. However, conflict does not constitute premeditated efforts to cause harm, fear, or distress. Parameters for addressing conflict between students may be dealt with through counselling and/or [Administrative Procedure 350, Student Conduct](#).

Personal Harassment:

is any unwelcome behaviour, conduct, or communication directed intentionally or unintentionally at an individual that is offensive to that individual and is based on the rights identified in the Alberta *Human Rights Act*, including, but not limited to, race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation. Personal harassing behaviour may include, but is not limited to, threats, intimidation, ostracism, offensive gestures, offensive remarks or jokes, demeaning or humiliating actions, or behaviour that supports a hostile or poisonous environment.

The test in determining if an action is harassing is whether a reasonable person knows or ought to know the behaviour would be considered unwelcome or inappropriate by the recipient. Such an action may be a single event or may involve a continuing series of incidents. It may involve the abuse of authority or position, or it may involve relations among co-workers and affiliated personnel. Personal harassment, however, does not include the appropriate exercising of an individual's supervisory authority.

Sexual Harassment:

is any unwelcome behaviour, conduct, or communication directed intentionally or unintentionally at an individual which is sexual in nature and known or ought to be known to impact the well-being of others. This includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome physical contact (e.g., patting, pinching, rubbing, grabbing), unwelcome remarks or compromising invitations or requests, verbal abuse or display of suggestive pictures, leering, whistling, innuendoes, jokes, demands for sexual favours, stalking, embarrassing, suggestive or threatening language, displays of pornographic materials, sexting, or behaviour that supports a hostile or poisonous environment.

Restorative Practice:

promotes values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches among students, families, and school staff. These approaches validate the experiences and needs of everyone within the community, particularly those who have been marginalized, oppressed, or harmed. These approaches allow schools to act and respond in ways that are healing, rather than alienating or coercive. Restorative discipline is a strategy that a principal may use to address bullying within a school.

Supporting Positive Behaviours:

is a strategy for schools to further the social responsibility and responsiveness of students in meeting behavioural expectations in a school. Within this model, pre-determined levels of

support and intervention are established to enhance a positive climate of school engagement for all students. While the support model may look different at each school, three levels may be clearly identified:

- Basic/Universal Support: Systematic teaching that produces a clear understanding of expectations is developed in a collaborative and respectful culture.
- Targeted Support: Additional support is provided for those students who have not yet internalized appropriate responses to the expectations that they have been expected to follow.
- Individual/Intensive Support: Highly focused support is established for those students who require ongoing adult monitoring in order to engage in appropriate behaviours.

Supporting Positive Behaviours is based upon a belief that teaching and nourishing appropriate behaviours has a far greater success than relying upon a model of consequences and punishment. This model is applied according to the age and stage of development of the learner, and is a strategy that a principal may also use to address bullying within a school.

Procedures:

1. All members of the school community are expected to play a positive role to promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying behaviours.
2. Students and parents are encouraged to report bullying behaviour to school staff.
3. All reports of bullying and/or harassment shall be taken seriously and investigated by school staff.
4. If, in the opinion of the teacher or Principal, an act of bullying has occurred, interventions shall be applied dedicated to stopping the behaviour in the future and educating the student who is targeted about how to address the issue in the future. Interventions shall be applied to both those who are targets of bullying behaviour and those who engage in bullying behaviour in order to further a safe and caring culture within the school.
5. Parents play a primary role in assisting with the resolution of matters pertaining to bullying. Apprising them of issues in this area as they have impacted their children should occur at the earliest opportunity.
6. A Principal may use a Restorative Discipline or Positive Behavioural Support model to address matters of discipline.
7. Incidences of bullying that adversely impact the safety of individuals or are an affront to the common good of the school community may be addressed through application of Sections 24 or 25 of the *School Act* (Suspension and Expulsion) or [Administrative Procedure 355, Suspension or Expulsion of Students](#).
8. The Division shall establish consistent school-based practices to ensure that LGBTQ members of school communities and their families are welcomed, accepted, and included in all aspects of education and school life.
9. The Division shall provide and promote opportunities for staff to increase their awareness and understanding of the scope and impact of discrimination against LGBTQ people, including professional learning opportunities, so staff are informed and familiar with

expectations pertaining to human rights, discrimination, harassment, sexual and gender minority diversity, and become aware of and sensitive to the needs and concerns of sexual and gender minority students and their families.

10. The Division shall make resources and support services available for LGBTQ students and staff.
11. The Division shall commit to ongoing, constructive, and open dialogue with LGBTQ communities to increase cooperation and collaboration among home, school, and community.
12. Teachers shall be encouraged to help students acquire the skills and knowledge to understand the unique perspectives and lived realities of sexual and gender minorities.
13. Learning, curriculum, and library resources shall reflect and value the diversity in the Division, so that all students, including LGBTQ students, see themselves and their lives positively reflected.
14. Principals shall identify a staff person(s) to be a safe contact for students who identify themselves as LGBTQ. Principals shall inform students and staff about the location and availability of this contact person.
15. Principals shall support the establishment and naming of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), Queer-Straight Alliances (QSAs), or other similar clubs. Parental permission or notification is not required to attend a GSA or QSA.
16. The Division shall ensure staff address and provide appropriate remedial consequences for interactions involving the use of comments, behaviours, and actions that are homophobic, transphobic, and sexist, whether they occur in person or in digital form.
17. The Division shall use respectful and inclusive language in its communication to students, staff, families, and the community.
18. The Division shall maintain the right of LGBTQ students and staff to privacy and confidentiality regarding their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression and protect them from unwanted disclosure of such information. This includes all student and employee records, forms, and processes.
19. Transgender students shall have the right to be addressed by their preferred name(s) and pronoun(s) that correspond to their lived gender identities. Students shall be informed of limitations regarding their chosen name and gender identity or gender expression in relation to official school records that require legal name designation.
20. Principals shall ensure dress codes are flexible, inclusive, and respectful of the gender identities and gender expressions of all members of the school community.
21. The Division shall make gender neutral washrooms available to students. Students are to be able to access washrooms that are congruent with their gender identity and the Division shall make reasonable efforts to provide solutions that are respectful, discreet, and safe for all students.
22. All students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, shall be able to participate in physical education classes and extracurricular activities in ways that are safe, comfortable, and consistent with their lived gender identity.
23. The Division shall work with all schools, communities, and educational stakeholders to ensure this Administrative Procedure is respectfully implemented to support all students, staff, and families in our schools.
24. The Division recognizes that change occurs over time and that as understandings of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions evolve, procedures

and practices to support welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning and working environments shall develop correspondingly.

Reference:

Section 12, 16.1, 16.2, 18, 20, 23, 30, 45, 45.1, 50.1, 50.2, 60, 61, 96, 113, 116, 117 *School Act*

Alberta Bill of Rights

Alberta Human Rights Act

Ministerial Order on Student Learning 001/2013

Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Truth and Reconciliation Final Report

Guidelines for Best Practices: Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions

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