

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

### **POLICY**

The Board of Trustees of Livingstone Range School Division No. 68 is committed to providing welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments that respect diversity, foster a sense of belonging, and promotes student and staff wellbeing. Each student and staff member has the right to learn and work in an inclusive environment free from bullying, discrimination, harassment and violence where equality of opportunity, dignity, and respect are promoted.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Learning Environments**

A welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment is one where students and staff are protected from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence within school facilities, on school grounds, on school buses, and during school sponsored/authorized co/extra-curricular activities. This applies whether contact is face-to-face, by phone, fax, e-mail, Internet or Intranet, or by any other means of communication. All those involved with the division including trustees, staff (employees, volunteers, and contractors), students, parents, and visitors must share in the responsibility for eliminating bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence. The Board prohibits bullying, harassment, discriminatory, and violent behaviours and expects allegations of such behaviours to be investigated in a timely and respectful manner.

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is a repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour intended to cause harm, fear or distress, including psychological harm or harm to a person's reputation. It often involves an imbalance of social or physical power. Bullying tends to be subtle and consists of an accumulation of many small incidents, each of which, when taken in isolation and out of context, seem trivial. Bullying may include:

Verbal Bullying Name calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumours, threats, discriminatory references, unwanted comments.

Social Bullying Mobbing, scapegoating, excluding others from a group, humiliating others, gossiping, gestures or graffiti intended to put others down.

Physical Bullying Hitting, poking, pinching, chasing, shoving, coercing, destroying property.

Cyber Bullying Using the internet, social media or text messaging to intimidate, threaten, put down or spread rumours about someone.

#### **Discrimination**

Negative differential treatment of a person or group on the basis of the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the *Canadian and Alberta Human Rights Act*, mainly, 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.

## **Harassment**

Improper conduct (physical or verbal behavior) by any individual that is directed at and offensive to or humiliates another individual, and that the individual knew or ought reasonably to have known would cause offence or harm. It comprises objectionable act(s), comment(s) or display(s) that demean, belittle, or cause personal humiliation or embarrassment, and any act of intimidation or threat. It also includes discrimination within the meaning of the *Canadian and Alberta Human Rights Acts*. Harassment consists of repeated and persistent behaviours towards an individual to torment, undermine, frustrate or provoke a reaction from that person. It is the synergy and repetitive characteristic of the behaviours that constitute the conduct as harassment. However, one single incident can constitute harassment when it is demonstrated that it is severe and has a significant and lasting impact on the complainant. Harassment also includes:

Personal Harassment Disrespectful behavior that is unwelcomed and demeans or embarrasses a person and not based on one of the prohibited grounds within the *Canadian and Alberta Human Rights Acts*.

Sexual Harassment Offensive or humiliating behavior that is related to a person's sex, gender or sexual orientation, as well as behavior of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or "poisoned" work/learning environment or that could reasonably be thought to put sexual conditions on a person's educational advancement, job or employment opportunities.

## **Violence**

Harassing behavior that has as an element of use, attempted use or threatened use of physical force or substantial risk that physical force may be used against a person or property of another.

## **GUIDELINES**

1. The *Canadian Human Rights Act*, and *Alberta Human Rights Act* protect individuals from discrimination.
  - a) No person shall discriminate or exhibit an intention to discriminate against a person or a class of persons, or is likely to expose a person or a class of persons to hatred or contempt because of the 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 of that person or class of persons.
2. The *Canada Labour Code* protects staff from sexual harassment.
  - a) Every employee is entitled to employment free of sexual harassment.
  - b) Every employer shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that no employee is subjected to sexual harassment.
  - c) The employer will take such disciplinary measures as the employer deems appropriate against any person under the employer's direction who subjects any

employee to sexual harassment.

3. The *Criminal Code* protects individuals from violence including physical and sexual assault.
4. The *School Act* addresses bullying behavior and protects students from bullying behavior.
  - a) A student, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means.
  - b) No person shall
    - i) disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school,
    - ii) disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school meeting or board meeting,
    - iii) loiter or trespass in a school building or on property owned by a board, or
    - iv) conduct themselves in a manner detrimental to the safe operations of a school.
5. Principals shall ensure that all school policies and procedures are consistent with and adhere to the philosophy and intent of this welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments policy.
6. Supervisory and performance evaluation actions and processes undertaken in good faith in accordance with Livingstone Range School Division policy and procedures, the School Act, or Ministerial Orders do not fit under the definition of bullying, discrimination, or harassment.

## **REGULATIONS**

1. The Board expects that all trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, visitors, and contractors shall show responsibility, understanding, sensitivity and concern for the well-being of others and actively participate in maintaining a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment.
2. This policy covers inappropriate behaviour directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means.
3. The Board expects that all trustees, staff and students will adhere to LRSD Administrative Procedure 308, (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity), the School Act 16.1(1) and all other acts and legislations in effect which ensures a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment for all students and staff.
4. The Board prohibits bullying, harassment, discriminatory, and violent behaviours.
  - a) The Board expects students to adhere to Administrative Procedure 350, Student Expectations and Discipline and the schools' code of conduct.
5. The Board encourages reporting of all incidents of bullying, discrimination, harassment, or violence regardless of the identity of the respondent or offender. Reports should be made promptly to a trusted adult, the Principal, the individual's supervisor, or the Superintendent.
  - a) Staff shall report any bullying discrimination, harassment, or violence that may constitute a contravention of the *School Act*, Section 256 to the school Principal who shall inform the Superintendent.

6. The Board expects all reported incidents of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence to be investigated in a timely and respectful manner. (Reference; Administrative Procedures 307, *Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Learning Environments*, 308, *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification*, 349, *Use of Physical Restraints*, and 350 *Student Expectations and Discipline*.)
7. Individuals engaging in bullying, discriminating, harassing, and/or violent behaviour and those willingly making false claims regarding such behaviour may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, termination, and/or criminal prosecution.
8. The Superintendent or Principal may contact the police who may lay a charge when conduct is considered a criminal offense, governed by the Criminal Code, or is believed to contravene the *School Act* and warrants such action.
9. Following any incident of bullying, discrimination, harassment, and/or violence, the Superintendent or designate, or school principal will evaluate the level of potential harm and implement appropriate action (i.e. Threat Assessment, Bullying Protocol, parent contact, etc.).
10. The Superintendent or designate shall ensure that the Crisis Response Manual is maintained and reviewed regularly, and revised as required.
  - a) All staff shall adhere to the procedures outlined in the Crisis Response Manual
  - b) Critical incident reports shall be completed and filed with the Superintendent or designate immediately following an incident. (See Crisis Response Manual)
11. The Superintendent or designate will develop, maintain, review annually, and revise as required the LRSD Safety Handbook.
12. Principals shall develop, maintain, review annually, and revise as required the School Response Plan.
13. Schools shall have measures in place to prevent bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence, which may include one or more of the following:
  - a) school policy development on related topics to be communicated to students, parents, and staff;
  - b) a program designed to develop and maintain a positive school climate;
  - c) conflict resolution programs;
  - d) access to a counsellor or family school liaison counselor;
  - e) curricular instruction; and/or
  - f) special presentations on relevant topics.
14. Principals shall ensure that students and staff are familiar with the school safety plan and receive training and, where appropriate, practice in implementation of crisis response procedures.

---

January, 2015 (New Policy)

References:  
Administrative Procedure 307, 308  
School Act 16.1 (1)

Updates: April 11, 2016; March, 2018