

MEDICINE HAT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 76**WELCOMING, CARING, RESPECTFUL, AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS****BACKGROUND**

Every school community member within the District has 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. The Board of Trustees is further committed to protecting all students from harassment and discrimination during the District's school-related activities. All those involved with the District including trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, contractors, and visitors must share in the responsibility for eliminating bullying, harassment and discriminatory behaviours, and expects allegations of such behaviours to be investigated in a timely and respectful manner.

GUIDELINES

1. The Board of Trustees acknowledges its responsibility to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments for all students. It recognizes the importance of students' emotional, social, intellectual and physical wellness to their success in school and expects students to adhere to 621 P 001 Student Code of Conduct and schools' codes of conduct.
2. The Board of Trustees expects all trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, visitors, and contractors to embrace and support this policy. This policy covers behaviour not only at District 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 in the school. This applies whether contact is face-to-face, by phone, fax, e-mail, internet or intranet, or by any other means of communication. This policy also covers threatening, harassing, intimidating, assaulting or bullying, in any way, any person within the school community, including aggressive behaviours such as "cyber" hate messaging and websites created in the student's home, in cyber cafes or other settings.

3. *In an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation for individual differences, ALL staff, students and families, in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, specifically Sections 2 and 15, have the right to:*
 - a. *be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect;*
 - b. *have their confidentiality protected and respected;*
 - c. *freedom of religion, conscience, expression and association;*
 - d. *be fully included and represented in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner;*
 - e. *have equitable access to supports, services and protections;*
 - f. *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*
 - g. *have their unique identities, families, cultures and communities included, valued and respected within all aspects of the school environment.*
4. The Board of Trustees expects reporting to a responsible adult who is a District employee all incidents of threats, bullying, harassment, violence or intimidation regardless of the identity of the alleged harasser or offender.
5. Students are required to abide by the Code of Conduct as described in the School Act, Board Policy and individual school's Student Code of Conduct.
6. This policy is to be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

Approved and Adopted:

REFERENCES

Alberta School Act
Alberta Human Rights Act
Alberta Teachers Association Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
District Policy 207 – District Council of School Councils