Medicine Hat Public School Division

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MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATES AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION,
AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "MHPSD" AND/OR "DIVISION"

SECTION 500 – Personnel and Employee Relations

POLICY 528: DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, VIOLENCE AND BULLYING

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees is committed to providing and maintaining a safe, caring, respectful and inclusive learning and working environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, violence and bullying.

This policy is established in accordance with the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code, the Alberta Human Rights Act, and other applicable legislation.

Any individual who, in good faith, believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment, violence or bullying is encouraged to report the incident without fear of retaliation or reprisal.

POLICY

The Board is committed to fostering a respectful, safe and healthy environment for all employees, students, parent/guardians, contractors, volunteers, visitors and other individuals engaged in Division-related activities.

The Division will take all reasonably practical steps to:

- Prevent discrimination, harassment, violence and bullying;
- Investigate complaints and incidents in a timely, fair and confidential manner;
- Address and correct inappropriate behaviour;
- Protect individuals from retaliation or reprisal for making a complaint or participating in an investigation;
- Provide information, instruction and training regarding workplace harassment and violence prevention;
- Support affected individuals where appropriate; and
- Comply with the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code.

The Division recognizes that discrimination, harassment, violence and bullying are detrimental to the well-being, health, safety, dignity, and productivity of our employees and learners and will not be tolerated.

This policy applies to conduct occurring:

- At Division workplaces and school sites;
- During Division-related activities or events;
- During work-related travel;
- Through electronic communications, social media or digital platforms where such conduct adversely impacts the learning or working environment; and
- In any circumstance where there is a connection to Division operations or activities.

GUIDELINES

1. All employees, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, contractors and employees shall be made aware of this policy and related administrative procedures.
2. The Superintendent shall establish administrative procedures to:
   2.1. Assess and control workplace violence and harassment hazards;
   2.2. establish reporting and investigation procedures;
   2.3. provide worker instruction and training;
   2.4. maintain confidentiality to the extent reasonably possible;
   2.5. support affected workers and students;
   2.6. address domestic violence risks where they may affect the workplace;
   2.7. establish emergency response procedures where required; and
   2.8. review prevention measures on a regular basis.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. Discrimination
   1.1. Discrimination means any conduct, practice, comment or action, whether intentional or not, that adversely affects and individual on one or more protected grounds under the Alberta Human Rights Act, including but not limited to: race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, family status, source of income, or any other protected ground identified in legislation.
2. Personal Harassment
   2.1. Personal Harassment means any unwelcome verbal or physical behavior, conduct or communication that disparages, humiliates, intimidates, threatens or harms another person.

2.2. The behavior need not be intended as harassing to be considered Personal Harassment. It is sufficient that one knows or ought reasonably to know that the behavior is offensive or unwelcome.

2.3. Reasonable management actions carried out in a respectful and lawful manner do not constitute harassment.

3. Sexual Harassment

3.1. Sexual Harassment is any unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture, communication or contact, which is sexual in nature. Such behavior may directly or indirectly affect or threaten to affect in an adverse manner a person's job security, prospects, promotions, earnings, working conditions, or learning environment.

4. Violence

4.1. Violence, whether at a work site or work-related, means the attempted, threatened or actual conduct of an individual that causes or is likely to cause physical or mental injury and includes any threatening or intimidating statement or behaviour that gives an individual reasonable cause to believe that they are at risk of injury. Acts of domestic violence that may expose an employee or student to harm at a Division workplace or activity are included in this policy and related administrative procedures.

4.2. A dysregulated student, in and of themselves, does not necessarily constitute workplace violence. Such situations are generally classified as "student problematic or concerning behaviour" and are addressed through appropriate supports and interventions, which may include parent/guardian involvement, student safety plans, behavioural supports, and other individualized strategies.

5. Bullying

5.1 Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour manifested by the use of force or coercion to affect others, particularly when the behaviour is habitual and involves an imbalance in power and/or authority. Bullying may occur in person, in writing, electronically or through social media.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

528 AP 001 – Discrimination, Harassment, Violence and Bullying Reporting

528 AP 002 – Discrimination, Harassment, Violence and Bullying Prevention

Approved: June 19, 2012
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