

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Background

Foothills School Division has a responsibility to ensure that students and staff are provided with welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and foster a sense of belonging and promote student wellbeing. Foothills School Division works with families and community partners to provide safe, caring, respectful, and welcoming, inclusive and equitable learning experiences that engage students to achieve their full potential in an increasingly interdependent world. Foothills School Division is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence. All those involved with the Division including trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, and community members must share in the responsibility for eliminating bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence. Investigation of allegations of such behaviours will be conducted in a timely and respectful manner.

This *Student Code of Conduct* is intended to establish and maintain an appropriate balance between individual and collective rights, freedoms, and responsibilities in the school community. Our purpose is to promote student learning, growth and understanding as well as ensure that students possess a strong connection to their schools as welcoming, caring, respectful and safe places focused on their individual success. It will be reviewed annually and publicly available on the Division's website.

The *Student Code of Conduct* establishes expectations, interventions and possible consequences for student behaviour. Students will be held accountable for unacceptable behaviour and conduct that occurs both inside and outside of the school building or school day, if the conduct negatively affects a member of the school or interferes with the school environment. Behavior may include use of electronic means (e.g. social media). Consequences of unacceptable behaviour must take into account the student's age, maturity and/ or individual circumstances. Support will be provided for any students who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour as well as for students who engage in inappropriate behaviour. Although the code of conduct will address issues such as consequences for unacceptable behaviour, the primary focus of the *Student Code of Conduct* is to help students learn how to address issues of dispute, develop empathy and become positive citizens both within and outside of the school community.

Schools will develop a *School Code of Conduct* that will address respect, harassment, discrimination, and bullying, along with possible interventions and consequences as outlined in a Progressive Discipline Continuum. The review and evaluation of the School Code of Conduct will be in consultation with the School Council and/or community and is to occur on an annual basis as needed. Responsibility of students, staff, and parents will be outlined in the *School Code of Conduct*.

When developing a *School Code of Conduct*, schools shall:

- focus on encouraging and promoting positive student behaviour through the provision of strategies and programs to develop pro-social skills
- develop and utilize a Progressive Discipline Continuum
- make the *School Code of Conduct* publicly available on the school website, and review annually
- consider core values such as belonging, citizenship, diversity, fairness, and respect.

Definitions

Respect: To show regard or consideration for others.

Harassment: Any behavior that in effect or intent disparages, humiliates, or harms another person or class of persons. It is behaviour that denies dignity and respect, and is demeaning and/or humiliating to another person or class of persons. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, references related to age, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race and/or sources of income, family status or citizenship. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome behavior that is sexual in nature. Such behavior may directly or indirectly affect or threaten to affect in an adverse manner a student's well-being and/or learning environment. The behavior does not need to be intended as harassing to be considered as personal harassment. It is sufficient that one knows, or ought reasonably to know, that his/her behaviour is offensive and unwelcome. Harassment is not a relationship of mutual consent. It is any action including, but not limited to verbal, physical, written and cyber messaging that is unwelcome or intimidating and denies individual dignity and respect.

Discrimination: The denial of individual rights and freedoms in a manner which contravenes the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and/or the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. Discrimination on the basis of 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 is prohibited.

Bullying: Bullying means 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. It often involves an imbalance of social or physical power.

Bullying behaviours are a form of aggression and can be:

- Physical – For example: poking, elbowing, hitting
- Verbal – For example: name calling, insults, racist, sexist or homophobic comments, put-downs or threats
- Social – For example: gossiping, spreading rumours, excluding someone from the group, isolating, ganging up
- Cyber – For example: social or verbal bullying through the use of email, text messages, social media including the sharing of intimate images.

Progressive Discipline: Is a whole school approach that utilizes a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote and foster positive behaviour. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive.

Procedures

Responsibilities: The development of positive student behaviour is a shared responsibility between students, staff and parents.

1. Students

1.1 Students have a responsibility to respect the rights and dignity of others and to become actively and productively involved in their own academic learning and social growth. Students are valued and contributing members of their school community and accept the responsibility for their behaviour while at school, at school sponsored 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. While school staff are not able to control what students do outside of school, when the behaviour has impact on the school environment, there may be consequences or interventions for inappropriate behaviour.

1.2 In accordance with the *Education Act* students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the School Student Code of Conduct developed by school leadership, staff, students and community. Examples of (but not limited to) **acceptable behaviour** for students include;

1.2.1 be ready to learn, and actively engage in, and diligently pursue your education;

1.2.2 attend school regularly and punctually;

1.2.3 cooperate with all school staff;

1.2.4 know and comply with the rules of your school;

1.2.5 be accountable to your teachers and other staff for your behaviours;

1.2.6 respect yourself and the rights of others in the school by demonstrating appreciation of diversity of all school members regardless of their 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;

1.2.7 ensure your conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful inclusive and safe learning environment that fosters a sense of belonging of others in your school;

1.2.8 refrain from, report and discourage 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;

1.2.9 inform an adult you trust in a timely manner of incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation or other safety concerns in the school;

1.2.10 always demonstrate behaviours that positively contribute to and honour your

school and community.

- 1.3 Consequences must take into account the student's age, maturity, and individual circumstances rather than a "zero tolerance" approach to behaviour with a "one size fits all" approach to consequences, which is not consistent with the *Education Act*. The specific circumstances of the situation and of the student must be taken into account when determining appropriate consequences; for example, consideration of needs including physical, behavioural, communicational, cognitive, mental health, trauma, as well as student's age, history, past interventions trialed, and accommodations/supports must be considered.

Examples of **unacceptable behaviour** may include;

- 1.3.1 Behaviours that interfere with the learning of others and/or the school environment or that create unsafe conditions;
- 1.3.2 Acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation/discrimination;
- 1.3.3 Acts of violence, physical aggression or threatening behavior;
- 1.3.4 Retribution against any person in the school who has intervened to prevent or report bullying, harassment, or stop an incident that might cause harm to others;
- 1.3.5 Illegal activity such as: possession or use of weapons; possession or use of alcohol, drugs or other forms of intoxicants on school property or at any other school related function (i.e. graduation, field trips) (refer to AP163 – *Alcohol & Drugs*);
- 1.3.6 theft or damage of property.
- 1.4 The student code of conduct will address how support will be provided to students impacted by inappropriate behaviour and to those students who engage in inappropriate behaviour. Support, not just punishment, will be provided to those students that engage in inappropriate behaviour as denoted by a Progressive Discipline Continuum including such evidence-based practices such as mentoring, restorative processes, student advisories, peer support networks, regular check-ins with teachers or schools counsellors, counselling, time-out, suspension and/or expulsion.

Regarding consequences, or use of physical intervention:

- The use of corporal punishment is prohibited
- Use of restraint shall only be used if a student is a danger to themselves or others. Depending on assignment, each school should ensure some staff members are trained in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI)
- Violence Threat Risk Assessment training will be provided to school administrators, Family School Liaison Counsellors and other staff as required.

2. Staff

- 2.1 Under the leadership of the Principal, staff are responsible for establishing a positive school climate in which structure, support and encouragement is provided to assist the student in understanding the importance of education, and developing a sense of self-discipline and

responsibility while making a positive contribution to society.

2.2 Schools will use proactive and preventative approaches to reduce the occurrence of unacceptable behaviour and maintain environments that are welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and are conducive to teaching and learning.

2.2.1 When responding to unacceptable behaviour, schools will give first consideration to the safety and security of students, staff, and other members of the school community;

2.2.2 Students feel safe, important and trusted and have the opportunity to develop, assume and maintain responsibility and self-motivation;

2.2.3 There is a joint effort to learn and a feeling of mutual respect among staff, students and parents;

2.2.4 Appropriate behaviour is consistently encouraged and reinforced, thus increasing social emotional competencies including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making;

2.2.5 On-going and timely communication exists between staff and parents to encourage and provide the opportunity for active and constructive parental involvement in the education of their children.

3. Parents

3.1 Parents are partners in respect to their child(ren)'s education. They have a responsibility to take an active role in their child(ren)'s educational success and will support their child(ren) in complying with their responsibilities as students. Parent conduct should contribute to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment. Foothills School Division believes that the role of the parent with respect to education, will:

3.1.1 Encourage, foster and advance collaborative, positive and respectful relationships with teachers, principals, other school staff and professionals providing supports and services in the school;

3.1.2 Ensure that the child attends regularly and is punctual;

3.1.3 Be aware of, and support, the expectations from the *School Code of Conduct*;

3.1.4 Communicate and collaborate with school staff about any concerns regarding *Student Code of Conduct*.

References: Relevant Legislation & Guidelines