

September 2023

As Superintendent of the Abbotsford School District, I sincerely hope that you have a successful year. I am confident that all Abbotsford schools provide a safe and caring environment. The Board of Education has requested that all students do their part to ensure that their friends are safe as well. As a result, we have included the Code of Conduct, the 'Fair Notice Letter' and district procedures on Harassment (bullying), Search and Seizure, and Emergency Closure of Schools for your information.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### **Purpose:**

The Board of Education has a responsibility to establish expectations of student conduct in schools as part of its governance role for the district. The Board believes that the responsibility for student behaviour and conduct in schools is shared among students, staff and parents in order to create a safe, caring and orderly learning environment. To support these aims, the Board has established a District Code of Conduct for Students that shall be followed in all schools.

The Board affirms its commitment to the anti-discrimination principles and values contained in the B.C. Human Rights Code that includes the prohibited grounds of discrimination in respect of discriminatory publication and accommodation. The Board recognizes that students and staff have the right to a safe, inclusive and welcoming learning environment regardless of their "race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age..." (s. 7)

### **1. Responsibilities:**

School staff are responsible for consistently supporting and applying the District and their School's Codes of Conduct and establishing a positive climate in which structure, support and encouragement assist students in developing a sense of self-discipline and responsibility. School staff are required to inform volunteers and the school community about the Code of Conduct and its expectations.

Students are responsible for respecting the rights and dignity of others in learning environments free from discrimination as set out in the BC Human Rights Code and becoming actively and productively involved in their own academic learning and social growth.

Parents/Guardians and all other adults working with students are responsible for knowing and supporting the District's and School's Codes of Conduct and encouraging students to understand and follow these Codes of Conduct.

### **2. Conduct Expectations:**

The Board believes that acceptable behaviours and conduct are fostered in a positive climate in which:

- All students feel safe, valued and trusted, and have the opportunity to develop, assume and maintain responsibility and self-motivation;
- All students feel supported without fear of retaliation in reporting unsafe conditions, actions or potential incidents;
- There is a joint effort to learn and a feeling of mutual respect among staff, students and parents;
- Appropriate behaviour is taught, encouraged, modelled, practiced, and acknowledged, thereby increasing student self-respect and positive social behaviours;

- Disciplinary action, wherever possible, is preventative and restorative, rather than solely punitive;
- Expectations for student behaviour increase as they become older and more mature;
- Disciplinary action is considerate of students with special needs if these students are unable to fully comply with the Code of Conduct due to a diagnosed disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature.

The Board believes that acceptable student conduct, based on respect for oneself, respect for others, and respect for property is essential to the development of responsible citizens. Students are expected to:

- Be aware of and obey all school rules;
- Respect the rights of all persons within the school including peers, staff, parents and volunteers;
- Refrain from lying, cheating, stealing;
- Attend classes punctually and regularly;
- Work cooperatively and diligently at their studies and home assignments;
- Respect the legitimate authority of the school staff;
- Respect all school property, including buildings and equipment;
- Respect the diversity of our school community;
- Behave in a safe and responsible manner at all times;
- Refrain from any behaviour that would threaten, harass, bully (bullying includes but is not limited to, physical or verbal intimidation, verbal harassment and cyberbullying), intimidate, assault or discriminate against, in any way, any person within the school community on or off school property;
- Refrain from being in possession of, or under the influence of, drugs and/or alcohol in all school facilities or on school grounds or at school-sponsored functions and activities;
- Refrain from being in possession of weapons of any kind in school or at school activities;
- Refrain from inappropriate computer usage and/or multi-media devices in accordance with Board policies (cell phones, iPhones, cameras, etc.).

The Board believes that any breach of Code of Conduct behaviours or expectations would be considered unacceptable. Students are encouraged to inform a responsible adult when becoming aware of any infraction of the Code of Conduct.

### **3. Notification:**

The Superintendent will ensure that each Principal, in consultation with staff, parents and, when appropriate, students, establishes a Code of Conduct for their school that is consistent with the District Student Code of Conduct and which reflects the provincial standards.

The school's Code of Conduct and a summary of the district's procedures on Student Suspensions (AP 333), Possession of Weapons or Explosives (AP 320), Drugs and Controlled Substance Abuse (AP 331), Search and Seizure (AP 332) and Information and Communication Services (AP 417) shall be communicated to all students annually.

Under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Protection Act* and/or other relevant legislation, it may be necessary to advise other parties of serious breaches of the District Student Code of Conduct.

#### 4. Consequences:

Students will be disciplined in a timely and fair manner and such discipline shall be in accordance with district procedure AP 333, 'Student Suspensions.'

Students, while attending school and/or school-sponsored functions and activities, shall be subject to the District Code of Conduct as well as the school's Code of Conduct. Students may be subject to discipline under the school Code of Conduct and/or the District Code of Conduct for any conduct which has the effect of negatively impacting the school environment, whether that conduct occurs on or off School District property, at a school-sponsored function or activity, or elsewhere.

Serious breaches of conduct that threaten the safety and welfare of others will be referred directly to a District Board of Review (Level Three suspension). The condensed version of the District Code of Conduct is posted in every school.

#### References

Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide  
School Act  
BC Human Rights Code  
Canadian Charter of Rights  
333)  
Constitution Act

Multiculturalism Act  
Official Languages Act  
Youth Criminal Justice Act  
School District Administrative Procedure (AP  
333)

#### **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT (AP 418)**

Please refer to the complete administrative procedure on the district website at [www.abbyschools.ca](http://www.abbyschools.ca) under the *About Us* tab under Administrative Procedures.

The Abbotsford School District is committed to fostering an environment within which all individuals are treated with respect. The district considers harassment in general and sexual harassment, in particular, to be violations of generally accepted standards of behaviour and the District's Code of Conduct.

In its efforts to eliminate harassment, the Abbotsford School District will provide a working and learning environment that will encourage respect for and fair treatment of all individuals within the community.

#### Definition

Harassment or bullying includes inappropriate remarks, jokes, taunting, comments, gestures, sexually suggestive comments or actions that create an uncomfortable or hostile environment.

A bully is someone who:

- Uses power to hurt others or harm their possessions;
- Purposely scares or intimidates others;
- Often hurts the same person repeatedly;
- Is sometimes supported by other people who just watch and laugh, instead of helping the person being bullied.

#### Complaint Procedures

If a student is being bullied or harassed, he/she should take the following steps to try and stop the harassment or prevent it from happening again.

1. Report all incidents to an adult you trust such as a person of authority at your school, your parent or an adult you trust outside of school. It is important to tell your parents of any incidents of bullying or harassment that may occur at school, at school functions or on your way to and from school.
2. If the bully or harasser is an adult from within your school, then it is important to report this immediately to your parents/guardians or an adult you trust outside of school. You and the adult you have told should contact either the Principal or the Assistant Superintendent's office.
3. It is important to report all incidents of bullying or harassment; however, false allegations are a serious matter and can damage a person's reputation and are not acceptable in any way.

If you require further information, please contact the School Board Office at 604.859.4891.

### **SEARCH AND SEIZURE (AP 332)**

All students have a right to attend school in an environment conducive to learning. Dangerous objects, alcohol, and other drug possession (supply or sale) are illegal and interfere with both effective learning and the healthy development of all individuals. The Abbotsford School District is committed to protecting students from harm, maintaining the safety of our schools and promoting an environment free of substance use. Students are not required to obtain a school locker, but if they choose to do so, they do so on the condition that it is to be used only for authorized purposes. Lockers may be subjected to searches by Abbotsford School District staff.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS**

During emergency situations, schools will be closed to ensure the greatest possible level of safety for students and staff. Reasons for such closures could include bomb threats, gas leaks, fire, smoke, power failure, extreme weather situations, earthquakes and other causes that may endanger students and staff. The Superintendent is responsible for all decisions relating to school closures.

Our Emergency Procedures are put into place by either a school administrator, Assistant Superintendent or the Superintendent. The Superintendent is responsible for all decisions relating to school closures. Information regarding each level of emergency status is listed in our [Administrative Procedure 103 - Emergency Procedures](#). Procedures are practiced at each school at multiple times throughout the year. In all scenarios, special considerations are to be taken by teachers and supervisors for the care and evacuation of students with special needs.

Notifications of emergency status will be circulated via:

- District/School Websites ([www.abbyschools.ca](http://www.abbyschools.ca));
- Twitter ([@AbbotsfordSD](https://twitter.com/AbbotsfordSD)), Facebook ([@AbbotsfordSD](https://www.facebook.com/AbbotsfordSD)) and Instagram ([@AbbotsfordSD](https://www.instagram.com/AbbotsfordSD)); and
- Email and/or Phone Call via SchoolMessenger.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kevin Godden  
Superintendent of Schools