

Policy 14

FSD Vision

Engagement, Support and Success for each learner.

FSD Mission

Each learner entrusted to our care has unique gifts and abilities. It is our mission to find out what these are ... Explore them ... Develop them ... Celebrate them!

Organizational Purpose

Placing Education at the Center of a Flourishing Community

A PLACE FOR ALL

To achieve The Foothills School Division (FSD) Vision, Mission and Organizational Purpose, the Board believes that each community member has a responsibility and role to play in contributing to, enhancing and promoting inclusive environments within all FSD schools and facilities.

All members of the FSD community have a right to be free from bullying, harassment and discrimination of any kind. This includes, but is not limited to, being free from such behaviors, actions or words that target individuals or groups based on race, religious beliefs, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical diversity, neurodiversity, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation of that person or class of persons.

Each of us is expected to consistently foster a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environment that prioritizes respect and acceptance for diversity. This environment provides each learner with relevant and engaging learning opportunities as well as appropriate and timely support for each person to feel valued and to be successful at FSD.

Bullying, harassing and discriminatory behaviors are not part of an inclusive environment. There is a collective responsibility to foster a true sense of belonging for all students, staff, and members of the school community.

It is important that when bullying, harassing or discriminatory behaviors occur, they are addressed as soon as is reasonably possible. All inappropriate and hurtful behavior needs to be identified and understood in order to attend to and reconcile the situation effectively.

All individuals can be agents of positive change in our FSD community and can assist in identifying and addressing instances of bullying, harassment and discrimination. Together, we can cultivate an equitable and safe community for all, a place for all.

The Foothills School Division, through the operationalization of Policy 14, is committed to actions that cultivate an equitable and safe community for all by:

- Assure that the legislative framework cited above is reflected and adhered to in Division policy and directives to recognize, support, and protect the fundamental human rights of all members of the school community;
- Assure staff, students and visitors have welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environments that respect diversity and foster a sense of belonging for each person;
- Assuring that all instances of bullying, conflict, harassment and discrimination are taken seriously when reported or when they come to the attention of FSD staff.
- Assure ongoing professional learning opportunities that build the capacity of staff to effectively understand and support our diverse student population and to maintain optimal learning environments and foster a sense of belonging;
- Assure that all students and staff have equitable access to available support, services and protection;
- Assure a barrier-free means for reporting violations, complaints, or voicing concerns for all school community members;
- Collaboratively work with community partners to identify and implement an evidence-based continuum of support services, inclusive of learning and wellbeing, to promote student wellbeing and learning;
- Assure interventions consider developmental appropriateness, age, maturity and the known individual circumstances of the persons involved;
- Assure that available support is provided to all persons involved and impacted in instances of bullying, harassment and discrimination;
- Assure the implementation of the Division's Student Code of Conduct (AP 350)
- Assure support to student clubs and organizations:

If one or more students attending a school operated by a board request a staff member employed by the board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall:

- Grant permission in a timely manner for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and
- Within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.
- The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity
- The principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”.
- The principal shall immediately inform the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison, and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.
- The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.
- Notification, if any, must be consistent with the usual practices relating to other student organizations and activities.
- The principal shall ensure all legislation such as *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* which governs the disclosure of personal information is adhered to by staff.
- This policy will be reviewed and affirmed on an annual basis.

Legislative Framework

Alberta and Canadian law set out responsibilities for all partners in the education system and society, including students, parents and caregivers, staff, and school boards. The legislative framework is listed in Appendix A.

Definitions

It is important to share a common understanding of bullying, harassment, discrimination, conflict diversity, equity and inclusion as they are key parts of this policy. These definitions are listed in Appendix B.

Applicable Administrative Procedures (AP)

As per the *Education Act*, a Code of Conduct (AP 350) has been established to provide a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that addresses bullying behavior. It is important to also understand the other Administrative Procedures that are relevant to the operationalization of Policy 14. These are listed in Appendix C.

Legal Reference: [Relevant Legislation & Guidelines](#)

Appendix A

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

[Alberta Human Rights Act](#)

[Alberta Education Act](#)

[Alberta Youth Justice Act](#)

[Alberta Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act](#)

[Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)

[The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)

[Rights of Children in Canada](#)

Appendix B

DEFINITIONS

Inclusion:

Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and promotes a sense of belonging for all learners. This is defined in Alberta's Policy Document on Inclusive Education.

Equity:

Alberta's *Human Rights Act* states that it is recognized in Alberta as a fundamental principle and as a matter of public policy that all persons are equal in dignity, rights, and responsibilities.

Diversity:

Alberta's *Human Rights Act* states that in Alberta, as a fundamental principle and as a matter of public policy that all Albertans should share in an awareness and appreciation of the diverse racial and cultural composition of society and that the richness of life in Alberta is enhanced by sharing that diversity. The diverse racial and cultural composition of Alberta's society and its importance is a fundamental principle and matter of public policy.

Respect:

To show regard or consideration for others.

Bullying:

Alberta's *Education Act* defines bullying as 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. Bullying can take different forms and includes but is not limited to:

- Physical – pushing, hitting, other
- Verbal/written – name calling, threats, other
- Social/psychological – social exclusion, rumors, other
- Cyber/social media – using the computer, cell phone or other technology to harass, threaten, intimidate, demean, share images, other

Conflict:

Alberta's *Education Act* defines bullying as different from conflict. Conflict is defined as a disagreement or struggle over opposing beliefs, needs, feelings or actions and is a normal part of life. Students as well as adults can benefit from learning how to resolve conflict peacefully and recognizing the difference between a conflict and bullying.

Harassment:

Any conduct, comment, gesture, or physical contact that a reasonable person should know would be unwelcome, inappropriate, or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals. It is not a relationship of mutual consent; it is any action that is unwelcome or intimidating and denies any individual dignity and respect. Excluded from the definition of harassment is any reasonable conduct of an employee in respect of the management and supervision of employees or students. Alberta law explicitly protects Albertans from discrimination for a wide variety of reasons under the Alberta *Human Rights Act*.

Sexual Harassment:

Harassment also encompasses any unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which:

- Implicitly or explicitly makes submission of such conduct a term and condition of an individual's learning environment;
- Affects access to learning;
- Affects access to school services or events;
- Creates a hostile or offensive environment that interferes with an individual's learning environment;
- Intimidates, embarrasses, coerces, or humiliates an individual at school; or
- Arises out of a relationship that is not based on mutual consent.

Examples of conduct that would meet these descriptors include, but are not limited to the behaviours listed herein:

- Verbal abuse or threats associated with behaviour of a sexual nature;
- Unwelcome remarks or jokes of a sexual nature;
- Unwelcome invitations or requests of a sexual nature;
- Staring, leering, or inappropriate observation of an individual of a sexual nature;
- Displaying, sharing, or posting pornographic, offensive, or derogatory materials of a sexual nature online or in the learning environment
- Unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature;
- Exposing oneself sexually;
- Explicit or implicit demands of a sexual nature; and
- Any other behaviour, conduct, or activity of a sexual nature that is unwelcome or uninvited.

Discrimination:

A distinction made based upon characteristics protected under the Alberta *Human Rights Act*, whether or not intentional, based on a characteristic or perceived characteristic referenced in the protected grounds that has the effect of imposing on an individual or group of individuals burdens, obligations or disadvantages that are not imposed on others, or of withholding or limiting access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to other individuals in society.

Appendix C

APPLICABLE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

[Administrative Procedure 146: Social Media Code of Conduct](#)

[Administrative Procedure 170 – Bullying, Harassment and Threatening Behaviour](#)

[Administrative Procedure 207: Human Sexuality in Education](#)

[Administrative Procedure 208: Religious Activities in Division/School Related Functions](#)

[Administrative Procedure 213: Inclusive Education Programming](#)

[Administrative Procedure 309: Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions](#)

[Administrative Procedure 350: Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Administrative Procedure 379: Student Organizations and Clubs](#)

[Administrative Procedure 402: Protection of Staff](#)

[Administrative Procedure 403: Harassment Prevention, Reporting and Investigation](#)