



**HARASSMENT AND BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY**

**for**

**Pattison High School**

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## **HARASSMENT AND BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY for**

### **Pattison High School**

#### **Introduction**

Safe schools are ones in which members of the school community are free of the fear of harm. The attitudes and actions of staff, faculty and caregivers support an environment that is resistant to disruption and intrusion and enables a constant focus on student achievement.

Caring schools provide a sense of belonging and connectedness for everyone in the school community; this is essential for the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment. All aspects of school life embrace and reflect diversity and the school is an inviting place for students, staff, visitors and parents as well as guardians, custodians and agents;

Orderly schools are characterized by a climate of mutual respect and responsibility. They are free from chaos and confusion, and instead are the venues of purposeful learning activities. Everyone in the school has work to do, and in a way that does not interfere with the learning and development of others. Everyone in the school community feels a sense of meaningful accomplishment, and believes that the school is a good place to be; and

Students who feel respected, accepted and connected tend to be physically and mentally healthier, and perform better academically. They tend to have fewer incidents of violent or “acting out” behaviour, be less sexually active, have a lower rate of “experimentation”, with or “use” of drugs and alcohol (*Preventing Bullying and Ensuring Safe and Caring School Communities* – Level 1; Province of British Columbia, 2013, p 13).

#### **Commitment to Protect**

The safety and wellbeing of children in independent schools is of paramount consideration. Children deserve to be protected from abuse, neglect, bullying, harm, or threat of harm. It is important that Pattison High School ensures that students feel connected through the relationships created between students, staff, and parents in the school community. Therefore, Pattison High School will ensure that children attending our schools will experience an orderly learning environment that enables every child to feel safe, accepted, and respected.

Pattison High School will continuously develop strategies to make students feel valued, respected, and connected within our school community. This will include the protection of the students' physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness as well as protection from all forms of bullying,



regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

## **Definition**

Bullying is a pattern of repeated aggressive behavior, with negative intent, directed from one person to another where there is a power imbalance. Bullying behavior incorporates harassment and intimidation – and can be physical and/or verbal. Bullying behavior is an intentional and purposeful act meant to inflict injury or discomfort on another person. Bullying is distinguishable by three critical conditions:

- an imbalance of power
- repetition over time, and
- the intent to harm.

## **Unacceptable Behaviour**

Bullying encompasses a wide range of behaviours within a relationship between a dominant and a less dominant person or group where:

- An imbalance of the perceived power is manifest through aggressive actions.
- Physical or psychological (verbal and social) abuse occurs.
- Negative interactions occur directly (face-to-face) or indirectly (gossip, exclusion).

Negative actions occur with intent to harm, and can include some or all of the following:

- i. Physical actions such as punching, kicking, biting and initiating unwanted sexual touching, can hurt the person's body, damage belongings or make the person feel badly about himself or herself;
- ii. Verbal actions such as threats, name calling, insults, racial and cultural slurs or inappropriate jokes and/or comments. Also includes sexual harassment that is when a person or group hurts another person by taunting or discussing sensitive sexual issues, creating sexual rumours or messages, and making derogatory comments on a person's perceived sexual identity;
- iii. Social exclusion such as spreading rumours, ignoring, gossiping, excluding.
- iv. Information and communication technologies used to physically threaten, verbally harass or socially exclude an individual or group.

Negative actions that are repeated and/or the intensity or the duration of the actions establishes the bully's dominance over the person. The person thus becomes a victim of injustice.



## ***Building a School Community***

There are many strategies and activities that are employed within a school to enable students to feel safe, accepted and respected. Pattison High School

- Promotes open communication among staff, students, families and communities
- Proactively connects with those students, along with their family, who are experiencing academic or social challenges.
- Communicates expectations, values and norms that support positive health and academic behaviour in the school community
- Acknowledges students by name
- Promotes visibility within the school during class transitions, breaks, before/after school
- Finds ways to acknowledge students for their contributions in the school community, including those where improvement comes only in small increments.

Therefore, the school conveys its expectations about how students conduct themselves:

- Students are expected to respect themselves and others, and to interact in positive, supportive ways;
- Students are expected to contribute to making the school a safe, caring and orderly place;
- Students are expected to engage in learning activities in a purposeful and timely manner;
- Students are expected to act in a manner that brings credit to the student and the school;
- As students mature through the high school program, the expectation is that their behavior shall also mature – such that rising academic engagement is correlated with rising engagements in personal growth and social responsibility; and

## **Policy Program**

The expectation of student conduct, and what is considered unacceptable conduct, includes all activities while at school, all school-related activity, or any and all other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school. Pattison High School has in place protocols that outline roles, responsibilities and procedures for staff, students and other adults (including parents/custodians) that address bullying.

## ***Education, Awareness and Prevention***

- Education and awareness on bullying that includes ways to recognize its pattern and characteristics versus normal peer conflict
- Instruction to students that emphasizes respect and compassion for others and age-appropriate behaviours to prevent or respond to bullying



- Instruction to students on their responsibility to report and take an active stand against acts of bullying including reference to the school's code of conduct as it relates to bullying

## ***Reporting***

- Students should report incidents of bullying to Pattison High School staff or faculty or online anonymously (<https://erasereportit.gov.bc.ca/>)
- The School Principal will investigate allegations of bullying
- Incidents of bullying at school (bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment including student-to-student sexual harassment, intimidation, threatening or violent behavior) will be tracked
- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students will be our first priority. Student and parent concerns regarding student safety will be taken very seriously, and action will be taken to resolve these concerns.

## ***Responding to Bullying***

Student and parent concerns regarding student safety will be taken very seriously, and action will be taken to resolve these concerns. Students engaged in behaviours that interfere with the general welfare of other students, or the learning environment, or that reflect negatively on the school and its values, may be subject to disciplinary action. Consequences will depend on the severity and frequency of the incident(s) and may include parental notification, suspension from school activities and classes, involvement of the police and/or expulsion.

- There will be clear and logical consequences for those who bully, that provides support for those being bullied and intervention with students who bully
- Parents/custodian of children involved in a bullying incident will be informed while seeking a resolution
- In deciding a course of action, the school weighs the consequences by age and maturity of the individuals involved, the degree of harm done, incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior, the relationship between the parties involved and the context in which the incident(s) occurred

## **Commitment to Shield against Retaliation**

Pattison High School will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation by a person against a student who has made a complaint about a breach of this policy.