

Anti-Discrimination Policy (September 2022)

Developed in reference with the Federation of Independent Schools Association Board of Directors directive (April 2016), the Ministry of Education and in parts from the Surrey School District.

Overview

The Anti-Discrimination Policy is implemented in correlation to the School's Code of Conduct, which is built on the notions of respect (Be Respectful to Yourself, Be Respectful to Others, Be Respectful to Property, Be Safe), and the need for a Safe and Caring School Environment for all.

Background

The School is required to abide by Schedule 1 of the *Independent School Act*. It states that there are basic requirements for independent schools requesting certification as Group 1, 2, 3 or 4 classifications. Article 1 states that:

Before issuing or renewing a certificate of group 1, group 2, group 3 or group 4 classification to an authority the inspector must be satisfied that

- a) no program is in existence or is proposed at the School that would, in theory or in practice, promote or foster doctrines of
 - i) racial or ethnic superiority or persecution
 - ii) religious intolerance or persecution
 - iii) social change through violent action, or
 - iv) sedition
- b) The School facilities comply with the enactments of British Columbia and the municipality or regional district in which the facilities are located, and
- c) the authority of the School complies with this *Act* and regulations.

In addition to abiding by Schedule 1 of the *Independent School Act*, it is important that the School ensure that students feel connected through the relationships that are created between students, staff, and parents that are part of the school community.

The School will continuously develop strategies to make students feel valued, respected and connected within the 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, gender identity or expression while remaining consistent with the School's faith-values, cultural perspectives and philosophical values. Such ideals are also upheld in the School Code of Conduct.

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).

Policy

The safety and wellbeing of children and staff members at the School is of paramount consideration. Children and staff members deserve to be protected from abuse, neglect, bullying, harm or threat of harm. Therefore, the School will ensure that children and staff members attending our school will experience a learning environment that enables every child to feel safe, accepted and respected.

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act, the B.C. Multiculturalism Act, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the B.C. Human Rights Code protect individuals from discrimination. In recognizing the importance of these values, the School shall prohibit discriminatory conduct which violates the B.C. Human Rights Code and any form of discrimination that falls within Canadian Human Rights Act, which include, but are not limited to, discrimination based on

- race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, disability

The School recognizes and will respect the idea that students and school community members identify and represent different backgrounds and beliefs. The School will ensure that these students and staff members feel safe and respected, and no practices are in place to discriminate against these students, or members of the school community.

Attending to Human Rights and creating a safe and caring school environment is a priority for the School. The School will not permit or tolerate any discriminatory behaviour or actions.

The School is committed to:

- creating an environment which promotes non-discrimination consistent with the BC Human Rights Code
- hiring employees on the basis of merit consistent with human rights laws
- providing students with educational programs that will assist them in participating in and contributing to a diverse society
- reducing language and cultural barriers
- communicating effectively with all students, parents, staff members and other partner groups in our diverse community.

All students, employees, contractors, visitors, and other users of the School facilities shall be required to conduct themselves in accordance with the School's commitment to Anti-Discrimination and human rights as set out in this Anti-Discrimination Policy. Conduct which is not consistent with this policy shall not be tolerated by the School or School Board. In order to ensure that the School's commitment to fostering and promoting Anti-Discrimination and human rights is communicated effectively, the School shall ensure:

- All facility users shall be informed of this policy.

- The School's Code of Conduct has clear statements and rules reflecting its commitment as expressed in this Anti-Discrimination Policy to human rights.
- Conduct consistent with this policy is considered to be a term and condition of employment for all staff.
- Allegations of discrimination will be reported to the Principal/Administration Team in the case of students, and to the immediate supervisor in the case of employees.

The School will review the Anti-Discrimination Policy regularly to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the school, students, parents, staff, and any legal requirements.

The School reserves the right to alter this policy at any time in accordance with the requirements of the school or the law.