

## Policy 33

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### Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Environments

The Board is committed to ensuring that each Aspen View student and each staff member employed by the Board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self. The Board values all members of our educational community where everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. We value and respect diversity, and strive to treat others with kindness, caring and tolerance. Students, staff and visitors are expected to model and to reinforce these beliefs and values. Our decisions and actions shall be governed by the following beliefs/principles which will be reflected in Division and school programs, operations and practices.

- A welcoming, caring, respectful and safe school environment is foundational for students to learn and to achieve high academic standards.
- Each student and staff member has the right to learn and work in environments that promote equality of opportunity, dignity and respect.
- Equity of opportunity, and equity of access to programs, services, and resources are critical to supporting all students in realizing their full potential.
- School and Division staff will be respectful of the concerns of students and their families, and will work with them to provide appropriate support and resolve their issues in a timely manner. Schools have the responsibility to ensure that students and their families feel safe to share issues and concerns.
- The Board values and embraces diversity while adhering to inclusionary practices which promote a sense of belonging and respect learners' differing needs, cultures, backgrounds and abilities.
- The Board affirms the rights of, and will not tolerate discrimination against students, staff or any person because of the 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 or of any other person or class of persons.
- The Board is committed to ensure all children and students have access to meaningful learning experiences that include appropriate instructional supports, regardless of race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation or any other factor.

#### Specifically

1. The Board of Trustees acknowledges its responsibility to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments for all students and staff. It recognizes the importance of students' and staffs' emotional, social, intellectual and physical wellness to their success in school and expects students to adhere to AP 355 – Student Code of Conduct and Discipline.
2. The Board of Trustees affirms rights as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of each staff member employed by the Board of Trustees and each student enrolled in a school operated by the Board of Trustees.
3. Staff members employed by the Board of Trustees will not be discriminated against as

provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

4. Students enrolled in a school operated by the Board of Trustees will not be discriminated against as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
5. The Board of Trustees expects all trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, visitors, and contractors to embrace and support this policy. This policy covers behavior at Division schools, any school-related functions, and school-related communications whether face-to-face, by phone, fax, electronic, or by any other means of communication. All behaviour which is threatening, harassing, intimidating, assaulting or bullying, in any way toward any person within the school community will be considered harassment. All students, staff and volunteers must adhere to AP 171 – Workplace Harassment and AP 355 – Student Code of Conduct and Discipline.
6. The Board of Trustees is supportive of the establishment of student organizations and student-led activities that promote equality and non-discrimination, including but not limited to gay-straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs and anti-bullying clubs. If one or more students attending a school operated by a Board of Trustees request a staff member employed by the Board of Trustees 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:
  - 6.1 Immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school.
  - 6.2 Subject to subsection (6.5), 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.
  - 6.3 For the purpose of subsection (6.1), an organization or activity includes an organization or activity that promotes equality and non-discrimination with respect to, without limitation, race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, including but not limited to organizations such as gay-straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs and anti-bullying clubs.
  - 6.4 The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”, after consulting with the principal. For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance.”
  - 6.5 The principal shall immediately inform the Board of Trustees and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in subsection 6.1, 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.

- 6.6 The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection 6.1 is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity. It is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations and activities.
7. The Board of Trustees encourages reporting to a responsible adult or supervisor all incidents of threats, bullying, harassment, violence or intimidation regardless of the identity of the alleged harasser or offender. The Superintendent must develop administrative procedures to address Workplace Harassment and a Student Code of Conduct and Discipline. This policy and associated administrative procedures must be displayed in a prominent place on the Division website and shared with stakeholders where appropriate.
8. The Board of Trustees is committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning and teaching environment for all members of the school community.
- This includes those students, staff, and families who identify or are perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, queer or questioning their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
  - The Board expects all members of this diverse community to be welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported in our schools.
9. The Superintendent must develop administrative procedures to address Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. This policy and associated administrative procedures must be displayed in a prominent place on the Division website and shared with stakeholders where appropriate.
10. All information is protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

References:

Section 12, 16.1, 18, 20, 24, 25, 45, 45.1, 50, 60, 61, 105, 113 School Act  
 Alberta Bill of Rights  
 Alberta Human Rights Act  
 Occupational Health and Safety Act  
 Teaching Profession Act  
 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms  
 Criminal Code  
 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)  
 AP 355 – Student Code of Conduct and Discipline  
 AP 350 – Student Responsibilities  
 AP 171 – Harassment