

Anti-Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination Prevention Policy

Overview

Kimberley Independent School has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying, harassment, or discrimination. At no time will bullying, harassment, or discrimination of students or staff be tolerated. Bullying, harassment, and discrimination are regarded as a serious infringement of school rules and policy.

The safety and wellbeing of children in the Kimberley Independent School is of paramount consideration. Children deserve to be protected from abuse, neglect, bullying, harm or threat of harm. Therefore, KIS will ensure that children attending this school will experience a learning environment that enables every child to feel safe, accepted and respected. Kimberley Independent 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 or gender identity and expression, while remaining consistent with the independent school's faith-values, cultural perspectives and philosophical values.

The disciplinary policy will be enforced, and any matter being identified as bullying, harassment, or discrimination will be thoroughly documented and investigated. If deemed to be bullying, harassment, or discrimination the behavior may be punishable by suspension and/or expulsion from the school.

If the suspended student will be returning to the school, a plan will be developed to prevent future bullying or harassment, promote stronger relationships, and a positive social environment. Any behaviour that intimidates or exposes students or staff to physical harm, ridicule, hatred, or contempt can have a significant negative impact on the school environment. The school will not tolerate retaliation of any sort against a student who reports a concern (witnessed, rumoured, etc.). If a student is found to have made a false claim or accusation, they shall face consequences determined appropriate by the school administrator.

There is a growing concern about conduct called "cyber-bullying" that has had a profound negative impact not only on students' ability to learn in school, but also the school's status as a caring and orderly learning and working environment.

The KIS Codes of Conduct are informed by the *BC Human Rights Code*, which states that two of its purposes are to:

- "foster a society in British Columbia in which there are no impediments to full and free participation in economic, social, political and cultural life of British Columbia," and
- "promote a climate of understanding and mutual respect where all are equal in dignity and rights."
- Students' feelings of safety and belonging, including freedom from discrimination, can seriously affect their ability to learn in school. KIS is a place where students are free from harm, where clear expectations of acceptable behaviour are held and met, and where all members feel they belong.
- Unacceptable behaviour can be unwelcome and inappropriate conduct, such as insults, threats, physical harm, and the spread of rumours, which aims to humiliate or intimidate another person. It also includes bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or violent behaviours

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- Acceptable behaviour is respectful and constructive, and includes fair conduct, open communication, and actions that promote a positive environment, rather than undermining others.

Safe schools:

- Make it easy and safe for students and their parents to inform school authorities of safety concerns
- Make a “big deal” about bullying, harassment and intimidation

Caring schools:

- Enable parents to advocate for their children’s well-being
- Enable students to help each other
- Promote appropriate adult-student relationships

Orderly schools:

- Plan for things to “go right” and are ready to respond appropriately if or when things “go wrong”
- Minimize distractions from purposeful learning activities
- Are characterized by a climate of mutual respect and responsibility

Procedures

The administrator has responsibility for investigations concerning harassment, intimidation or bullying, and acts of cyberbullying. The investigator(s) shall be a neutral party having had no involvement in the complaint presented.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the following procedures:

Step 1

Any harassment, intimidation or bullying, and acts of cyberbullying (complaints, rumors, etc.) shall be presented to the Administrator. Complaints against the principal shall be filed with the Board. All such information will be recorded in writing and will include the specific nature of the offense and corresponding dates.

Step 2

The Administrator receiving the complaint shall promptly investigate. Parents will be notified of the nature of any complaint involving their student. The administrator will arrange such meetings as may be necessary with all concerned parties within [five] working days after receipt of the information or complaint. The parties will have an opportunity to submit evidence and a list of witnesses. All findings related to the complaint will be recorded in writing. The administrator shall notify the complainant and parents as appropriate, [in writing,] when the investigation is concluded and a decision regarding disciplinary action, as warranted, is determined. [A copy of the notification letter or the date and details of notification to the complainant, together with any other documentation related to the incident, including disciplinary action taken or recommended, shall be forwarded to the Board.]

Step 3

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at Step 2, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Board. Such appeal must be filed within 10 working days after receipt of the Step 2 decision. The administrator will arrange such meetings with the complainant and other affected parties as deemed necessary to discuss the appeal. The Board Chair shall provide a written decision to the complainant’s appeal within 10 working days.

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Definitions

Bullying behaviour: a pattern of repeated aggressive behaviour, with negative intent, directed from one person to another where there is a power imbalance. Bullying behaviour is a type of harassment and intimidation. This aggressive behavior includes physical or verbal behaviour, and is an intentional and purposeful act meant to inflict injury or discomfort on the other person. There are three critical conditions that distinguish bullying from other forms of aggressive behaviour including:

1. **Power:** involves a power imbalance. Individuals who bully acquire their power through physical size and strength, including status within the peer group, and/or by recruiting support of the peer group.
2. **Frequency:** is repeated over time. Bullying is characterized by frequent and repeated attacks. It is this factor that brings about the anticipatory terror in the mind of the person being bullied that can be so detrimental and can have the most debilitating long-term effects.
3. **Intent to harm:** is intended to hurt. Individuals who bully generally do so with the intent to either physically or emotionally harm the other person.

Cyber bullying: bullying behaviour which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, blog, discussion group or instant messaging. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies and new internet technologies in the future.

Harassment: any unwelcome or unwanted act or comment that is hurtful, degrading, humiliating, or offensive to another person is an act of harassment. Of particular concern is such behaviour that persists after the aggressor has been asked to stop.

Any of the following behaviours could be considered harassment:

1. Condescending treatment that undermines another's self-respect, name-calling, teasing, disrespectful comments
2. Gossiping, spreading malicious rumours, "dirty" looks, social ridicule, public embarrassment
3. Social isolation ("freezing out" or rejecting others), exclusion from a group, threatening to withdraw friendship
4. Repeated unwanted communication
5. Unwelcome jokes, innuendoes, insults, or put downs; taunts about a person's body, disability, religion, attire, age, economic status, ethnic or national origin
6. Insulting graffiti directed at an individual or group
7. Unwanted and uninvited sexual attention, particularly when it is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to the recipient.
8. **Intimidation:** Intimidation is the act of instilling fear in someone as a means of controlling that person. For example, any of the following behaviours could be considered intimidation:
9. Verbal threats: threatening phone calls, threats of violence against a person or property
10. Physical threats: showing a weapon, jostling, threatening to punch, stalking or following
11. Defacing or stealing victim's property
12. Daring or coercing victim to do something dangerous or illegal
13. Extortion (demanding payment or goods for a victim's safety)
14. Inciting hatred toward a victim
15. Setting up a victim to take the blame for an offence

Disciplinary Policy

Our objective is to foster in our students the care, respect and consideration for oneself, other individuals and their property, and to enable our students to develop a sense of responsibility and self-

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discipline through age-appropriate guidance and authority based on the principles of the Kimberley Independent School.

Elementary

In the elementary school, the teacher stands as a loving authority and a worthy model for the children. In giving guidance, setting boundaries and assigning consequences the teacher draws upon the longer-term relationship with his/her students and a deep awareness of each child's individual temperament. The foundation of rhythms and routines established in early childhood is further developed by practice of good habits, which foster the emergence of self-discipline.

Junior High

In junior high, the student's strengthening sense of self-discipline is called upon when they take responsibility for their actions and accept the consequences of their behavior. Students are able to experience dignity and self-worth when they are able to redeem their actions through reparative or restorative activities. While students are experiencing a growing need for individual expression, teachers still set clear boundaries and consequences to meet the older student's need for clarity, firmness and fairness.

Discontinued Enrollment

We believe that students will develop maturity, responsibility and self-discipline by engaging in the rich curriculum guided by the authority of their teachers and by experiencing the consequences of their actions within our school environment. However, when the teachers no longer believe they can affect transformation in a student due to the persistence and/or nature of a child's behavior, the school may decide it is in the best interest of everyone that the student leaves the school.

Refer to Student Codes of Conduct

Guidelines for Discipline

Day-to-Day Discipline Issues

- Teachers set guidelines and expectations for students' behavior and actions in their class, consistent with the School's expectations and the Code of Conduct and review them with their students.
- Consequences for not meeting expectations will be assigned by the classroom teacher and will be applied in the context of the student's transgression, the child's age, his or her temperament and the history of the student's behavioural conduct.
- Consequences may include a detention, a letter of apology, an essay on the importance of respecting the rules.
- If deemed necessary, the teacher involved will contact principal/parents to report the student's behavior. Principal may choose to send the child home, and your child must be picked up within one hour. If parent is unavailable for pickup alternative arrangements must be made by parent.
- If a discipline issue is continual, the class teacher will contact the principal who will then contact the parents to discuss and issue possible solutions. At this time, the class teacher should inform parents of the student's status on the discipline policy.

- In some cases of a more extreme nature, the class teacher and the principal may recommend an out-of-school suspension. The length of the suspension (not to exceed 5 days) and whether it warrants a Contract for Continued Enrollment will be determined at this time. The student, parents and teacher will be informed of the suspension and the teacher will make a written report.
- The Board of Directors will be informed of the out-of-school suspension at its next meeting.
- All inappropriate behaviour and resulting consequences will be reported to and documented by the student's class teacher and the principal, if required.
- Persistent Discipline Issues – Contract for Continued Enrollment
- When a student's misconduct becomes persistent, their actions may become a detriment to the learning environment for the other students. The class teacher and principal may initiate a Contract for Continued Enrollment for the student.
- At the spring Parent/Teacher Interview, the class teacher and parents review the student's re-enrollment for the coming year. The class teacher may at that time recommend the placement of the child on a contract until the end of the school year or reintegrate the student into the class.
- Persistent Discipline Issues – Students with Special Needs
- Some students may struggle with impulsive behaviour, and may or may not have a diagnosed special need. The school will strive to work with parents and other supportive professionals to ensure the student's needs are met.
- To ensure the safety of all students and allow educators to maintain a high quality of service. It is recommended that each classroom have no more than 2 students with special needs. The principal may modify the number of students with special needs per classroom, so long as safety and quality of learning are maintained. Factors influencing the number of students with special needs include: type and severity of special need, existing capacity in the classroom, meeting the needs of current students, obtaining additional resources to support the student with special needs.
- If a student requires additional professional assessments and/or supports and has become a danger to him/herself or others, that student may be asked not to attend school until the assessments are completed and adequate supports are in place.