



SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS POLICY

DM Approval:

Effective Date: September 1, 2018

GENERAL INFORMATION

Safe and Caring School Environments

Under the *Education Act*, the Minister must establish and communicate goals and objectives for the Yukon education system, including the development of student self-worth through a positive educational environment.

The Department of Education supports a healthy, active, safe and caring learning environment in Yukon schools.

A school is a place that promotes responsibility, respect, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included and accepted. Building and sustaining a positive school climate is a complex challenge requiring evidence-informed solutions.

All students, parents, and teachers and other school staff have the right to be safe, and to feel safe, in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to contribute to a positive school climate. The promotion of a whole-school approach to prevention and intervention strategies fosters a positive school climate that supports student achievement and the well-being of all students.

PURPOSE OF POLICY

- To promote the safety of people in the schools.
- To ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity.
- To promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community.
- To maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect.
- To encourage the use of non-violent and restorative approaches to resolve conflict.

- To prevent bullying in schools.

PRINCIPLES

Respect: School community members must exhibit behaviour that shows respect for the rights, property and safety of themselves and others.

Responsibility: School community members must accept personal responsibility for their behaviour in order to maintain a safe and productive learning environment.

Rights: School community members must honour the rights of others through the process of learning and demonstrating appropriate behaviour in the context of social responsibility.

The above principles are supported by the *Education Act* under several sections, including the preamble and those pertaining to the duties of students, parents/guardians, School Councils, teachers, principals, superintendents and support staff.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Respect & Responsibility

All members of the school community must:

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, territorial, and municipal laws;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity; respect differences in people, their ideas, and their opinions; treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability;
- respect the rights of others; show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- respect all members of the school community;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching; and
- not use profane language.

Safety

All members of the school community must not:

- engage in bullying, abusive or other unacceptable behaviour;
- commit physical or sexual harassment or assault;
- traffic in weapons or drugs;

- give alcohol, tobacco or cannabis to a minor;
- commit robbery;
- be in possession of any weapon in or on school property;
- use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;
- cause injury to any person with an object;
- be in possession of, be under the influence of, or provide others with alcohol, cannabis or illegal drugs; inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias;
- commit an act of vandalism that causes damage to school property or to property located on the premises of the school.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Department of Education** has the responsibility to:

- Provide direction to schools, School Councils and School Boards to ensure opportunity, academic excellence and accountability in the education system.
- Promote the use of effective intervention strategies and responses as necessary.
- Provide opportunities for all staff to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to develop and maintain academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment.
- Wherever possible, the department should collaborate to provide coordinated prevention and intervention programs and services, and should endeavour to share effective practices.

School Administration, under the direction of their superintendent, take a leadership role in the daily operation of a school. They provide this leadership by:

- Promoting academic excellence in a safe teaching and learning environment.
- Holding everyone under their authority accountable for their behaviour and actions.
- Empowering students to be positive leaders in their school community.
- Communicating regularly and meaningfully with school community members.

Teachers and school staff, with the leadership of their principal, maintain order in the school and are role models. They are expected to:

- Help students work to their full potential and develop self-worth.
- Empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school and community.
- Communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents.
- Maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students.
- Demonstrate respect for all students, staff and parents.
- Prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship.

Students must demonstrate respect for themselves and others. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- Attends school prepared, on time and ready to learn.
- Shows respect for themselves and others.
- Refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others.
- Is aware of and follows the established rules and takes responsibility for his or her own actions.

Parents must support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents fulfill this responsibility when they:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Show an active interest in their child's school work and progress.
- Communicate regularly with the school.
- Help their child be prepared for school.
- Promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival.
- Encourage and assist their child in following the school behaviour expectations.
- Demonstrate respect for all school community members.

All school community members have the responsibility to comply with the *Education Act* and regulations, department policies and Memoranda of Understanding that have been established with Yukon First Nations.

Appendix A: Definitions

‘Behaviour Support Plan’ is a written plan based on a functional assessment of problematic behaviour. It contains preventative practices, replacement or alternative behaviour being taught and reinforced and consequences for problematic behaviour. The Plan is implemented, continually monitored, and evaluated based on progress achieved.

‘Bullying’ is a pattern of repeated aggressive behaviour, with negative intent, directed from one person to another, or from one group to another. In many cases bullying occurs when there is a power imbalance. Repeated bullying behaviours can take many forms and are not limited to; physical (e.g. pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g. name calling, put-downs), social (e.g. social isolation, gossip), intimidation (extortion, defacing property or clothing) or electronic bullying (threats or harmful and demeaning text messages, photos or videos distributed or published to the internet).

‘Discrimination’ consists of being mistreated or treated differently, unequally or unfairly on the basis of an identified group membership which may include: race, ethnic origin, colour, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital/family status or disability.

‘Harassment’ consists of unwelcome comments, actions or material directed at or offensive to another person in which the harasser knows or ought to have reasonably known is unwelcome.

An **‘Individualized Education Plan’** is a document that outlines the educational program for a student as determined in consultation with professional staff and parents. IEPs are implemented when a student is determined to have academic, social/emotional and/or behavior challenges that have led to a designation of exceptionality under Division 2 of the *Education Act*.

‘Parent’ means the biological parents, the adoptive parents by custom or otherwise, and/or otherwise the persons legally entitled to custody of the child.

A **‘Restorative Approach’** facilitates community support and ensures that a student learns how his/her behaviour impacts others and the surrounding environment. Restorative processes provide the student with the opportunity to accept responsibility, make amends to those impacted negatively, and engage in restitution. For additional information and resources contact Student Support Services in the Department of Education.

A **‘Safety Plan’** is a written plan created in progressive response to a student who may exhibit increasing levels of disruptive and/or violent behavior. The Plan emphasizes staff and student safety as the paramount goal, and is reviewed regularly by the School Based Team.

‘School Administration’ means the school principal, vice principal and or other staff acting in the role of principal or vice principal.

‘School Based Team’ means a collaborative problem solving team established to address a student’s needs and increase learner success. Members can include the school administrator, Learning Assistance Teacher, Shared Resource Program Teacher, School Counsellor, classroom teacher, and parent(s).

‘School Community’ means everyone in a community who has contact with a school, including students, families, Department of Education staff, School Councils or Boards, First Nations and other partners in education.

‘Sexual Harassment’ means any conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature:

- a) that might reasonably be expected to cause offense or humiliation; or
- b) that might reasonably be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or promotion.

A **‘Student Learning Plan’** is a written document that identifies short-term and ongoing adaptations to support a student to achieve prescribed learning outcomes.

A **‘Threat’** is any expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be spoken, written, drawn, posted on the internet, or made by gesture only. Threats may be direct, indirect, conditional or veiled.

‘Unacceptable Behaviours’ mean behaviours that break school rules and interfere with the learning of others, including their emotional well-being, interfere with an orderly environment or create unsafe conditions for other students and staff.

A **‘Weapon’** is an object that is designed for inflicting bodily harm or physical damage.

Appendix B: Application, Exceptional Circumstances and Legislated and Policy References

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all staff of the Department of Education, School Councils and School Boards, and all other members of the School community.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In situations where the individual circumstances of a case are such that the provisions of this policy cannot be applied or to do so would result in an unfair or an unintended result, the decision may be based on the individual merits and justice of the situation. Such a decision will be considered for that specific case only and will not be precedent setting.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective September 1, 2018.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY REFERENCES

Education Act, s. 34; s. 38; s. 39; s. 167

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Yukon Human Rights Act

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 2, 15

Department of Education Policy 'School Council Dispute Resolution Procedure Policy'

Department of Education Policy 'Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy'

Department of Education Policy 'Student Attendance'

Department of Education Policy 'Volunteers in Schools'

General Administration Manual, Policy 3.47

Department of Education 'Student Support Services Procedures'

HISTORY

Department of Education Policy 'Safe and Caring Schools Policy', effective January 31, 2008; amended effective September 1, 2018.