



Section 3: Staff

“Together We Learn”

351 - RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

Introduction

The Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining a learning and working environment where people are treated and treat each other professionally and respectfully in their interactions. When personal conflict occurs, processes are in place to allow the conflict to be effectively resolved.

Policy

1. The Board is committed to a learning and working environment that supports the following objectives:
 - 1.1 A consistent understanding is developed regarding the proper and appropriate behaviour in dealing with others, including the ability to speak or act without offending;
 - 1.2 Interactions between people are fair, professional and respectful;
 - 1.3 Conflict, when it occurs, is resolved in a timely and effective manner.
2. The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that the provisions of this policy are communicated and understood.
3. All participants engaged in School District activities are to conduct themselves in a manner that is courteous, respectful of and responsive to the needs of others. They can expect to be free from objectionable or abusive behaviour that is contrary to this policy.
4. Individuals involved in the learning and working environment are responsible for their actions and are accountable for their consequences. Individuals are responsible for ensuring that their actions and communication with others (including electronic communication) adheres to the spirit and intent of this policy.
5. To assist in the achievement of these objectives, the Board will provide volunteer Mediators/Facilitators to provide assistance in the resolution of conflict when it occurs. These individuals will be selected from the partner groups.

Application

1. This policy covers all adults involved in the learning or working environment regardless of their role for function. This includes School District employees,



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parents, volunteers, third parties doing business with the School District and members of the general public who interface with the School District.

2. For District employees, this policy does not supersede any provision of an applicable Collective Agreement.
3. Students are not covered under this policy. Standards for student behaviour are addressed in each school’s Code of Conduct.
4. Inappropriate behaviour by an adult toward a student is not covered by this policy. The School Act, BC College of Teachers and the District’s Collective Agreements will define and govern the standard of behaviour required by adults when dealing with students.
5. The conduct of Board of Education is addressed in Board Policy 125 – Trustee Code of Ethics.
6. This policy is not intended to address issues where the cause of the conflict or behaviour is based on a personal characteristic that is protected under the BC Human Rights Code. For example, if the inappropriate behaviour toward another person is based on homophobic or racist views, Board Policy 350 – Human Rights is the appropriate arena to seek resolution.

Examples of Policy Breaches

In order to provide further guidance, the Board considers the examples listed below to be breaches of this policy:

1. Unprofessional or Disrespectful Comments or Actions

When people come together to perform an activity, there may be incidents when an individual behaves inappropriately. Some examples of behaviour in the learning or working environment that would be inappropriate include:

- an action by any person which humiliates, insults or degrades another person;
- verbal abuse in any form, such as swearing at or displaying unnecessary shows of temper or anger toward another person;
- physical abuse/intimidation.

These actions are often not intended to harm another person. They may have occurred in the “heat of the moment” or with a lack of forethought regarding their consequence. But they still have a detrimental impact on an individual or group.



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2. Workplace Bullying

Bullying is defined as acts or verbal comments that could mentally or physically hurt or isolate a person in the learning or working environment. Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people. Some common examples would include:

- spreading malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo that is not true;
- personal insults and name calling;
- excluding or isolating someone socially;
- intimidating a person;
- physically abusing or threatening someone;
- undermining or deliberately impeding a person’s work;
- withholding necessary information or purposefully giving the wrong information;
- making jokes that a reasonable person would find offensive by spoken word, gestures, on paper, or through electronic communication;
- intruding on a person’s privacy by pestering, spying or stalking;
- criticizing another person persistently or constantly;
- tampering with a person’s personal belongings or work equipment.

These actions can be overt and obvious or subtle, and would be considered by a “reasonable person” to be unacceptable.

3. Abuse of Authority

Individuals involved in District activities can be given responsibility and authority for the management of resources, including people, financial and/or material resources. People in these positions are held to a higher standard of performance and are expected to exercise their authority in a fair and consistent manner. Examples of abuse of authority include:

- any of the behaviours noted previously in this section;
- addressing individual work performance issues in a public setting where others may hear;
- setting impossible deadlines that will set up the individual to fail;
- unfairly assigning unpleasant or undesirable tasks to one person.



School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan)

Policies And Procedures

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People in positions of authority have difficult tasks to perform including assigning work, setting performance expectations, providing feedback and taking corrective or disciplinary action when necessary. These activities can create tension, but the legitimate exercise of this authority is expected.

Date Agreed: June 22, 2011

Date Amended:

Related Document: 351R, Policy 350, 350R