

The Board believes that maintaining high standards of professional workplace conduct is essential in providing the best learning environment for students and in building confidence in the public school system. Therefore, the Board is committed to creating and maintaining a learning and working environment where all adults are treated and treat each other professionally and respectfully in their interactions. The Board expects all adults involved in the school district to follow the highest standards of conduct in all aspects of their roles.

This policy is intended to provide a safe and effective process for resolving conflicts and reporting inappropriate conduct in the workplace. Where the complaint involves violence, physical or sexual harassment, or a violation of the Human Rights Code refer to Policies 405.2 and 405.3.

**Policy**

This policy covers all adults involved in the learning or working environment regardless of their role. This includes school district employees, contractors, parents, volunteers, third parties doing business, and members of the general public who interface with the school district.

1. Processes and procedures are in place to ensure:
  - 1.1 A consistent understanding regarding the proper and appropriate behavior 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 Appropriate conduct with respect to school district property;
  - 1.4 Matters are resolved in a timely and effective manner.
2. All participants engaged in school district activities are to conduct themselves in a manner which is courteous, respectful of and responsive to the needs of others and which also treats school district property appropriately.
3. All participants can expect to be free from objectionable or abusive behavior and comments.
4. Individuals involved in the learning and working environment are responsible and accountable for their actions.
5. Individuals are responsible for ensuring that their actions and communication with others (including electronic communication) adhere to the spirit and intent of this policy.
6. WorkSafeBC policy requires an employee to report an incident of violence or harassment, to his/her supervisor, Human Resources Department (via Director of Human Resources), or Union representative. Union representatives have an obligation under WorkSafeBC regulations to report incidents of violence or harassment, to the Human Resources Department (via the Human Resources Director). Refer to Policies 405.2

Protection of Employees from Violence in the Workplace, and 405.3 Harassment.

7. The conduct of the Board of Education is addressed in Board Policy 200.3 Trustee Code of Conduct.
8. Students are not covered under this policy. Standards for student behavior are addressed under Policy 502 Student Conduct.
9. Inappropriate behavior by an adult toward a student is not covered by this policy. The School Act, School District Policy, the Teachers' Regulation Branch, the District's Collective Agreements along with the BC Human Rights Code and employment laws/statutes will define and govern the standard of behavior required by adults when dealing with students.
10. People in positions of authority are also entitled to a safe working and learning environment free from objectionable and abusive behavior.
11. For District employees, this policy does not supersede any provision of an applicable Collective Agreement.
12. People in positions of authority are held to a higher standard of performance and are expected to exercise their authority in a fair and consistent manner. As well, 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.

### **Examples of Inappropriate Workplace Behaviors and Policy Breaches**

Inappropriate workplace behaviors are those which are objectionable and/or unwelcome to an individual.

Examples of such conduct include, but are not limited to:

- An action or comment by any person which insults, or degrades another person
- Verbal abuse in any form, such as swearing at or displaying anger toward another person
- Written or verbal comments, actions or gestures or other behaviors
- "Jokes" which are offensive or belittling
- Abusing authority
- Yelling or shouting (except where intended to alert another to danger)
- Deliberately excluding an employee from relevant work activities or decision making
- Decision making which is influenced by factors which have no work related purpose

- Attempting to discredit an employee by spreading false information about him/her

**Resolution Process**

From time to time a person in the workplace may experience an unwelcome interaction with another person. In many cases, the other person involved may not realize that his/her actions or comments are creating an issue for the individual who is concerned (complainant). Given that most reasonable people will change their behavior when they discover it is creating issues for others, a complainant must attempt to resolve concerns at the earliest possible stage without unnecessary escalation. The complainant may select an advocate for support through the following process:

- 1.1 The complainant should attempt to find a suitable resolution directly with the other person involved.
- 1.2 In the event that a satisfactory resolution was not achieved, the complainant should address the matter with the other individual's supervisor.
- 1.3 If the issue remains unresolved, the complainant shall refer the matter to the appropriate Director for consideration of further mediation or investigation.
- 1.4 If the issue has not been concluded through the process at 1.3, it shall be referred to the Superintendent (or designate).

**Reporting an Incident**

In the event that someone uninvolved is a witness to inappropriate conduct (i.e., damage to property, an offense toward another individual, etc.) that individual must report the incident to the supervisor most responsible for that area immediately.

Adopted: August 31, 2016  
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