

4.9 HARASSMENT AND BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

Purpose:

The Bella Bella Community School (BBCS) is committed to providing a safe, caring and orderly environment which includes the protection of all students' physical safety, social connectedness, and 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 our Hałzaqv values and Gvi'ilas. We aim to create an atmosphere of kindness, mutual support and generosity inclusive of all students. The staff at the school, school board directors and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance. BBCS will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate or harass another student through words or actions.

Scope:

Superintendent, school board members, administrators, teachers, staff and students.

Policy:

This policy also underlines the seriousness of harassment (at times referred to as bullying) in our school and urges all employees and students to work toward its elimination either as a participant or an observer.

BBCS will take disciplinary measures, corrective action, or any other appropriate action as is deemed necessary and as outlined in this Policy against any person who is found to have bullied or harassed another. This policy addresses conduct taking place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation, or any official fieldtrip.

Procedure:

Bullying and harassment are not only school disciplinary matters but are illegal under Canadian law, as is victimization of those who report bullying. Bullying and harassment can occur wherever people work or play together. Sometimes people do not realize that their behaviour can be harmful and unfair to others, and also against the law. In all cases of bullying/harassment:

- Every effort will be made to support students who experience bullying.
- Every effort will be made to work with the student who is bullying.
- Every effort will be taken to adequately account for the student's age, maturity and special needs
- BBCS acknowledges that bullying and harassment can occur, and students will be encouraged to report each incident to the school and their parents.

Monitoring and follow-up will take place to ensure the bullying ceases.

Education, awareness and prevention of bullying at BBCS will be ongoing throughout the school year, including ways to recognize its pattern and characteristics versus normal peer conflict. Instruction to students that emphasizes respect and compassion for others and age-appropriate behaviours to prevent or respond to bullying. Instruction to students on their responsibility to report and take an active stand against acts of bullying including reference to the school's code of conduct as it relates to bullying. Education and awareness on understanding BBCS' Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) school-wide policy.

1. If found to have taken place then, at least two staff members will talk with the student/s involved either separately or as a group. Specific (and sometimes very detailed) questioning about any background or history to the incident may be asked. These include questions about previous incidents or the relationship with the alleged bully and whether any possible provocation or misunderstanding has occurred.
2. The student who claims to have been bullied will be interviewed and may be asked to give an account of the problem orally or in writing. As soon as possible the accused person will be seen and informed of the allegation. The accused will be asked to provide his or her version of the events. Specifically, he or she will be asked to comment on whether the allegation is true. Other relevant questions may also be asked.
3. If it is clear that bullying or harassment has occurred, a letter will then be sent to all involved informing them of the details of the incident and what the process has been up to that point and a full and detailed record will be kept of all reports, meetings, interviews and strategies a copy of which will be filed by the Records Clerk.
4. The students involved will be advised of the findings.
5. The student accused will be taken through the events and the inappropriateness of harassing behaviour will be fully explained. Responses, such as “I was only joking” or “He’s too sensitive” and the like will be explained as unacceptable. The expected future behaviour will also be set out.
6. At this point resolution will normally occur, with both parties understanding how they must act appropriately in the future.
7. The student involved in the harassment will be seen regularly over the next few weeks and periodically after this to determine whether the bullying behaviour has ceased. If the bullying behaviour does not recur, the matter will end.
8. BBCS will take disciplinary measures, corrective action, or any other appropriate action as is deemed necessary and as outlined in this Policy against any person who is found to have bullied or harassed another.

Definitions:

Bullying and harassment includes any *inappropriate conduct or comment* by a person towards another individual that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that individual to be humiliated or intimidated. It can be related to unwelcome or objectionable conduct or comment that would be considered discriminatory under the Human Rights Code, if the conduct or comment was in respect of any of the following:

- race
- political belief
- conviction for an offence
- sex
- colour
- religion
- ancestry
- age
- physical disability
- marital status
- place of origin (birthplace)
- sexual orientation
- mental disability
- family status

Bullying and harassment includes complaints that are not based on the *prohibited or protected grounds* set out in the Human Rights Code, but on other forms of mistreatment, that has the purpose or effect of intimidating or isolating an individual. Examples of conduct or comments that might constitute bullying and harassment include:

- verbal and non-verbal aggression or insults
- calling someone derogatory names
- harmful hazing or initiation practices
- vandalizing personal belongings
- spreading malicious rumours

Sexual harassment is any verbal, written or physical conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature that may cause offence or humiliation or that might reasonably be perceived by the subject of the harassment as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or promotion. Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to:

- unwelcome remarks, questions, jokes, innuendo or taunting, about a person's body or sex, including sexist comments or sexual invitations
- verbal abuse and threats of a sexual nature
- leering, staring or making sexual gestures
- display of pornographic or other sexual materials in the form of degrading pictures, graffiti, cartoons or sayings unwanted physical contact such as touching, patting, pinching, hugging
- intimidation, threat or actual physical assault of a sexual nature
- sexual advances with actual or implied work-related consequences

*Replacing former policy 4.9 Harassment and Sexual Abuse
Replacing former policy 4.10 Anti-Bullying and Anti-Violence Policy
Approved by BBCSS*