

4.12 RCMP – BBCS PROTOCOL

Purpose:

To ensure a positive and healthy school environment within the whole community of Bella Bella, it is important to have a cooperative and respectful relationship between the school and all of the other community entities that can enter our students' lives in one way or the other. Maintaining such a cooperative relationship with the RCMP will have several positive aspects for our students, the staff and the wider community.

Scope:

All Board Members, administrators, teachers, parents and students

Policy:

The RCMP-BBCS protocol established between the two parties is to be adhered to when dealing with community/school issues. This protocol agreement between the RCMP and BBCS will clarify our different roles in keeping our school and community safe

Procedure:

RCMP School Liaison: One important part in building this connection is the establishment of an RCMP officer in the role of a School-Liaison, ensuring that needed communication and connection between the two community entities.

Key Initiatives:

- Preventing delinquent and criminal behaviour through education, communication and addressing the circumstances underlying the youth's offending behaviour in a collaborative effort with school staff.
- Assessing threats and risk factors facing our young people and be a resource person for police, students, families, teachers, counselors and the community.
- Assisting in making appropriate referrals to rehabilitate, restore and reintegrate youth into the school and wider community.
- Taking appropriate action in delivering meaningful consequences by working within the Youth Criminal Justice Act, Bella Bella Community School and utilizing other community-based programs such as the Heiltsuk Restorative Justice and the Victim Support Services.

Current Responsibilities:

- Develop a trusting and cooperative relationship between the RCMP, students, parents, school staff, and the wider community in a "non-crisis" environment.
- Act as a source of information between the school and the RCMP in cases of student involvement or situations that could impact day to day interactions at the school.
- Provide students and school staff with a better understanding of the law, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and better access to police services.
- Take the role of a resource person for staff meetings, classroom lectures and discussions on current law and enforcement related topics.
- Act as a visible and approachable RCMP officer through regular, casual school visits and interactions with students and staff.

- Participate in School Based Threat Assessments by providing by providing information and services to the school, social agencies and other community supports to ensure the safety and protection of students and staff.
- Assist in an investigation by interviewing victims, suspects and witnesses and recommending appropriate and meaningful consequences.

RCMP – Victim Services: Another essential part for the cooperation between the RCMP and BBCS is the support Victim Services can provide to our students. As this position hinges around trust and relationship building, it will be important to have the Victim Services person at our school regularly.

Key Initiatives:

- Build a relationship with the students at BBCS through an ongoing presence, allowing students to feel comfortable with the Victim Services person in case of an emergency when that support is needed
- Assessing threats and risk factors facing our young people and be a resource person for students, families, teachers, counselors and the community.
- Assisting in making appropriate referrals to support students who are in need of Victim Services
- Remaining in contact with teachers and administrators in cases where a student will be or is in need of Victim Services and special arrangements are needed
- Establishing a regular time at the school will be ideal if the case load allows for it

School:

In maintaining a positive and healthy school environment within the larger community, it is important to preserve a respectful and cooperative relationship between BBCS and the RCMP, while attending to our responsibilities in “locus parentis”, our duty is to act always in the best interest of our students.

Administrative Responsibilities:

School personnel will cooperate with members from the RCMP according to legal guidelines, BBCS Policies and this protocol which maintains the school’s responsibility to provide for all students’ and staff’s well-being. Involvement of the school with members of the RCMP may be as a result of:

- Casual visits of RCMP officers at the school and/or regular visits by the RCMP – School – Liaison
- A student indicating that she/he has been involved in, or is a victim of a criminal act
- Administration’s belief that a student may have committed a crime while at school
- A police request to question a student in connection with an investigation of a crime on or off school property

Administrative Procedures:

It is the administration's understanding and expectation that school staff will report any disclosure or witnessing of illegal activities, involving our students, directly to the authorities. In situations where the RCMP wishes to have contact with students enrolled at BBCS, the administrator needs to be informed about the situation and will:

- request that whenever possible, interviews, questioning, searches and arrests are done away from school
- if interaction with RCMP is happening at school, make every attempt to notify the parents or caregiver and confirm whether they wish to attend (administrator will document attempts to make contact)
- determine from the RCMP officer what the nature of the contact will be (conversation, questioning, arrest)
- ensure that a staff member (administrator preferably) attends and observes the interview in the absence of the student's parents yet does not participate in the questioning
- ensure that complete records of the circumstances of the police conduct are kept
- make sure the students understand that this interaction is between the student and the RCMP and does not fall under the jurisdiction of school policy
- provide a private room for the RCMP and students to meet
- unless in the situation of an emergency, school administration will decide where at the school a possible arrest should take place

School Procedures:

To maintain a positive working relationship between the RCMP and BBCS and ensure each entity's role to the best interest of the students, parents and community, it is important to cooperate within clearly defined roles, avoiding overlap and confusion. Therefore:

- school staff cannot act, or appear to act, as a representative of the RCMP
- student demographic information can only be requested from, and provided by administration
- school level investigations and/or other discipline-related steps will proceed once the contact with the police is concluded
- students, parents and staff need to be of the understanding that school related consequences will be determined separately from police investigations and their findings