

<p><b><i>Policy Manual</i></b></p>          <p>PAGE: 1 of 4</p>	<p>Policy 20                  TITLE: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Working and Learning Environments</p> <p>APPROVED: March 8, 2016                  AMENDED/REVIEWED: June 11, 2024</p>
<p>LEGAL REFERENCE: Section 8, 31, 33, 35, 35.1, 36, 37, 41, 51, 52, 53, 222 Education Act; Alberta Bill of Rights; Alberta Human Rights Act; Occupational Health and Safety Act; Teaching Profession Act; Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; Criminal Code</p>	

**Policy**

Each and every student and staff member within the Grande Prairie Public School Division has a right to work and learn in an environment that is respectful of individual diversity, engenders a feeling of safety, and is free from bullying, discrimination, and harassment.

The Board recognizes and affirms the rights of all staff members and enrolled students as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and all other relevant legislation. Staff and students will not be discriminated against for reasons of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, and sexual orientation as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Because diversity is a strength of our division, it is a focus of our attention. We welcome students from all backgrounds. The Board is committed to the safety of students and to providing a welcoming, caring, inclusive, respectful and safe learning and working environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence. This policy applies to all Board operated sites and includes field trips and other off-site activities engaged in by students and staff. All will share in the responsibility for eliminating bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence. The application of this policy will apply to all Board operated sites and includes field trips and other off-site activities engaged in by students and staff. The Board prohibits bullying, harassing, discriminatory, and violent behaviours and expects allegations of such behaviours to be investigated in a timely and respectful manner.

The division and its staff strive to ensure that a key outcome for the Division is that all stakeholders will possess a strong connection to their schools as welcoming, caring, respectful and safe places focused on their individualized success.

**Guidelines**

The Board acknowledges its responsibility to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments for all students and staff. It recognizes the importance of students' emotional, social, intellectual and physical wellness to their success in school

<p><i>Policy Manual</i></p> <p>PAGE: 2 of 4</p>	<p>Policy 20 TITLE: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Working and Learning Environments</p> <p>APPROVED: March 8, 2016 AMENDED/REVIEWED: June 11, 2024</p>
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and expects students to adhere to the detailed expectations outlined in Administrative Procedure 350: [Student Code of Conduct](#) and all school codes of conduct.

1. The Board expects all stakeholders to adhere to this policy. This policy covers behavior that has a negative impact on an individual or group in the school community whether the behavior occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means.
2. The Board encourages reporting to a responsible adult within the Division all incidents of threats, bullying, harassment, violence or intimidation regardless of the identity of the alleged harasser or offender.
3. The Board provides a method to attend to harassment, bullying, and discrimination through Administrative Procedure 170 and 171.
4. The Board recognizes the Trustees may, at times, engage in vigorous debate and provides a method to attend to harassment, bullying and discrimination in regard to Trustees of the Board through Board Policy 6, Trustee Code of Ethics.
5. The Board recognizes that many individuals have dissenting opinions pertaining to Federal Charter and Provincial Human Rights issues. These opinions shall be respected if these opinions do not transfer to become bullying, discrimination, or harassment. Those with dissenting opinions should not be made to feel unwelcome, discriminated against, or harassed because of their differing belief systems.

### **Support for Student Organizations**

**The Board supports student organizations and activities in accordance with Section 16.1 of the School Act.**

6. If one or more students attending a school operated by the Board requests a staff member employed by the Board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the Principal of the school shall:
  - 6.1 Immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and
  - 6.2 Subject to subsection (6), within a reasonable time from the date that the Principal receives the request designate a staff member to serve as the staff

<p><b><i>Policy Manual</i></b></p> <p>PAGE: 3 of 4</p>	<p>Policy 20                  TITLE: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Working and Learning Environments</p> <p>APPROVED: March 8, 2016                  AMENDED/REVIEWED: June 11, 2024</p>
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liaison to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.

7. The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”, after consulting with the Principal.
  - 7.1 For greater certainty, the Principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”.
8. The Principal shall immediately inform Division Administration, and subsequently the Board and the Minister, if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in subsection (6). If so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.
9. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection (6) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity, and is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations and activities.
10. As a public body, Grande Prairie Public School Division is bound by the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Any disclosure of personal information is done in accordance with that Act.
11. The Board believes parents are critical partners in a child’s learning and as such, individual parental involvement supporting students of diverse gender identities is highly encouraged where appropriate and where the student consents.

**Definitions**

**Harassment:** Unwelcome, discriminatory conduct or behaviour, or verbal or physical conduct, that focuses on the protected areas of Human Rights Legislation. Harassment includes conduct that disparages, humiliates, or harms another person. It may involve abuse of authority but does not include the legitimate exercise of an individual’s positional authority. Harassment may undermine another individual’s personal dignity by causing embarrassment, discomfort, humiliation, and may interfere with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating or hostile work or learning environment.

<p><i>Policy Manual</i></p> <p>PAGE: 4 of 4</p>	<p>Policy 20                  TITLE: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Working and Learning Environments</p> <p>APPROVED: March 8, 2016                  AMENDED/REVIEWED: June 11, 2024</p>
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Harassment can stem from the actions of an individual or those of a group purporting certain unacceptable opinions or actions. The behaviour giving rise to a complaint is typically intentional in order to be considered harassment. This behaviour is often repeated; however, there may be instances of a singular vexatious event that may be considered harassment. The expectation is that the offender ought to reasonably know that the behaviour is offensive and unwelcome. Any member of the Division who believes he/she has been subjected to harassment is encouraged to make it known to the harasser that the behaviour is offensive and contrary to this Board Policy.

**Discrimination:** The abusive, unfair, or demeaning treatment of a person or group of persons that focuses on the protected areas of Human Right legislation, when such treatment has the effect or purpose of unreasonably interfering with that person’s or group’s status or performance, or of creating a hostile or intimidating educational environment

**Bullying:** A conscious, willful, deliberate, repeated and hostile activity marked by an imbalance of power, intent to harm and/or threat of aggression. It can occur within a peer group or between groups. It can occur at school and in extracurricular settings. It often includes a combination of forms of bullying.