

- Policy Number: 524
 - Policy Name: Violence Prevention (revision #3)
 - Date of Revision: 1998 10 14
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Violence Prevention

Rationale: *School District # 64 wishes to promote and foster a safe and secure environment for all students during their educational day. The district views education and skill-building as the foundation to achieve a respectful, safe, and healthy school environment, where all students can develop to their full potential. We are committed to addressing all forms of violence at the earliest possible stage and responding with appropriate measures.*

(Please refer to Appendix C for the definitions of violence and abuse for the purposes of this policy.)

Policy

School District #64 takes a proactive approach to preventing violence and abuse, and addresses the root causes at the earliest possible stage. The district endorses the use of constructive means to resolve conflicts, deal with anger, and encourages role models and leadership among students and staff to prevent violence and abuse. All Schools within the district will follow the District Violence Prevention Policy, and develop a school code of behaviour for students and staff, in keeping with the policy.

APPENDIX 'A'

Responding to the Needs of Children

- The safety and well-being of children is paramount.
- Children are entitled to protection from abuse, neglect, harm and the threat of harm.
- Interventions to ensure a child's safety should be those that are the most effective in keeping the child safe and the least disruptive to the child.
- While all children are vulnerable, some are more vulnerable than others. Children with disabilities and very young children may not be able to protect themselves, and are particularly dependent on adults for their safety and well-being. Service providers should be especially vigilant in preventing, detecting and intervening in cases of abuse and neglect involving such children.
- Children's need for privacy and confidentiality should be respected. This is particularly important when a child may have been abused or neglected.
- Children should have their views considered and be involved when decisions relating to them are made.
- Children should be provided with prevention information and skills that will help them resist or avoid abuse, when possible, and report abuse or neglect.

The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1998 (p. 3)

APPENDIX 'B'

Legal Responsibilities

A. Section 14 of the B.C. Family and Child Services Act contains the following mandatory reporting clause:

- (1) Duty to Report** — A person must promptly report the circumstances to the Ministry of Children and Families where he or she has reason to believe that a child: (paraphrased)
 - a. has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a parent or other person, or
 - b. if the child is emotionally harmed by the parent's conduct, or
 - c. if the child is deprived of necessary health care, or
 - d. if the child's development is likely to be seriously impaired by a treatable condition and the child's parent refuses to provide or consent to treatment, or
 - e. if the child's parent is unable or unwilling to care for the child and has not made adequate provision for the child's care, or
 - f. if the child is or has been absent from home in circumstances that endanger the child's safety or well-being, or
 - g. if the parent is dead and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care, or
 - h. if the child has been abandoned and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care.
 - (2) Exception** — The duty under subsection (1) overrides a claim of confidentiality or privilege, except a claim founded on a solicitor and client relationship.
 - (3) Protection from liability** — No action lies against a person making a report unless she or he has knowingly reported false information.
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(4) **Offense** — A person who fails to report or knowingly reports falsely commits an offense.

B. Sexual harassment is discrimination on the basis of sex and a violation of the B.C. Human Rights Code.

“Sexual harassment is *unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature* that has a negative effect on where you work, or live, or receive services. It can be verbal or physical. “unwelcome” attention includes any attention that a reasonable person would know is unwanted or unwelcome. Sexual harassment often occurs in a situation where the harasser has more power than you do.”

Some examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include:

- verbal abuse or threats
- unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes or taunting
- displaying of pornographic or other offensive pictures
- practical jokes that cause awkwardness or embarrassment
- unwelcome invitations or requests
- leering or other gestures
- unnecessary physical contact such as touching, patting, pinching, punching
- sexual assault (this may also be a criminal matter)

APPENDIX ‘C’

Observing behaviour is subjective and involves reasoned judgment. It is important to consider the intent of the participants, differentiating equal and willing peer interaction.

Definitions of violence and Abuse (oral, physical, and written)

***Sexual Harassment* (for definition refer to the previous page).**

- sexual comments about someone’s body;
- questions about someone’s sex life;
- unwanted sexual contact, including touching, hugging, or kissing;
- sexually suggestive jokes or comments;
- graffiti or t-shirts with sexual messages or pictures;
- ‘cat calling’, whistling at, suggestive remarks or names;
- snapping someone’s bra, or lifting their skirt;
- repeated requests for dates after the person has said, no;
- pulling someone’s shorts down in public;
- being treated unfairly for refusing sexual activity;
- sexual assault (from sexual touching to rape)

Physical

- physically aggressive behaviour, including: punching, slapping, kicking, shoving, and grabbing;
- use of a weapon to intimidate or cause physical injury;
- acts of vandalism.

Verbal

- insults;
 - putdowns;
 - demeaning jokes;
 - abusive language.
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Bullying

- intimidation-threats of physical harm;
- extortion-obtaining money or other goods through threats;
- teasing;
- isolating from peer group;
- gossiping and spreading rumours.

Stalking

- harassing phone calls;
- spying;
- following.

Negative Discrimination

- unfair treatment based on religion, sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation, gender, culture, disability, race, language.

This may involve:

- discriminatory jokes;
- unequal access to opportunities;
- isolating, excluding.

Abuse of Power

- using position of authority for personal gains;
 - use of authority to obtain sex;
 - abusive language, putdowns, threats, or sexual harassment, by someone in a position of authority.
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