



*"Inspire learners, Integrate sustainability,  
Involve community"*

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## SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 64

### PROCEDURE 212

## Violence and Harassment Free District

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Section: Learning and Working Environment

Dates of Revisions:

Date of Adoption and

Resolution Number: June 13, 2018- 76/18

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In keeping with the Ministry of Education's Safe, Caring and Orderly School Strategy, the School District No. 64 Board of Education commits to making district learning and working environments safe places where students, employees and other adults are free from harm, where expectations for acceptable behaviour are clearly communicated and understood, and where everyone feels both welcome and that they belong.

The board understands the term 'violence' to include a range of behaviours including physical and verbal violence and abuse, discrimination, bullying/cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation. It believes that violence is best seen and understood as a matter of district-wide concern, and best addressed through district-wide strategies that recognise the need to distinguish between school-aged children and employees.

Because it recognises that expectations placed upon children and youth, and employees are necessarily different, and that different legislation applies in the case of each, Procedure 212 is divided into two main parts: one applying to students (children and youth), and the other to employees and other adults.

### **Part One: Students:**

#### **1. Violence Prevention Education Program**

Violence prevention education includes, but is not limited to, skill development in conflict resolution, anger management, and assertiveness training, developing healthy relationships, and developing self-esteem.

- a. Teachers are encouraged to examine existing curriculum to try to find ways to integrate violence prevention education into learning outcomes so students have the opportunity to practice positive, non-violent social skills.
- b. The district encourages the use of media, illustrative material, or forms of behaviour which portray healthy non-violent, non-racist and non-sexist lifestyles.

- c. We encourage instructional methods which reflect the diversity of the student population. Positive role models and accomplishments of both men and women should be included in teaching materials. Inclusive, gender-free language is encouraged in the classroom.
- d. The school community is encouraged to work cooperatively with the broader community to address violence and abuse.
  - i. Appropriate social service agents will be encouraged to work with the schools to enhance our work in violence prevention.
  - ii. The district encourages partnership projects with appropriate community agencies to prevent violence and abuse.

## **2. Early and Ongoing Identification for Prevention**

Students at risk of being bullies and/or victims will be identified and helped at the earliest possible stage.

- a. Following identification, early intervention will follow to help students develop positive and appropriate methods of communication and problem-solving skills.
- b. Peer counselling and peer mediation programs are encouraged in all schools, offering students and youth the opportunity to take a leadership role in violence prevention.
- c. Schools are encouraged to develop incentives for students, youth, and employees who do exhibit leadership and peacemaking skills in violence prevention. These may include course credit for Planning, special recognition and honours.

## **3. Accountability**

A system of accountability will be established to oversee the ongoing implementation of the district's violence prevention policy, on an individual school basis and on a district-wide basis.

## **4. Violence Prevention:**

- **School-Based**

- a. The Principal of each school may form a violence prevention committee comprised of a minimum of two people, and could include the Principal, and staff member(s).
- b. A school-based violence prevention committee would monitor the violence prevention program and report to the Program Delivery Task Force at least once per year, by the end of the academic year.

- c. Information about the (local) school violence prevention program would be distributed in each school by the Principal, to staff members, students, and parents or guardians.
- d. A School Safety Suggestion box (a locked box) could be placed in each school to receive **confidential** written suggestions and concerns about school safety. (The school violence prevention committee reviews all submissions and with follow up as appropriate. When warranted, the concerns will be brought to the attention of the Superintendent.)
- e. School Codes of Conduct (Policy and Procedure 210) will support efforts to prevent violence.

- **District-Based**

- a. The Program Delivery Task Force will report on what each school in the district has accomplished regarding violence prevention programs annually at a public School Board meeting and make copies of that report available to the general public.
- b. The Superintendent or his/her designate will function as the School Safety Advocate, and receive all concerns based on reasonable and probable grounds.

## 5. Procedures for Dealing With Violent or Abusive Incidents

Procedures must be in place in each school in order to deal with incidents of violence or abuse, effectively, constructively, consistently, and fairly.

- a. Staff, students, and parents or guardians at each school will develop a set of disciplinary procedures compatible with the district policy for dealing with the range of violent incidents that could occur in the school environment, including incidents that may involve students, employees, or visitors.
- b. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has been or is likely to be physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited, sexually harassed, or needs protection due to the specific circumstances outlined in the Child, Family and Community Services Act is **legally responsible to report** the matter to a child protection worker and the Superintendent of Schools. In British Columbia, a student is anyone under the age of 19. Joint reports, e.g. by principal and teacher discharge this responsibility for both.
- c. The following incidents must be reported to the police and to the Superintendent of Schools:
  - Possession of weapons
  - Sexual assault

- Stalking
  - Threats of serious physical harm
  - Physical assault causing serious bodily harm
  - Robbery and extortion
  - Hate motivated violence
  - Vandalism causing extensive damage
  - Bomb threats and pulling a fire alarm without cause
- d. Strategies for dealing with the aftermath of an incident of violence or abuse must be in place at each school.
- i. The Principal of the school where an incident takes place will oversee district and community support services for the victim and perpetrator in consultation with the school violence prevention committee.
  - ii. Incidents which could result in a liability claim against the district must be reported to the School Protection Program, Risk Management Branch. Serious incidents need to be reported immediately.
  - iii. Wherever possible, a team-approach to safety, security, and support for the victim will be set up. Protection of the student is paramount, and can include a range of options such as a change of class or an independent review of grades.
  - iv. The Principal may need to oversee the re-entry of the perpetrator, including links with youth services, appropriate counselling services, and/or educational programs. (Underlying problems contributing to the violent incident such as abuse in the home, substance abuse, sexism or racism may need to be considered).
  - v. Respect for a student’s need for privacy and confidentiality will be maintained within the constraints of conducting an investigation.
  - vi. All schools are required to give students information on where to seek help, including local services, the Kids Helpline, and the Child, Youth and Family Advocate.

## Part Two: Employees

### 1. Violence, Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace

#### Definitions:

- a. Work Safe B.C. Policy defines **violence** as ‘improper behavior that includes the attempted or actual exercise ... of any physical force so as to cause injury, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives the worker reasonable cause to believe he or she is at risk of injury ...’ (Work Safe Policy, section 4.28)
- b. Work Safe B.C. Policy defines **bullying and harassment** as “any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have

known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated, but excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment.” (Work Safe Policy D3-115-2)

- c. Bullying and harassment is an occupational health and safety issue (Workers Compensation Act Section 116 (1)(a)) that poses a potential risk to the physical and mental health and safety of employees. Bullying and harassment behaviours may also involve breaches of human rights under the Human Rights Code, R.S.B.C, 1996, c. 210. Incidents involving conflict between students of the type normally dealt with by employees without recourse to outside agencies are not considered acts of violence, bullying or harassment under this policy.

## **2. Reducing the Risk of Violence, Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace**

- a. The Board has a duty to ensure the health and safety of its employees. Employees have a duty to take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and other persons. As a result, all reasonable steps to prevent where possible or otherwise minimize workplace bullying and harassment will be taken. These steps include staff training to assist employees in identifying and responding to violence, bullying and harassment in the workplace.
- b. Employees are expected to identify any situation that presents a risk. No employee shall be subject to reprisal or discipline as a result of filing a complaint which the complainant reasonably believes to be valid.
- c. Identified situations of risk are to be reported immediately. Reports may be made directly to the Superintendent or designate, to the school principal, the work site supervisor and/or the District Health & Safety Supervisor. All parties involved in a complaint will deal with the complaint expeditiously and with respect to confidentiality.
- d. When a risk has been identified, a committee composed of the school principal/work site supervisor, employee at risk, staff rep, shop steward, and/or the site Health and Safety representative as appropriate, shall develop a plan of action designed to eliminate or reduce the risk.
- e. In most cases the school principal/work site supervisor shall be responsible for developing the plan of action and shall forward a copy to the Superintendent or designate and the District Health and Safety Supervisor.

## **3. Employee Training Related to Violence, Bullying and Harassment**

- a. The employer commits to:
  - i. Informing all employees regards the Violence, Bullying and Harassment policy and procedures
  - ii. Providing training related to identifying and responding to Violence, Bullying and Harassment in the workplace
  - iii. Reviewing all policies and procedures related to Violence, Bullying and Harassment on an annual basis
- b. Where employees are exposed to a risk of violence, bullying or harassment, direction and instruction on preventing and dealing with violent, bullying or harassing behavior shall be provided to the employee. Such instruction shall be approved by the District Health and Safety Supervisor. The school principal/work site supervisor shall be responsible for providing such training and for ensuring that the employee's work is performed without undue risk.
- c. All new employees shall receive recommended training as soon as possible after hire.
- d. The employer shall maintain a record of identified risks and a list of employees who have received direction and instruction in violence, bullying and harassment prevention procedures

#### **4. Responding to Incidents of Violence, Bullying and Harassment – Reporting**

- a. Employees shall respond, without delay, to all incidents of violence/potential violence, bullying or harassment which could threaten safety in the workplace. If appropriate, the employee may choose to speak to or correspond directly with the alleged perpetrator to express his/her feelings about the situation. Employees may report concerns to their staff rep, shop steward or school principal/work site supervisor in an effort to resolve the concern and/or to request assistance in resolving the matter.
- b. Employees may choose to formally report concerns directly to the Superintendent or designate. Should the employee wish to file a formal complaint, specific behaviours which form the basis of the complaint and the definitions of violence, harassment and/or bullying which may apply must be included. The employer shall notify the alleged perpetrator of the complaint and provide notice of investigation in writing. The employer shall also notify the District Health and Safety Supervisor.
- c. In the event that the perpetrator is the Superintendent, the formal complaint may, at the complainant's discretion, be referred directly to a Board member.

- d. The employer shall advise the employee to consult a physician should an injury or other adverse symptoms occur (including emotional trauma) as a result of an incidence of violence, bullying or harassment.

## **5. Responding to Incidents of Violence, Bullying and Harassment – Investigating**

- a. All reported incidents of violence/potential violence, bullying or harassment shall be investigated as soon as possible by the employer and with respect to confidentiality. The investigation shall be conducted by a trained and/or experienced individual.
- b. Where the investigation determines that violence, bullying or harassment has taken place the employer will ensure that corrective actions are taken without undue delay.

### **References:**

- The BC Human Rights Code [RSBC 1996] Chapter 210.
- Government of Canada: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, Violence in the Workplace (2014)
- School Act sections 85(1.1), 168 (2) (i)
- Basic Threat and Risk Assessment Training Guide, Level Two, 5th ed. Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response, 2012.
- BC Ministry of Education. Preventing Bullying and Ensuring Safe and Caring School Communities, Level One, 2012.
- Policies 210, 212, 215