

Safe and Caring Learning Environment

Formerly: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments



CALGARY
INTERNATIONAL
ACADEMY
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Policy Title: Safe and Caring Learning Environment

Legislative Basis: Bill 25

Effective Date: September 1, 2026

Review Cycle: Yearly

Safe and Caring Learning Environment

Education Act, including sections 16, 31, 32 and 33 as amended by An Act to Remove Politics and Ideology from Classrooms and Amend the Education Act, 2026 (Bill 25 / SA 2026 c 13)

Upon proclamation of the applicable Bill 25 amendments, or as otherwise directed by Alberta Education and Childcare

Annual, and additionally when legislative or regulatory requirements change

Policy Statement

The school is dedicated to fostering a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours. The school also values diversity, inclusion, belonging, empathy and mutual support as school commitments, consistent with applicable legislation and the school's educational responsibilities. The school strives to ensure that students and staff can learn and work in an environment that supports physical and emotional safety, respectful conduct, critical thinking, and responsible participation in the school community.

I. Bullying Awareness and Prevention Program

a. Definition of Bullying

Section 1.1(d) of the Education Act defines bullying as:

"Repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual's reputation."

b. Bullying Awareness and Prevention Initiatives

Every February will be a school-wide Bullying Awareness and Prevention Month. The 27th of February will be Pink Shirt Day or Anti-Bullying Day.

c. Types of Bullying

Students will learn the many different forms of bullying:

1. **Physical** (using your body or objects to cause harm): includes hitting, punching, kicking, spitting or breaking someone else's belongings.
2. **Verbal** (using words to hurt someone): includes name-calling, put-downs, threats, and teasing.
3. **Social** (using your friends and relationships to hurt someone): includes spreading rumours, gossiping, excluding others or exclusion from a group or making others look foolish or unintelligent.
4. **Cyber** (using a computer or other technology to harass or threaten): includes communication technologies like the Internet, social networking sites, websites, emails, text messaging or instant messaging to intimidate or harass others.

d. Strategies to Stop Bullying at School

1. Promote Positive Communication

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Students will learn positive communication skills, and teachers/staff will reinforce positive behaviour through role-modelling.

2. Increase Self-Awareness

Students will learn about the effects of bullying and promote self-awareness.

3. Active Participation

Students will become active participants in efforts to eliminate bullying.

4. Zero Tolerance Policy

The school will implement a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at school and ensure consistent enforcement of anti-bullying measures.

II. Ensuring a Safe and Caring School Environment

a. Board's Responsibilities

Section 33(1)(d) of the Education Act, as amended by Bill 25, requires the board to ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board and each staff member employed by the board is provided with a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours.

In addition, the board will implement and continuously monitor the delivery of prescribed, approved or authorized courses or programs of study to support high-quality and academically challenging instruction, and will ensure that courses and programs of study are focused on academic rigor, intellectual integrity and essential knowledge.

b. Physical Environments

The school is equipped with 24-hour surveillance and monitoring systems.

At any time, no person is allowed to pick up a child other than the parents, guardians, or approved persons.

Staff/teachers will supervise playtime at the playground or play spaces.

Teachers and staff must:

1. Be attentive to the program structure's physical and emotional environments to encourage positive behaviour.
2. Be aware of program rules and age-appropriate expectations.
3. Ensure that program activities are developmentally appropriate and well-planned, with smooth transitions between activities and consistent routines.

c. Social and Emotional Environments

The school will establish, implement and maintain positive social inclusion and social connections through role modelling by the school board, administrators, teachers, and staff. These school commitments will be implemented in a manner consistent with the statutory requirement to foster and maintain respectful and responsible behaviours.

III. Intellectual Diversity, Expression, Neutrality and Respect

a. Courses, Programs of Study and Instructional Materials

In accordance with section 16 of the Education Act, as amended by Bill 25, courses or programs of study and instructional materials used in the school must:

- encourage a wide range of perspectives and ideas;
- foster critical thinking;
- foster the acquisition of knowledge and skills;
- reflect the diverse nature and heritage of society in Alberta;
- promote understanding and respect for others; and

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- honour and respect the common values and beliefs of Albertans.

Courses, programs of study and instructional materials must not promote or foster doctrines of racial or ethnic superiority or persecution, social change through violent action, or disobedience of laws.

b. Impartiality and Neutrality in Non-Prescribed Programming

The board will ensure that the delivery of education programming that is not prescribed, approved or authorized under the Education Act is impartial, fair, neutral and free of personal bias.

c. Student Expression

Each student is free to express any perspective or idea at school in a manner that complies with the student code of conduct and all applicable legislation. Respectful disagreement and discussion are permitted; bullying, threats, violence, harassment and other conduct contrary to the code of conduct are not permitted.

d. Board Statements and Positions

The board will refrain from issuing statements or taking positions, including political, social or ideological positions, that are not relevant to the fulfilment of the board's obligations under the Education Act.

e. Employee Conscientious, Political, Social and Ideological Beliefs

The board will not directly or indirectly require an employee to participate in an exercise, or to affirm, recite or make a statement, that is inconsistent with the employee's conscientious, political, social or ideological beliefs, except where participation or the statement falls within an exception permitted by the Education Act, including prescribed or approved courses or programs of study and applicable religious instruction, exercises or activities.

IV. Fulfilling the Board's Obligation

1. Board's Responsibilities

Section 33(2) of the Education Act requires the board to establish, implement and maintain a policy respecting its obligation to provide a safe and caring environment. The policy must include the establishment of a student code of conduct that addresses bullying behaviour.

The student code of conduct will be developed and reviewed with input from relevant stakeholders, including staff, parents, students and the community, including through Parent Council meetings where appropriate.

The board will also establish and implement methods that facilitate the meaningful involvement of parents in student learning and in decisions respecting non-instructional school activities.

2. Policy Implementation

This policy will be made publicly available to staff, students and parents.

The policy will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure its ongoing relevance and effectiveness and will be reviewed sooner when legislative or regulatory changes require amendment.

The board will establish, implement and maintain measures to address bullying behaviour, violence, and other conduct inconsistent with a safe and caring environment.

V. Students' Code of Conduct and Positive Reinforcement Policy

Section 33(3)(d) of the Education Act: Students' Code of Conduct and Positive Reinforcement

1. Statement of Purpose

The school's code of conduct is guided by a fundamental commitment to creating a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours. Such an

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environment is essential for learning, student growth, physical and emotional safety, respectful relationships, and responsible participation in the school community. The school also values inclusion and belonging as complementary school commitments, implemented consistently with applicable legislation.

2. Guiding Principles

- Discrimination, as outlined in the Alberta Human Rights Act on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious belief, gender, physical or mental disability, marital or family status, source of income, or sexual orientation, will not be tolerated anywhere on school premises.
- The school focuses on supporting a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours, positive relationships, and responsible participation.
- Students may express perspectives and ideas, including perspectives with which others disagree, provided their expression complies with the student code of conduct and applicable legislation.
- Students must refrain from engaging in violence of any kind at school or during school-related activities and, without putting their own safety or well-being at risk, must assist in preventing violence by reporting concerns to and cooperating with school staff.
- Any incident involving a school community member that does not meet the school's conduct expectations, whether physical or emotional, will be addressed accordingly and on a case-by-case basis.
- Staff are not permitted under any circumstances to use any form of physical punishment, including spanking, or harsh, demeaning or abusive language in the presence of children. Any disciplinary action must be reasonable in the circumstances, considering maturity, age and individual circumstances.
- Support is available for staff and students, impacted by inappropriate behaviour and for those who engage in inappropriate behaviour. The board and administrators will examine and update the continuum of support yearly. Mentoring and restorative practices are among the support available at the school, including regular check-ins with a trusted adult, teacher or staff member.

3. Positive Reinforcement

The school utilizes techniques of Positive Reinforcement to address children's behaviours, based on the idea that there are no bad children, just good and bad behaviours. A positive approach focuses on encouraging and reinforcing positive behaviours through redirection, role modelling, encouragement, clear expectations, problem-solving and effective communication, including communication at a child's eye level.

4. Acknowledging and Reinforcing Good Behaviours

Whenever a child shows good behaviour, staff members may acknowledge it by:

- offering verbal praise directly to the child for positive behaviours;
- giving high-fives or other appropriate physical gestures to celebrate;
- clapping and cheering to create a positive environment and encourage other children to exhibit similar positive behaviours; and
- informing parents about the child's positive behaviours, fostering a collaborative approach between home and school.

Positive behaviours may be reinforced by:

- implementing reward systems, such as stickers, stamps, or other incentives, to recognize and encourage positive behaviours; and
- acknowledging positive behaviour in front of the class or during circle time, where appropriate, to reinforce the importance of positive conduct.

5. Discipline Policies and Restrictions

Childcare staff are strictly prohibited from using any form of physical punishment, including striking, shaking, grabbing, shoving, slapping, choking, stabbing, spanking and burning a child under any circumstances. Any adult, including a parent, staff member or volunteer, must not use harsh, demeaning, threatening or abusive language in the presence of children. Such language must not be used to humiliate or undermine a child's self-respect. Prohibited conduct may also include inappropriate exposure to sexual contact, activity or behaviour; force-feeding; exposure to profanity; or exposure to violence between parents, staff members, volunteers or other adults. Verbal or physical degradation is prohibited as a form of child guidance or discipline. Any child disciplinary action taken must be reasonable in the circumstances.

Staff are not allowed to:

1. inflict or cause any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, or emotional deprivation upon a child;
2. deny or threaten to deny any necessity; or
3. use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation.

6. Handling Misbehaviours

Positive ways to handle misbehaviour include:

- Redirection: Staff must engage children to willingly follow directions on their own, especially during transitions between activities. Transitions must be developmentally appropriate and easy to follow. Under no circumstances are staff allowed to physically move a child, especially when the child is uncooperative or not following directions, such as by picking the child up or pulling the child's arms.
- Role Modelling: Staff should lead by example and demonstrate positive behaviours. Children tend to mirror behaviours they observe in adults.
- Encouragement: Staff should explain and encourage positive ways to handle conflicts. Staff members should promote positive behaviour through verbal encouragement and encourage children to ask a teacher or adult for help with conflicts.
- Clear Expectations: Staff should clearly explain expectations and assist children in understanding them, including by encouraging the child to repeat back expectations where developmentally appropriate.
- Problem Solving: Allow the child an opportunity to think about or find solutions to avoid misbehaviour. This helps children take responsibility for their actions and identify constructive ways to address issues.
- Effective Communication: Staff should communicate with children at their eye level and maintain appropriate eye contact to support communication and understanding.

VI. Responsibilities of Students

1. Responding to Bullying

Under section 31(e) of the Education Act, students have a responsibility to refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed toward others in the school, whether it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means. Consistent with this responsibility, students should:

- tell a trusted teacher or staff member and report bullying concerns to school administrators;
- tell the person engaging in bullying to stop, if it is safe to do so; and
- seek assistance from a teacher, staff member or other trusted adult when bullying is occurring.

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Staff Responsibilities

- If a staff member has reason to believe that a child is a victim of bullying, the staff member should speak with the child, reassure the child that support is available, and take appropriate steps consistent with school procedures.
- Teachers and staff must document relevant incidents appropriately and report them to school administrators.

2. Student Accountability to Teachers and the School Community

Under section 31 of the Education Act, a student has the responsibility to:

- be ready to learn, actively engage, and respond to individual learning;
- attend class regularly;
- exhibit respectful behaviour toward peers, teachers and staff;
- respect the rights of others and demonstrate acceptance and respect for diversity regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, gender expression, physical ability or mental disability, mental illness, age, socio-economic status, or appearance;
- comply with school rules;
- ensure that the student's conduct safeguards and contributes to a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours;
- refrain from engaging in violence of any kind at school and during school-related activities and, without putting the student's own safety or well-being at risk, assist in preventing violence by reporting concerns to and cooperating with school staff;
- consistently demonstrate positive behaviours within the school community and beyond; and
- contribute positively to the school and community. Opportunities such as peer mentoring, leadership, service-learning and volunteering may be made available to students.

VII. Responsibilities of Parents

Under section 32 of the Education Act, parents/guardians have responsibilities that include:

- ensuring that their conduct safeguards and contributes to a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours; and
- collaborating and cooperating with the school to facilitate the provision of necessary support and services to the child.

The school will facilitate meaningful parental involvement in student learning and in decisions respecting non-instructional school activities, in accordance with the Education Act. Examples may include participation through Parent Council, volunteering, consultation, and other school-community engagement opportunities.

VIII. Policy Communication and Implementation

This policy will be communicated to parents and staff through the Parent Handbook and Employment Handbook. Parents and staff must sign the applicable acknowledgement form after receiving a copy. The policy will be implemented with children in the program where developmentally appropriate, with opportunities for individualized coaching and one-on-one attention.

Administrators will ensure that staff are informed of the requirements relating to safe and caring environments, student expression, violence prevention, neutrality in non-prescribed programming, and employee protections established by the Education Act, as applicable.

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Revision History

Date	Version	Classification	Description	Author Initials or Amended By	Approved By
Jan 2019	1.0	Major	Initial release	AM	JD
Aug 2021	1.1	Minor	Updated for the school year 2021-22	AM	JD
Jan 2022	1.2	Minor	Updated for the school year 2022-23	AM	JD
Jan 2023	1.3	Minor	Updated for the school year 2023-24	AM	JD
May 2024	1.4	Minor	Updated for school year 2024-2025; compliance with the Alberta Education Act	TD	JD
Jun 2025	1.5	Minor	Updated for school year 2025-26	OB	JD
Aug 2026	2.0	Major	Amended for Bill 25 (SA 2026 c 13): statutory safe-and-caring terminology; intellectual diversity and critical thinking; neutrality of non-prescribed programming; student expression; violence prevention; parental involvement; board neutrality; and employee conscience protections. Effective upon proclamation of applicable provisions. Updated for school year 2026-27.	OB	JD