



## **Harassment and Bullying Prevention and Management Policy Saplings Nature School August 2022**

### ***Rationale***

While recognizing the importance of free inquiry and open discussion of all issues, Sapling's commitment to developing, maintaining and safeguarding an atmosphere that is free from discriminatory harassment means that Saplings will not tolerate words, symbols and/or actions, which make the educational and social environment at the school hostile, insulting, intimidating, threatening, unwelcoming, or violent for a person because of their citizenship, race, place of origin, ethnic origin, culture, religion, colour, ancestry, disability, age, creed, sex, pregnancy, real or perceived gender identity, gender expression, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, or receipt of public assistance.

### ***Policy***

At Saplings we believe it is important to address and protect a students' physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness and protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their citizenship, race, place of origin, ethnic origin, colour, ancestry, disability, age, creed (religion), sex, pregnancy, real or perceived gender identity and/or gender expression, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, or receipt of public assistance. We believe in a discipline that is fair and consistent, that provides a positive, purposeful and safe learning environment, and that promotes student self-discipline, cooperation and consideration.

Any incident of harassment or bullying that comes to the attention of staff or administration will be actively addressed, with the intent of pursuing healing and justice for the victim/target, healing and accountability for the aggressor, and a restoration of positive relationships among all members of the school community.

We also believe that an effective discipline system requires the support of parents. As a team, Saplings and families will work together to maintain a safe and friendly environment where our students are educated and aware of the effects of bullying. Every Stakeholder is considered to be an Upstander (a person who will intervene in a safe and non-physical manner) and model this behaviour.

### **Safe and Caring Schools**

Saplings Nature School expects that all individuals, adults, and students will treat each other with respect and courtesy, and conduct themselves in a manner that will promote safety and security for all learners and staff. Fundamental to maintaining a school that cultivates excellent conduct is the adherence of individuals to the principles which foster caring, nurturing, and compassion to create the building blocks for a safe, caring, and welcoming learning environment.

### **Primary Safe school Coordinator**

**Cecily Heras, Head of School, 604-313-9362**

The Primary Safe School Coordinator plays a key role in the development of school-wide safety initiatives and in responding to student safety incidents. The Primary Safe School Coordinator's responsibilities include:

1. Responding to reported incidents (e.g. submitted via the [erase Report It Tool](#))
2. Overseeing the Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) process
3. Liaising with community partners as required (e.g. Ministry of Children and Family Development, police/RCMP, hospital/ER)

4. Communicating with the local school district to request to participate in the development of the Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Community Protocol

### **Additional Safe School Coordinator**

**Heather Fraser, Program Director, 778-838-0335**

1. School-based staff, and work with the Primary Safe School Coordinator on the development of school-wide safety initiatives and in responding to student safety incidents
2. Typically members of the school's leadership team and can step in and fulfill the role of Primary Safe School Coordinator, if required

Required to have Basic Violence Threat Risk Assessment (Basic VTRA) training

### **Association Safe School Coordinators:**

Each independent school association must have one or more Association Safe School Coordinators to support the Head of School in the Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) process and in the event of an emergency or critical incident. Responsibilities may also include:

- Supporting a group of independent schools in their efforts to create safe and inclusive learning environments and developing prevention and intervention strategies for addressing worrisome behaviours including threats or risks of violence
- Building school capacity to deal with bullying and violence

Association Safe School Coordinators must have the following advanced eraser training:

- Advanced Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)
- Advanced Digital Threat Assessment (DTA)

### **Online Student Reporting Tool**

Students have the opportunity to report observed incidents of mean behaviour and/or bullying through The [Ministry's eraser "Report It" tool](#). Students have the choice to include their names or to make an anonymous report. The main goal is to ensure that all incidents of worrisome, mean and/or bullying behaviour is reported so that students feel supported. The information collected through this tool will be monitored by the Safe School coordinator who will then respond appropriately.

<https://erasereportit.gov.bc.ca/add/report-it>

### ***Awareness***

At Saplings we strive to create a safe, respectful, orderly, and welcoming school environment by building and maintaining positive relationships between students, staff and parents, and explicitly teaching the skills involved with conflict resolution and becoming more self-aware. Teachers at Saplings weave opportunities for inclusiveness, sharing, cooperation, leadership, expressing empathy, and kindness throughout the daily life of students. Teaching and recognising pro-social behaviours are fundamental to the education of the whole child at Saplings.

### **Peer Conflict**

Conflict between and among peers is a natural part of growing up. Students will have times when they disagree and can't solve their own problems. They may even become so frustrated that they say mean

things or act out physically by hitting, kicking or trying to hurt. Adults can respond by helping the students talk it out, and see each other's perspective. This is often referred to as "conflict resolution". If it's peer conflict, usually these students:

- usually choose to play or hang out together;
- have equal power (similar age, size, social status, etc.);
- are equally upset;
- are both interested in the outcome; and
- will be able to work things out with adult help (after calming down).

### **Mean Behaviour**

Students may try out behaviours to assert themselves – sometimes saying or doing mean things – such as making fun of others, using a hurtful name, taking something without permission, leaving a student out, or "budging" in line. When adults see mean behaviour they should not ignore it. Adults should respond quickly, firmly and respectfully to stop the behaviour, to let students know that their actions are hurtful and to redirect them to more positive behaviour. This quick response stops students from developing a pattern of mean behaviour as their way of interacting with peers, and prevents mean behaviour from escalating into bullying. It is a lot easier to correct a student for one nasty comment than to change a pattern of cruelty that grows over time. If it is mean behaviour, usually:

- it is not planned and seems to happen spontaneously or by chance;
- it may be aimed at any student nearby;
- the student being mean may feel badly when an adult points out the harm they've caused.

### **Bullying Behaviour**

The B.C. The Ministry of Education defines bullying as: repeated physical aggression, name calling, threats or exclusion in a context where there is intent to harm and an imbalance of power. The bullying of members of the school community, by physical, verbal, written or electronic means, is not permitted at Saplings. Anyone who witnesses bullying is expected to speak with the school personnel (educator, educational assistant, noon hour supervisor, and counselor, Head of School, or Program Director).

Bullying is serious behaviour that has three key features –all three must be present for the situation to be considered bullying:

- Power imbalance --One student clearly has power over the other(s), which may be due to age, size, social status, and so on.
- Intention to harm --The purpose of the bullying behaviour is to harm or hurt other(s) –it's intended to be mean and is clearly not accidental.
- Repeated over time --bullying behaviour continues over time, and gets worse with repetition. There is a real or implied threat that the behaviour will not stop, and in fact will become even more serious.

The effect on the student who is being bullied is increased fear, apprehension, and distress. Often by the time adults find out about what is happening, the student has tried many ways to stop the bullying but cannot do so on their own. Adults must address the bullying behaviour and ensure the safety of the student who has been targeted. They also need to reassure the students who may have witnessed the behaviour that adults are taking care of it.

We recognize that bullying and intimidation have a negative effect on the learning climate of the school and therefore, as a learning community, we prefer to address problematic behaviour rather than label a student as a 'bully' or 'victim'. Our students are actively taught problem-solving skills and appropriate responses to bullying from an early age. It is important for them to know that we take bullying seriously and need to know when it occurs.

When schools respond to bullying, staff will also help the student who has been bullying others to take responsibility for their actions, and change their behaviour. They will monitor the situation to ensure the bullying

stops, and will support the student who has been bullied to regain confidence and a sense of safety. Staff may follow-up with the students who observed the behaviour to help them learn what to do when they see bullying.

The “conflict resolution” style of bringing the students together is not recommended in bullying situations, until considerable time has gone by and all students are feeling safe enough to talk about what happened so that relationships can be healed.

### ***Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours***

Students are expected to learn and mature as they move through successive grades, and as such the expectations progress towards increasing personal responsibility and self-discipline, as well as increasing consequences for inappropriate conduct/unacceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour includes bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, threatening or violent behaviour while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have a negative impact on the school environment.

### **Helpful Bystanders (“Upstanders”)**

Due to the fact that the majority of bullying incidents occur in the presence of youths other than the bully and the victim, bystanders play a very important role.

Upstanders are those who directly intervene by discouraging the bully, defending the victim, or redirecting the situation away from bullying. Upstanders may also rally support from their peers to stand up against bullying, or report the bullying to adults. This could be as simple as telling the bullying to “leave them alone” or “cut it out”.

Whilst it is common for students to fear that they will be further bullied or suffer retaliation for telling a trusted person such as their teacher, advisor or member of administration, they can be assured that by telling, the bully will be told that retaliation will result in further escalation of punishment.

### **Hurtful Bystanders**

Hurtful Bystanders are those who support the bullying by laughing, cheering, video-taping or making comments that further encourage the bully. Forwarding cruel photos or texts and visiting websites that are targeting a specific youth also encourage the bully. They may also join in on the bullying once it begins. They can also be those who simply watch and say or do nothing – they give the bully the audience he/she craves, and silently allows the bully to continue with their hurtful behaviour. Even “liking” a cruel comment on a YouTube video or on Facebook is wrong – it’s just as bad as writing it.

Being a passive bystander to an episode or episodes of bullying is also not acceptable. This means that anyone who is aware of any type of bullying that is taking place is expected to report the incident immediately. This can be done by speaking with an adult at the school or reporting the incident through the [ERASE Bullying website](#).

### **Forms of Bullying**

All forms of bullying are viewed to be unacceptable and contrary to the Student Code of Conduct Policy.

There are four common types of bullying:

1. Physical : Includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing, threats, intimidation, harassment, and other violent behaviours, or damaging property.
2. Verbal: Includes name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, harassment, homophobic or racist

remarks, verbal abuse, or making threats.

3. Social and Emotional: Also called "relational bullying", which includes behavioural actions designed to harm a child's reputation or cause humiliation. It includes:
  - lying and spreading rumours
  - negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
  - playing mean jokes to embarrass or humiliate a child
  - mimicking unkindly
  - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
  - damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance
4. Cyber: Is covert or overt bullying behaviour using digital technologies. It includes:
  - harassment via mobile phone
  - setting up a defamatory personal website
  - deliberately excluding someone from a social networking space
  - taunting or humiliation through social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) or the Internet
  - humiliating others while playing online games
  - verbal or emotional bullying through chat rooms, instant message or texting, posting photos of other youth on rating websites, etc

### **What Does Good Behaviour Look Like?**

A good guide to behaviour is to treat others how you would like to be treated as an individual. Here are some examples:

- It is being inclusive – including others in group activities, discussions and social groups.
- It is being caring – showing empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others.
- It is being principled – acting with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities.
- It is being responsible – taking ownership for your own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
- It is being respectful of yourself – making good judgments about how you conduct yourself and live up to your responsibilities.
- It is being respectful of your environment – cleaning up after yourself and ensuring everyone else can enjoy the school spaces and respecting school and personal property.
- It is being respectful of others – being kind and polite at all times to students, teachers and administration and employees of the school.
- It is being compassionate – making sure you help others who are hurt or upset.
- It is being honest – owning up to mistakes, accepting consequences for your actions, learning from the experience, and not repeating the inappropriate behaviour which is hurtful or harmful to others.
- It is being fair – doing your share in a group situation.
- It is being open-minded – being open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities and understanding that others' ideas and opinions can be equally right.

### ***Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity***

Saplings Nature School is committed to ensuring a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming environment for all members of the school community, regardless of real or perceived sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, and to improve understanding of the lives of people who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.

The term “sexual orientation and gender identity” (SOGI) is an inclusive term that encompasses all individuals regardless of where they identify on the sexual orientation, or gender identity spectrums, including identities like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two-Spirit, queer, intersex, cisgender, and asexual. The term SOGI used in this procedure includes all sexual orientations and gender identities.

Saplings Nature School believes that all students, staff, and families have the following rights:

- The right to privacy and confidentiality;
- The right to self-identification and determination; and,
- The right to have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, represented, valued, and respected within all aspects of the school environment.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

Staff will respect confidentiality and privacy and not expose sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression of students.

- A student’s transgender status, legal name, or gender assigned at birth may constitute confidential personal information that will be kept confidential unless its disclosure is legally required or unless authorization has been granted.
- In situations where school staff or administrators are required by law to use or to report a transgender student’s legal name or sex, such as for purposes of data collection, school staff and administrators will adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such information.
- Students’ rights to discuss and express their gender identity and/or gender expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much private information to share will be respected.

### **Self-identification**

A student will be addressed using the name by which they deem appropriate for their gender identity and will be addressed with the use of pronouns that correspond to their gender identity.

- Every student has a right to be addressed by a name and the pronouns that correspond to their gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the student does not need to change their official records.
- A student who is transitioning during the time they are enrolled in the school will likely indicate their name and pronouns. Students must be addressed by the pronoun that reflects their gender identity regardless of their gender expression.
- If a student’s gender identity is blended or fluid or neither, the student may request to be referred with a gender neutral pronoun such as they/them/theirs. Once a student declares their pronouns, that choice must be respected to ensure the student’s sense of well-being and security.

### **Official Records and Student Information**

- Whenever possible and permitted by law, requests made by a student, or the parent/guardian, to change the student's official record to reflect their usual name and/or gender identity will be accommodated. Saplings is required by law to maintain a mandatory permanent record card which includes each students' legal name and legal sex, yet has a great deal of latitude in handling student records in the day-to-day operations of the school.
- Whenever possible, at the request of a student or of a students' parent(s)/guardian, the student's preferred name and their pronouns will be included on class lists, timetables, student files, identification cards, etc.
- In situations where Saplings staff or administrators are required by law to use or to report a transgender student's legal name or assigned sex, such as for the purposes of standardized testing, learning centre staff and administrators will adopt practices to avoid inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information.

## **Dress**

Students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression. This includes students who may dress in a manner that is not consistent with societal expectations of masculinity/femininity.

## ***Procedures/Response for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying***

The following steps will be taken to support and respond to the needs of both bullied and bullying pupils:

### Targeted Student (bullied student)

- Listen, support and record incident
- Meet with school officials and parents
- Discuss and determine how to make the student feel safe in their school environment including taking steps to ensure retaliation does not occur
- Reassure the student that this is not their fault
- Help with reintegration with their peers

### Perpetrator (student that is bullying)

- Remove the student from the environment/classroom
- Meet with the student and allow them to reflect and speak about their behaviour
- A meeting with parents, student and teacher to discuss their behaviour
- Determine an appropriate restitution to the targeted student (apology, apology note- this needs to be within the comfort zone of the targeted student)
- Find and discuss tools on how to correct their behaviour
- Meeting with administrator or teacher to receive and understand what consequences that may come from their bullying behaviour

### Those who report (those who have witnessed and come forward)

- Listen, support and record incident
- Meet with school officials and parents
- Thank the student for having come forward
- Let the student know that you will take over from here
- Reassure the student that you will work to keep their name private, and prevent any retaliation

All incidents of bullying are recorded and discussed with the Teaching Team and Head of School.

The Head of School will keep an ongoing record and open communication with regards to any incidents of bullying.

In order that the staff member will ensure that the students are safe and supported; they will

- investigate to determine details of the incident
- Staff member will communicate with the Head of School/Program Director
- The Head of School/Program Director will investigate further
- The Head of School/Program Director will review the Student Code of Conduct in relation to the violation of another student's right to a safe and secure learning environment

### **Actions which may be taken**

The Head of School or Program Director will determine the appropriate consequences and course of action, taking into consideration:

- Student's age/developmental level
- The seriousness of the incident
- The student's history
- The history of the relationship between the students

The consequence(s) for the student who is bullying will range from, but are not limited to:

- Discussion with students involved and proactive solutions decided upon
- Completion of assignment on social responsibility including problem solving sheets,
- Contacting parents of all students concerned in the bullying incident.
- Investigation into the reported incident.
- Contacting the Police/Community Liaison office or Youth Intervention Officer.
- Feedback to those concerned.
- Sanctions for bullying (dependent on the incident)
- A form of restitution/repairing of the harm done (letters of apology, essays, posters etc. )
- Limited involvement in school activities (Loss of recess or noon hour privileges or loss of extra curricular privileges)
- Suspension (in-school and/or out-of-school)
- Expulsion
- Contact with relevant support teams and/or outside of school counseling support
- Completion of school service
- Formal suspension with written notification to parents which will be put in the student's file
- Other consequences as deemed necessary
- Staff completion of a Violence Threat Risk Assessment

The bullying incident will be documented and there will be a follow up with the parents through text, email, or phone call. Additional supervision, support, and monitoring will be provided as necessary. Saplings will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation by a person against a student who has made a complaint of a breach.

### **Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Community Protocols**

A Community VTRA Protocol is designed to reflect the shared understanding and agreement between school districts/independent school authorities and community partners about how to collaboratively respond to threat-making and worrisome behaviour. Community VTRA Protocol partners work together for the common goal of violence prevention, threat management, and safety planning. This is achieved by sharing information, advice,



and support that assists in the reduction of risk. A multi-disciplinary threat assessment response team may include agencies such as:

- Education (school districts and independent schools)
- Law enforcement
- Child and youth mental health
- Child protection
- Probation
- Youth crown counsel
- Psychiatry
- Health (e.g., hospital emergency units, physicians)

Independent schools are encouraged to collaborate with their local school district in the development of Violence Threat Risk Assessment Community Protocols as per the [Safe and Caring School Communities Ministry policy](#) for public schools. Independent schools are strongly encouraged to communicate with the local school district to request to be included as a member of the Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol.

Appropriate information sharing between schools and other agencies is an integral component of VTRA community protocols. The [Personal Information Protection Act \(PIPA\)](#) governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by private organizations such as independent school authorities, and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by public bodies such as school districts.

Independent school authorities are responsible for ensuring that their information sharing practices align with the [Personal Information Protection Act \(PIPA\)](#), and are encouraged to seek independent legal advice as necessary.

## Student Safety Communication Protocols

In the event of a student safety incident (a serious act of violence or threat-making behaviours that impact students or a school community), please refer to the Student Safety Communications Protocol flowchart, which can be found on the erase website in the secure login area (“Tools for Schools”). Please email the Independent Schools Branch if you require assistance with login details. See below for a summary of the information provided in the Protocol:

- If an independent school requires **immediate** critical incident response support, trauma-recovery support for staff, social media monitoring/digital threat assessment support, VTRA assistance, assistance with media and parent communications, connect with **Safer Schools Together directly by email or by phone: 604-560-2285 / 1-855-677-3720**
- It is essential to **notify** the Ministry about incidents if there is media involvement (or strong potential of media involvement), high profile investigations or emerging issues/trends of concern, using this email or phone number (778-974-6388)
  - Please also use these contact details when **requesting information** (i.e. erase training questions, templates and resources)

### ***Anti Bullying Action Plan***

The Saplings Anti Bullying Action Plan is built as a partnership between parents and staff and informed by the BC government’s ERASE bullying program. Bullying should not be kept a secret. It is the secrecy that generally allows bullying to continue unabated and makes dealing with the issue very difficult. As staff and as parents, we need to help all students develop interpersonal skills upon which they build positive relationships with peers. By responding together, we can make a difference.

#### *Stage 1*

In this stage, the issue is addressed by the parties and the first staff member that is aware of a problem.

1. Staff shall, where appropriate, encourage and support students to work out issues among themselves with guidance in conflict resolution techniques.
2. Staff may inform parents/caregivers of student(s) involved.
3. Staff shall maintain confidentiality.
4. If the staff's guidance does not resolve the difficulty, the staff shall report the matter to the Head of School

### *Stage 2*

In this stage, the issue is addressed with the involvement of the Head of School.

1. The Head of School shall investigate every complaint or staff report about harassment or bullying. The Head of School shall interview participants and witnesses, and review evidence, as necessary.
2. The Head of School shall assess if the harm is harassment, bullying, or child abuse. In the case of child abuse, the Head of School will follow the *Child Abuse Policy*.
3. The Head of School shall consider informing parents/caregivers of student(s) involved; should the Head of School elect to involve the parents/caregivers, the Head of School will involve them early in the discussion.
4. The Head of School shall lead a reconciliation process that may include the following activities:
  - a. Lead a session in which the specific impact of the harassment/bullying behaviour is understood by the parties involved (impact on individuals, groups, the school as a whole, etc.)
  - b. State the school's policy on harassment and bullying, and possible action or applied consequences.
  - c. Discuss expectations in a specific and concrete way.
  - d. Explain options and encourage student(s) to suggest remedies.
  - e. Indicate when the Head of School will check back with the student(s), staff and parents/caregivers/guardians to see if the harassment/bullying has been resolved.
5. The Head of School shall document these events in summary form, including names, times, and methods of communication, and retain a copy of the summary in administrative files.

### *Stage 3*

In this stage, the issue is addressed with a formal plan and may involve authorities outside the school. The Head of School shall take the following action:

1. Notify student(s) and parents/caregivers involved and the Saplings Board of Directors that action will be taken.
2. Assess the need to refer to the appropriate authorities.
3. Ensure that a formal plan is prepared to address healing for the victim/target and accountability for the harasser/bully. The plan shall include specific accountabilities for monitoring and follow-up.
4. Ensure that all steps in the plan are implemented in a timely manner.
5. Document these events in summary form, including names, times, and methods of communication, and retain a copy of the summary in the administrative files.

### ***Responsibilities of all Stakeholders***

Saplings' Head of School will:

- Develop, implement and review the anti-bullying policy and program on an annual basis.
- Implement and monitor the anti-bullying programme and ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying.
- Ensure that all students begin to learn that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behaviour in the centre.
- Establish a climate of mutual support and praise for successes, so that incidents of bullying are less likely.
- Ensure that all students and parents have access to and are familiar with the school's

anti-bullying policy

- Provide access to relevant professional development for educators.
- Manage incidents of unacceptable behaviours or bullying in a consistent manner.
- Maintain confidential records of inappropriate behaviour in a secure location.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure retaliation does not occur against a student who has made a complaint and/or report of bullying or harassment.
- When managing consequences for incidents of unacceptable behaviour, divisional leaders will take into account the student's age, maturity and special needs, if any.

Saplings' staff will:

- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate, by example, the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Teach about exclusive behaviour and bullying so that every student learns about the damage it causes to both the student who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens. Understand what being an "Upstander" (a person who will intervene in a safe and non-physical manner) is.
- Be alert and sensitive to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying within the student population.
- Listen to students who come forward with a case of being bullied, record what they say and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the Head of School of the respective division.
- Follow up any complaint by a student, parent or upstander about bullying, and report back to the parents and student promptly and fully on the appropriate action which has been taken with that incident.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with school procedures.
- When managing consequences for incidents of unacceptable behaviour, all staff will take into account the student's age, maturity and special needs, if any.
- Keep a written record of any incidents of bullying identifying both the victim and the perpetrator.
- Monitor incidents to detect patterns of behaviour
- Arrange support for both the victim and perpetrator. In the case of the victim, this may be supported in how to deal with the individual/s and circumstances surrounding the bullying, arranging student support around the victim is a subtle but effective manner.
- In the case of the perpetrator, it may require investigation as to what motivated that behaviour, acquainting them with the definition and nature of bullying and counselling or behaviour management on an ongoing basis.

Student responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Demonstrating commitment to learning by coming to school prepared to learn and by contributing to a safe, caring, positive, inclusive, and peaceful environment;
- Neither taking part in nor condoning (provoke, encourage or make a spectacle of) any form of violence, including bullying, harassment, threat-making, intimidation, verbal, sexual, physical or online abuse and harassment, or discrimination in any form including discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability or challenge, gender, sexual orientation or age;
- Seeking to prevent violence and potentially violent situations, and demonstrating their social responsibility by reporting such situations;

- Not possessing, using or displaying any weapon, replica weapon or toy weapon, on any school property or at any event that is organized or sponsored by a school. Only replica weapons designed for school theatrical production will be permitted for use in productions, drama classes, and rehearsals as authorized and permitted by the Head of School or Program Director. Offenses involving weapons shall result in significant consequences;
- Demonstrating, when utilizing the Internet, social media, email or other electronic forms of communication, appropriate digital behaviour;
- Using respectful language and refraining from using obscenities and derogatory language;
- Students must never engage in acts of hate, defined as verbal, physical, written, cyber or social acts of bias, prejudice, and bigotry which incite hatred towards a person or persons based on their membership in a group protected under the provisions of the Human Rights Code, including race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or political beliefs. These acts may be carried out by individuals or groups and are directed against specific persons, groups or property. In some cases, acts of hate may constitute criminal offences under the Criminal Code of Canada. Saplings recognizes the serious impact of crimes of hate on individuals and the school community.

### Parental responsibilities:

Parents are an important educator for their student and a valuable partner to their student's educators in school. What one does as a parent helps each student to be successful in school and in life. A few suggestions to consider:

- Always speak of the school and staff in positive, constructive terms. If parents have a concern, share it with staff who can explain it or help to solve it together.
- Send students to school each morning with a cheerful parting.
- Show interest in each student's schoolwork.
- Provide a special time each day for parents and students to spend a few minutes to talk and to enjoy each other's company.

Parents are powerful role models – ideally, students should see parents solving problems in respectful and inclusive ways.

### ***Key Elements***

**Communication:** Expectations regarding acceptable conduct are made known to all students, parents, and school staff, as well as to temporary staff and visitors. Protocols while acting as ambassadors of the school are also made known to students, parents, coaches, and involved members of the greater community.

**Implementation:** Behavioural expectations outlined in the code of conduct are consistently taught and actively promoted. Our behavioural expectations are taught and reviewed with students and staff during our first week activities at the start of the year, in student discussions, and in seminars. Responses to unacceptable behaviour are consistently based on sound principles and are appropriate to the context. As a school, we recognize the importance of modeling respectful and responsible processes for managing conflict. Whenever possible, we try to use a restorative approach to resolving conflict and teaching pro-social behaviours.

**Monitoring and Review:** All school staff continuously monitor student conduct. Acceptable behaviours are taught at the classroom level and reinforced within school culture. School staff, students, and parents will review the code of conduct on an annual basis.

**Alignment :** This code of conduct is developed to align with the Human Rights Code of British Columbia. Standards

- To establish and maintain safe, caring, and orderly environments for purposeful learning.

- To establish and maintain appropriate balances among individual and collective rights, freedoms, and responsibilities.
- To clarify and publish expectations for student behaviour while at school, while going to and from school, and while attending any school function or activity at any location.

### ***Process and Timelines***

To enable timely responses to issues as they arise, the Head of School may delegate their authority under this policy to another teacher or the Board (if no other teacher is available) for periods when the Head of School is unavailable.

Time is of the essence in dealing with harassment/bullying, since the victim/target may continue to be subject to harassment/bullying while the interventions and planning are under way.

#### Stages 1 and 2:

Proceed in a timely manner at the discretion of staff and Head of School.

#### Stage 3:

Once the Head of School determines the matter requires a Stage 3 response, a plan shall be completed within 5 working days.

### ***Appeals***

Parties involved may consult the *Appeals Policy*.

### **DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions are intended to enhance understanding of this policy. They are descriptive only and not intended to be used for any legal actions.

***Abuse:*** As defined in the *Child Protection Policy*.

***Bullying:*** The most widely accepted definition of bullying comes from the work of leading Norwegian researcher, Dr. Dan Olweus: *“Bullying...is a pattern of repeated aggressive behaviour, with negative intent, directed from one child to another where there is a power imbalance.”*

This aggressive behaviour includes physical or verbal behaviour, and is an intentional and purposeful act meant to inflict injury or discomfort on the other person. Olweus’ definition identifies three critical conditions that distinguish bullying from other forms of aggressive behaviours, including:

- **Power:** Students who bully acquire their power through physical size and strength, by status within the peer group, and by recruiting support of the peer group.
- **Frequency:** Bullying is not a random act. Rather, bullying is characterized by frequent and repeated attacks. It is this factor that brings about the anticipatory terror in the mind of the student being bullied that can be so detrimental and have the most debilitating long-term effects.
- **Intent to harm:** Students who bully generally do so with the intent to harm the other child physically, emotionally, or both.

Bullying can start out in seemingly playful ways, consisting of pranks, jokes, and some “roughhousing.” The incidents soon become more hurtful, degenerating into name-calling, ridicule, personal attacks, and public embarrassment. Rough and tumble “play” gives way to punching, kicking, restraining, and beatings (Ross 1998).

Bullying often involves physical and/or verbal aggression. Physical aggression consists of open assault on another student, slapping, hitting, punching, kicking, throwing things, jostling, and/or poking (Ross 1998). Verbal

aggression consists of verbal taunts or open and overt behaviour, and takes the form of teasing, criticism, gossiping, spreading malicious rumours, threatening to withdraw friendship, social isolation, or exclusion from the group.

See outlines below of various forms bullying can take. Please note that this information is not exhaustive. When determining whether a specific behaviour is bullying, consider whether or not it:

- is repeated over time
- is intended to hurt
- involves a power imbalance.

Adapted from the Ministry of Education programs, *Focus on Bullying* (1998) and *Focus on Harassment and Intimidation: Responding to Bullying in Secondary Schools* (2001).

**Discrimination:** Discrimination is unequal or unfair treatment based on one or more of the prohibited grounds enumerated in the *BC Human Rights Code*: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person. Discrimination includes racial slurs, imitation of accent, put downs about cultural differences, gender harassment, and insults about appearances (e.g., weight, glasses, hair colour).

**Harassment:** Harassment includes, but is not limited to, such behaviour that has the purpose or effect of offending or demeaning an individual or group of individuals on the basis of race, colour, size, ancestry, place of origin, nationality, religion, family status, physical or mental ability, age, gender, or sexual orientation. A student is bullied and harassed when someone takes an action that they knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that student to be humiliated or intimidated.

Harassment can be a single incident or a series of incidents. Bullying is usually a series of such incidents. The unwelcome comment or conduct does not have to be directed at a specific person for harassment to occur. Bullying is usually directed at a particular individual. Comments or conduct that tend to ridicule or disparage a group may give rise to an offensive environment and thus to harassment. When it includes an individual who is targeted, then it can be bullying.

**Intimidation :** Intimidation includes, but is not limited to, stealing, extortion, prank, dares (e.g., a public challenge), bribery, threats, locking in a confined space, swarming, stalking, anonymous phone calls, gossip, and breaking confidence.

**Non-verbal Body Language (inappropriate):** Inappropriate non-verbal body language includes, but is not limited to, glaring, snickering, gestures, ignoring (silent treatment), shunning, confining, surrounding, blocking, and unwelcome physical contact such as inappropriate touching or patting.

**Physical Aggression:** Physical aggression includes, but is not limited to, spitting, pushing, tripping, hitting, shoving, kicking, hair pulling, hiding personal possessions (e.g., lunch), damaging property, attacking family or friends, coercion, intimidation, threatening with a weapon, defacing property, and stealing.

**Social Isolation and Alienation:** Social isolation and alienation includes, but is not limited to, shunning; excluding from a group; public humiliation; undermining; embarrassing gossip; setting up a student to look foolish; spreading rumours; inciting hatred; racist, sexist or homophobic alienation; setting up someone to take the blame; and display of pornographic, racist, or other offensive or derogatory material.

**Staff:** Any individual who is employed by the SAP Outdoor Association including an independent contractor who has entered into an agreement with the Society.

**Threats:** Threats are either: a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action on someone in retribution for something done or not done; a person or thing likely to cause damage or danger; or an indication of something impending.

**Verbal Aggression:** Verbal aggression includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate teasing; name calling; offensive remarks, inappropriate jokes or innuendo; mocking; sarcasm; putdowns; whistling/catcalls; leaving nasty or threatening notes; threatening or intimidating phone calls; giving dirty looks; racist or sexist taunting; daring another to do something dangerous; verbal threats against property; verbal threats of violence or inflicting bodily harm; coercion; and extortion. Verbal aggression can occur in all forms of communication including, but not limited to, mail, e-mail, text messages, social media platforms, shared documents (e.g., Google Drive files), fax, voice mail, notes, or yearbook journaling.

**Physical Violence:** Physical violence means that a person is exerting control over another person through the use of physical force. Examples of physical violence include hitting, punching, slapping, kicking, restraining, choking, and brandishing or using any weapon.

## Resources

### School Safety

- [Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide](#)
- [LGBTQ-Inclusive Education Resources](#)
- [Expect Respect and a Safe Education \(erase\)](#) – includes secure login area for Safe School Coordinators – (Email the Independent Schools Branch if you require assistance with login details)
- [Confidential Online Reporting Tool - “Report It”](#)
- Preventing Youth Suicide

### Mental Health

The Canadian Mental Health Association and the Ministry of Children and Family Development have created a suite of resources to assist schools and service providers in understanding their roles and responsibilities regarding privacy issues and information sharing across sectors. Independent school administrators are responsible for ensuring that all staff understand their responsibilities with regard to information sharing.

- Information Sharing for Young People Factsheet (PDF)
- Privacy for Parents and Caregivers Factsheet (PDF)
- Best Practices Guide: Child and Youth (PDF)
- Best Practices Guide: Substance Use (PDF)
- Best Practices for Service Providers: Privacy and Information Sharing (PDF)