

Policy 17

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Inclusion and a sense of belonging for all students – those from difficult backgrounds, those with learning challenges, those who excel academically or on the sports field, those of different colour, race, sexual orientation or beliefs, those who are absolutely “average” – stems from creating an environment in which we focus on all the ways in which we have the same right to learn, not on the things that make us different.

The Board is committed to providing a welcoming, safe, caring and orderly learning environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours. All students within the District have the right to learn and work in schools that promote equality of opportunity, dignity, and respect. The Board is further obligated to protect all students from harassment, discrimination, and violence during the District’s school-related activities. All those involved with the District including trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, contractors, and visitors must share in the responsibility for eliminating bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence. The Board prohibits bullying, harassment, discriminatory, and violent behaviours and expects the allegations of such behaviours to be investigated in a timely and respectful manner.

One of the key outcomes of our vision for the District is that all students will possess a strong connection to their schools as welcoming, safe, caring and respectful places focused on their individualized success.

The Board believes that the quality of student learning and the quality of student health are interdependent. Educational research supports this connection and acknowledges the District’s role in creating and supporting healthy school communities as foundations for optimal learning. The District values the benefits of healthy lifestyles and supports environments that promote healthy living choices. Academic, character and relationship development rests on the base of family, community and health.

As follows, the District’s holistic approach focuses on three specific tenets: mental well-being, physical activity, and healthy eating, and acknowledges the causal relationship among the three.

- **Mental Well-Being**
 - **Definition:** Creating and supporting positive social, emotional and ethical development among students and the adult role models in their lives. Mentally well individuals are able to realize their abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their communities.
 - **Rationale:** Students who have strong senses of self, belonging and who feel cared for at school are more likely to achieve greater academic success, have successful and rewarding relationships, and exhibit positive social behaviour and character traits.

- Physical Activity
 - Definition: Developing knowledge, skills and attitudes in a variety of physical activities and environments that strongly correlate with leading a healthy, active lifestyle.
 - Rationale: Students who are physically active are more likely to exhibit on-task behaviour, academic success, and social inclusion. Engagement in physical activities encourages students to make health-enhancing choices and reduces the risk of obesity.
- Healthy Eating
 - Definition: Understanding and making nutritious food and beverage choices to sustain the body's physical, emotional and intellectual processes and development.
 - Rationale: Nutrition plays a significant role in student growth, development, disease resistance, and physical and mental health. Students who make healthy nutritional choices reduce the risk of obesity and health issues. A successful school-wide approach includes the entire school community and works toward establishing healthy eating habits while limiting non-nutritious food and beverage choices in the school.

Specifically

1. The Board acknowledges its responsibility to ensure healthy learning environments for all students. It recognizes the importance of students' emotional, social, intellectual and physical wellness to their success in school and expects students to adhere to the District Code of Conduct and schools' codes of conduct.
2. The Board expects all trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, visitors, and contractors to embrace and support this policy. This policy covers behaviour not only at District schools, but also at any school-related functions including field trips, conferences, training sessions and social functions. This applies whether contact is face-to-face, by phone, fax, e-mail, Internet or Intranet, or by any other means of communication. Threatening, harassing, intimidating, assaulting or bullying, in any way, any person within the school community including aggressive behaviours such as "cyber" hate messaging and websites created in the student's home, in cyber cafes or other settings.
3. The Board encourages reporting to a responsible adult all incidents of threats, bullying, harassment, violence or intimidation regardless of the identity of the alleged harasser or offender.

Legal Reference: Sections 2, 6, 11, 15, 20, 22, 26, 50, 65, 74, 85 School Act
 Human Rights Code
 Teachers Act
 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
 Criminal Code