

Safe School Procedures

BEHAVIOUR/DISCIPLINE

It is everyone's job to make our school a safe and happy place and whilst we all may have preferred ways of dealing with students, we all need to agree on certain expectations that we have for our students.

All students have the right to learn.

All students have the right to physical and emotional safety.

All students have the right to safety of personal property.

All students have the right to natural justice.

All staff are expected to exercise **natural justice** and common sense when dealing with student behaviour. It is important that teachers employ a **variety of management strategies** in order to assist students to meet expectations.

Effective communication between **home and school** is seen as vital to solving behavioural issues, particularly "nipping problems in the bud", before they escalate.

Persistent serious offenders should have the date and behaviour noted by the teacher for later reference. Mediation procedures are available in the case of conflict and teachers with responsibility for pupil welfare will advise.

The support of staff, the deputy principal, and the principal is readily forthcoming on all matters connected with behaviour management.

Bullying

Bullying is unacceptable harassment and as such can contravene human rights legislation.

Infringement of an individual rights and group rights.

Interferes with students' educational and social development.

We identify four main types of bullying:

- physical - hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- verbal - name-calling, insulting, racist remarks
- indirect - spreading nasty stories, excluding someone from the group.
- Online – texting, email or chat. Video or still image that is designed to offend.

Bullying is:

- deliberate, hurtful behaviour.
- repeated, often over a period of time.
- difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

In this school we will:

Raise and maintain awareness of what constitutes bullying and appropriate responses by including information in:

- * Staff Procedures manual
- * Health Programmes
- * Peer support
- * Assemblies
- * Staff meetings
- * Daily reinforcement in class

A “telling environment” will be encouraged by educating students, parents and staff on the necessity of telling the appropriate people.

A variety of approaches to their response to bullying will be used. These may include holistic approaches such as restorative justice and a ‘no blame’ approach.

If issues of safety are a concern there is an immediate response.

Parents/Caregivers of victim and offenders to be informed and where necessary, involved in the disciplinary process.

Students that exhibit bullying behaviours may be referred to Counselling staff or RTLB service.

Students that are victims are offered ongoing support by staff and School Counsellor.

Staff must react to all incidents of bullying, e.g. low level bullying - verbal reprimand; high level bullying - referred to Senior Management or Counsellor.

Ensure adequate duty coverage before school, interval and lunchtime.

CONCERNS and COMPLAINTS

The School should have a fair and supportive environment where students, parents/caregivers or staff members can register any complaint and feel confident that these will be handled in a fair and professional manner.

Complaints may be from:

- A student about a student or staff member
- A staff member about a student or staff member
- A parent or a member of the public about a student or staff member

These procedures are in place to:

Resolve complaints in a fair and professional manner – this should be done in a co-operative and speedy manner.

Protect the right of complainants by

- (a) acting promptly to resolve the dispute or complaint;
- (b) ensuring that they are not harassed for having laid a complaint.

To protect the rights of staff by

- (a) ensuring the complaints are fairly investigated and decisions are made on the basis of properly evaluated evidence;
- (b) ensure the process complies with the procedures set out below and relevant contractual provisions

To protect the rights of students by

- (a) ensuring that complaints are fairly investigated and decisions are made on the basis of properly evaluated evidence;
- (b) ensuring that a process is in place so that the student does not suffer adversely as a result of making the complaint.

Concerns Procedure

- 1. Talk to the teacher first:** Parents or caregivers who are concerned about something happening at school ask for an appointment with the child's teacher to discuss the issue.
- 2. Talk to the Principal next:** If, after a period of two weeks (or other agreed time), the matter is unresolved or has resurfaced, make an appointment to discuss the issue with the principal. The action taken is recorded by the Principal and dated with the record of the concern.
- 3. If you still have a concern:** If, after working with the teacher and principal, you believe an acceptable outcome has not been reached, you may choose to make a complaint.

Complaints Procedure

- All complaints (which should preferably be made in writing) must outline clearly the details of the complaint being made and the names of the person/s involved.
- The Principal (or such staff member as may be appropriate) shall investigate the complaint to determine whether or not it is of substance. If there is no foundation to the complaint or it is capable of being remedied informally with the agreement of the parties concerned, then this shall conclude the inquiry and the outcome advised to those concerned. Where appropriate, a written record shall be kept of the complaint and its resolution.
If the complaint is not capable of being resolved informally the Principal shall give consideration to an appropriate response in accordance with the standdown, suspension, exclusion and expulsion rules and provisions under the Education Act 1989 or the Staff Discipline Procedures as outlined in the Teachers' Collective Contract.

Staff Complaints Procedure

- Complaints should preferably be in writing, clearly setting out the details of the complaint and identifying the person/s involved. It is acknowledged in some cases a written complaint may not be practicable, this will not prevent these procedures being implemented.
- If a complaint is received about a staff member's conduct then the Principal shall carry out an investigation in the first instance unless the

complaint is about, or concerned with, the Principal in which case the Board of Trustees shall carry out the investigation. The purpose of this initial inquiry is to determine whether there is any foundation to the complaint, whether it can be resolved informally or if it should be the subject of a formal disciplinary investigation.

3. An investigation into a staff complaint shall comply with the requirements of procedural fairness and the relevant terms of the applicable employment agreement. The investigation process shall be determined by the investigator on a case by case basis, but shall include the following minimum requirements:

(a) the staff member shall be fully advised of the complaint and be given the opportunity to make an initial response.

(b) if a formal disciplinary investigation is commenced, the staff member shall be advised of this decision and of his or her right to representation during the investigation. The identity of the person(s) who will be carrying out the formal investigation on behalf of the Board of Trustees shall be notified.

(c) The disciplinary investigation may involve interviewing those persons considered relevant to the enquiry. The staff member shall be kept advised of the scope of the enquiry and provided with all interview notes, documentation and other information obtained during the process

(d) The staff member shall be given the opportunity throughout the process to give responses and ensure his or her views are considered

(e) At the completion of the formal investigation a report setting out the tentative findings and recommendations of the Board shall be made available to the staff member who will be given further opportunity to respond to the findings and recommendation.

4. The complaints procedure will be carried out in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and relevant provisions contained in a teacher's employment agreement.

HEALTH NURSE

When teachers have concerns about the physical well-being of children the health-nurse may be consulted. The health nurse is in the school weekly and is available to students by appointment. The health nurse can provide ongoing support to students and their families and can also access other health providers where necessary.

INTERNET SAFETY

Balmacewen Intermediate School recognizes and encourages the use of communication and information technology by our staff and students. Email and internet is offered for all staff and students with the goal of promoting educational excellence.

All online content is filtered by the school network and will prevent any inappropriate or objectionable material being accessed. The filter applies to all users. Staff and students will sign a **Digital Citizenship Agreement** that gives clear guidelines for use.

PROTECTED DISCLOSURE

The Balmacewen Intermediate School Board of Trustees ensures procedures are in place to meet the requirements of the Protected Disclosures Act 2000.

In the first instance where disclosures are to be made the Principal is the Protected Disclosures Recipient (PDR). Where situations occur that disclosures are about the Principal the Board of Trustees chairperson is the Protected Disclosures Recipient. For procedures involving disclosures please refer to the section on complaints.

ABUSE

Adults will be receptive and sensitive to children so that the children feel listened to and believed.

The school will use the most appropriate agency for abuse. In the case of a report from a third party to the school, the first course of action will be the school will direct the third party to an appropriate agency without becoming involved. The school will follow up to see that this happens and may be actively involved.

Parents will be informed except where the children's welfare is likely to be threatened. Whichever agency is involved in the cases will be responsible for informing the parents.

The counsellors will be the resource people in this area. Teachers who have concerns will discuss them with the Counsellor or Senior Management.

- If a teacher is aware or suspects that a student is the victim of abuse he/she may tell the Principal or a Counsellor. Teachers have the right to contact police, CYFS or a social worker directly if it is considered in the child's best interest. All information/discussion will be confidential to the staff involved. Notes should be kept as they may be important in any future court action. Data will be stored with the Counsellor. This data will be kept for the duration of the child's stay at the school. It will be forwarded at the discretion of the Principal.
- Where further action is necessary the Counsellor will contact the appropriate agency without identifying the child and seek advice on the appropriate action.
- Once the agency has been involved, that agency will investigate and the school will act on the advice from those agencies.
- Whenever an agency meeting is held with a child, an adult whom the child has confidence in, must be present. The welfare of the child must be the first priority and wherever that is compromised the interview must be terminated. Any staff member attending such an interview would need to have the ability to make this judgement.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Board of Trustees have legal obligations as both employers and education providers to prevent sexual harassment occurring. Legal requirements are contained in the Human Rights Contract Act 1991 and the Education Act 1989, State Sector Act 1988, Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Crimes Act 1961 and Summary Offences Act 1981.

The Board of Trustees regards sexual harassment as a serious offence and it will not be tolerated within the school community.

Sexual harassment is offensive, unasked for behaviour.

Sexual harassment generally occurs when a person is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

It can include:

- Sex orientated jokes, cartoons, posters, pin-ups.
- Offensive questions, comments, abuse, leering.
- Unwanted, unnecessary, deliberate physical contact, touching and gestures.
- Questions and comments about private life.
- Requests for sexual favours implying promises of favourable treatment or threats of unfavourable treatment.

Sexual harassment is serious and can be detrimental to one's work performance, to learning, to job opportunities, as well as to self-esteem and reputation. All employees and students must be able to work in, learn in, and be part of, an environment that is free from sexual harassment.

All complaints of sexual harassment will be taken seriously, investigated quickly, privately and fairly, and could be the subject of disciplinary procedures.

A complainant will not be the subject of any victimisation.

If anyone wishes to make an enquiry or a complaint about sexual harassment, they should contact one of the following :

- The Principal
- Staff Representative
- School Counsellor
- Any Board of Trustee member

Traumatic Incident Response

A crisis is a tragedy or trauma involving a severe emotional impact on the affected persons. This can affect the wider community especially one which involves the death or serious injury of students, staff, their families or friends.

Procedures

1. Any person who is informed of the death of a student, or of an incident which will impact on students and/or staff, should advise the Principal or Counsellor immediately. The Principal will verify the death by direct contact with the victim's family.

2. If a crisis should occur the following team of staff members will meet as soon as possible, evaluate the available information, and plan strategies for coping with the crisis:

- Counsellor(s)
- Senior management staff
- Staff with relevant cultural knowledge, skills

- Classroom teacher

The team will prepare a written statement communicating essential information to the BOT Chairperson and staff, and specifying the procedures which they should follow.

Staff will be informed as soon as possible by telephone tree, staff meeting or by crisis team members visiting classrooms. Any teacher who is distressed will be replaced. Staff will be treated according to their wishes which the crisis team will identify.

Group Specialist Education 'Critical Incident Team' will be notified as quickly as possible.

The crisis team will operate on the basis of the principles that the needs of victims, or those most affected, will be given priority, and that staff needs must be met first in order to enable staff to meet student needs. As much as is possible the crisis team will endeavour to consult and involve staff in decision-making.

A designated member of the crisis management team will initiate as soon as possible and maintain contact with affected families and will update staff, including support staff, regularly.

The crisis management team co-ordinator will liaise with the Front Office staff, preparing them with statements suitable for community release.

The Principal or BOT chairperson will liaise with the media and prepare a written media release if appropriate. Any media requests are to be dealt with by the principal or BOT chairperson.

February 2015