

Rainbow District School Board Code of Conduct

Students need a safe and positive learning and teaching environment to succeed at school.

The Safe and Accepting Schools Act, 2012 (Bill 13) came into effect on September 1, 2012.

This legislation strengthens equity and inclusive education principles and bullying prevention and intervention strategies.

Related Policy Board Policy No. Gov - 12 Learning and Working Environment: Safe Schools

Policies are available at rainbowschools.ca

With these policies and procedures, school staff will continue to work respectfully and collaboratively with students and parents/guardians, using a progressive approach to discipline with school safety first and foremost.

A school community promotes responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. A school community includes school board trustees and school board personnel.

All students, parents/guardians and staff have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that put the safety of others or oneself at risk.

Rainbow District School Board believes that every student has the right to an education without disruption, along with the equally important responsibility not to deny this right to any other student.

Rainbow District School Board's Code of Conduct encourages positive student behaviour. A firm and fair application of this Code of Conduct shall prevail in all matters related to Rainbow District School Board, including school activities, school board business and school buses.

ACCEPTANCE

Positive Attitudes

Rainbow District School Board strives to create positive attitudes towards punctuality, regular attendance, completion of classroom assignments, and interest in learning through classroom participation.

Parental Support

Parents/guardians support Rainbow District School Board staff by encouraging students to fulfill their responsibilities towards their school, other students, and themselves. The Board recognizes that an important factor in success at school is the regular completion of homework and regular attendance which requires the co-operation of the home.

Guiding Principles

Rainbow District School Board's Code of Conduct is shaped by the Provincial Code of Conduct.

All participants in the publicly funded school system - students, parents/guardians, volunteers, teachers and other staff members - are included in this Code of Conduct, whether they are on school property, on school buses or at school-authorized events or activities.

All members of the school community must be treated with respect and dignity, especially persons in positions of authority.

Responsible citizenship involves appropriate participation in the life of the school community. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, and more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others.

Members of the school community are expected to use non-violent means to resolve conflict. Physically aggressive behaviour is not a responsible means for interacting with others.

The possession, use or threatened use of any object to injure another person endangers the safety of oneself and others.

Alcohol and illegal drugs are addictive and present a health hazard. Schools will work co-operatively with police as well as drug and alcohol agencies to promote prevention strategies and, when necessary, respond to school members who are in possession of, or under the influence of, alcohol or illegal drugs.

Insults, disrespect, and other hurtful acts disrupt the teaching, learning and business in a school community. Members of the school community have a responsibility to maintain an environment where conflict and differences can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility.

Roles and Responsibilities of the School Community

School members include principals, teachers, staff, students, parents and/or guardians, school councils, trustees, volunteers and visitors.

Principals take a leadership role in the daily operation of schools. They provide this leadership by:

- demonstrating care and commitment to academic excellence and safe teaching and learning environments;
- holding everyone under their authority accountable for their behaviour and actions;

HONESTY

EMPATHY

- empowering students to be positive leaders in their school and community;
- communicating regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community.

Teachers and school staff, under the leadership of their principals, maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and school staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents/guardians;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents, volunteers and members of the school community;
- prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship.

Students are to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- comes to school prepared, on time and ready to learn;
- shows respect for himself/herself, for others and for those in authority;
- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others;
- follows the established rules and takes responsibility for his or her own actions;
- dresses in accordance with the school dress code.

Parents/guardians play an important role in the education of their children, and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents/guardians fulfill their responsibility when they:

- show an active interest in their child's homework, school work and progress;
- communicate regularly with the school;

- help their child be prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;
- become familiar with the Provincial Code of Conduct, the Board's Code of Conduct and school rules;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour;
- assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child.

School council members act as a valuable support mechanism to their local schools when they:

- act as a liaison group on school-related issues;
- act in an advisory capacity to principals on specified school policies.

Police and community members are essential partners in making our schools and communities safe. Community members need to support and respect the rules of their local schools.

Community agencies deliver prevention or intervention programs that may be used by the school community. Protocols are effective ways of establishing linkages between boards and community agencies and of formalizing the relationship between them.

The police play an essential role in making our schools and communities safer. The police investigate incidents in accordance with the protocol developed with the local school board. These protocols are based on a provincial model that was developed by the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Education.

Standards of Behaviour

The standards of behaviour apply to students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, school council members, trustees and visitors engaged in any school activity. In addition, principals will, in conjunction with members of the school council, develop a school Code of Conduct clarifying acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour for all members of their school community. These school Codes of Conduct are subject to review on a regular basis.

Respect, Civility and Responsible Citizenship

All members of the school community must:

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity in achieving academic excellence and in the appropriate use of technology;
- respect differences in people, their ideas and their opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, socio-economic status, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- respect all members of the school community, especially persons in positions of authority;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching;
- not swear at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority.

Safety

All members of the school community must:

Weapons

- not be in possession of any weapon, including but not limited to firearms;
- not use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;
- not use any object to cause personal injury.

Alcohol and Drugs

- not be in possession of, or be under the influence of, or provide others with alcohol or illegal drugs;
- not traffic in weapons or illegal drugs;
- not give alcohol to a minor.

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Physical Aggression

- not inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- seek staff assistance, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully.

Other

- not engage in bullying behaviours;
- not commit sexual assault;
- not commit robbery;
- not engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias;
- not commit an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property or to property located on the premises of the school;
- not use the Internet and electronic devices in a manner that violates the privacy or dignity of others.

Bullying is defined as aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where,

- a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of
 - (i) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or
 - (ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and
 - (iii) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education.

Bullying includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying by electronic means including:

- a) creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the Internet; and
- c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

Education Act, Subsection 1(1)

Suspension

The purpose of a suspension is to caution students and deter them from continuing with or repeating unacceptable behaviours; prevent other students from being exposed to or involved in dangerous and damaging activities; discipline students who have transgressed the rules of the school; and to warn parents or guardians of serious discipline problems with their children. The primary purpose underlying the implementation of a suspension is to result in a change in behaviour for the student.

Activities Leading to Possible Suspension

A student may be suspended for a minimum of one (1) school day and a maximum of twenty (20) school days.

Suspension shall be considered when a principal's investigation of an incident, which should include consultation with the pupil's parent/guardian and pupil or the adult pupil, determines that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

- a) uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person;
- b) possessing alcohol, illegal drugs, or restricted drugs;
- c) being under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- d) swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority;
- e) committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property;
- f) bullying;
- g) use of profane or improper language;
- h) smoking on school property;
- i) academic dishonesty;
- j) inappropriate use of technology;
- k) any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the physical or mental well-being of any member of the school community; and
- l) any act considered by the principal to be contrary to the Board or school code of conduct.

Suspension Reviews

The parent/guardian or the adult pupil may request a review of a decision to suspend where a suspension has been issued.

A written request setting out the reasons for a review must be made within three (3) days of receipt of notice of the suspension. The time for requesting the review may be extended at the discretion of the Superintendent of the school where circumstances precluded a request within the requisite time frame.

The review shall take place upon receipt by the Superintendent of the school of a request for a review.

Suspension Appeals

Where a suspension review has occurred, the pupil's parent/guardian or the adult pupil may appeal the suspension imposed by the principal. In accordance with the Board's administrative procedures, the appeal must be made in writing and delivered to the Director of Education within ten (10) days of the commencement of the suspension.

INTEGRITY

COURAGE

Expulsion

Expulsion shall be considered when a principal's investigation of an incident, which should include consultation with the pupil's parent/guardian and pupil or the adult pupil, determines that the pupil has committed one or more of the infractions outlined below on school property, and/or during a school-related activity or event, and/or in circumstances where the infraction has an impact on the school climate.

The infractions for which a principal shall suspend a pupil and may consider recommending to the Board that a pupil be expelled from the pupil's school or from all schools of the Board include:

- a) possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm;
- b) using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;
- c) committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner;
- d) committing sexual assault;
- e) trafficking in weapons and/or in illegal drugs, and/or possessing weapons and/or illegal drugs for the purpose of trafficking;
- f) committing robbery;
- g) giving alcohol to a minor;
- h) bullying, if:
 - the student has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and
 - the student's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person;
- i) any activity that is a suspension infraction under subsection 306 (1) of the Education Act that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor;
- j) an act, including opposition to authority, considered by the principal to be significantly injurious to the school climate and/or to the physical or mental well-being of others;
- k) a pattern of behaviour that is so inappropriate that the student's continued presence is injurious to the effective learning and/or working environment of others;
- l) activities engaged in by the student on or off school property that have caused extensive damage to the property of the board or to goods that are or were on board property;
- m) a pattern of behaviour that demonstrates that the student has not prospered by the instruction available to him or her and that the student is persistently resistant to making changes in behaviour which would enable him or her to succeed; or
- n) any act considered by the principal to be a serious violation of the board or school code of conduct.

Expulsion Appeals

A pupil's parent/guardian or adult pupil may appeal a Board's decision to expel a pupil to the Child & Family Services Review Board in accordance with the procedures set out by the Ministry of Education.

Rainbow District School Board is committed to the promotion of respect, responsibility and civility in its elementary and secondary schools.

MITIGATING AND OTHER FACTORS

In considering whether to suspend a student for engaging in an activity described above, the principal will take into account mitigating and other factors.

Prior to suspending a student, the following mitigating factors shall be taken into account:

1. The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour.
2. The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour.
3. The pupil's continuing presence in the school does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person.

OTHER FACTORS:

The following other factors shall be taken into account if they would mitigate the seriousness of the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled:

1. The pupil's history.
2. Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil.
3. Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment.
4. How the suspension or expulsion would affect the pupil's ongoing education.
5. The age of the pupil.
6. In the case of a pupil for whom an individual education plan has been developed,
 - (i) whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's individual education plan,
 - (ii) whether the appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
 - (iii) whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct.

In circumstances where one or more of the factors above mitigate the decision to apply a suspension as a form of discipline for the pupil, the principal may consider whether alternative discipline and/or other intervention is appropriate in the circumstances.

Restart: Sudbury, Restart: Espanola, and Restart: Manitoulin are programs for students who have been suspended or expelled. Students are supported in both academic and non-academic areas.

*For more information,
talk to your school principal.*