

DELTA
WEST
ACADEMY

SAFE AND CARING POLICIES



Preface

Delta West Academy considers itself a growing and living community; everyone who is part of it is responsible for the well-being and success of the other members since we all have a common goal: the best learning environment to build students of strength and character while developing their potential.

We believe...

- all students want to succeed and can do so in a safe, caring and invigorating learning environment.
- students will learn and perform best when expectations, rules and potential consequences are clearly laid out, and consistently and fairly enforced.
- it is the parents' responsibility to be fully aware of the expectations, rules and potential consequences so they can be reinforced for children to quickly learn and demonstrate a standard of behavior conducive to success.

Delta West Academy operates in accordance with the *Alberta School Act*, *Alberta Human Rights Act* and *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Personal Information Protection Act* in pursuit of a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment for students, parents and staff.

As outlined in the *School Act* **Section 45.1(3)**, Delta West Academy affirms the rights, as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, of each staff member employed by the School authority and each student enrolled in a school operated by the school Authority, and contains one or more statements that staff members employed by the School Authority and students enrolled in a school operated by the School Authority will not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

DWA Mission Statement

The goal of Delta West Academy is to realize learning with a strong emphasis on real life relationships. DWA creates an environment based on mutual respect and trust, allowing the uniqueness of each student to shine, and challenging them to attain academic excellence and personal growth.

DWA Vision

The ultimate goal of Delta West Academy is to provide an excellent education, academically and socially, that will prepare students to be successful in post-secondary studies, their careers and in their roles as active citizens. To that end, DWA will maintain a low student to teacher ratio environment which means small classes in a small school within the context of a strong school community. The staff is responsible for the creation of an interesting and interactive learning environment that is safe in all respects - intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. They generate active and enriched learning for students within a framework of high expectations and a well-balanced program of studies. Students are responsible for ethical achievement, conscientiously developing their skills and talents, and respectful social interaction. Parents are responsible for supporting their children in all aspects of their learning endeavours and social growth, and collaborating constructively with the school staff and school community. Everyone, including staff,

students and parents, has a responsibility in maintaining a cohesive, safe and vibrant school community through honest and timely communication, being committed to the vision of DWA and contributing to the progress and growth of the school community as a whole. Our vision has always been centred on a safe, caring environment where all stakeholders, students, faculty and parents play a role in providing a setting that supports all individuals.

The following policies were approved by the Board of Directors on **June 25th, 2018** and are in compliance with legislation outlined in the *Alberta School Act*, *Alberta Human Rights Act* and *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Personal Information Protection Act* in pursuit of a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment for students, parents and staff.

These policies are made available to through our publicly accessible website, our secured parent portal and upon request. Review of DWA's policies and code of conduct undergo regular review and posted on June 30th of each subsequent year as per the Ministerial order of the provincial government in compliance with **Section 45.1(6)**.

Safe and Caring Policy

Delta West Academy has always valued a safe and caring environment for the positive growth and development of our students. Furthermore, Delta West Academy promotes a welcoming, caring and respectful safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

The newly enacted government legislation under the *School Act* **Section 45.1(2) and Section 16.1** now align with policies DWA has always followed, valued and fulfilled within our community. We establish, implement and maintain a policy respecting its obligation under subsection (1) to provide each enrolled student and every employed staff member with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that includes the establishment of a code of conduct for students that address bullying behavior.

When a student request for assistance, support and or an accommodation is received, the school, through the Principal and or agents of the school, will respond in a caring, respectful and timely manner.

Behavioural Standards

DWA strongly believes that a safe and caring learning environment is essential to intellectual risk-taking, which leads to learning and a harmonious school community to support student growth and development as encompassed by the code of conduct. This statement aligns with the *School Act* **Section 45.1(5)** whereby the following pages 2-8 indicate our standards.

Due to the changing nature of growing children, DWA takes a pro-active approach in teaching respectful and inclusive behaviour, which involves teaching and training of responsible behaviour and enforcing the compliance of that behaviour. Improper behaviour is corrected so that respectful responses and responsible choices become habit. To this end, we support and respect the individuality of all students and aim to create a positive and supportive environment focused on providing the best possible learning opportunity for each student.



Parents have a very important role in supporting this growth. As such, parents are also held accountable for their interactions with staff, students, other parents and guests in our school community.

The Province of Alberta *School Act* R.S.A. 2000 c. S-3.1 as amended (the "*School Act*") and the *School Act* Regulations, authorizes and requires DWA to make rules for the discipline of students and for the suspension and expulsion of students.

Responsibility of Students

When students are committed to their education and personal development, their behaviour is generally not a concern. The *School Act*

(<http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/s03.pdf>) recognizes this with the following section:

Section 12 of the *Act* states a student shall conduct himself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:

- be diligent in pursuing the student's studies;
- attend school regularly and punctually;
- co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services;
- comply with the rules of the school;
- account to the student's teachers for the student's conduct;
- respect the rights of others;
- ensure that the student's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging;
- refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means;
- positively contribute to the student's school and community.

Parent Responsibilities & Code of Conduct

Section 16.2 of the *Act* states parents have a corresponding responsibility under *Alberta's Amended School Act* to help their child meet his/her responsibilities. A parent of a student has the responsibility to

- take an active role in the student's education success, including assisting the student in complying with **Section 12**;
- to ensure that the parent's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment;
- to co-operate and collaborate with school staff to support the delivery of specialized supports and services to the student;
- to encourage, foster and advance collaborative, positive and respectful relationships with teachers, principals, other school staff and professionals providing supports and service in the school, and;
- to engage in the student's school community.

Teacher Responsibilities and Code of Conduct

As an employee, staff must treat students, parents, administrators, colleagues and other members of the community with dignity, respect and consideration as the conduct of all employees in a school “bears directly on the community’s perception of the ability of teachers to fulfill their unique position of trust and influence.

Society and the school community hold teachers to a high standard of conduct.” While this statement mentions teachers specifically, at Delta West Academy it includes all non-teaching and support staff as a matter of best practice. Everyone at our school interacts with students and parents and each other, and we are all held to the same high standard of conduct.

Staff must adhere to the policies and regulations of their employment contract with Delta West Academy Society, and for teachers also the *School Act*, any other relevant legislation, and conduct your employment responsibilities in an honest and diligent manner.

Parents can help in many ways. According to **Section 16.2(a)** of the **Act** some examples include:

- model kindness;
- pay attention to how you talk about other children and the school in front of your child;
- take responsibility for your mistakes;
- report any problems at school to the teacher as soon as you can. Problems are easier to solve when they have not been going on for a long time. The best place to start is with your child’s teacher. If you are not satisfied with the results of this conversation, the next step would be to make an appointment to speak to your child’s principal;
- model peaceful problem solving when you have a conflict.

Inappropriate Behaviour

This applies to all DWA community members, students, staff, parents and volunteers, and includes but is not limited to:

- a poorly presented school uniform;
- excessive lates and absences;
- bullying (as defined in Appendices 2 pg. 38) and cyber-bullying;
- swearing, foul language, slander, discriminatory or prejudicial remarks and any other inappropriate language;
- using other languages inappropriately;
- harassment, threats, intimidation;
- verbal or physical assaults;
- fighting;
- inappropriate sexual innuendo, contact or intimacy
- gossip causing distress;
- theft;
- blackmail;
- vandalism of school property or anyone else’s property;
- inappropriate use of electronic media including accessing inappropriate sites,



emailing or posting inappropriate comments/graphics related to the school community or any member of the school community to others or on any sites, including personal or other (Facebook, ratemyteacher, Yelp, Twitter, Snapchat, etc.);

- wilful and aggressive disobedience;
- plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty;
- illegal offenses involving drugs, tobacco products, firearms, weapons, explosives, alcohol and any circumstances in which the above products impact the school community in any way including possession, distribution or use on school property or at school events;
- motor vehicles violations;
- activities legal for persons age 18 and over including but not limited to tobacco products and or vaping, alcohol, and gambling will not be permitted on the school property;
- other conduct injurious to the moral tone or well-being of DWA or any members of its community.
- acts of retribution against an individual who has intervened to prevent bullying or informed about bullying or other unacceptable behavior.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

The staff of Delta West Academy is responsible for investigating breaches, attempted breaches and complaints from any member of the school community regarding inappropriate behaviour. It is also their responsibility to assess the seriousness of the inappropriate behaviour, its impact on the victim and the school community as a whole. Furthermore, the staff is then responsible for making decisions regarding the Disciplinary Actions that will apply.

Many breaches are minor and dealt with quickly, within the same hour or school day. However, severe breaches or investigations that become complex require more time to conduct properly. To ensure fairness to and confidentiality of all involved, the school will take whatever time is necessary to thoroughly investigate breaches and this will require patience on the part of all involved.

Investigation Procedures

Upon witnessing or being made aware of a breach or complaint, the staff member starts an investigation or refers the matter to another appropriate staff member within a short period of time, to:

- determine the exact nature and severity of the breach;
- ascertain all persons allegedly involved or who may have witnessed the breach;
- give all involved persons an opportunity to speak to the breach including other staff members or parents;
- depending on the severity of the breach or the number of people involved, document the interviews and deal with effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures;
- obtain any relevant items and keep them in a secure place;
- based on the results of the investigation, make a determination about the actual sequence of events, any mitigating circumstances and any disciplinary actions to be applied;
- depending on the complexity of the investigation, other senior staff or administrators may become involved;

- inform the persons involved about the results and outcomes of the investigation;
- depending on the severity of the breach or its impact, inform parents of the outcomes of the investigation, if they have not been previously involved. This information will reflect only the involvement of their child as the involvement of other students and their respective consequences is confidential;
- engage outside authorities if warranted;
- enact disciplinary actions.

*Parents will **not** be notified of minor infractions that occur which are considered part of age-appropriate behaviour unless there is a pattern of inappropriate behaviour that starts to develop.*

Disciplinary Procedures

The following is a range of disciplinary actions that **can** be applied, in any order or combination, depending on the results of any investigation:

- warning;
- reparation activity;
- meeting with senior staff member (one-time or regular);
- supervised meeting with peer(s);
- notification of breach, investigation or consequences added to student file;
- temporary removal from a group or class activity or school event;
- temporary removal from peer interaction such as recess;
- temporary loss of privilege (off-campus, school store, free days, locker, etc.);
- informing parents of the results of the investigation;
- meeting with parents;
- addendum to the Admission Agreement regarding future behavioural and/or academic expectations;
- payment of damage or for replacement of item or costs incurred;
- extra assignment or chore or duty;
- extra assignment during non-school hours/days;
- removal from award nomination lists;
- in-school suspension (up to five school days);
- out-of-school suspension (up to five school days);
- notification of breach to Alberta Education or other authorities;
- probation period;
- expulsion;
- any other consequences deemed necessary by the school.

Significant disciplinary actions are confidential so parents or students will not be informed of specifics of disciplinary actions for another child or parent, regardless of the nature of the incident.

Failure to comply with Delta West Academy's Code of Conduct, Section 16 and Section 45 and/or outlined sections of the *School Act*, may also result in disciplinary action of the parent(s). Some examples may include but not be limited to:

- no longer attending field trips or any off campus activities;
- exclusion from extra-curricular events such as Graduation & Awards Ceremonies or



Christmas Tea;

- being prohibited from entering the school premises;
- the termination of a student/family's enrolment.

Any breach of the Code of Conduct may result in an evaluation of the student's/family's fitness to be a member of the DWA school community.

Bullying & Cyber-bullying

“Bullying is when one person uses power in a willful manner with the aim of hurting another individual repeatedly. It is the repeated exposure over time to negative actions where there is an imbalance of power such that the individual being victimized has trouble defending him/her against physical, verbal or psychological aggression.”

(Courtesy of Bully-Proofing Your School).

This includes cyber-bullying where the main contact medium is the use of technology to degrade, ridicule, embarrass or instil fear. The repetitive aspect of bullying is also counted by how many individuals or groups have access to or are exposed to the cyber-bullying information about the victim, the ease with which such information can be electronically shared and the anonymity of the sender(s).

Due to the far reaching effects of social media, there is a heightened accountability for parents, students and staff to provide a safe and caring learning environment as stated in **section 45.1** of *Alberta's Amended School Act*.

DWA recognizes that there is normal peer conflict where negative interaction will occur, which will be dealt with as described previously, but that bullying is a severe form of aggression with potential long-term consequences both for the individual engaged in bullying behaviour and the individual who is victimized by it.

It encompasses the list of Inappropriate Behaviours, as listed in the Student Code of Conduct, on a repetitive and targeted basis and is not tolerated at DWA. Bullying amongst students is dealt with in the same manner as other breaches with the added process of parental involvement and the appropriate authorities right from the beginning of the identification of the problem. DWA has programs and interventions in place to deal with bullying which all involve parental support. If parental support is not forthcoming in addressing the bullying problem, higher order Disciplinary Actions including expulsion will be applied.

It is important to note that bullying amongst adults in our school community is equally unacceptable and will be dealt with in an upfront manner and consequences applied if needed.

To identify bullying behaviour, the repetitive nature of the behaviour must be established. Thus, while one or two negative incidents between the same students does not constitute bullying, they should still be reported as they need to be addressed as per our policies, and which may prevent bullying behaviour from being developed in the first place. Negative behaviours over a longer period of time (more than two months) that have not been reported

become more difficult to address as they have had time to become negative habits. Students and parents should be prepared for more lengthy and intense intervention in this case.

Board of Directors

Delta West Academy operates under the direction of an established board. As per **Section 45.1** of the **Act**, the board has the responsibility to:

- ensure that each student enrolled in the school operated by the board and each staff member employed by the board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.
- A board shall establish, implement and maintain a policy respecting the board's obligation under the above mentioned subsection to provide a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that includes the establishment of a code of conduct for students that addresses bullying behaviour.

The Delta West Academy Board also acts as the final appellate for the school. If a parent or student chooses to appeal a suspension and or expulsion the Board of Directors must be notified in writing within **7 days** of the first day of the expulsion/suspension or termination of the enrolment outlining the reasons for the appeal.

The Board will determine whether a hearing is warranted or the suspension/expulsion stands. If a hearing ensues, all parties will be notified and called to appear before the Board. The Board, hearing an appeal of an expulsion or termination of a family's enrolment will, at an in-person hearing, receive information from the principal, from the parent or guardian and from the expelled student. The Board of Directors may uphold the expulsion/termination or may reinstate the student/family on such terms and conditions as the Board of Directors deems appropriate. The decision of the Board of Directors is final, binding and not subject to appeal.

Section 16.2(b) of the **Act** says that parents also have a responsibility to contribute to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment. Parents have an important role to play whether they are in the school regularly or not. Some examples include:

- speaking respectfully to and about school staff
- speaking positively about the school, staff, other students and their families in front of your child
- making appointments to ensure the person you want to speak with has sufficient time to have a focused conversation.
- communicating with the teacher or other school staff. For example, positive notes or emails to your child's teacher and or other school staff, positive comments when you drop off or pick up your child.

Support for Student Organizations

Student organizations and activities will be permitted in a manner consistent with the vision, mission and programming of the school. **Section 16.1(1)** of the amended **Act** indicates if one or more students attending a school operated by a board request a staff member employed by the board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity



intended to promote a welcoming, caring and respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall

- permit the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and
- designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity that promotes equality and non-discrimination with respect to, without limitation, race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation.

As per **Section 16.3** of the amended **Act**, The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity including the name “*gay-straight alliance*” or “*queer-straight alliance*”.

Stated within **Section 16 (3.1)** of the amended *School Act*, for greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”.

Also inclusive in the support for student organizations is **Section 16(4)** of the amended **Act**, where the principal shall immediately inform the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in subsection (1) and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.

Within **Section 16.1(6)**, the principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in **Section 16.1(1)** of the School Act is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity, and is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations and activities.

The collection, use and disclosure of personal information through Delta West Academy are done so in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA).

