

***Provisions of the School Act related to the following policies are currently being challenged as unconstitutional before the courts. Consequently, these policies are subject to continuing review.***

## **DEVON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL SAFE AND CARING POLICY**

### **Rationale:**

Devon Christian School is deeply committed to operating a safe, caring, inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment. We provide a faith-filled education that reflects in its programs, policies, procedures, the Biblical beliefs of the Evangelical Christian church community, adhering to the organization's statement of faith.

All policies and procedures of the school are developed and administered with gentleness, respect for all people as image bearers of God the creator, care for the wholeness and well-being of the people involved, and in pursuit of unity within the Christian community as the body of Christ. (Genesis 1:26-27, Colossians 3:13-14, Psalms 133:1, Ephesians 4:11-13). We are all created in the image and likeness of God. As such, all human beings are inherently sacred and must be treated with dignity and respect. All efforts to support the inclusive, safe, and caring learning and working environment of the school must be in accordance with our statement of faith.

A nurturing inclusive community is one in which each person is welcomed, accepted, and supported as a child of God; therefore, any discrimination is unacceptable and will be addressed.

### **Administrative Policy and Procedures:**

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31, Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behaviour or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture. As part of that commitment, the employees and students of Devon Christian School will conduct themselves in a manner which is consistent with the following:

### **Building A Culture of Respect Policy and Procedures:**

The principal and other staff as designated from time to time shall:

- Communicate, monitor, and address all aspects of this procedure with the staff, students, and parents/guardians on an annual basis;
- In keeping with our goal of treating one another with love and respect the staff shall articulate the expectations regarding the worth and dignity of all as part of discrimination and bullying prevention;
- Ensure that school conduct procedures, if applicable, are reviewed annually with staff and students and that they explicitly address expectations for inclusive behaviours and language;
- Take ongoing action to create and maintain an inclusive, safe, caring, and nurturing learning and working environment;
- Support the establishment of school clubs, groups, and committees which are supervised by a teacher or administrator, that focus on equality and non-discrimination, social justice, peer support and human rights concerns from an Evangelical Christian approach.

Staff are expected to:

- Explore and model the Biblical understanding of inclusivity, that everyone is to be respected and treated with compassion as image bearers of God, and of trending issues in a comprehensive and appropriate way, calling upon our Evangelical Christian resources to inform themselves;
- Support students to help them develop an understanding of themselves as children of God, therefore fostering a sense of self-worth;
- Model respectful inclusive language and behaviours at all times;

- Hold each other accountable for their language and behaviours, and report instances of language and behaviour that result in exclusion or discrimination to their immediate supervisor;
- Report language and behaviour in contravention of this administrative procedure.

The principal and other staff as designated from time to time shall:

- Thoroughly investigate in a timely manner all reports of language and behaviours that result in exclusion or discrimination;
- Address all substantiated reports of language and behaviours that result in exclusion or discrimination in a timely manner;
- Gather and respond to data on language and behaviours that result in exclusion or discrimination on an ongoing basis.

### **Student Programming Policies and Procedures:**

School based staff shall:

- Provide for the needs and physical privacy of students in a pastoral manner, with a view at all times to maintaining their dignity and safety;
- Consult with students and families with respect to accommodating individual needs, protecting the privacy and confidentiality of students;
- Determine best practice and rationale for all individuals involved with respect to student participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities including intramurals and athletics. Based on specific student circumstances, educators address additional needs in consultation with the principal.
- Provide age appropriate Christian education to students on inclusive language and behaviours permeated through all aspects of the school day/life.

### **Code of Conduct Policy:**

At Devon Christian School all students and staff members are to be treated with the utmost respect and care (Micah 6:8; 1 John 4:16-18). Staff members, students and visitors, are to be provided a welcoming, safe, caring and respectful environment in a manner consistent with the school society's philosophy, in accordance with the guidelines articulated in this policy.<sup>1</sup> Unacceptable behaviour includes bullying, violence, prejudice, harassment, threats, and intimidation, whether by personal or electronic means. Acceptable behaviours include those that reflect the fruits of the Spirit such as love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5: 22-23).

### **Discipline Policy and Procedures:**

- Any violation of the code of conduct by students may result in a suspension from school and school sponsored activities. Disciplinary action will be decided upon by the administration and, if necessary, the school board, and will reflect the nature of the incident as well as the age and maturity of the child(ren) involved.
- Staff members found to be in violation of this policy may also face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

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<sup>1</sup> Devon Christian School Society affirms the rights of students and staff members to not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* to the extent applicable and subject to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the nature and character of Devon Christian School as a private, voluntary religious association. See e.g. *H.S. v. The Private Academy*, 2017 HRTO 791; *Caldwell et al. v. Stuart et al.*, [1984] 2 S.C.R. 603; *Loyola High School v. Quebec (Attorney General)*, 2015 SCC 12.  
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### **Support for Victims Policy and Procedures:**

- Devon Christian School is committed to supporting any students or staff members that have been the recipient of inappropriate and/or discriminatory conduct. The student or staff member will receive appropriate support by guidance from the school administration.
- In the case that more extensive assistance is required; the school will enlist the support of local professionals.

### **Restoration and Support for Students or Staff Who Engage in Inappropriate Behaviour Policies and Procedures:**

- Devon Christian School is committed to the principles of reconciliation and unity in the spirit of Matthew 18:15–19. Where appropriate, students and staff will be encouraged to seek reconciliation with one another and, if required, seek out the assistance of a third party within the school (i.e. a teacher or staff member). If reconciliation is not achieved, all parties will meet with the Principal to work towards restoration. If the conflict involves the Principal, the parties will meet with the Chairman of the Board to work towards restoration.
- Students or staff who engage in inappropriate behaviour will be provided the opportunity to access appropriate resources in our school and in our community to assist them in evaluating and correcting their behaviour.

### **Establishment of a Club Policy and Procedures:**

In an effort to ensure that all students can experience a welcoming, safe, caring, and respectful environment, Devon Christian School promotes the establishment of voluntary student-organized clubs designed to achieve this goal. These clubs may be established as long as they are created in a respectful fashion, and in conformance with the philosophy and basis of the school. Clubs such as these provide students the opportunity to learn how to live out their calling to show love to God and to their neighbour (Galatians 5:14; John 13:34; Mark 12:29-31).

The following guidelines apply to the establishment of clubs dedicated to the promotion of a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment:

- If one or more students 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, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging for all students in the school, the principal of the school shall, without undue delay and after ensuring that the purpose of the voluntary student organization or activity is in harmony with the philosophy of the school, grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school.
- Within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request the principal will designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity. All staff members who lead or support student clubs, voluntary student organizations and student-initiated activities must have a lifestyle and reputation that is in accordance with the philosophy of Devon Christian School. The staff member is required to attend all meetings of the student club, voluntary student organization, or all planning meetings of student-initiated activities and provide regular updates to the principal.
- An organization or activity includes an organization or activity that promotes equality and non-discrimination regardless of personal characteristics. Non-discrimination refers to the equal treatment and support of people, and does not require that behaviours, thoughts, or feelings that are contrary to a Biblical worldview be endorsed or promoted.
- In keeping with the Biblical values of Devon Christian School; any student club, voluntary student association, or student-initiated activity will support the statement of faith and philosophy of the school.
- The students may select a respectful and inclusive name that it is in harmony with the philosophy of the school.

- Section 45.1(4)(d) of the *School Act* requires this Policy to indicate that the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)*<sup>2</sup> governs the disclosure of personal information by the Board. *PIPA*, the *School Act*, the *Alberta Bill of Rights* and the Teacher's Professional Code of Conduct recognize latitude for parental notification for participation in student clubs and voluntary student activities:
  - *PIPA* states that notification is allowed in situations where: "a reasonable person would consider that the disclosure of the information is clearly in the interests of the individual and consent of the individual cannot be obtained in a timely way or the individual would not reasonably be expected to withhold consent". *PIPA* also states that notification is allowable in situations where, "the disclosure of the information is necessary to respond to an emergency that threatens the life, health or security of an individual or the public".
  - The *School Act* states that "parents have a right and a responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children".
  - The *Alberta Bill of Rights* guarantees as a fundamental freedom "the right of parents to make informed decisions respecting the education of their children."
  - The *Teacher's Code of Professional Conduct* states, "The teacher may not divulge information about a pupil received in confidence or in the course of professional duties except as required by law or where, in the judgment of the teacher, to do so is in the best interest of the pupil".

Section 45.1 of the *School Act* requires the school board to include the text of sections 16.1(1), (3), (3.1), (4) and (6) in this policy. Portions of Section 16.1 are currently before the courts in regards to their constitutionality.<sup>3</sup> Devon Christian School Society is unable to adopt provisions into its policy that violate its religious beliefs and the legal and constitutional rights of students, parents, and the school community. For access to Section 16.1 and 45.1 and its contents, please refer to the *School Act*, or contact the school office for a copy accompanied by details of the court challenge.

Nothing in this Policy is to be interpreted so as to limit or be a waiver of the Devon Christian School Board's or School's rights, powers, and responsibilities pursuant to the *Alberta Bill of Rights* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. To the extent, provisions referenced in this Policy conflict with Devon Christian School Board's or School's rights, powers and responsibilities pursuant to the *Alberta Bill of Rights* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the Devon Christian School Board's and School's rights, powers, beliefs and policies pursuant to the *Alberta Bill of Rights* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* will govern.

#### **Additional Safe and Caring Policies and Procedures:**

1. Staff ensure that students are supervised at all times.
2. Unsafe items such as weapons are not allowed at school.
3. Rocks, gravel, snowballs, or dangerous items should never be thrown.
4. Only parents or a designated emergency contact person can pick up their children from school.
5. Should an emergency occur during a school day, the staff would assume responsibility for the students until parents could pick up their children. Depending on the situation, evacuated students would move to the Devon Alliance Church Gymnasium or basement.
6. In the case of an injury to a student, the parents (or emergency contact person if parents are not available) will be notified immediately if the injury is serious. It is critical that parents keep the office up to date on contact number changes.
7. All staff members are certified in the administration of first aid and CPR in the event of a serious accident. If medical attention is urgently required, we will call emergency medical help, as well as the parent.
8. In all cases, the teacher on duty at the time of the accident will complete a form with details of the incident.
9. The entire school will participate in fire drills several times each year to facilitate an orderly and rapid exit from the building in the event of a real fire occurring during the school day.

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<sup>2</sup> The interpretation and application of *PIPA* is subject to the paramount provisions of the *Alberta Bill of Rights*, including sections 1(c) and 1(g), and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, sections 2 and 7.

<sup>3</sup> Sections 45.1 and 16.1 of the *School Act* are currently under Constitutional challenge before the Courts: Devon Christian School Society recognizes that the application of any provisions of the *School Act* are subject to the paramount provisions of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Alberta Bill of Rights*, protecting freedom of conscience, religion, expression, association, and the right of parents to make informed decisions concerning the education of their children.  
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10. Devon Christian School has an Emergency Response Plan to follow and it is reviewed annually.
11. Each teacher is also instructed in the proper procedures to follow in the event of a school lockdown. This is practiced throughout the year.
12. In the event of an emergency such as a bomb threat or intruder alert the principal will determine the correct response and initiate the procedure.
13. Child abuse is a disturbing yet prevalent trend in our society. We hope and pray that all children attending our ending our school are growing up in a secure and loving environment. Should a case arise where a staff member has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is suffering in an abusive situation, that staff member is morally and legally obligated to report it to the principal and file a report immediately with Child and Family Services or the RCMP.

**References:**

- *The Holy Bible*
- *The School Act*
- *Alberta Bill of Rights*
- *Alberta Human Rights Act*
- *Personal Information Protection Act*
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*