

## **I. Students**

### **Policy I-101: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments Policy**

Students are better able to achieve success and a positive sense of self when schools are inclusive, welcoming, caring, respectful and safe. Such environments support students in building healthy relationships with others, value diversity and demonstrate respect, empathy, and compassion.

Each student and staff member within the Valhalla Community School has the right to learn and work in an environment that promotes dignity, respect and equality of opportunity. In keeping with the emphasis on rural leadership and community at VCS, the Valhalla School Foundation Board is committed to providing a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

The Charter Board 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 Charter Board and each student enrolled in a school operated by the Charter Board. Staff and students will not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The Charter Board is further obligated to protect all students and staff from harassment and violence during school-related activities. All those involved with the Valhalla Community School and Valhalla School Foundation, including Directors, employees, students, parents, volunteers, contractors, and visitors must share in the responsibility for eliminating bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence. The Charter Board prohibits bullying, harassment, discriminatory and violent behaviours, for any reason, including race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation. Allegations of such behaviours will be investigated in a timely and respectful manner.

One key outcome of our vision for Valhalla Community School is that all students will possess a strong connection to the school as a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe place focused on their individualized success.

#### **Specifically**

1. The Charter Board acknowledges its responsibility to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and healthy learning and working environments for all students and staff. It further recognizes the importance of students' emotional, social, intellectual and physical wellness to their success in school, and in support of a safe, caring environment expects students to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct.
2. The Charter Board expects all Directors, employees, students, parents, volunteers, visitors, and contractors to embrace and support this policy. This policy covers behavior not only on school property, but also at any school-related functions and applies whether contact is face to face, by phone, fax, email, internet, social media sites, or 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 hate messaging through websites created in the student's home or in other off-campus settings, is strictly prohibited.

3. The Charter Board expects all members of the school community to report to a responsible adult, in a timely manner, all incidents of bullying, threats, harassment, discrimination, violence or intimidation regardless of the identity of the alleged harasser or offender.
4. The Charter Board will hear unresolved student or staff complaints of bullying, discrimination or harassment.
5. The Charter Board supports the establishment of student organizations as well as the arranging of activities which are intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment, including but not limited to organizations such as gay-straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs and anti-bullying clubs are permitted.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Student Code of Conduct

Appendix B: Administrative Procedures

## **Appendix A: Student Code of Conduct**

The Charter Board is committed to the establishment of a welcoming, safe, caring, respectful and effective learning environment for its students, staff, volunteers and visitors.

Student behaviour and conduct at Valhalla Community School will reflect strong moral character and self-discipline characterized by:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Self-Discipline
- Compassion
- Integrity
- Good Citizenship

The Charter Board believes that parents, as partners, play a vital role in instilling and reinforcing the skills necessary for appropriate conduct.

### **Guidelines**

A student shall conduct him/herself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct as established in the School Act:

1. Be diligent in pursuing the student's studies;
2. attend school regularly and punctually;
3. co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the Charter Board to provide the education program and other services;
4. comply with the rules of the school;
5. account to the student's teachers for the student's conduct;
6. respect the rights of others, and avoid all forms of bullying, discrimination, harassment and violence, for any reason, including race, colour, gender identity, sexual orientation, body type or religious beliefs.
7. 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;
8. Positively contribute to the student's school and community.

The *School Act*, this policy and school and classroom based codes of conduct shall apply whether or not the conduct occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means. This includes:

1. any school or school sponsored activity whether on or off campus,
2. any bus transportation of students, including designated drop off or pick-up areas,
3. transportation by volunteer drivers to school – sponsored off-campus activities, and
4. any conduct, at any time or place, or by any means, that is injurious to the welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment of the school.

**Appendix B: Valhalla Community School Administrative Procedures regarding Student Organizations and Activities to Support a Welcoming, Safe, and Caring Environment**

Students are better able to achieve success and positive sense of self when schools are inclusive, welcoming, caring, respectful and safe. These environments support students in building healthy relationships with others, value diversity and demonstrate respect, empathy and compassion.

**Procedures:**

The Principal shall:

1. Provide students, staff and parents with a copy, or electronic access to the publicly posted Student Code of Conduct.
2. Investigate all student complaints of bullying and discriminatory behavior in a timely, respectful manner with the primary goal of ending such behavior through restorative processes, strategies for addressing issues of dispute, or counselling, for both those students who are impacted and those who engage in inappropriate behaviour. Where deemed necessary, there will also be disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion, taking into account each student's age, maturity and individual circumstances.
3. Develop bullying and harassment awareness in the school community, and promote activities to foster a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment in the school.
4. Support the establishment of student organizations and the arranging of student-led activities which are intended to support a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that nurtures a sense of belonging in accordance with section 16.1 of the *School Act*.

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, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall.

- (a) Immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and
- (b) Subject to subsection (4), within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request 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.
- (c) The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name "gay-straight alliance" or "queer-straight alliance", after consulting with the principal. (3.1) For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes "gay-straight alliance" or "queer-straight alliance".
- (d) 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.
- (e) The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection (1) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.

5. Notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or activity referred to in section 16.1(1) of the *School Act* is limited to the fact of 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.
6. In addition to informing the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in section 16.1(1), the principal will also inform the Superintendent.
7. Valhalla Charter School is a public body bound by the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

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*Legal Reference:* School Act Section 12, 16.1, 18, 20, 24, 45, 50, 60, 105, 113 School Act  
Alberta Human Rights Act  
Occupational Health and Safety Act  
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms  
Criminal Code