
Aurora Academic Charter School

Creating Safe and Caring Schools: Report to the Board



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Legislation, Policies, and Definitions

1) Aurora Policy 1020: The Purpose of Aurora School is:

- a) To assist and encourage students of average ability and beyond to develop the highest level of academic and creative prowess possible
- b) To help develop in students a lifelong love of learning and a pursuit of **physical and mental wellbeing**
- c) To produce **responsible citizens** who recognize the value of hard work and enterprise
- d) To develop in students a desire to be **productive, law-abiding and loyal** employers and employees
- e) To develop in students **effective communication skills**
- f) To ensure students are prepared upon graduation to enter the global economy

2) School Act: Student Code of Conduct

- a) be diligent in pursuing the student's studies;
- b) attend school regularly and punctually;
- c) co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services;
- d) comply with the rules of the school;
- e) account to the student's teachers for the student's conduct;
- f) **respect the rights of others;**
- g) **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;**
- h) **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;**
- i) **positively contribute to the student's school and community.**

RSA 2000 CS-3 S12;2015 C1 S

3) Aurora Policy 6035: Student Code of Conduct

- a) **Respect yourself and the rights of others in the school.**
- b) **Make sure your conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment in the school that respects the diversity and fosters a sense of belonging of others in your school.**
- c) **Refrain from, report and refuse to tolerate bullying or bullying behavior, even if it happens outside of the school or school hours or electronically.**
- d) **Inform an adult you trust in a timely manner of incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, or other safety concerns in the school.**
- e) **Act in ways that honour and represent you and your school.**
- f) Attend regularly and punctually.
- g) Be ready to learn and actively engage in and diligently pursue your education.

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- h) Know and comply with the rules of your school.
 - i) Cooperate with all school staff.
 - j) Be accountable for your behavior to your teachers and other school staff.
 - k) Contribute positively to your school and your school community.**

4) Alberta Education Definition of Bullying

- a) Bullying is a repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour intended to cause harm, fear or distress, including psychological harm or harm to a person's reputation. It often involves an imbalance of social or physical power.
- b) Bullying behaviours are a form of aggression and can be:
 - i) Physical – For example: poking, elbowing, hitting
 - ii) Verbal – For example: name calling, insults, racist, sexist or homophobic comments, put- downs or threats
 - iii) Social – For example: gossiping, spreading rumors, excluding someone from the group, isolating, ganging up
 - iv) Cyber – For example: social or verbal bullying through the use of email, text messages or social media.
- c) What Bullying is Not:

Bullying behavior is not the same as hurting someone's feelings if there is no misuse of power or a deliberate intent to cause harm. It is important to support individuals to understand the difference between these behaviours as part of learning how to build healthy relationships.

Bullying behavior is sometimes confused with conflict. Conflict is a disagreement about different beliefs, ideas, feelings, or actions. It is a normal part of healthy relationships. For example, friends may disagree over which movie to see or what game to play. Learning skills to resolve conflict appropriately is very important for building and maintaining positive relationships.

[HTTPS://EDUCATION.ALBERTA.CA/BULLYING-PREVENTION](https://education.alberta.ca/bullying-prevention)

Elementary and Middle School Approach

Aurora staff, teachers, and administrators believe in the dignity of all children and that the best approaches to creating safe and caring environments are systemic, evidence-based, proactive, restorative, and involve parents and guardians as partners.

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- 1) Systemic: infused into classroom activities, as well as consistently reinforced through special events, school-wide communication, policies, and adult modelling
 - 2) Evidence-based: focused on best practices and legislative frameworks and utilizing acknowledged resources and accredited speakers
 - 3) Proactive: infused in the culture of the school and discussed before incidents happen so that students, staff, and parents have the vocabulary and understanding to deal with issues and events
 - 4) Restorative: helping all students involved to recognize the reasons for the behavior, the consequences effecting all parties, and appropriate ways of dealing with situations. While discipline is necessary to show that certain behaviours are not tolerated at Aurora, the focus will be on educating students while providing a path for healing relationships and supporting all students involved in the bullying scenario.
 - 5) Parent and Guardian Partnerships: All Caregivers want to raise a child who does not engage in bullying behaviors. Responses of parents and guardians are impactful in eliminating bullying behaviour. By providing support all children can feel safe and empowered. Parents and guardians of all children involved in bullying have a right to be informed and the responsibility to help the children involved to learn and be safe.

Procedures

Administration treats reports of bullying as serious events. All reports are investigated first by teacher and, if bullying is suspected, then by the Assistant Principal and/or the Principal:

- 1) Gathering Information
 - a. All children party to the report are interviewed, including possible witnesses
 - b. Any available supporting information is gathered (security footage, etc.)
 - c. Teachers, both current and past, are interviewed firstly to ensure that all students have a safe environment going forward during the investigation and secondly to ascertain what events, causes, and effects have been noticed to this point
 - d. Parents and guardians are engaged as partners to provide insight regarding behavior at home that can add information to the investigation.
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2) Determining Bullying

- a. After gathering information from multiple sources, the administration will make a determination of whether the situation constitutes bullying or is indicative of a different situation
 - i. If a situation does not meet the definition of bullying, then other appropriate steps will be taken to mediate the dispute
 - ii. If a situation is bullying, then the Principal is informed

3) Determining Strategies

- a. The Assistant Principal, Principal, teachers, and parents will work collaboratively to discuss the situation
- b. Students who are jeopardizing safety will be sent home until an action plan can be set up.
- c. Mediation between children is necessary to support positive relationship building
 - i. Students who have bullied need to recognize their behavior and its effects, as well as exhibit a willingness to change
 - ii. Students who have been bullied need to have access to supports to ensure they feel safe at school and to build resilient social skills to protect themselves and re-build self-esteem.
 - iii. All students need the opportunity to address the situation so they can work toward a possible reconciliation
- d. Parents need to be informed and engaged in the process so as to provide information about their children and to support the healing process for all students.

4) Monitoring the Situation Post-Intervention

- a. Classroom placements for future years will take into account incidences of bullying
- b. Should students persist in bullying behaviors, further steps will be taken including:
 - i. Recommending and, if required, providing counselling services to all students involved
 - ii. Suspending students from classes and/or the campus
 - iii. Suspending students from the bus
 - iv. Recommending expulsion to the Board
- c. The Principal, Assistant Principal, teachers, parents, and students will be engaged in follow-up consultations to ensure on-going student safety
 - i. These could be informal or formal, depending on the situation

Elementary Strategies

Teachers are professionals with an extensive toolkit of strategies to create safe and welcoming spaces that do not tolerate bullying. Teachers are supported in these strategies through professional development and collaboration time, as well as coaching by mentors and administrators.

Whole-School strategies and activities include active participation in Anti-Bullying Week, Pink Shirt Day, and Orange Shirt Day; the CUBS leadership program for grade 4 students where they work with and mentor all students in the Elementary; special assemblies and presentations about on-line safety, bus safety, bullying, etc.; active supervision strategies; and regular communication in the newsletter about Safe and Caring Schools.

Kindergarten

Activity: In class or Extra-curricular	Resource
Read alouds focusing on Friendship	Various
Discussion on ways to be a good friend <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “What if...” situations• Making good choices• Kindness	Various
Kindergarten Buddies Program <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pair students to model leadership and kindness	Various

Grade 1

Activity: In class or Extra-curricular	Resource
Reading Informal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read-aloud books to students 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "You're Mean Lily Jean" 2. "Bullies Never Win" 3. Recess Queen 4. Big Bad Bruce 5. Berenstain Bears and the Bully 6. How Do Dinosaurs Stay Friends 7. The Invisible Sting Book
Health program/curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to be a good friend bucket fillers – anti-bullying (friendship theme) • Movies – Feelings stories 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How Full is Your Bucket?
Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-bullying Bracelets – colour and wear during Anti-Bully week • A "Minion" reasons not to bully – craft 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lorrie Makepeace 2. Pintrest
Technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos to show students about bullies and how to solve problems 	Bernenstain Bears Video
Circle time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's talk about... 	Teacher and Student-Led
Music: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing songs about friendship 	Various

Grade 2

Activity: In class or Extra-curricular	Resource
Reading Informal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Habits Stories, Read-aloud books • Bucket Filling Books <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement when interacting 	1. Stephen R. Covey 2. McCloud
Health program/curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Dealing with Stress” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comes from within • “Dealing with Anger” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comes from within • Dealing with Emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Part of friendship • Daily work • Booklets and worksheets • Stress/Regulation • Feelings • Friendship 	1. Rodeo Chaps 2. Discovery Education Videos (Self-Regulation)
Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Activities • Health Activities • Hands for Friendship Wreath/Art Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students contributed what they could do • Anti-bullying Bracelets – colour and wear 	1. Booklets 2. Bulletin Board/ Anti-Bullying 3. Games
Technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Choosing appropriate sites ○ Sites to avoid • Ian Gray – Digital Citizenship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technology/internet etiquette • Videos 	1. Edmonton Public Library Presentation on Internet safety 2. Ian Gray – in class visits 3. Brain Pop Jr. – Video 4. Berenstain Bears - Video
Discovery Ed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along Monsters videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scenarios and appropriate/possible responses ○ Feelings 	Discovery Education

Grade 3

Activity: In class or Extra-curricular	Resource
Anti-bullying Art Project and Bulletin Board	Various
“Bucket Filler” Books to read in class	Author: Carol McCloud
“Student of the Week” Program continues all year to focus on individuals and celebrate differences.	T.P.T (Teachers Pay Teachers) and hand-made resources
Anti-bullying Writing Project: Poem	Various
Enemy Pie Book Study	Derek Munson
Pink Shirt Day Craft	Various

Grade 4

Activity: In class or Extra-curricular	Resource
Diamante poem: Anti-bullying poem (in class)	Various
Health Class: (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bullying worksheets• Conflict resolution	AB Education Approved Resource List
Grade 4 Cubs leadership: (Extra-curricular) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sign declaration• Do Presentations	Various
2 Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internet Safety (on-line bullying) completed• Anti-Bullying Presentation – intent to book	Saffron Centre (for both presentations)

Middle School Strategies

The Middle School approach to creating a safe and caring environment is less grade specific, and more holistic in nature due to the fact that students travel from class to class and see multiple teachers in not only a day, but also during the week. The aim is to create an environment where healthy relationships are encouraged, diversity is celebrated and valued, and where respect and kindness are expected. Many of these strategies, however, also apply to the Elementary School.

- Alberta Education Health Curriculum is covered in class; specifically the Relationship Choices strand (please see attached)
- An informed school-wide definition of bullying is taught and utilized
- Bullying behavior versus conflict is outlined
- Classes discuss and recognize what kindness looks like
- Acknowledgement and celebration of positive behavior
- Newsletter items relating to Safe and Caring Schools
- Each term citizenship is recognized through an award with equal value to academics
- Whole school and division presentations are held to reinforce positive behaviour
- Supervision of hallways, greeting of students, and active supervision
- Classroom and hallway etiquette/manners reinforcement

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- Addressing class issues promptly
 - Providing students with numerous extracurricular activities
 - Positive affirming hallway and classroom displays (bulletin boards)
 - Random grouping for projects/activities to create positive relationships and the ability to work well with others
 - Reading buddies with younger grades
 - Tutoring buddies
 - Student Council planned activities such as Post-it-Forward, Middle School Nights, dances, muffin days
 - Recognizing National Bullying Awareness Week
 - Pink Shirt Day
 - Random Acts of Kindness Week
 - Building positive rapport with students
 - Teacher communication with parents through PowerSchool, homework books, emails, phone calls
 - Teachers as role models, working together, positive interactions
 - All teachers in Middle School completing the *Respect in School* course
 - Accessibility – teachers open to meet for conversations
 - Check-ins with classes and individual students
 - Pods in classrooms to build collaboration, cooperation/bonding

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- Promoting student mentorship, at recess students are teaching other students instruments.
 - Promoting sportsmanship, team atmosphere in DPA and PE.
 - Mixed grade intramural teams.
 - PE – staff picks teams (using technology, random, etc.)
 - PE – Three solutions for how to solve problems in sports taught and reinforced.
 - Funding and development of DPA games to build community.
 - Science Olympics (mix students up and monitor them working together).
 - ELA books/stories with related themes
 - Cross grade activities (ie. Student Council)
 - Cross curricular and cross grade pairing of students (2, 8 reading, math/science work).
 - Cross grade extra-curricular to build relationships (science/theatre clubs, teams, student council).
 - Limit tech (phones) in school/recesses (limits online bullying, pictures, they spend time together).
 - Learning Commons as a place to gather and build community
 - Leadership option
 - Middle School Counselor

RELATIONSHIP CHOICES

Students will develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.

Awareness of personal feelings, appropriate expression of feelings and the learning of a vocabulary to express feelings begins in Kindergarten. In later grades, students learn coping behaviours to deal with worries and fears. They learn about handling mood swings, persistent negative feelings and the symptoms of suicide, with emphasis on the value of seeking help and talking to others.

Students learn the characteristics of healthy relationships. They learn that the development and maintenance of effective relationships requires the communication skills of listening, expressing needs and emotions, and providing feedback. Interwoven throughout is the awareness that students are not alone. They learn about support networks, mentors, and developing healthy relationships and positive interdependence.

Students learn how to maintain relationships and how to deal with change and transitions in a variety of life roles. They build a capacity to adapt and respond to the many aspects of change; e.g., family life cycle, school transitions, growth and development. As well, students develop and expand personal and community support networks for assistance in meeting the challenges of life.

Students learn to value the strengths and gifts of self and others. This knowledge is essential in order to build on team strengths and diversity to create opportunity for all members to make a valued contribution. Mutual support is reinforced as essential group skills are learned, such as conflict management, cooperation and effective decision-making skills. This leads to an understanding of group dynamics and skills for effective team membership.

Awareness of the uniqueness of self and others is fundamental. Concern for the welfare of others, not only for self, is an important aspect of healthy relationships. These strategies for managing relationships successfully are important life skills that are transferable to a variety of family, social and school/work settings.



Adopted	February 18, 1998
Revision Date	November 16, 2015
Review Year	2020

Background/Purpose:

Effective student discipline is at the foundation of our program.

Definitions:

- a. Personal harassment is defined as any behaviour that has as its intent or effect to alarm, provoke, intimidate, or belittle a person. It can include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - i. unwanted physical contact
 - ii. unwelcome remarks or compromising invitations
 - iii. verbal abuse or display of suggestive material
 - iv. inappropriate gestures
 - v. threats of physical harm
- b. Suspensions are defined as exclusions of up to five school days from regular student activities (classes, school, riding on a school bus, or extra-curricular activities). A suspended student may be reinstated by the Principal within five days.
- c. Expulsions are defined as exclusions from regular student activities for more than ten school days.

Policy Statement:

An orderly, respectful, and studious environment allows for the fulfillment of our learning objectives. Furthermore, we believe that effective teaching and supervision alleviates the vast majority of discipline concerns. To be effective our policy must be simple, fair to those concerned, fully communicated to our stakeholders, and fully enforced.

Guidelines:

Our expectations for student behaviour are those found in Section 12 of *The School Act*: A student shall conduct himself or herself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:

- a. Be diligent in pursuing the student's studies
- b. Attend school regularly and punctually
- c. Co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services
- d. Comply with the rules of the school
- e. Account to the student's teachers for the student's conduct
- f. Respect the rights of others

General Provisions

Expectations for School and Classroom Discipline Practices: It is expected that school and classroom discipline practices in general will be based on the following:

- a. Treatment of individuals which is consistently typical of that which would be practiced by a kind, firm, and judicious parent.
- b. Procedures which are fair, objective, consistent, and reasonable.
- c. Avoidance of threats and other measures that can be regarded as excessive.

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- d. Early detection of attendance concerns and other potential discipline problems and early action to resolve them without resorting to severe punitive measures.
- e. Early and ongoing communication with parents throughout the entire process of dealing with discipline problems.
- f. Recommendation for counseling services when deemed appropriate.
- g. Concentration upon the development of positive school practices and effective teaching as a means of encouraging appropriate student behaviour and maintaining school order.
- h. Prompt action to resolve discipline problems, especially those that may lead to a suspension.
- i. Decisions regarding the use of disciplinary measures should be made on consideration of the following:
 - i. Effect of the student's behaviour upon other students, the staff, and the school.
 - ii. Nature of the action or incident that calls for disciplinary measures.
 - iii. Student's previous conduct.
 - iv. Student's age and maturity.
 - v. Impact of proposed action on the student's future behaviour.
 - vi. Previous disciplinary actions.

Expulsions

Expulsion procedures *as set out in the Administrative Regulation* are to be consistent with the *School Act*.

- a. Expulsion will only be used when:
 - i. It is deemed that other means of corrective action including consultation with parents and suspensions have failed to achieve orderly and appropriate student behaviour.
 - or*
 - ii. The student's continued presence in the school is deemed to seriously threaten or disrupt the orderly functioning of the school or the student's presence is deemed to be a danger to persons or property.
- b. Expulsion procedures must ensure that the rules of natural justice and due process are followed, including a right to request a review of the Board's decision to the Minister.
- c. The seriousness of misbehaviour may warrant immediate suspension or a recommendation to the Board for expulsion on the first offense.

Accountability:

Monitored on a five year cycle in accordance with the Board of Directors annual work plan.

References:

School Act, sections 12, 24, 25
AR 6040 Student Discipline