

INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SOCIETY

Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidelines for student clubs, groups, and activities at Harvest Baptist Academy and Meadows Baptist Academy

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.

1. Commitment to supporting and creating a safe, respectful, enriching, and biblically grounded community for students

Consistent with our Mission, Vision, and Core Values, By-Laws and Independent Baptist Statement of Faith, Parent/ Student and Staff Hand Books, our Independent Baptist Christian School Board is 100% committed to supporting and creating a safe, respectful, enriching, and biblically grounded community for students and staff. We have a zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse or bullying toward any human being created in the image of God.

We promote the truth of scripture within all aspects of the operation of our schools including the creation and operation of any approved student groups and clubs. All school groups, clubs and activities (hereafter referred to as group(s)) must teach, demonstrate, and embrace a distinctly Christian World View and Biblical perspective that is the foundation for all of the school activities.

2. Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures

We define bullying as the degrading of any student, adult or human being involving either verbal, physical or emotional abuse. Our Christian School Board has zero tolerance toward any form of bullying, whether it occurs in person or electronically. Any and all reports of bullying and unchristian behaviour and complaints will be taken seriously, documented and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policies and procedures.

All matters will be reported immediately to the Principal of the school. At that point the issue will be investigated with a written incident report describing the circumstances. The offending students involved will be reprimanded and expected to apologize either verbally or in writing to the offended student or students. Offended and vulnerable students would be reassured that the staff and students will surround them with love and support.

A discipline notice will be sent home to the parents. Discipline of students will take account of the student's age, maturity and individual circumstances. In serious cases students involved in bullying activities will be required to take some further Biblical counselling regarding God's teaching to treat others with love, compassion, kindness, and respect.

Students will also be required to write a special report including Biblical references as to the importance of good character in treating all human beings with dignity, love and respect etc. In severe cases, students involved in habitual bullying will be suspended and if necessary expelled from the school. Thankfully we have never had to expel a student due to bullying.

3. Formation and Naming and function of student groups

The formation and names for student groups and activities including adult Christian facilitators (sponsors) must be approved by the Board, Principal and Parents. Approved names will incorporate language that reflects and/or is in harmony with the teachings of scripture and the values and Christian faith perspective of the school community. Any functions or groups must adhere to biblical principles and doctrines. No anti-Christian clubs, groups or activities will be permitted.

The IBCES Board has approved the formation of a Unity Council to facilitate the goals and objectives as stated in this Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidelines.

The Unity Council project was announced to our Christian community and parents at the IBCES Annual General Meeting. Board members and school staff have agreed to facilitate this voluntary Christian support group and engage in regular scheduled meetings with students and staff members who may be interested in participating at the start of the 2018-2019 school year. This group is intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging for students, as they gain a foundational Biblical understanding of their inherent value and dignity, God-given unique identity, enabling them to build resiliency and community.

4. Guidelines for the Formation of student groups and clubs

When a student group is requested, it is important to determine the nature of the request and how best to meet the expressed needs. The principal shall determine whether the group will create a safe, caring respectful environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, as well as the purpose for the group, so it can be properly structured within school priorities and guidelines. Flexibility, respect, and responsiveness, based on needs, is critical.

5. Parent Notification and Permission for Student to Participate in Clubs and Activities

Parental notification and permission is required for students to attend and participate in any approved school clubs and activities, consistent with the usual practices and responsibilities of the school. Section 45 (4) (d) of the School Act requires this Policy to indicate that the Personal Information Protection Act governs the disclosure of personal information by the Board.

6. General norms also govern all types of student groups.

Groups shall: Support the mission, vision and core values of the school while upholding the value of the individual as created in the image of God. Any groups formed shall reflect, through name and action, the philosophy and theology of our Independent Baptist Statement of Faith and Christian evangelical tradition and emphasize the value of the person, inclusion, hospitality, respect, justice, truth, and the call to loving service.

All student organizations and activities approved by the Board, Principal and parents will support the mission, vision and core values of the school and will seek to strengthen every aspect of the school's faith perspective. Staff facilitators of student organizations will integrate prayer, scripture and faith / value based teaching into discussions and activities as appropriate. All student organizations and activities will be permeated in a manner consistent with the vision, mission and programming of the school. The schools, teachers and staff may describe and explain the school's faith and or value community beliefs, doctrines and ethical beliefs from a faith / perspective that need not be required to adopt a neutral position.

Since each type of group addresses different needs (advocacy, peer support, common interest, sports etc.), specific guidelines and additional norms follow:

7. Advocacy Groups

Purpose:

- To advocate against all forms of bullying and/or behaviours that cause students to feel unsafe, isolated and not included.
- To assemble students who experience discrimination, isolation, and a lack of feeling included in our school community or society, with students who want to offer these students their support via initiatives designed to advocate against all forms of bullying.
- To enable students to activate their unique God-given gifts for the benefit of furthering a more respectful community for everyone.
- To discuss issues that cause pervasive harm to young people in society.

Norms:

- Ensure the student groups are led by trained Christian facilitators (sponsor) whose lifestyle and reputation reflect the biblical values of the school, and assisted, when deemed necessary, by professional Christian counselors, pastors or social workers. Ideally the sponsor will be a teacher or staff member of the school.
- Be open to explore a variety of issues from a Christian perspective.
- Ensure advocacy efforts are directed against all forms of bullying.

Activities:

- Exploring how best practices enhance the life of the school (e.g. celebrating a school's success annually through a variety of means).

- Sponsoring activities throughout the school year to address these areas (i.e. bullying awareness week activities, peer advocacy, guest speakers, and frequent liaison with the school principal).
- Promoting whole school social justice activities to address needs locally, nationally or internationally.
- Increasing awareness of international and domestic concerns such as alcohol and drug abuse, suicide prevention, human trafficking, poverty, child educational sponsorship, international mission work, etc.

8. Peer Support Groups

Purpose:

- To assemble students who experience abuse, racism or bullying, isolation, and a lack of feeling included in our school community or society, with students who want to offer these students their support via facilitated discussions.

Norms:

- Ensure the student groups are led by trained Christian facilitators (sponsor) and assisted, when possible, by professional Christian counselors, pastors or social workers.
- Ensure boundaries are clarified prior to the discussion of any topic, so members do not feel pressured to make personal disclosures.
- Invite, but not pressure, other students to join them.
- Be sensitive to the safety of all students who are at risk.
- Refrain from labeling or discussing students who are not members.

Activities:

- Exploring those areas with staff facilitators where inclusion could be improved (e.g. student group discussions as per “norms” outlined through the leadership of the facilitator).

9. Common Interest Groups (clubs)

Purpose:

- To assemble students who enjoy certain activities or wish to learn and develop skills and knowledge related to certain activities.

Norms:

- Ensure the student groups are led by a knowledgeable Christian facilitator and assisted, when possible, individuals with knowledge and interest in the group’s topic.
- Invite, but not pressure, other students to join them.
- Be sensitive to the knowledge and skill level of all students who participate in the club.
- Refrain from labeling or discussing students who are not members.

Activities:

- Inviting guest speakers that have interest and skill in the group's topic.
- Facilitate practical activities such as projects, tournaments, discussion groups, etc.
- Present group skills and/or knowledge to the school community as appropriate and approved by the school principal.
- Meet regularly on site to practice, discuss, or learn about, the group's topic.

10. Guiding Principals

Our Christian faith recognizes that parents have a God given responsibility to raise their children and in keeping with legislative recognition of religious freedom, including the right to express and make manifest ones' belief, recognition that parents are the primary care givers and educators of their children, and Education Act 2012 section 58 duty to inform parents, parents may be informed of student participation in school based clubs, groups, and activities.

The Board 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 the school as a private, voluntary religious association. ¹

As appropriate if the Board and Principal or if a parent or student believes the faith and or value commitment of the school and the parents or student's faith and or values are incompatible and continuing to enroll the student in the school is not in the best interest of the student or the school community, then the school shall assist the parent or student to enroll in another school for the subsequent school year.

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Fundamental freedoms

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

(a) freedom of conscience and religion;

(b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;

¹ 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.

Education Act of Alberta (2012)

Part 9, preamble

WHEREAS parents have the right and the responsibility to make informed decisions respecting the education of their children;

Section 58 Notice to parent 58.1(1) A board shall provide notice to a parent of a student where courses, programs of study or instructional materials, or instruction or exercises, include subject-matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion or human sexuality. (2) Where a teacher or other person providing instruction, teaching a course or program of study or using the instructional materials referred to in subsection (1) receives a written request signed by a parent of a student that the student be excluded from the instruction, course or program of study or use of instructional materials, the teacher or other person shall, in accordance with the request of the parent, permit the student, without academic penalty, (a) to leave the classroom or place where the instruction, course or program of study is taking place or the instructional materials are being used for the duration of the part of the instruction, course or program of study, or the use of the instructional materials, that includes the subject-matter referred to in subsection (1), or (b) to remain in the classroom or place without taking part in the instruction, course or program of study or using the instructional materials. (3) This section does not apply to incidental or indirect references to religion, religious themes or human sexuality in a course, program of study, instruction or exercises or in the use of instructional materials. 2015 c1 s2

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 26

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

11. Scripture References

As stated in our Statement of Faith we believe the Bible is the inspired holy word of God and absolute final authority in all matters of faith, truth and practice both in heaven and on earth. We quote a few of the many verses of scripture referenced as the foundational truth and guidance in preparing the related anti-bullying policy and guidelines for student clubs.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV)

¹⁶ All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Matthew 24:35 (KJV)

³⁵ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (KJV)

¹³ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

2 Peter 1:3-9 (KJV)

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

⁸ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹ But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

1 Peter 3:8-9 (KJV)

⁸ Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

⁹ Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Romans 12:10 (KJV)

¹⁰ *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

1 Thessalonians 3:12 (KJV)

¹² And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you:

Luke 6:27 – 28 (KJV)

²⁷ But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

²⁸ Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

Ephesians 4:31-32 (KJV)

³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Ephesians 5:10-13 (KJV)

¹⁰ Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.

¹² For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

¹³ But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

James 4:7 (KJV)

⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.