



Welcoming, Caring, Respectful & Safe Teaching and Learning Environment Policy

(This policy can be found in the RVS Parent and Student Policy and Procedure Guide.)

I. Commitment

Consistent with our mission, vision and values, River Valley School is committed to a safe, caring, respectful, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning and teaching environment for all students, staff and members of our community.

All students, staff and members of our community have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment.

This right is guaranteed under the:

- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;*
- The *Alberta Human Rights Act* as amended March 10, 2015. In addition, the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, includes the right not to be discriminated against by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or gender identity or gender expression. Legislation also provides as a fundamental right the “right of parents to make informed decisions respecting the education of their children;” and,
- Requirements of the *Alberta School Act* (and upon Proclamation the *Education Act, Section 35.1*) that provide for measures that support the equality and non-discrimination of students who may belong to minority groups, including sexual orientation.

II. Rights

River Valley School does not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived differences or gender identity or gender expression. River Valley School believes that all students have the right to:

- Be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect;
- Have their confidentiality protected and respected;
- Have their privacy protected as governed by PIPA;
- Self-identification and determination;
- Freedom of conscience, expression, and association;
- Be fully included and represented in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner by all school personnel;
- Have equitable access to the same supports, services, and protections provided to heterosexual students and their families;
- Have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, and/or violence; and



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- Have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, valued and respected within the school environment.

III. Measures

River Valley School has implemented measures which:

- Define appropriate expectations, behaviours, language, and actions in order to prevent discrimination, prejudice, and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their harmful effects;
- Ensure that all such discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures;
- Improve students' understanding of the individual lives of minorities, including sexual and gender minorities, and their families, cultures, and communities;
- Develop, implement, and evaluate inclusive educational strategies, professional development opportunities, and administrative guidelines to ensure that minorities including gender minorities and their families are treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of the school community in a manner consistent with the school's mission and vision;
- Upon request, the Head of School will immediately grant permission for the establishment of a student organization or the holding of an activity at the school to support the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), or similar student support groups, where student interest has been expressed and have it named as such;
- In order to protect student privacy, notification around a student organization will be limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity;
- Identify a staff member to serve as a safe contact for sexual and gender minority students. The Head of School will inform the school community about the location and availability of this Safe Contact Resource Person;
- Ensure staff will not refer students to programs or services that attempt to change or repair a student's sexual orientation or gender identity; and
- Ensure administration and staff recognize the confidentiality and privacy of the sexual orientation and gender identity of all students and protect them from unwanted disclosure of such information; and
- Annually review and repost these policies and make available to the public.

IV. Legal Basis

When implementing the above policy directions, River Valley School will act reasonably in the best interests of the student in keeping with the guidelines outlined by the Supreme Court of Canada (*Loyola College vs. Quebec, 2015*), the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Alberta School Act.