

# 143 WELCOMING, CARING, RESPECTFUL, and SAFE SCHOOLS

## Beliefs

The Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESC) follows cultural and traditional teachings of the Maskwacis Cree, in particular Wahkohtowin. Wahkohtowin is the belief that all things are related and connected, that all of existence has spirit and that living in a good way requires us to maintain good relationships with each other and other aspects of existence. We recognize that respect for mother earth, elders, youth, and the Treaties are paramount to planning ahead and making decisions for future generations.

MESC believes that all students and staff members have the right to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe, learning and working environment that respects diversity, equity, human rights and fosters a sense of wahkohtowin among all.

When students feel like they belong, it encourages them to stay in school to learn and succeed. These are environments where:

- healthy and respectful relationships are built and fostered
- students feel that adults care for them as a group and as individuals
- positive mental health is promoted
- values, rights, and responsibilities are respected
- support is demonstrated through collaboration, high expectations, mutual trust and caring
- diversity is respected, celebrated and understood as a strength
- expectations are clear, consistent, and regularly communicated
- consequences of unacceptable behaviour take into account the students age, maturity, and individual circumstances
- support is provided for those impacted by inappropriate behaviour as well as for those who engage in inappropriate behaviours
- children, youth and adults model positive social-emotional skills, including empathy and compassion

## Procedures

1. MESC affirms the rights of each student enrolled in a school operated by MESC and each staff member employed by MESC as provided for in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Alberta Human Rights Act. These rights shall be supported and enforced so that all members of the school community and Commission may work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation for individual differences.
2. MESC will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination of students or staff as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
3. MESC believes that teaching and acknowledging appropriate behaviors has a far greater chance of success than relying upon consequences and punishment.
4. Principals shall:
  - 4.1. Ensure all staff members share responsibility for proactively creating and maintaining welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and inclusive learning environments that acknowledge and promotes understanding, respect, and the recognition of the diversity, equity and human rights of all students and families within the school community;
  - 4.2. Ensure all members of the school community are aware of the expectation to model respectful conduct, inclusive behaviour, and an understanding and appreciation for diversity, equity and human rights;
  - 4.3. Ensure that measures for managing student behaviors are done so in accordance with the age, maturity and individual circumstances of the learner.
5. Students and Families:
  - 5.1. Students and families play an important role in creating a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and inclusive learning environment.
  - 5.2. Students have the responsibility to meet the expectations as outlined in Administrative Procedure 307: Student Code of Conduct.
  - 5.3. Parents play an important role in being positive role models, engaging in solution focused problem solving, and making the teacher the first point of contact for addressing concerns as early as possible.
6. Principals shall:
  - 6.1. Receive, investigate, report on and respond to inappropriate behaviour and actions, such as discrimination, intimidation or bullying;
  - 6.2. Create a clear reporting and investigative process and a safe environment for students and parents/guardians to bring concerns forward in a timely manner;

- 6.3. Ensure that all students have opportunities to learn the requisite concepts and skills of positive behaviors, ethical citizenship and social responsibility so that they can meet the behavioural expectations in a school.
7. Teachers shall:
    - 7.1. Help all students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
    - 7.2. Assist students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school and community by building social, interpersonal, assertiveness, empathy, conflict resolution and leadership skills;
    - 7.3. Maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students so as to contribute to a positive school climate;
    - 7.4. Communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents/guardians; and
    - 7.5. Report all incidents of discrimination, intimidation, and bullying, and assist administration when conducting an investigation into such incidents.
  8. Students shall:
    - 8.1. Ensure that their behavior is in keeping with Administrative Procedure 307: Student Conduct and contribute to a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe, learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging among all.

References:

Administrative Procedure 307: Student Conduct Administrative  
Administrative Procedure 311: Student Discipline  
Alberta Human Rights Act  
Alberta Bill of Rights  
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms