

Otherwise

CALGARY MONTESSORI SCHOOL

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

Effective Date: June 2018.

Applies to: All Alberta-Certified Teaching Staff, Support Staff, Students, Parents and Volunteers.

Purpose: Consistent with its mission and vision, Calgary Montessori School is committed to a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning and teaching environment for all students and employees.

Legislative Contexts

Calgary Montessori School is committed to providing all students and employees with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and work environment consistent with the School Act, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Alberta Human Rights Act.

Policy Details

All students, employees, parents and members of the community have a responsibility to promote and support a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and work environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. This includes following the Calgary Montessori School's Student Code of Conduct, Calgary Montessori School's Employee Code of Conduct and Calgary Montessori School's progressive discipline practices.

Calgary Montessori School will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived differences in sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

All students 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, and the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, including 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 support measures that support the equality and non-discrimination of dignity of students who may belong to minority groups, including sexual orientation.

Protocols and Procedures

Calgary Montessori School is committed to implementing measures that will:

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.

Ensure transgender students shall have the right to be addressed by their preferred name(s) and pronoun(s) that correspond to their lived gender identities. This is true whether or not the student has obtained documentation of a legal change of name or sex designation.

Student records will be changed when a parent or guardian requests a change in name and/or gender. Confidentiality of a student's records will be maintained at all times.

Responsibilities under Section 16.1 of the School Act for Supporting Student Organizations

16.1 (1) 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:

immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and

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.

(3) 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”.

(4) 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.

(6) 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.

Section 45.1 (4) (c) (ii) Notification, if any, will be otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to other student organizations and activities.

16.1 (4) (d) The Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) is the major piece of legislation governing disclosure of personal information for private schools such as Calgary Montessori School.

This *Safe and Caring School Policy* is fundamentally linked with Calgary Montessori School’s Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy. Together these policies set out behavioural expectations, responsibilities as well as the rights and freedoms of students, employees, administration and parents.

References: Relevant Legislation and Guidelines.

