

## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments

### **Purpose**

Consistent with its Purpose and Promise, West Island College is committed to a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning and working environment.

All students and staff 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, 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* (the *Education Act, Section 35.1* when proclaimed) where it states; “*For the purposes of subsection (1), an organization or activity includes an organization or activity that promotes equality and non-discrimination with respect to, without limitation, race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, including but not limited to organizations such as gay-straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs and anti-bullying clubs.*”

Emphasis in achieving safe and secure school environments is to be placed on measures which foster positive attitudes and behaviours. As a part of this emphasis, stress is to be placed upon meeting the individual needs of students, developing self-esteem and creating a school community which is caring and supportive with the use of appropriate interventions.

West Island College will take firm and decisive action in responding to behaviour which causes or threatens harm to persons or property. Students who are responsible for serious misconduct of this kind may face suspension, expulsion and, when appropriate, referral to the police. Students should share in the responsibility for maintaining a safe and secure school environment.

## Application

This policy applies to all persons associated with the College, but especially students, staff and parents, for both on-campus and off-campus activities and functions.

## Definitions

1. A “safe and secure” school learning environment is one that is physically, emotionally and psychologically safe, characterized by:
  - a. caring
  - b. respect for law and order
  - c. respect for democratic values, right and responsibilities
  - d. respect for cultural diversity
  - e. community, family, student and staff involvement
  - f. appropriate modeling by staff and students
  - g. clear, consistent expectations for behaviour and consequences for misconduct which are communicated to students, staff and parents
2. Parent – references to parent are intended to include persons who are defined as a parent or accorded the rights of a parent in the School Act (Education Act).

## POLICY STATEMENT

### Board Responsibility

1. The West Island College Society of Alberta (“Board”) has the responsibility to ensure that each student enrolled at West Island College (“School”) and each staff member employed by the Board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

### Head of School Responsibility in accordance with section 16.1(1) of the School Act

2. If one or more students attending West Island College request a staff member employed by West Island College for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity (collectively the “Requested Activity”) intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the Head of School of West Island College shall, in addition to the other duties set out in this Policy, ensure that the Requested Activity promotes at the School a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

Board Responsibility in relation to Student Organizations at the School under section 16.1 of the School Act

3. In accordance with section 45.1(4)(b) of the *School Act* which legislatively mandates the Board to include the text of section 16.1(1), (3) (3.1) (4) and (6)” of the *School Act* in this Policy, if one or more students attending the School 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 Head of School shall:
  - (a) immediately provide permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the School, and
  - (b) subject to section 5 (below), within a reasonable time from the date that the Head of School 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.
4. 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 Head of School.
5. For greater certainty, the Head of School shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”.
6. The Head of School shall immediately inform the Board and the Minister of Education (“Minister”) if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to above at subsection 3(b) 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.
7. The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in section 16.1 (1) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.

Additional Legislatively Mandated Head of School Responsibilities

8. As legislatively mandated by section 45.1(4)(c) of the *School Act*, the Head of School is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in section 16.1(1) of the *School Act*,
  - (a) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity, and
  - (b) is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other students.

## Section 45.1(3) School Act Statutory Requirements

9. As legislatively mandated in section 45.1(3) of the *School Act*, this Policy and the Student Code of Conduct set out in this Policy (“Code of Conduct”):

- a) herein affirms the rights, as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, of each staff member employed by the Board and each student enrolled in the School;
- b) herein states that staff members employed by the Board and students enrolled in the School will not be discriminated against as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* or the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to the degree the same applies in law to the School.

### **Code of Conduct**

10. As legislatively mandated by section 45.1(5) of the *School Act*, the Code of Conduct herein set out has the following purpose:

West Island College is committed to providing students and staff with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging and positive sense of self.

11. In order to ensure that students conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times, the students attending West Island College shall be subject to this Code of Conduct.

12. Students shall conduct themselves so as to reasonably comply with the following Code of Conduct:

- i. be diligent in pursuing their studies;
- ii. attend school regularly and punctually;
- iii. co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services;
- iv. comply with school rules;
- v. be accountable to their teachers for their conduct;
- vi. respect the rights of others;
- vii. ensure that they contribute positively to the environment and culture of the School;
- viii. refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed to others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day, or by electronic means.

### **Unacceptable Behaviour**

Students will refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed towards others in the school, whether or not the behaviour occurs within the

school building, during the school day or by electronic means. Bullying behaviours are a form of aggression and can be physical, verbal, social or cyber.

“Bullying” means repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual’s reputation.

The following are examples of unacceptable behaviours and may include but are not limited to:

- behaviours that interfere with the learning of others and/or the school environment or that create unsafe conditions;
- acts of bullying, harassment or intimidation/discrimination;
- acts of violence, physical aggression or threatening behaviour;
- retribution against any person in the school who has intervened to prevent or report bullying or harassment, or to stop an incident that might cause harm to others;
- illegal activity, such as possession or use of weapons, possession or use of alcohol, drugs, inhalants or other forms of intoxicants on school property or at any other school related functions (i.e. graduation, field trips); and
- theft or damage of property.

Activities that may constitute a violation of this Code of Conduct include, but are not limited to, bullying whether in person during the school day or by electronic means, physical harm or assault upon others, harassment, hazing, gang activities, weapons in school, drug and alcohol use, and improper conduct on buses or on field trips.

Unacceptable behaviour may be grounds for disciplinary action and provides the student with an opportunity for critical learning and reflection in the areas of personal accountability and responsibility, the development of empathy, as well as communication, conflict resolution, and social skills development.

In the assessment of the potential consequences of unacceptable behaviour, the School shall also consider a student’s age, maturity, individual circumstances, and frequency of the misconduct. In addition, the specific circumstances of the situation and of the student must be taken into account when determining appropriate responses to unacceptable behaviour.

When a student engages in unacceptable behaviour, consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- i. temporary assignment of a student to an alternate supervised area within the school;
- ii. temporary assignment of a student to an alternate learning location;
- iii. short term removal of privileges including removal from school-related extra-curricular activities and/or groups;

- iv. interventions such as positive behaviour supports, contracts, counselling, restorative practices;
  - v. replacement or retribution for loss of or damage to property in-school or out-of-school suspension; and/or recommendation for expulsion.
- f) The School must ensure that support is provided for students who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour, as well as for students who engage in inappropriate behaviour.
- g) This Code of Conduct shall be made publicly available on the School website and shall be provided to all staff, students, and parents.
- h) This Code of Conduct shall be reviewed each school year.

13. Section 45.1(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.

### **Approval**

Approved by: West Island College Board of Directors

Effective Date: August 28, 2018

Review Date: June 30, 2019

### References:

- a) Alberta School Act, RSA 2000, c S-3: preamble, sections 2, 3, 16, 28
- b) Alberta Bill of Rights, RSA 2000, c A-14: preamble, sections 1 and 2
- c) Alberta Human Rights Act, RSA 2000, c A-25.5: sections 7, 8 and 11
- d) 2017 Bill 24, Third Session, 29th Legislature, 66 Elizabeth II (“Bill 24”)
- e) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), article 5
- f) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 999 U.N.T.S. 171, article 18(4) (which protects the rights of parents to guide their children’s religious upbringing)
- g) Alberta’s Personal Information Protection Act