

## **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING A SAFE AND CARING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

### **BACKGROUND**

Westmount Charter School (WCS) is committed to providing a safe and caring learning environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours. Student organizations and activities can contribute positively to student well-being, belonging, leadership development, and engagement in school life.

In accordance with the *Education Act*, students have the right to establish voluntary student organizations and activities that promote a safe and caring learning environment, foster respect for diversity, and support positive relationships among students.

The Charter Board supports lawful student-led organizations and activities that promote dignity, respect, non-discrimination, and human rights as protected under Alberta law. Such organizations may include, but are not limited to, gay-straight alliances (GSAs), diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs, anti-bullying clubs, cultural clubs, and other student-led initiatives that support student well-being and a sense of belonging.

Student organizations and activities shall operate in a manner consistent with the *Education Act*, the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, Board policies, and Administrative Procedures and shall support a safe and caring learning environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours.

### **PROCEDURES**

1. If one or more students attending WCS request support from a staff member to establish a voluntary student organization or to lead an activity intended to promote a safe and caring learning environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours, the Principal shall:
  - 1.1 Immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school; and
  - 1.2 Within a reasonable time, designate a staff member to serve as staff liaison to facilitate the establishment and ongoing operation of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.
2. Students may select a respectful name for the organization or activity, including the name “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance.”
  - 2.1. The Principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance.”
3. If no staff member is available to serve as staff liaison, the Principal shall immediately notify the Board and the Minister in accordance with the *Education Act*. Where required, the Minister may appoint a responsible adult to support the students in organizing the activity or facilitating the establishment and operation of the student organization.
4. Student organizations and activities shall be student-initiated and student-led and shall:
  - 4.1. Support student well-being, belonging, and respectful relationships;

- 4.2. Foster and maintain respectful and responsible behaviours;
- 4.3. Operate in accordance with applicable legislation, Board policies, and Administrative Procedures; and
- 4.4. Respect the rights, dignity, privacy, and safety of all students.
5. Notification regarding a voluntary student organization or activity shall be limited to the fact that the organization has been established or the activity is being held.
6. Any notification shall be consistent with the school's practices respecting other student organizations and activities.
7. Personal information relating to students participating in a student organization or activity shall be collected, used, disclosed, retained, and protected in accordance with the *Protection of Privacy Act* (POPA), the *Access to Information Act* (ATIA), and Board privacy management, records management, and information security procedures.
8. School staff shall protect the privacy of students participating in student organizations and activities and shall not disclose personal information except as authorized or required by law.

**Legal Reference:** *Education Act*  
*Alberta Human Rights Act*  
*Protection of Privacy Act (POPA)*  
*Access to Information Act (ATIA)*

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