

Administrative Procedure 341

Students

HARASSMENT BY STUDENTS

BACKGROUND

Westmount Charter School (WCS) is committed to providing a safe and caring learning environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours. Every student has the right to learn in an environment that promotes dignity, respect, well-being, and positive relationships.

Harassment negatively impacts student well-being, learning, and participation in school life. Harassment may interfere with a student's sense of safety, belonging, and ability to participate fully in educational opportunities.

The Charter Board expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner that respects the rights, dignity, privacy, and safety of others. Harassment by students, whether occurring in person, electronically, on school property, during school-sponsored activities, or in circumstances that affect the school environment, will not be tolerated.

The Principal is responsible for implementing this Administrative Procedure.

DEFINITIONS

1. Personal Harassment

- 1.1 Personal harassment is any unwelcome behaviour that adversely affects or threatens to affect a student's emotional well-being, learning environment, participation in school activities, or opportunities for involvement.
- 1.2 Harassment is considered to have occurred when a person knows, or reasonably ought to know, that their behaviour is unwelcome.
- 1.3 Harassment may include, but is not limited to:
 - 1.3.1 Unwelcome physical contact, intimidation, or bullying;
 - 1.3.2 Verbal abuse, threats, coercion, or extortion;
 - 1.3.3 Derogatory, demeaning, insulting, or offensive remarks;
 - 1.3.4 Unwelcome comments, jokes, taunts, or innuendo relating to a person's actual or perceived characteristics, including any protected ground under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*; and
 - 1.3.5 Electronic or online conduct that constitutes harassment.

2. Sexual Harassment

- 2.1 Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture, communication, or physical contact of a sexual nature that may reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation, intimidation, embarrassment, or harm.
- 2.2 Sexual harassment may include implied or explicit threats, reprisals, or promises of benefit related to sexual advances or requests.

3. Bullying

- 3.1 Bullying has the meaning assigned in the *Education Act* and may constitute harassment when the behaviour meets the definition of harassment contained in this Administrative Procedure.

PROCEDURES

1. Students are encouraged, where appropriate and safe to do so, to inform the person engaging in the behaviour that it is unwelcome and must stop.
2. Students who experience or witness harassment are encouraged to report the matter promptly to a teacher, counsellor, administrator, or other trusted staff member.
3. School staff shall take reports of harassment seriously and respond in a timely, fair, objective, and respectful manner.
4. The Principal or designate shall investigate allegations of harassment as appropriate to the circumstances.
5. During an investigation, reasonable measures may be taken to support the safety, dignity, privacy, and well-being of students involved.
6. Confirmed incidents of harassment shall be addressed through educational, restorative, supportive, and/or disciplinary measures as appropriate to the circumstances and in a manner that supports a safe and caring learning environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours.
7. Students affected by harassment may be provided with appropriate supports, interventions, counselling referrals, or other services.
8. The Principal or designate may inform and involve parents or guardians in accordance with applicable legislation, Board policy, Administrative Procedures, and the *Protection of Privacy Act* (POPA).
9. Information relating to harassment complaints, investigations, and responses shall be collected, used, disclosed, retained, protected, and securely disposed of in accordance with POPA and Board privacy management, records management, and information security procedures.
10. Retaliation against any individual who reports harassment, participates in an investigation, or supports a person making a complaint is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

Legal References:	<i>Education Act</i> <i>Alberta Human Rights Act</i> <i>Protection of Privacy Act</i> (POPA)
Cross Reference:	AP-409 Personal Harassment AP-340 Student Code of Conduct AP-350 Student Discipline AP-351 Suspension
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