

Meadow Montessori School

Discrimination Protection Policy

The safety and wellbeing of children in independent schools is of paramount consideration. Children deserve to be protected from abuse, neglect, bullying, harm or threat of harm. As a member of FISA BC, Meadow Montessori School strives to ensure that our children experience a learning environment that enables every child to feel safe, cared for, accepted and respected. As part of Meadow Montessori's values, and as stipulated in the *Independent School Act*, it is important that Meadow Montessori ensures students feel connected through the relationships that are created between students, staff, and parents that are part of our school community.

Background:

Independent schools represent a wide range of philosophical, pedagogical, and faith-based perspectives. Schools are generally independently operated by an authority, registered as a Society, with the BC Registrar of Companies, and have a governance board consisting of individuals elected or appointed by the authority.

Each authorized independent school in British Columbia is required to abide by Schedule 1 of the *Independent School Act*. It states that there are basic requirements for independent schools requesting certification as Group 1, 2, 3 or 4 classifications. Article 1 states that:

Before issuing or renewing a certificate of group 1, group 2, group 3 or group 4 classification to an authority the inspector must be satisfied that

- a) no program is in existence or is proposed at the independent school that would, in theory or in practice, promote or foster doctrines of
 - i) racial or ethnic superiority or persecution
 - ii) religious intolerance or persecution
 - iii) social change through violent action, or
 - iv) sedition,
- b) the independent school facilities comply with the enactments of British Columbia and the municipality or regional district in which the facilities are located, and
- c) the authority complies with this *Act* and regulations.

In addition to abiding by Schedule 1 of the *Independent School Act*, it is important that independent schools ensure that students feel connected through the relationships that are created between students, staff, and parents that are part of the school community.

Students who feel respected, accepted and connected tend to be physically and mentally healthier, and perform better academically. They tend to have fewer incidents of violent or “acting out” behaviour, be less sexually active, have a lower rate of “experimentation”, with or “use” of, drugs and alcohol (*Preventing Bullying and Ensuring Safe and Caring School Communities – Level 1*; Province of British Columbia, 2013, p 13).

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The safety and wellbeing of children in independent schools is of paramount consideration. Children deserve to be protected from abuse, neglect, bullying, harm or threat of harm. Therefore, FISA BC independent school member associations and their affiliated schools will ensure that children attending these schools will experience a learning environment that enables every child to feel safe, accepted and respected.

Independent schools will continuously develop strategies to make students feel valued, respected and connected within the school community. This will include the protection of the students’ physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness as well as protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, while remaining consistent with the independent school’s faith-values, cultural perspectives and philosophical values.

Building a School Community

There are many strategies and activities that can be employed within a school to enable students to feel safe, accepted and respected. The following suggestions are provided to facilitate a conversation on strengthening the learning environment for children.

- Engage students in the decision-making process of policies and activities that build community
- Engage parents in the educational program and school life of their children
- Encourage parents to share their culture and expectations
- Promote open communication among administrators, teachers, staff, students, families and communities
- Be proactive in connecting with students that are experiencing academic or social issues
- Communicate expectations, values and norms that support positive health and academic behaviour in the school community

- Acknowledge students by name
- Be visible within the school during class transitions, breaks, before/after school
- Find ways to acknowledge students for their contributions in the school community, including those where improvement comes only in small increments.

As part of their employment with Meadow Montessori School, all contractors and regular staff must take a Diversity and Inclusion Training course provided by the school.

Safe Harbour: *Respect for All* is an award-winning AMSSA diversity and inclusion training workshop for workplaces.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the key concepts of diversity, bias, prejudice, stereotype and discrimination
- To identify dimensions of diversity that exist in society and to understand the value of diversity
- To consider the different ways in which respect is communicated by different cultural groups and apply this learning to the concept of inclusion
- To apply learning through a series of scenarios and discussion that build awareness of how exclusion can occur
- To develop ideas for fostering inclusion in workplace settings with co-workers and customers/clients

Meadow Montessori School will strive to maintain and to continuously improve upon its learning environment to make students feel valued, respected and connected within the school community. This will include the protection of the students' physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness as well as protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, while remaining consistent with the school's religious tenets, cultural perspectives and philosophical values.