

Alberta's Amended

# SCHOOL ACT

Welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments

## INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Amendments to the School Act as part of Bill 10 (in force June 1, 2015) set out responsibilities for all partners in the education system, including students, parents, and school boards. All partners have a responsibility to do their part to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments.

### DEFINITION OF BULLYING

**Section 1.1(b.1) of the School Act defines bullying as:**

*“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.”*

Bullying can take different forms:

- Physical – pushing, hitting
- Verbal – name calling, threats
- Social – exclusion, rumors
- Cyber – using the computer or other technology to harass or threaten

Bullying is not a normal part of growing up and it does not build character. No one should have to put up with bullying. Bullying is a learned behaviour – children and youth often learn bullying behaviours when they either experience being bullied or see it happening to others.

Bullying is different from conflict. Conflict is defined as a disagreement or struggle over opposing beliefs, needs, feelings or actions and is a normal part of life. From time to time everyone has conflicts with friends, family, teachers, co-workers. It is important to learn how to resolve conflict peacefully and recognize the difference between conflict and bullying. You can help by reporting bullying behaviour as soon as you can after seeing it.

### SECTION 12

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

**Section 12(g) of the Act** says that a student shall conduct him or herself to “ensure that the student’s conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.” Some examples of how you can contribute include:

- smiling at your peers and the adults in your school
- calling your friends on their behaviour (in a nice way) when they are not contributing to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environment
- greeting visitors to your classroom or school
- being friendly and helpful towards students that are new to the school and others
- sitting with someone who is alone at lunch, inviting someone to play with you at recess or working together to complete a project
- keeping your school and school grounds clean and tidy
- coming to school/class on time and as prepared as possible
- treating everyone with respect even if you don’t agree with their beliefs and/or values
- having empathy for others
- following classroom and school expectations so everyone is able to learn
- no put downs or snickers when questions are asked in class – no one should feel afraid or nervous about coming to school.

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## INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

### SECTION 12

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS, *continued*

**Section 12(h) of the Act** talks about students refraining from, not tolerating, and reporting bullying whether it occurs at school or outside of school or by electronic means like texting, social media. This means treating others with respect and kindness. If you are kind you can't be a bully. If you are being bullied or if you see someone being bullied, tell an adult. Do you know if your school has a way to report bullying? If yes, do you know what it is? If no, ask an adult in the school to tell you. Some ways to report are:

- tell an adult in the school that you trust
- if there isn't someone at school you can talk to, tell a parent, relative, coach, mentor, friend and have them help you report to the school.

What does it mean to "not tolerate bullying"? This doesn't mean you have to step into the middle of something. You can show your support in many different ways, including:

- model the behaviours you would like to see in others
- support the person who is the target of the behaviour
- don't watch or encourage bullying behaviours - this sends a message that you think these behaviours are okay
- if its safe say to the person " hey, let's go" and walk away with them
- check in with the person who was bullied to see if they are ok and if they have someone to talk to. This could be in person or by text
- support the person to tell an adult. This might be through encouraging them or going with them.

**Section 12(e) of the Act** says that students are accountable to teachers for their conduct. What does it mean to be accountable to teachers for your conduct? Everyone makes mistakes so it's not about being perfectly behaved all the time. When you do make mistakes, it is about admitting and owning up to those mistakes, taking responsibility and when necessary making things right.

Talk to your teachers or another adult when something goes wrong – homework not done, making an unkind comment, not prepared for class, arriving to class or school late, etc. Explain the circumstances and ask what you can do to make things 'right'.

**Section 12(i) of the Act** states that students have a responsibility to contribute positively to their school and community.

Some examples include:

- get involved in school activities that interest you
- participate in class and in other events by answering questions, getting involved in discussions and projects
- come to class as prepared as possible
- suggest new clubs and activities
- look for opportunities to help others both in the school and in your community
- do your best in all of your school work. Let your 'being smart' or 'being talented' shine through. Encourage others to also do and be their best.