



<b>Category:</b> Student Services	<b>Responsible Owner:</b> Head of High School	<b>Effective Date:</b> April 2023
<b>Policy Number:</b> 7.13	<b>Approval Body:</b> Board of Governors	<b>Policy Name:</b> Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy (High School)

**A. POLICY:**

**PURPOSE/COMMITMENT:** 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, Columbia College High School will ensure that children attending these schools will experience an orderly learning environment that enables every child to feel safe, accepted and respected.

Columbia College High School 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.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all students attending classes at Columbia College High School.

**WHEN TO USE THE POLICY:** This policy should be used when a student experiences bullying or harassment by one or more members of the Columbia College community. For instances in which an employee or contractor of Columbia College is the recipient of bullying and (or) harassment, please refer to *5.10 Bullying and Harassment Policy*.

Bullying is a persistent pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behaviour that hurts others physically and/or emotionally. For a situation to be considered a bullying incident, three indicators are usually present:

1. Power – people who bully acquire their power through physical size and strength, by status within the peer group, and by recruiting support of the group.
2. Frequency – bullying is not a random act. It is this factor that brings about the anticipatory terror in the mind of the child being bullied that can be so detrimental and have the most debilitating long-term effects.
3. Intent to harm – people who bully generally do so with the intent to either physically or emotionally harm the other child.

A person who shows bullying behaviour says or does something intentionally hurtful to others and they keep doing it, with no sense of regret or remorse – even when it’s obvious that they’ve hurt a person or when they’re asked to stop.

Any member of the Columbia College community observing bullying or harassment against a student must make a report to the Head of High School. An investigation of the complaint will take place in line with this policy and procedure. This policy should be referred to in order to ensure that students are protected as per Ministry of Education requirements.

Any member of the Columbia College community observing bullying or harassment against a non-student should refer to *5.10 Bullying and Harassment Policy*.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**BULLYING and HARASSMENT:** Bullying is intentional, hurtful and aggressive behaviour that makes others feel uncomfortable, scared or upset, humiliated, or intimidated.

**COLUMBIA COLLEGE COMMUNITY:** Columbia College students, employees, governors, contractors of services, volunteers and visitors.

**REASONABLE:** In the relevant act, a reasonable action is defined as “a person (or organization) who exercises the degree of attention, knowledge, intelligence and judgment that society requires of its members for the protection of their own and of others’ interests. The reasonable person acts sensibly, does things without serious delay and takes proper but not excessive precautions.”

**REPORT:** Statement of alleged facts provided by Complainant who is seeking recourse under this Policy.

**RESPONDENT:** Person or persons against whom a Report has been made under this Policy.

**B. PROCEDURES:**

**1. Reporting**

- a. An allegation of harassment, intimidation, bullying or discrimination may be made informally through a verbal report to a staff member or to the Head of High School. A trusted adult may accompany students making complaints.
- b. All staff are responsible for receiving complaints of harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination and for ensuring that the most appropriate staff person is informed of the complaint.
- c. Students can report incidents of harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination through the *Erase Bullying* website. Access to this site is available through school administration.
- d. Complaints may be made anonymously, as persons lodging complaints may have fear of reprisal. Staff should endeavour to honour such requests, but those making such complaints should understand that an anonymous complaint will place certain limitations on an investigation.
- e. A record of the incident should be made in writing, either by the receiver or by any witness(es) who are reporting. Faculty or staff may assist in this process.
- f. Any person lodging a complaint must be informed that due process may, at some stage of the investigation and intervention process or of a subsequent legal process, require the Columbia College High School to release all information regarding the complaint.
- g. All recorded personal information will be treated following the Columbia College Privacy Policy, in line with the guidelines of the [Personal Information Protection Act \(PIPA\)](#).
- h. Notwithstanding points c. and f., information may be shared where:
  - i. an individual is at imminent risk of self-harm;
  - ii. an individual is at imminent risk of harming others;
  - iii. there are reasonable grounds to believe that others in the College or wider community may be at risk of harm.

**2. Investigation**

- a. All complaints of harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination will be taken seriously and will be followed up in a timely manner.
- b. In cases where an incident potentially contravenes the *Criminal Code of Canada* (hate propaganda, public incitement of hatred, willful promotion of hatred, etc.) the appropriate authorities will be contacted by the Head of High School to consult regarding appropriate action.
- c. In all cases where child abuse is suspected, a report will be made to the appropriate Ministry, in accordance with the *Child Abuse Reporting* policy.
- d. An investigation of harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination will include obtaining input from the person(s) alleged to have been harmed by the behaviour, from the alleged perpetrator and from a witness or witnesses, (if they exist and will speak) to the alleged behaviour. More intensive interviewing of those involved and/or of witnesses may be required at

the discretion of the investigator, depending on the nature of the behaviour or incident and especially when evidence of prejudice and or discrimination is present.

### **3. Intervention**

- a. When there is a finding that harassment, intimidation, bullying, prejudice or discrimination has occurred intervention will be:
  - i. in alignment with the *Student Discipline (High School)* policy;
  - ii. appropriate to the degree of misconduct;
  - iii. educative, preventive and/or restorative, and;
  - iv. implemented in a timely manner.
- b. Appropriate intervention may include, for example, one or more of the following actions:
  - i. allowing an opportunity for those harmed by the behaviour to explain to the perpetrator that his/her conduct is unwelcome, offensive, inappropriate, prejudicial, or and/or discriminatory either in writing or face-to-face;
  - ii. a statement from the Head of High School to an individual conveying that any form of harassment, intimidation, bullying or discrimination does not align with school policy, is prohibited under the *B.C. Human Rights Code*, and is unacceptable in our educational community. A student should then have the opportunity to make amends or disciplinary steps could be taken.
  - iii. arranging measures which are designed to provide those harmed with restitution of status or sense of self-worth;
  - iv. counselling or educative measures designed to support any students involved with harassment, intimidation, bullying or discrimination– including both those who may have been harmed and those who are responsible;
  - v. disciplinary measures up to and including suspension or expulsion from a regular educational program;
  - vi. notification of other agencies as deemed by the Head of High School to be appropriate or legally required.

### **4. Process of Appeal**

- a. Columbia College High School recognizes and respects the fact that students and /or parents or guardians may sometimes disagree with decisions made by the Columbia College High School. The *School Act of British Columbia* gives parents or guardians and students (with parental consent) the right to express concerns or appeal certain decisions. This right of appeal applies to decisions that significantly affect the health, education or welfare of students.
- b. Prior to an appeal it is expected that school administration, students and parents or guardians will work to try to resolve concerns at the school level.
- c. Should a student or parent/guardian wish to appeal a decision made by the Head of High School that, in the student's, parent's, or guardian's view, significantly affect the health, education or welfare of the student, a written request to appeal should be made to the Principal.
- d. The Principal will review the request, along with any documentation collected in association with the decision. The Principal may conduct interviews with the student, parent or guardian, and any witnesses, if necessary.
- e. The Principal will make a ruling on the appeal request. This decision is final, and will be communicated to the student, parent or guardian, and the Head of High School.

### **5. Education for Prevention of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Prejudice and Discrimination**

- a. Columbia College High School will ensure that:
  - i. Communication with parents, at least annually, includes emphasis of the seriousness with which the school regards harassment, intimidation, bullying, prejudice, and discrimination and the provisions of this administrative procedure;
  - ii. Students are informed on an annual basis, in language appropriate to their age level about the following:
    1. the definition of harassment, intimidation, bullying, prejudice and discrimination;

2. the expectations for student conduct with regard to harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination - including the obligation of students to report incidents of harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination;
3. the interventions listed in this administrative procedure.

**6. Retaliation**

- a. No student, school employee, parent or volunteer may engage in reprisal or retaliation against a victim, witness, or other person who brings forward information about an act of harassment, intimidation, bullying, prejudice or discrimination. Reprisal or retaliation is prohibited and will result, where appropriate, in discipline and/or in the filing of a complaint with other appropriate authorities.

**7. Falsely Reporting Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Prejudice or Discrimination**

- a. It is a violation of this administrative procedure to knowingly report false allegations of harassment, intimidation, bullying, prejudice or discrimination. Persons filing a false report will be subject to appropriate discipline and/or the filing of a complaint with other appropriate authorities.

**8. Other Laws**

- a. Nothing in this administrative procedure precludes any person harmed by alleged harassment, intimidation or bullying from exercising his/her rights under procedures outlined in other laws; for example, the Criminal Code of Canada or civil action.

**9. Other Policies and Procedures**

- a. Nothing in this administrative procedure is intended to prohibit discipline or remedial action for inappropriate student conduct that falls outside of the definition of harassment, intimidation, bullying or discrimination as defined in this administrative procedure, but which is or may be prohibited by other policies or by school rules.

**LINKS TO SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITE:**

n/a

**REFERENCE TO EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT CLAUSES:**

n/a

**REFERENCE TO BYLAWS:**

n/a

**RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS:**

[Independent School Act](#)  
[Harassment and Bullying Prevention Order](#)  
[School Act](#)

**RELATED POLICIES:**

*Bullying and Harassment Policy*  
*Child Abuse Reporting Policy*  
*Appeals Policy (High School)*  
*Student Code of Conduct Policy*  
*Student Discipline Policy (High School)*

**APPROVALS:**

**IF APPLICABLE:**

<b>Chair, Academic Board</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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<b>Chair, Marketing and Recruitment Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Chair, Finance Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

**APPROVAL FOR ALL POLICIES:**

<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Principal or Designate:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Chair, Board of Governors:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>Proposed Review Date:</b> April 2024	<b>Dates(s) revised:</b>	<b>Replaces Policy Number:</b>
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