

# RENFREW EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

## SOCIETY POLICY BOOK

### FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENT

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| <b>SAFE AND CARING ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN/STUDENTS, STAFF AND VISITORS</b>  | <b>POLICY NUMBER: 1.14</b> |
| <b>APPROVED: MAY 2005</b><br><b>REVIEWED: JUNE 2017, MAY 2018, JUNE 2019, MAY 2020, MAY 2021, MAY 2022, MAY 2023, MAY 2024, MAY 2025</b> |                            |

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| <b>POLICY:</b> | Renfrew Educational Services Board is committed to a safe, caring, respectful, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming working and learning environment for all children/students, staff and visitors. |
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#### Procedures

- The Safe and Caring Environments for Children/Students, Staff and Visitors policy will be reviewed by the Board of Directors by June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.
- The Safe and Caring Environments for Children/Students, Staff and Visitors policy will be provided to all staff, children/students and parents and is publicly available.

At Renfrew all children/students, staff and visitors have the right to work and learn in an environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. This right is guaranteed under the

- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;
- The *Alberta Human Rights Act* as amended March 10, 2015. In addition, the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, includes the right not to be discriminated against by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or gender identity or gender expression. Legislation also provides as a fundamental right the “right of parents to make informed decisions respecting the education of their children;” and,
- Requirements of the *Education Act 1.1(d)* that provide for measures that support the equality and non-discrimination of students who may belong to minority groups, including sexual orientation.

Renfrew Educational Services Board will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination on the basis of a person’s actual or perceived differences or gender identity or gender expression.

As defined by the *Education Act 1.1(d)* bullying is defined as the “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 more individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual’s reputation.”

At Renfrew we believe that all children/students, staff and visitors have the right to:

- be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect;
- have their confidentiality protected and respected;
- self-identification and determination;
- freedom of conscience, expression, and association;

- be fully included and represented in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner;
- have equitable access to the same supports, services, and protections provided to heterosexual children/students, their families, staff and visitors;
- have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, and/or violence; and
- Have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, valued and respected within the school environment.

Renfrew Educational Services Board is committed to implementing measures detailed in the Student Code of Conduct, Bullying Policy, Parent Code of Conduct and other documents that will:

- Define appropriate expectations, behaviours, language, and actions in order to prevent discrimination, prejudice, and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their harmful effects.
- Ensure that all such discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.
- Improve students' understanding of the individual lives of minorities, including sexual and gender minorities, and their families, cultures, and communities.
- Ensure children/students and parents, staff and visitors will conduct themselves in a way that contributes to learning environments that are welcoming, caring respectful and safe.
- Support students to establish a voluntary student organization or to lead an activity intended to promote positive learning environments including Gay-Straight-Alliances (GSAs) or Queer-Straight-Alliances (QSAs) in their school. Should any student express interest in establishing a Gay-Straight Alliance or Queer-Straight-Alliance the school will support that student by assigning a teacher or school leader to help organize the alliance, select a respectful and inclusive name, and designate a space in the school for the alliance to meet.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate inclusive educational strategies, professional development opportunities, and administrative guidelines to ensure that minorities including gender minorities and their families are treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of the school community in a manner consistent with the school's mission and vision

As a Designated Special Education School the unique needs of our children/students are always in the forefront when developing programs and policies. We approach each situation with the utmost sensitivity ensuring our approach meets the developmental level of the child.