

Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Teaching and Learning Environment Policy **[Parkview Adventist Academy]**

PART I

A whole-school approach is inclusive of all school staff, students and partners and touches all aspects of school life. It promotes positive mental health and academic achievement and includes social emotional learning in school practices, policies and partnerships. **Parkview Adventist Academy** is using a number of strategies to support welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self.

Understanding aspects of a whole-school approach will help the principal decide how to best meet the needs and priorities of **Parkview Adventist Academy**. Effective school wide practices can then be used.

A whole-school approach:

- is built on evidence based strategies and practices (the effectiveness is documented and credible);
- happens over a sustained period of time (e.g. full school year or longer);
- is embedded into teaching, routines and activities;
- uses reliable instructional practices;
- is supported by ongoing professional development;
- engages students in active learning and opportunities to practice social emotional skills;
- is embedded into school policies and practices;
- promotes positive mental health;
- is supported by ongoing professional development;
- involves family and community partnerships;
- aligns with the specific needs and priorities of the school community; and,
- collects information to ensure the strategy is making a positive difference in the learning environment.

Consistent with its mission and vision, **Parkview Adventist Academy** is committed to a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe, inclusive and equitable learning and teaching environment for all students and staff. All students have the right to learn and work in an environment free of prejudice, harassment and unlawful discrimination. This principle is found within the golden rule expressed by Jesus Christ: "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you." Luke 6:31

As legislatively mandated in section 45.1(3) of the School Act, this policy and the Student Code of Conduct:

- Herein affirm the rights, as provided for the in Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, of each staff member employed by **Parkview Adventist Academy** and each student enrolled in **Parkview Adventist Academy**;
- Herein states that staff members employed by **Parkview Adventist Academy** and students enrolled in **Parkview Adventist Academy** will not be discriminated against as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the degree that the same applies in law to **Parkview Adventist Academy**.

PART II

Parkview Adventist Academy believes that all students have the right, under the Charter or otherwise, 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 by all school personnel;
- have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, and/or violence;
- have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, valued, and respected within the school environment;
- be free from discrimination on the basis of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation; and,
- to have equitable access to support, services and protections, regardless of their identity, background, or character protected under the Alberta Human Rights Act.

Parkview Adventist Academy will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived differences, gender identity, or gender expression.

PART III

Parkview Adventist Academy is committed to implementing measures 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;
- 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; and,
- support individual students through initiatives that may include, but are not limited to,
 - mentoring of individual students by older students,
 - more focused attention to individual students,
 - regular follow-up meetings of specific teachers with individual students,
 - student Peer Support Groups, and,
 - counseling and restorative justice processes.

To assist teachers and school leaders with implementation measures, the following Alberta Education resources may be used by school staff to assist with implementation of this policy:

The Walk Around: A School Leader's Observation Guide.

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/3114867/the-walk-around-school-leader-revised.pdf>

The Walk Around: Teacher's Companion Tool.

https://education.alberta.ca/media/142742/the-walk-around_teacher.pdf

PART IV

When implementing the above policy directions, **Parkview Adventist Academy** will act reasonably in the best interests of the student in keeping with the guidelines outlined by the Supreme Court of Canada (*Loyola v. Quebec*, 2015). In that case, the Court outlined the obligations of teachers in a private religious school in respect to delivering a prescribed provincial curriculum related to other religions and worldviews and at the same time teach the school's faith tradition. Some of the principles established by *Loyola v. Quebec* include:

- Christian teachers must be permitted to describe and explain Christian doctrine and ethical beliefs from the Christian perspective, and cannot be required to adopt a neutral position;
- Christian teachers must describe and explain the ethical beliefs and doctrines of other religions in an objective and respectful way;
- Christian teachers must maintain a respectful tone of debate — both by conveying their own contributions in a respectful way, and by ensuring the classroom dialogue proceeds in accordance with respect, tolerance and understanding for those with different beliefs and practices;
- Where the context of the classroom discussion requires it, Christian teachers may identify what Christian beliefs are, why Christians follow those beliefs, and the ways in which another specific ethical or doctrinal proposition does not accord with those beliefs, be it in the context of a particular different religion or an ethical position considered in the abstract.

PART V

The board under section 16.1 of the School Act is **Parkview Adventist Academy**.

The text of Section 16.1 of the School Act is as follows:

16.1 (1) If one or more students attending a school operated by a board request a staff member employed by the board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the principal of the school shall

- (a) immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the school, and

(b) subject to subsection (4), within a reasonable time from the date that the principal receives the request designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), an organization or activity includes an organization or activity that promotes equality and non-discrimination with respect to, without limitation, race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, including but not limited to organizations such as gay- straight alliances, diversity clubs, anti-racism clubs and anti-bullying clubs.

(3) The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name “gay-straight alliance” or queer-straight alliance”, after consulting with the principal.

(3.1) For greater certainty, the principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “gay-straight alliance” or “queer-straight alliance”.

(4) The principal shall immediately inform the board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in subsection (1), and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work, with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the school.

(5) If a staff member indicates to a principal a willingness to act as a staff liaison under subsection (1),

- (a) a principal shall not inform a board or the Minister under subsection (4) that no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison, and
- (b) that staff member shall be deemed to be available to serve as the staff liaison.

(6) The principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in subsection (1) is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.

As legislatively mandated by section 45.1(4)(c) of the School Act, the principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in section 16.1(1) of the School Act,

- (a) Is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity, and
- (b) Is otherwise consistent with the usual practices relating to notifications of other student organizations or activities.

Section 45.1(4)(d) of the School Act requires this Policy to indicate that the Personal Information Protection Act governs the disclosure of personal information by the Board