

# **St. Vincent Catholic Elementary School**

## **Student Code of Conduct Policy**

### **Statement of Purpose**

The implementation of the St. Vincent School Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures is done within the context of provincial legislation for Alberta's education system; referencing the Education Act, District Policy which is founded on establishing a Catholic school environment based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church towards ensuring a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment for all.

### **Our Student Code of Conduct Policy seeks to address the following key areas:**

1. Acceptable and unacceptable behaviours regardless of whether or not they occur within the school building, during the school day, school-related events or by electronic means.
2. Possible consequences of unacceptable behaviour and the supports to correct the unacceptable behaviour based on individual needs.
3. Bullying behaviours that occur at any time of day, at school-related events, or by electronic means. As outlined in Section 1(1) of the Education Act which 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."
4. Discrimination as set out in the Alberta Human Rights Act. Specifically, this refers to any conduct that serves to deny or discriminate against any person or class of persons regarding any goods, services, accommodation or facilities that are customarily available to the public is forbidden if the denial or discrimination is based on race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation.
5. The important role that parents have is to ensure that their conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment.

The primary focus of our Student Code of Conduct Policy is to help students learn how to address issues of dispute, develop empathy and become good citizens both within and outside of the school community.

### **At St. Vincent School, our goals are to provide students with:**

1. A welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment for all.
2. Stimulating learning experiences that establish an appropriate balance between individual and collective rights, freedoms and responsibilities in the school.
3. Clear and reasonable expectations for student conduct while at school, at a school-related activity or while engaging in an activity that may have an impact on others in the school.

Ultimately, our goal in any situation that requires the disciplining of children is to teach our students to make better behavioral choices. In doing this, **we seek to teach children to accept responsibility for their**

**actions, to right their wrongs, to reconcile with one another and to forgive.** We know from educational research that schools that have effective discipline demonstrate the following characteristics:

- The total school environment is conducive to good discipline.
- The school is focused on the needs of the students.
- Behavioral expectations are clearly communicated to students and parents and are consistently applied by all staff.
- The school focuses on the causes of discipline problems rather than symptoms.
- Emphasis is on positive student behavior and preventative measures rather than punitive actions.
- Teachers handle all or most of the routine discipline.
- Students have a sense of belonging to the school.
- The school has a close working relationship with the parents.

We believe that in order to provide our students with a learning environment that is optimal and that enhances the self-worth of the student, we must work with them and foster the development of self-discipline. Each child, therefore, has the responsibility (Education Act, Sec. 31) to ensure that his/her behavior contributes to a productive and non-disruptive atmosphere. This will in turn, prepare our students towards becoming productive members of the larger community.

In partnership with the school, the parent (Education Act, Sec. 32) must share in the responsibility of developing acceptable conduct and must support one another in that pursuit. By working together, we can ensure a learning environment that is orderly and safe for all.

**Our discipline approach seeks to teach, encourage and promote the three “As”:**

1. **APPROPRIATE** behavior
2. **AWARENESS** of one’s actions
3. **ACCEPTANCE** of responsibility for one’s actions

**We believe that all children require:**

- A positive, proactive behaviour plan
- Established school behaviour expectations and consequences for non-compliance
- A positive reinforcement system
- The teaching of social skills
- Active supervision and monitoring
- Firm, fair interventions

## **Statement of Acceptable & Unacceptable Behaviours**

Under Section 31 of the Education Act, students have the responsibility to ensure that their conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. Parents have a corresponding responsibility under Section 32 (b) to help their child meet his/her responsibilities towards ensuring a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment.

## GENERAL EXPECTATIONS FOR BEHAVIOR

At St. Vincent, we are dedicated to learning in a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment. Anything that interferes with teaching or learning is not allowed. This includes inappropriate dress, gum-chewing, head gear, sunglasses, inappropriate use of electronic devices or games, behavior that is in conflict with our district responsible use agreement, and physical contact between students. School-wide expectations are communicated to our students by teachers in classroom discussions, by school administration in assemblies, during morning announcements, through the school newsletter and through our school website. We have set behavioral guidelines for the school as a whole and have asked each teacher to set programs and procedures designed to maximize student learning and responsibility. Since each teacher has a different style, specific expectations and procedures will vary from class to class.

**Category 1: School-Wide Expectations** - refers to those general school-wide expectations which are deemed to be part of the basic and necessary expectations, which have been standardized to ensure the smooth operations of the school, so that it is a safe learning environment. Each homeroom teacher reviews these expectations annually, at the beginning of each school year, after Christmas Break, and after Spring Break. Listed below, for your reference, are a listing of the School-Wide Expectations. They are:

### **Respect**

Students are expected to show respect and consideration for others, including fellow students, parents, staff, visitors and community members. This respect includes others' feelings, personal space, belongings and work. Physical and/or verbal abuse is unacceptable. Behaviour such as fighting, bullying, pushing, spitting, disrespectful language, swearing or insults, teasing, stealing, vandalism and rough horseplay are not acceptable behaviors.

### **Non-Discrimination**

Discrimination as set out in the Alberta Human Rights Act specifically refers to any conduct that serves to deny or discriminate against any person or class of persons regarding any goods, services, accommodation or facilities that are customarily available to the public is forbidden if the denial or discrimination is based on race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation.

### **Peer Conflict and Mean Behaviour**

Part of student growth is learning how to resolve conflict within their peer groups. At St. Vincent, students are taught the difference between peer conflict and mean behaviour. **Peer conflict** is a result of frustration from being unable to problem solve. Participants are interested in a positive outcome which requires adult intervention and results in conflict resolution. **Mean behavior** results when children seek to assert themselves. It is spontaneous, does not target a specific individual or group, and the individual feels badly when they are made aware of the harm caused. Early adult intervention redirects attention to be more positive and is a step towards preventing the behavior from escalating to bullying.

-Excerpted from Social Responsibility and Diversity Team, Vancouver School District #39, 2013

### **Bullying**

Students are to ensure that they do not in any way partake in bullying behaviours at school, during school-related events or by electronic means at any time of the day. As outlined in Section 1(1) of the Education Act which 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.”*** Students who have witnessed bullying or are aware of such behaviours as defined above are to report it privately to their teacher and/or school administration.

Bullying can take different forms:

Physical – pushing, hitting

Verbal – name calling, threats, put-downs

Emotional/Social – exclusion, rumors, extortion of money or possessions, intimidation

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.

Students are expected to report bullying behaviour as soon as they can after seeing it or experiencing it. Students may do this by telling an adult in the school. Students who are uncomfortable with coming forward to school personnel are encouraged to talk with parents or friends, who could then assist them in notifying the school about bullying.

Bullying or cyberbullying of students could result in an immediate suspension from school. As well, the police may become involved in the investigation of bullying incidents. Bullying is defined in law as “the repeated intimidation of others by the real or threatened infliction of physical, verbal, written, electronically transmitted or emotional abuse.” Any person who repeatedly bullies a minor (under the age of 18) in a public place could be subject to a \$250 fine.

### **Restorative Practice**

Restorative practices are a set of diverse ideas and approaches used to build healthy communities, increase social capital, repair harm and restore relationships. These practices – which range from whole school strategies to specific intervention techniques – seek to move from a retributive model to a restorative model of accountability. In other words, it places emphasis on addressing harm and building community and relationships, rather than simply administering punishment. At St. Vincent School, restorative practice may include a continuum of prevention and intervention activities, ranging from informal practices such as class meetings to more formal practices like classroom circles and face-to-face meetings to address harm. The intent is to focus on how a victim was harmed, and the steps taken to reconcile all parties who are affected.

Therefore, the goal is to educate youth about the impact of their actions on others, to hold them accountable for their actions in a constructive and meaningful way and provide an opportunity for them to make amends towards those who have been harmed.

**Excerpted from** Integrating Bullying Prevention and Restorative Practices in Schools: Considerations for Practitioners and Policymakers, October 2014, and the Waterloo Region District School Board (<https://www.wrdsb.ca/our-schools/safe-schools/restorative-practicesrestorative-justice/>)

### **Safety**

Behaviors which may inflict injury on another is unacceptable. Behaviors such as throwing snowballs, sand, rocks or the like, may cause injury and are unacceptable. Any weapon or item that is used with the intent of acting as a weapon, or an item which represents a real weapon is strictly prohibited. Skateboards or roller blades are permitted to be used to and from school however, while at school, students are to refrain from using skateboards or rollerblades during the school day. The school will not be held responsible for any lost or stolen items. All members of the community are expected to obey safety signs, speed limits and/or patrols.

### **Dress Code**

Rapidly changing styles and fashions make it impossible to suggest a definite standard of dress; however, students should dress in a manner consistent with Christian values, educational goals, school activities, and the weather. For a student, school is their 'place of business'. Please have them dress accordingly.

During warm weather, shorts may be worn if they are a proper length and fit, and necklines must be appropriate. Sleeveless tops are acceptable as long as undergarments are covered. Tops which expose the belly-button and mid torso are not acceptable. Shorts and skirts must be the length of the child's extended arm. Clothing with inappropriate messages or decals that are not in keeping with our Catholic faith are not acceptable. Students dressed inappropriately will be asked to call home and have a replacement top brought to school, or they will be loaned a T-shirt to wear for the duration of the school day.

Outdoor footwear cannot be worn in the school. Students require well fitting, clean running shoes that are to be left at school (no black soled runners please). Hats are not to be worn indoors and once in the classroom, students should not wear outdoor clothes.

### **Honesty/Plagiarism**

Students are expected to be honest in relations with other students, staff and adults, and to take ownership for their actions. Lying, stealing, cheating, or copying another person's academic work and passing it off as one's own work and/or idea is not acceptable behaviour.

### **Language**

Student language must show respect for staff, students and other community members. Name calling, swearing, crude, rude and obscene language in spoken, written, implied or gestured format is unacceptable.

### **Care of Property**

Students are expected to respect all school property, property of others, and personal property. Students must keep their personal space, internal and external areas of school clean and safe. Students are

responsible for the care of textbooks. Lost and/or damaged items must be paid for. In order to help staff take care of the school property, students will not chew gum or eat sunflower seeds on the school property and grounds. It is expected that students keep their work, coat and boot and/or locker area clean and well organized. Safety of self and others is of prime importance. Vandalism is unacceptable and damages as a result of vandalism will be billed to the parent.

### **Extra/Co-curricular & Fieldtrip Activities**

All extra/co-curricular activities and field trips are considered to be an extension of daily school. As such, student expectations as outlined within this conduct policy apply and are to be followed. Student participation in such extra/co-curricular activities and field trips is subject to the child's daily behavior during the course of regular school hours. Both, student academic and behavioral efforts, are all considerations for participation in such activities.

### **Hallway/Outside Play Area Movement**

All hallway movement must be orderly and respectful of other classes. This helps us to ensure that there is minimal disruption of instructional time. At recess and/or lunch break times, children upon dismissal, are expected to go outside as quickly and as orderly as possible. Students are to play in designated areas only and are not to be around the bike racks during recess. Students are expected to remain in the schoolyard, at all times, except for students who walk home for lunch who are to sign-out, in the office.

Students are to seek the assistance of a supervising staff member in the event that an issue arises from outdoor recess activities. During outdoor recess the supervising teacher must retrieve any balls going on the street. The custodian will retrieve balls landing on the roof, at a later time.

When the bell rings, students are expected to stop their games immediately and proceed to their designated entrance and line up quietly and orderly, where they will be met by their homeroom teacher.

Upon entering the school, students are expected to proceed directly to their classroom in a respectful and orderly manner.

### **Positive/Proactive Academic Attitude**

To ensure success in the school year, students should be prepared to learn, challenge themselves to do their best, remain focused on the tasks assigned to them, and complete all class and homework assignments on time, and to the best of their ability. A key tool to assist students in establishing positive life skills are the use of the Student Agenda. It is expected that this tool be used regularly and a focused, proactive and positive attitude toward learning be demonstrated consistently.

### **Transportation**

Students taking the yellow bus are expected to follow general school-wide expectations as set out within this conduct policy. Requests made by a bus driver, which are more specific, are to be followed and respected. Should there be behavioral concerns, the bus driver will complete a bus infraction form outlining the specific concerns. In those circumstances where the child has received multiple bus infraction notices, the child will face suspension of bus transportation for a period of time. Students must show their bus pass prior to boarding the bus. Students are expected to board the bus within 5 minutes of dismissal and may be left behind if tardy. Students are to sit in their assigned seat.

**Category 2: Classroom Based Expectations** – refers to those specific classroom-based expectations which come directly from the teacher, as part of the teacher’s behavioral and routine expectations for the smooth operation of that teacher’s particular classroom management.

Each classroom teacher will discuss and develop with their students a list of expectations and consequences with regard to behavior within a given classroom at the beginning of each school year, after Christmas Break, and after Spring Break. These expectations are communicated to parents and guardians at the first reporting period in September.

Regardless of which category an expectation falls under, it is necessary that all students follow and abide by the expectations as they are set out. Non-compliance of either, School-Wide Expectations and/or Classroom Based Expectations will result in the student receiving consequences as outlined below.

### **ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS**

We know that most students behave appropriately most of the time. We also believe that people perform better when they know what is expected of them. St. Vincent School is committed to providing students with a school environment that is both safe and conducive to learning. We are dedicated to teaching students appropriate behavior towards themselves and others. We expect students to behave in an appropriate manner, which does not interfere with the learning or behavior of others. Students are to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful.

#### **Students Can Contribute to Creating a Positive Learning Environment by:**

- smiling at peers and adults in our school
- speaking to their friends about their behaviour (using clear, kind language) when they are not contributing to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environment
- greeting visitors to their 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 join games or sit with their group outside, or working together to complete a project
- keeping our school and school grounds clean and tidy
- coming to school/class on time and as prepared as possible
- treating everyone with respect even if they don’t agree with their beliefs and/or values
- having empathy for others
- following classroom and school expectations so everyone is able to learn
- not engaging in behavior such as put downs or snickers when questions are asked in class – no one should feel afraid or nervous about coming to school.

- Excerpted from The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities, *Series on Alberta’s Education Act*, November 2014

#### **Parents Can Help Students Meet Their Responsibilities by:**

- modelling kindness

Firmly using clear, kind language to correct behaviour

- paying attention to how they talk about other children and the school in front of their children
- taking responsibility for their mistakes
- reporting any problems at school to the teacher as soon as they can. Problems are easier to solve when they haven’t been going on for a long time. The best place to start is with their child’s teacher. If

parents are not satisfied with the results of this conversation, the next step would be to make an appointment to speak with their child's principal

- modelling peaceful problem solving when you have a conflict

- Excerpted from The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities,
- *Series on Alberta's Education Act*, November 2014
- Alberta Education: Guide to Education ECS to grade 12 (September 2018)

### **Other ways that Parents Can Contribute to a Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environment**

- speaking respectfully to and about school staff
- speaking positively about the school, staff, other students and their families in front of their child
- making appointments to ensure the person they want to speak with has sufficient time to have a focused conversation. Drop off and pick up times are not ideal for parents or for the teacher
- communicating with the teacher or other school staff – e.g. positive notes or emails to their child's teacher and/or other school staff, positive comments when parents drop off or pick up their child

- Excerpted from The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities,
- *Series on Alberta's Education Act*, November 2014
- Alberta Education: Guide to Education ECS to grade 12 (September 2018)

## **Statement of Consequences for Unacceptable Behaviours**

### **Minor Misbehaviours**

These can be described as inappropriate language, bumping or pushing on the playground, not following classroom or school expectations, and other minor incidents. The teacher/staff member will use his or her discretion in determining whether or not it is minor or major. Administration may be consulted.

When a minor misbehaviour occurs, staff may use some of the following incremental consequences:

1. A warning to the student followed by discussion of classroom/school expectations.
2. Ask for demonstration of appropriate behaviour
3. Administer an appropriate time out (5 to 15 minutes under adult supervision)
4. Request an apology which includes reason for apology and future actions, if appropriate
5. Use natural consequences, such as, if a student is not able to play well at recess, he or she may walk with a supervisor at recess, if appropriate or, if a student chooses to socialize rather than do class work, then he or she may need to stay in at recess to complete his or her work.
6. The teacher may when necessary, suspend the student **from not longer than one class period** at which point the teacher will provide students with the work that would be covered in class.
7. Teacher will log incident into Powerschool.

### **Major Misbehaviours**

Major misbehaviours can include open opposition to authority, willful disobedience, willful harming of other students, continuing misbehaviours, use of improper language towards students or staff, vandalism, stealing, or bullying as defined in the Education Act. It is also important to recognize that some discretion will be applied, especially with younger students. There are higher expectations for our



older students, who are expected to provide positive role modeling for our younger students.

**In the circumstance of a major misbehavior, the teacher will:**

1. Gather information to determine what happened and who was involved,
2. Log incident (Powerschool) and call the parent to inform them of the incident that occurred and send home the Incident Report Form.
3. Inform and involve an administrator, who shall assist with:
  - Discussing misbehaviour with student
  - Determining consequences based on severity and frequency of behaviour, including possible suspension of the student
  - The construction of an out-of-school suspension letter to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
  - Tracking frequency and severity of individual student's behaviour

**Suspensions**

Out of School Suspensions can vary from 1 to 5 days. The student and parent/guardian must meet with an administrator before returning to class after an Out-of-School Suspension. Only an administrator/designate has the authority to suspend students from school. Although not the usual course of action, an In-School suspension may occur in situations where the parent cannot be reached.

**During an In-School Suspensions, a student will:**

- Work quietly in a supervised area
- Eat lunch in similar supervised area
- Not participate in recess breaks
- Not be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities on that day.

**During Out-of-School Suspensions, a student will:**

- Have a letter regarding suspension placed on file, which will remain on file until the end of the following year, in accordance with District Policy.

In keeping with our Vision Statement, we strive to **create an environment where students do** more through actively learning, serving, and participating in a Christ-centred community.

The school, home, and community are all important variables in an equation that equals student success.