

PWS UPDATE

Park West School Newsletter

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April 23, 2019

Nova Scotia School CODE of CONDUCT Edition

Receive the *PWS Update* electronically! You can receive the *PWS Update* electronically via e-mail. If you wish to be among the first to receive the latest editions of our school newsletters by having it sent to your e-mail address simply e-mail your request to Mr. Carter at dcarter@hrce.ca The *PWS Update* is published **approximately every two weeks**.

In September 2015 Nova Scotia was the first province in Canada to implement a province-wide code of conduct for students who attend public schools. All students and school members in Nova Scotia are now required to follow this provincial code of conduct policy, which is governed by the Education Act.

Students, parents, teachers, support staff, principals, and regional centres for education (formerly school boards) **share responsibility** for creating a school-wide approach to maintaining a **positive and inclusive** school climate where all students are supported to develop healthy relationships, make good choices, and achieve success in their learning. **All members** of Nova Scotia's school communities have a role to play in the awareness and prevention of unacceptable behaviours. Each person is expected to contribute to a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Nova Scotia's provincial code of conduct policy establishes standards of behavior for all schools and is built on the following expectations:

- Unacceptable behavior will be responded to as soon as possible, if not immediately.
- Schools are expected to use proactive and preventative approaches to reduce the occurrence of unacceptable behaviour and maintain environments that are conducive to teaching and learning.
- When responding to unacceptable behavior, schools will:
 - Give first consideration to the safety and security of students, staff, and other members of the school community.
 - Assist students with developing new behaviours and strategies to reduce the reoccurrence of unacceptable behaviour.
 - Address consequences in a fair manner that does not disproportionately impact students based on race, culture, ethnicity, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, mental illness, age, national or aboriginal origin, socio-economic status, or appearance.
 - Use restorative strategies when appropriate.
 - Consider the impact consequences may have on students adversely affected by inappropriate behaviour.
- Unless immediate action is necessary to maintain a safe learning environment, schools will support and promote positive student behaviour through programs of **prevention and intervention**.

To maintain acceptable standards of behaviour in Nova Scotia's schools all students and school members will:

- Show respect for the rights, property, and safety of themselves and others.
- Accept personal responsibility for their behaviour.
- Demonstrate socially appropriate behaviour.
- Respect and appreciate diversity of all school members, regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, mental illness, age, national or aboriginal origin, socio-economic status, or appearance.
- Treat school property and the property of others with a reasonable standard of respect.
- Attend school regularly and punctually (that means on time).
- Show respect for the roles and responsibilities of students, principals, teachers, parents, support staff, volunteers.
- Demonstrate respect for the learning environment of the school and the classroom and school activities and events.
- Demonstrate and promote positive behaviour through the avoidance of all types of violence.
- Use information and communications technology (including the internet, digital resources, cell phones, e-communication, and all forms of social media) in a responsible and acceptable manner.
- Refrain from all forms of bullying and cyberbullying, intimidation, racism, and discrimination.
- Refrain from the possession of any weapons.
- Refrain from the use of items as weapons intended to harm another person or themselves.
- Refrain from the possession of, or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, cannabis, and all other forms of intoxicants on school property.

Some behaviours (such as failure to follow directions, shoving and pushing, profanity that is not directed at another person, disrespectful behaviour that shows disregard for a teacher's or other supervising adult's position) will be addressed by teachers and school administrators in the course of their daily work in classrooms and supervision of students in other areas of the school. **Responses to these behaviours are varied**, and may include: student and/or parent conferences, creating a plan for restitution, coaching students to help them learn new and appropriate behaviours, restorative approaches, and/or detention as a time to reflect.

More severe and unacceptable behaviours endanger the well-being of others, result in damages to property, and/or significantly disrupt learning environments. Unacceptable behaviours are referred to the office (i.e. school administration) and may be addressed in a progressive manner through consequences that may include in-school or out-of-school suspensions.

Responses to unacceptable behaviour will:

- Be appropriate for the student's age and stage of development, and consider a student's special needs where the behaviour is determined to be unintentional.
- Reflect the severity of the behaviour.
- Consider the frequency and duration of the behaviour.
- Be chosen primarily for their educational value.

- Occur in a timely fashion.
- Reflect an individualized approach to discipline.
- Be fair and equitable and respect the dignity of all involved.

A principal or vice principal may consider suspending a student for up to 10 days, if it is believed a student has engaged in any of the following activities while on school grounds, on property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, at a school bus stop or on a school bus, or off school grounds (if any of these behaviours disrupt the learning climate of the school):

- Bullying
- Cyberbullying
- Discriminatory behaviour
- Illegal activity
- Insubordination
- Misuse of network/internet or online resources
- Physical violence
- Racist behaviour (including using racial slurs and racist name-calling)
- Repeated use of tobacco or e-cigarettes
- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual misconduct
- Significant disruption to school operations
- Use or possession of alcohol, drug-related paraphernalia, illegal drugs, cannabis, weapons
- Vandalism
- Verbal abuse

Possible responses by school personnel to unacceptable behaviour (to be determined by school personnel) includes:

- Conferencing with student and/or parent
- Creating a plan for restitution
- Coaching to develop new behaviours
- Restorative approaches ((i.e. when inappropriate behaviour causes harm, the focus of the response will be on repairing that harm. The people most affected by the behaviour should be able to participate in its resolution)
- Mediation
- Detention
- Loss of school privileges
- Referral to school guidance counsellor
- Referral to program planning team
- Referral to assessment and counselling
- Referral to student support worker or teacher
- Referral for behavioural support
- Referral to SchoolsPlus
- In-school suspension
- Involvement of outside agencies, such as police, mental health services, or child welfare/protection
- Referral to CyberSCAN investigation unit
- Out-of-school suspension (up to 10 days)
- Recommendation for extended suspension for a period of more than 10 days

In summary...

- One code of conduct for all schools in Nova Scotia
- Specifically lists acceptable and unacceptable behaviours
- Not intended to be simply punitive
- Learning to develop and practice appropriate behaviours is part of the education process
- Intention of code:
 - Safety and security of students, staff, and other members of school community
 - Students to learn from their mistakes. Use the restorative approach when appropriate. Develop new behaviours and strategies to reduce occurrence of unacceptable behaviours
- Creating safe and inclusive learning environments
- Focus on equity and fairness (recognize that some students are marginalized and disadvantaged)
- Individualized responses to incidents of inappropriate behaviour
- Not always possible to have 'zero tolerance'. Not always effective.
- Focus on establishing relationships with students
- Use progressive discipline (consider if it is the first offence, or a repeated offence)
- A range of responses are available
- When responding to inappropriate behaviours school personnel (administrators and teachers) **may often use their professional judgement**

At Park West School we have two vice principals; Mr. Melanson and Ms. Olsen. **Mr. Melanson** is responsible for grade primary to four (P – 4). **Ms. Olsen** is responsible for grades five – nine (5 – 9). Parent/guardians are encouraged to contact the appropriate vice principal (depending on your child's grade) to assist you at any time with issues, concerns, and matters of behaviour. If parent/guardians have questions or concerns:

1. Start with your **child's teacher**.
2. If necessary, follow up with one of our vice principals.
3. Further assistance could be provided by our principal, Mr. Carter.

Something to think about: *“Children need to learn, and be allowed, to take responsibility for their actions, so they do not become adults believing that nothing is ever their fault.”*

