



**Student Code of Conduct (Policy)**  
**Vancouver Island School of Innovation and Inquiry**

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

**We believe:**

- That all students and staff have a right to learn and work in a safe, respectful environment that is focused on learning.
- That everyone can learn to make responsible decisions.
- That effective communication includes courtesy and respect.
- That diversity among students and staff is to be celebrated and protected.
- That commonly-accepted conduct is to be practiced by all members of a learning community.
- That age, maturity, cognitive ability, and previous behaviour will be taken into consideration when defining unacceptable behavior and the consequences that follow.

**POLICY**

1. The school will develop a Code of Conduct that defines expected behaviour.
2. The Code of Conduct will be reviewed yearly by representative members of the school community.
3. Students will follow all guidelines, rules, and procedures while in attendance at school, during all school sponsored activities, and extracurricular events
4. Wherever possible and appropriate, consequences for breaches of a code are restorative in nature rather than punitive. This may involve formal Restorative Justice or other forms of balanced restorative practice. Goals of any process will include school community safety, accountability to the victim and/or community, and competency development for the transgressor.
5. Discipline decisions made by the school principal may be appealed to the Board.

**KEY ELEMENTS**

**Communication**

Expectations regarding acceptable conduct are made known to all students, parents, and school staff, as well as to temporary staff and visitors. Protocols while acting as ambassadors of the school are also made known to students, parents, coaches, and involved members of the greater community.

**Implementation**

Behavioural expectations outlined in the code of conduct are consistently taught and actively promoted. Our behavioural expectations are taught and reviewed with students and staff during our first week activities at the start of the year, in student discussions, and in seminars.

Responses to unacceptable behaviour are consistently based on sound principles and are appropriate to the context.

As a school, we recognize the importance of modeling respectful and responsible processes for managing conflict. Whenever possible, we try to use a restorative approach to resolving conflict and teaching pro-social behaviours.

### **Monitoring and Review**

All school staff continuously monitor student conduct. Acceptable behaviours are taught at the classroom level and reinforced within school culture. School staff, students, and parents will review the code of conduct on an annual basis.

### **Alignment**

This code of conduct is developed to align with the *Human Rights Code* of British Columbia.

## **STANDARDS**

### **Statement of Purpose**

- To establish and maintain safe, caring, and orderly environments for purposeful learning.
- To establish and maintain appropriate balances among individual and collective rights, freedoms, and responsibilities.
- To clarify and publish expectations for student behaviour while at school, while going to and from school, and while attending any school function or activity at any location.

### **Conduct Expectations**

#### Acceptable Conduct

The following are encouraged within the school culture to clearly and simply convey common sense expectations for a positive, safe, caring learning environment.

Students are expected to:

- WORK ON ACHIEVING LEARNING GOALS, and not interfere with others' learning.
- BE THOUGHTFUL of others, treating others with dignity and respect through offering help and encouragement in times of need. Older students are encouraged to help any student who is younger.
- BE CONSIDERATE of others by speaking politely and moving in the school and when on school activities in a courteous, mannerly and safe fashion.
- BE INCLUSIVE of all students in play, conversation, teams, clubs, groups, etc. both in school and when on school activities. Inviting students to play, encouraging each other, respecting differences, and playing with other students from all age levels.
- BE RESPONSIBLE for school equipment, personal property, school supplies, books, manipulatives, and other learning tools used throughout the day. This includes the safety, cleanliness, and overall care of the classroom, the building, and areas around the school. We ask all students to report any damage done to any materials, equipment, or structures.
- BE ORGANIZED by keeping materials and belongings neatly cared for in workspaces provided, by ensuring schedules and assignments are punctual and complete, and by attending school punctually every day. If a student is not able to attend, parents are asked to report the absence via the approved channels.

- SOLVE PROBLEMS IN PEACEFUL WAYS by using words, using an “I message” (e.g., “I don’t like it when you...”), apologizing, walking away if necessary, and getting help from an adult if needed. All staff and many of our older students are able to help coach students through this process.
  - We focus on problem-solving by expressing feelings and needs and looking at how to avoid problems in the future.
  - We focus on the repair of social injury and/or damage.

### Unacceptable Conduct

All staff members have authority and responsibility to encourage appropriate behaviour and deal with the inappropriate behaviour of students.

The following statements are cited only as examples and are not intended to be all-inclusive. Those in authority, adult supervisors, teachers, vice-principals, and principals will consider the severity and frequency of unacceptable conduct in determining appropriate disciplinary action should unacceptable behaviour(s) occur.

Unacceptable behaviours include those that:

- Interfere with the learning of others
- Interfere with an orderly environment
- Create unsafe conditions
- Wilfully damage the property of others

Unacceptable actions include those that:

- Involve bullying\*, harassment, or intimidation
- Involve physical violence
- Demonstrate retribution against a person who has reported incidents
- Demonstrate non-compliance with those in authority.

\*Bullying includes, but is not limited to physical or verbal intimidation, verbal harassment and cyber-bullying occurring on or off school property. (See VISII policy on *Bullying and Harassment*.)

Illegal acts include but are not limited to the following:

- Possession, use, or distribution of illegal or restricted substances
- Possession or use of weapons
- Libel, slander, or defamation
- Theft of damage to property

As per Section 8 of *Human Rights Code* of British Columbia, students shall not discriminate against others on the basis of the race, religion, colour, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, family status, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or physical or mental disability.

Furthermore, as per Section 7 of the *Human Rights Code* of British Columbia, no student shall publish or display anything that would indicate an intention to discriminate against another, or expose them to contempt or ridicule, on the aforementioned bases.

## **Search of Student Property**

A search by school officials of a student under their authority or a search of student property may be undertaken if the school has reasonable grounds to believe a school rule has been or will be violated, and that the evidence of that violation will be found in the location or on the person of the student being searched. Students know that their teachers and other school authorities are responsible for providing a safe learning environment and maintaining order and discipline at school. As a result, they must know that, where reasonable grounds exist, this may require searches of students, their cubbies and their personal effects, and the seizure of prohibited items.

## **Collection and Disclosure of Student Information**

Students should also be aware that the schools may collect, use, and disclose personal information about students for the purposes of investigating and addressing student misconduct, safety and maintaining order and discipline in school. Such collection and use of student information may include information that is obtained from witnesses or collected from other secondary information sources (e.g. social media). All personal information of students collected by the school will be collected in compliance with and under the authority of the *Personal Information Protection Act* and the *Independent School Act*.

## **Restorative Practice**

The fundamental premise of restorative practice is that people are happier, more cooperative, productive, and more likely to make positive changes to their lives when those in authority do things “with them,” rather than “to them” or “for them” (International Institute for Restorative Practices, [What Is Restorative Practices? | Restorative Practices](#)). As a result, a focus of behaviour intervention should be to help an offender recognize and repair any harm done. Furthermore, the purpose is to teach the offender moving forward, and then reinforce positive behaviours, in order to return the offender to the school community stronger, and more resilient than before the offense.

Every effort will be made to support all students. However, if there are ongoing conduct issues after having implemented restorative interventions, more traditional discipline approaches may be used, separate or in conjunction with restorative interventions. All disciplinary decisions will be made with respect to the individual and context, and responses to conduct issues will take into consideration the student’s age, maturity, and past conduct.

Students may be subject to discipline under the school Code of Conduct for any conduct that has the effect of negatively impacting the school environment, whether that conduct occurs on or off school property, at a school sponsored function or activity, or otherwise.

## **Rising Expectations**

As students develop and become more mature it is expected that they will increase their level of self-discipline and personal responsibility. As students advance through the grades, become older and more mature they will be expected to develop in their Core Competencies and be able to self-report in these areas. Over the years we will expect increasing personal responsibility and self-discipline and will apply increasing consequences for inappropriate behaviour.

Leniency in the handling of previous incidents is not a precedent for future leniency.

## **Consequences**

- Discipline of a student must be similar to that of a kind, firm, and judicious parent, but must not include corporal punishment.
- Responses to unacceptable conduct are corrective rather than punitive.
- Accountability defined as understanding impact of actions, taking responsibility for choices, and suggesting ways to repair harm.
- As often as possible, students are encouraged to participate in meaningful consequences for violations of the code of conduct.
- Special considerations may apply for the imposition of consequences on a student with special needs if the student is unable to comply with this Code of Conduct, due to a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional, or behavioural nature.
- The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation by a person against a student who has made a complaint of a breach in our code of conduct.

## **Notification**

School staff may, depending upon the severity and frequency of unacceptable conduct:

- Have students inform parents directly about instances of unacceptable conduct.
- Contact and inform parents directly about the student's unacceptable conduct.
- Inform the parents of students who have been the victim of unacceptable conduct.
- Inform police and/or other agencies – as required by law.
- Inform all parents when deemed to be important and to reassure members of the school community that school officials are aware of a serious situation or incident and are taking appropriate action to address it.

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Epiphyte Educational Society

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