AP 2-400 – CODE OF CONDUCT

(Aligned with the Provincial Code of Conduct (2025) and WSD Safe Schools Framework)

Purpose

Western School Division is committed to maintaining safe, caring, respectful, and inclusive learning environments that support the success and well-being of all students. This procedure outlines the implementation process of the Provincial Code of Conduct (2025) within Western School Division schools and provides direction to principals and staff for teaching, promoting, and responding to student behaviour in alignment with the Provincial Code of Conduct (2025)'s guidance and the WSD's Safe Schools policies and procedures.

Background

The Safe and Caring Schools: Provincial Code of Conduct was last revised in 2017. The updated Provincial Code of Conduct (2025) expands upon existing legislation and regulation to strengthen school-wide approaches for preventing, intervening in, and responding to inappropriate student behaviour. The directive supports students in managing and taking responsibility for their behaviour while allowing local decision-making.

Guiding Principles

Consistent with WSD's Safe Schools, Inclusion, Restorative Practices, and Student Conduct procedures, decisions and actions under this procedure will:

- Place the safety, dignity, and well-being of students at the centre of all actions.

- Support Manitoba's Philosophy of Inclusion through equitable, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate practice.

- Uphold the right of every child and youth to access education without discrimination.

- Recognize that positive school climate, behaviour support, and student well-being are shared responsibilities among school staff, families, and community partners.

- Ensure that all responses to behaviour maintain the student's inherent dignity.

- Use evidence-based, research-informed, and restorative approaches that emphasize learning, repair, and growth.

- Emphasize that strong, respectful relationships are foundational to a safe and caring school environment.

Scope and Procedures

School administrators must ensure that a school-level Code of Conduct is established and communicated annually. Behaviour expectations must be explicitly taught, reinforced, and modelled. Interventions and responses must align with provincial and divisional directives.

Documentation of significant incidents must follow *AP 2-320 Threatening Behaviours.* Parents/guardians must be engaged when behaviour is persistent, escalating, or results in a significant impact. Students must be supported in developing self-regulation and behavioural ownership.

This procedure applies to:

- All Western School Division schools, programs, employees, volunteers, and students

- All school environments, including classrooms, division property, school buses, off-site activities, and digital/online environments where behaviour affects the school climate

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Guidance for Developing the Code of Conduct Procedure

Behaviour Expectations

A school's code of conduct must include the following:

- a statement that students and staff are respectful and observe the code of conduct

- a statement that the following will result in an intervention, a response, and/or a consequence:

  o abusing another person verbally, in writing, electronically (e.g., audio, images, video, or text), doxing, swatting, cyber flashing, and sextortion, or otherwise in the following ways: physically, sexually, emotionally, or psychologically

  o exhibiting bullying behaviour toward another person

  o discriminating on the basis of any characteristic set out in subsection 9(2) of The Human Rights Code

    As per subsection 9(2) of The Human Rights Code, the following are characteristics protected from discrimination:

    a) ancestry, including colour and perceived race

    b) nationality or national origin

    c) ethnic background or origin

    d) religion or creed, or religious belief, religious association, or religious activity

    e) age

    f) sex, including sex-determined characteristics or circumstances, such as pregnancy, the possibility of pregnancy, or circumstances related to pregnancy

g) gender identity

h) sexual orientation

i) marital or family status

j) source of income

k) political belief, political association, or political activity

l) physical or mental disability or related characteristics or circumstances, including reliance on a service animal, a wheelchair, or any other remedial appliance or device

m) social disadvantage

o using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or illicit drugs at school

- a statement that the following may not occur on school sites:

    o gang activity

    o possessing a weapon, as weapon is defined in section 2 of the Criminal Code (Canada)

    As per Section 2 of the Criminal Code (Canada), a weapon means any thing used, designed to be used, or intended for use

    a) in causing death or injury to any person, or

    b) for the purpose of threatening or intimidating any person

- a statement that students and staff must adhere to school policies respecting the appropriate use of the following:

    o the Internet, including the use of AI-generated content (e.g., audio, images, video, or text), social media, text messaging, direct messaging, websites, and email

    o cameras, cell phones, and other electronic or personal communication devices identified in the code of conduct or the policies of the school board

- the process for determining behaviour intervention, response, or consequence due to non-observance of the code of conduct and the process for appealing such decisions

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to:

- Demonstrate respectful, safe, and responsible behaviour in all school-related settings.

- Contribute positively to a safe, caring, and inclusive school environment.

- Engage in learning, attend regularly, and follow reasonable directions from staff.

- Use digital tools in accordance with WSD's acceptable use expectations.

- Seek adult support when experiencing conflict, harm, or unsafe situations.

- Adhere to the School Code of Conduct

Staff Responsibilities

Staff are expected to:

- Model respectful and appropriate behaviour.

- Teach, reinforce, and review expected behaviours regularly.

- Apply responses that are fair, consistent, and mindful of student needs and context.

- Intervene early and use restorative, preventive, and developmentally appropriate practices.

- Communicate with parents/guardians as required.

- Document incidents and responses in alignment with WSD procedures.

- Adhere to the School Code of Conduct

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Support their child's adherence to school and division expectations.

- Maintain communication with school staff regarding concerns.

- Participate in collaborative planning when interventions or behaviour supports are required.

Prevention and School-Wide Approaches

School Principals will ensure:

- School-wide expectations are clearly taught, reinforced, and communicated to students and families annually.

- Staff use proactive, relationship-based approaches such as:

- Restorative practices

- Social-emotional learning

- Predictable routines and structured environments

- Positive behaviour support frameworks

- Schools regularly monitor student well-being, belonging, and attendance to identify emerging needs.

- Environmental factors contributing to behaviour concerns are assessed and addressed where possible.

Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour

There are many behaviours that warrant an intervention and response rooted in caring and support. Some of these behaviours include but are not limited to the following:

- Bullying/cyberbullying behaviour

- Harassment/discrimination

- Threats to others

- Theft

- Trafficking in drugs or sex

- Physical violence/aggression

- Sexual assault/aggression

- Hazing

- Gang activity

- Possession of a weapon

- Possession of or being under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or an illicit drug

- Harmful use of the Internet and electronic communication including AI-generated content (e.g., audio, images, video, or text), doxing, swatting, cyber flashing, and sextortion

- Self- or peer exploitation

- Threats and/or harm to self

The Public Schools Act (PSA) defines bullying and cyberbullying behaviour and requires that students and staff observe school and school board policies respecting acceptable use of the Internet. A student's feeling of personal safety at school can be impacted by events that take place outside of school hours. Staff members who become aware of bullying or cyberbullying behaviour must report and act on it, regardless of where and when it takes place.

The PSA requires all school board employees and people in charge of students, including volunteers, to report non-observance of the code of conduct to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. This includes behaviour that occurs at school or during school-approved activities.

All responses must:

- Align with *AP 4-402 Student Discipline and Suspension*

- Maintain student dignity

- Prioritize teaching and restorative learning

- Consider the developmental, cultural, and individual context

- Support the safety of all students and staff

Informal Responses

Appropriate for minor or first-time behaviours; may include:

- Redirection or reteaching

- Restorative conversations

- Logical or natural consequences

- Problem-solving discussions

- Temporary change in seating or environment

- Parent/guardian contact when necessary

Formal Responses

In accordance with *AP 4-402 Student Discipline and* Suspension, responses used for repeated, escalating, or more serious behaviours may include:

- Development of Behaviour Support Plans (*AP 3-201 Appropriate Educational Programming)*

- Restorative conferences or mediation

- Referral to counsellor, Student Services, or school-based team

- Formal Meeting

- Positive Behaviour Agreement

- Outside Agency/Community Involvement

- Increased supervision or modified schedules

- Withdrawal from class or activity

- In-school or out-of-school suspension in accordance with WSD and provincial regulations

- Re-entry meetings and planning following significant incidents

- Managed Move

- Student Expulsion

Where behaviour threatens safety or may involve violence, *AP 2-320 Threatening Behaviours* will be followed.

Documentation

Principals will ensure documentation of:

- Significant or repeated behaviours

- Formal interventions

- Contacts with parents/guardians

- Safety concerns or threats

Documentation must align with WSD record-keeping and provincial privacy requirements.

Safety Concerns and Threat Assessment

Any behaviour indicating imminent or potential risk of harm requires immediate administrative notification. Principals shall activate the Threatening Behaviour Protocol (*AP 2-320*) when criteria are met. Parents/guardians must be informed in a timely manner. Safety or re-entry plans will be developed as needed.

Use of Technology

Any use of computer devices and technical equipment, including personal electronic devices must adhere with *AP 3-705 Use of Technology*.

Appeals

Appeals of disciplinary decisions will follow the process outlined in *AP 1-201 Public Complaints*. Principals must ensure parents/guardians are informed of appeal pathways.

Communication and Staff Development

Schools will communicate behavioural expectations, the Code of Conduct, and related procedures to students, staff, and families annually. The division will provide professional learning opportunities related to:

- Restorative practices

- Behaviour supports

- Inclusive and trauma-informed practice

- Safe and caring school environments

Review

Principals will review school-based behaviour expectations and code of conduct procedure annually to ensure alignment with this procedure and provincial requirements. Western School Division will review this procedure every three years or sooner if required by Manitoba Education.

Definitions

Bullying: "A damaging social process that is characterized by [a real or perceived] imbalance of power driven by social, societal, and institutional norms. It is often repeated and manifests as unwanted interpersonal behaviour among students or school personnel that causes physical, social, psychological, and emotional harm to the targeted individuals or groups, and the wider school community." (UNESCO) It may be direct or indirect; it may take place through written, verbal, physical, and sexual forms of expression. Various forms of electronic communication may be used (See: cyberbullying).

Case manager: A member of the school-based student support team designated by the principal to coordinate the team's collaborative work to meet individual student needs through the student-specific planning process and student-specific plan (SSP) development and monitoring.

Cyberbullying: Bullying behaviour by means of various electronic communication, including social media, text messages, direct messages, websites, email, or using AI generated content (e.g., audio, images, video, or text). cyber flashing When a person receives uninvited requests for sexual images or messages, or is sent unsolicited sexual images or messages. (Canadian Centre for Child Protection, "Online Sexual Violence")

Doxing: Publicly releasing someone's personal, identifying information, such as their name, address, phone number, email address, or school, online without their consent. ("Doxing," Cambridge Dictionary)

Expulsion: When a determination is made that a student has engaged in severe behaviour that is found to be injurious to the school environment and/or deemed an imminent safety risk to students and staff, and the student must be removed on a long-term basis. An out-of-school suspension lasting longer than six weeks shall be considered an expulsion. Expulsions may be administered by the school board only. Expulsions may occur from the school the student is attending, but not from the entire school division. If a student is expelled, the expulsion will last until the school board rescinds the expulsion or the end of the current school year, whichever comes first.

In-school suspension: An instance in which a student is temporarily removed from their regular classroom(s) for at least half a school day for disciplinary purposes but remains under the direct supervision of school personnel. Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision.

In-school team: The core team, other school staff, and parent(s)/caregiver(s) who have the knowledge and skills to identify student needs and develop and implement a plan to meet those needs.

Managed move: The transfer of a student to a new school or program that is characterized by careful planning and full support by both the outgoing school and receiving school or program.

Out-of-school suspension: An instance in which a student is dismissed from school for disciplinary purposes for a finite period of time when their peers are expected to be in attendance.

Parent(s)/caregiver(s): Refers to parents and caregivers and is used with the recognition that in some cases only one parent /caregiver may be involved in a child's education or that the significant adult in the life of many students may not be their parent. The term may also apply to a student who has reached the age of majority.

Reasonable accommodation: The school's obligation to address students' diverse needs that stem from the protected characteristics specified in Manitoba's Human Rights Code, such as physical or mental disabilities, and that affect the individual's ability to access educational/school services or facilities. The measures to accommodate diverse needs will be reasonable and required unless they demonstrably cause undue hardship due to cost, risk to safety, impact on others, or other factors.

Sextortion: When someone threatens to release personal sexual images or videos of another person unless demands are met, often for money, more sexual content, or sexual favours. (Canadian Centre for Child Protection, "Sextortion")

Swatting: The deliberate, malicious, and illegal act of reporting a false crime or emergency to evoke an aggressive response from first responders or law enforcement agencies to attend someone's residence or place of work.

Cross-References

Related Policies

- **Board Policy 13 – Safe Schools**

Related Administrative Procedures

- **AP 1-201 Public Complaints**

- **AP 2-320 Threatening Behaviours**

- **AP 2-321 Threat Assessment Chart**

- **AP 3-200 Special Education**

- **AP 3-201 Appropriate Educational Programming**

- **AP 3-705 Use of Technology**

- **AP 4-402 Student Discipline and Suspension**

- **AP 4-403 Student Discipline and Suspension Procedure**

- **AP 1-800 Workplace Safety and Health** *(for physical safety alignment)*

- **AP 2-112 Management of Student Records** *(for documentation requirements)*

School-Level Implementation Checklist – Code of Conduct (2025)

1. Communicating Expectations

☐ School-wide behaviour expectations are reviewed and updated annually.

☐ Expectations and routines are explicitly taught to students in September and reinforced throughout the year.

☐ Behaviour expectations and the Code of Conduct are communicated to parents/guardians (e.g., handbook, website, newsletters).

☐ Staff receive annual orientation on behavioural expectations and related WSD procedures.

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2. Prevention and School Climate

☐ Restorative practices are used regularly in classrooms and common areas.

☐ Social-emotional learning strategies are incorporated into instruction.

☐ Staff intentionally build strong relationships with students and families.

☐ The school monitors attendance, belonging, safety concerns, and well-being indicators.

☐ Safety concerns or patterns of behaviour are flagged early to Student Services.

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3. Classroom Practice

☐ Teachers establish and teach classroom expectations aligned with school-wide expectations.

☐ Predictable routines and structures are consistently implemented.

☐ Teachers use proactive, positive behaviour supports.

☐ Classroom responses align with AP 4-402 and the Code of Conduct.

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4. Responding to Behaviour

☐ Minor/informal interventions (reminders, reteaching, restorative conversations) are used consistently.

☐ Formal interventions are documented in accordance with AP 2-112.

☐ Parents/guardians are contacted for significant or recurring behaviour.

☐ Behaviour Support Plans are developed collaboratively when required in alignment with AP 3-201 Appropriate

Educational Programming.

☐ Suspensions comply with WSD procedures and Manitoba Education requirements.

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5. Safety, Threats, and Critical Incidents

☐ All staff know how to identify and report behaviour posing safety concerns.

☐ Principals follow *AP 2-320 Threatening Behaviours* when threats meet the threshold.

☐ Safety plans and re-entry plans are developed collaboratively following serious incidents.

☐ Staff working directly with identified students are briefed on safety plans.

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6. Documentation and Record-Keeping

☐ Significant incidents and formal interventions are documented according to WSD guidelines.

☐ Documentation is stored securely and in accordance with *AP 2-112 Management of Student Records.*

☐ Patterns of behaviour are reviewed by the principal and the Student Services team.

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7. Professional Learning

☐ Staff participate in relevant training (restorative practices, inclusion, trauma-informed approaches, etc.).

☐ School teams align their learning plans with Safe Schools and Code of Conduct requirements.

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8. Annual Review

☐ The school's Code of Conduct is reviewed annually for compliance with the Provincial Code of Conduct (2025).

☐ Feedback from staff, parents, and students (where appropriate) informs revisions.

☐ Updates are communicated to the school community before the start of each school year.

Links

- **The Public Schools Act**

- **The Education Administration Act**

- **The Parental Responsibility Act**

- **Safe Schools Regulation**

- **Appropriate Disciplinary Consequences in Schools Regulation and the Administrative**

- **Handbook for Schools (Manitoba Education and Training)**

- **Western School Division Administrative Procedures**

- **Human Rights Code**

- **Public Schools Act**

- **Protecting and Supporting Children (Information Sharing) Act.**

- **Code of Conduct (2025)**

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