INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES: PROVIDING SAFE AND CARING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Introduction

The mission of our Division speaks to students' gifts and talents being celebrated and nurtured. As further outlined in Board Policy 1, every effort to realize this mission is guided by beliefs and values that place the well-being of students as being at the forefront of the operation of our schools. As inclusive communities supporting our mission, we provide safe and caring learning environments to students, families, and educational partners in the mission of Catholic Education.

We believe:

a. In the inherent dignity of all people, the richness of our humanity, the importance of developing school communities that are welcome to all, and our call to live out the radical love embodied in the person of Jesus Christ. By openly supporting inclusive communities we must remember that we are an inclusive community.

b. In the eyes of the church, every human person is a unique and irreplaceable gift created by our loving God and called to be his son or daughter. Created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ, every person possesses an intrinsic dignity which must always be respected.

c. We model care and compassion and are pastoral in our actions.

d. We grow as caring and compassionate communities by choosing strategies and tools that best meet the needs of our students within each of our unique Catholic school communities.

e. That each student enrolled in our schools shall be provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and Catholic environment that promotes the well-being of all students and fosters community support for achieving this goal.

f. All efforts to further the safe and caring environment of a school must be in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church teaches that:

1. Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from their dignity as a person.
   n. 1930 Catechism of the Catholic Church

2. Respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that everyone should look upon their neighbour (without any exception) as 'another self,' above all bearing in mind their life and the means necessary for living it with dignity.
   n. 1931Catechism of the Catholic Church

3. With respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent.
   n. 1935 Catechism of the Catholic Church

Given these teachings and given the requirements of the:

- Alberta Human Rights Act,

- Alberta Education Act, and

- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Elk Island Catholic Schools Division is committed to ensuring that all students, families and educational partners of our community will be provided with:

1. a fully inclusive school community

2. a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe, and Catholic environment

3. a supportive environment that is free from discrimination of any type including but not limited to discrimination based on race, colour, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical, and mental disabilities, nationality, sexual orientation, family status, marital status, and gender expression.

In addition the Board expects the schools to offer learning experiences that will enhance the concept of a Catholic Christian community, that will help ensure that all students will be made to feel welcomed and included, and that will help ensure that all students will be given a full opportunity to benefit from their Catholic education.

Legal Reference: Section 8, 31, 33, 35, 35.1, 36, 37, 41, 51, 52, 53, 222 Education Act
                      Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
                      Alberta Human Rights Act
                      Individual Rights Protection Act
                      Catechism of the Catholic Church
                      Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta (1999)
                      CCSSA Commitment to Inclusive Communities
                      Episcopal Commission for Doctrine (2011) – Pastoral Letter to Young People on Chastity