

Calgary Waldorf School

Policy and Procedures for

A Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Learning Environment

Approved by the Calgary Waldorf School Society Board of Directors

March 17, 2016

Updated by the CWSS Board of Directors

May 17 and June 7, 2018

PREAMBLE: 100 YEARS OF WALDORF SCHOOLS AROUND THE GLOBE

Waldorf Education: Diversity and Inclusiveness

*“The healthy social life is found when,
in the mirror of each human soul,
the whole community finds its reflection,
and when, in the community,
the strength of each is active.”
~ The Social Motto, by Rudolf Steiner*

The Calgary Waldorf School, founded in 1985, subscribes to the following over-arching philosophy and approach which live within Waldorf Education throughout the world.

Waldorf Schools have, since their inception in Germany in 1919, espoused principles of respect for human rights and the diversity of humankind. Today, Waldorf Schools continue to define diversity as a range of racial identifications, ancestries, nationalities, native languages, socioeconomic backgrounds, family structures, ages, belief systems, gender and sexual identities, abilities, appearances, occupations, and political affiliations. Enhancing and celebrating our diversity is a journey of both moral and educational importance, and a learning and growth experience for our whole community.

Waldorf Schools have always operated on these principles and find themselves in full alignment with the recent *Stuttgart Declaration*, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the German Association of Waldorf Schools (Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen) in Stuttgart on October 28, 2007. This Declaration was made to unequivocally clarify the intents of Rudolf Steiner’s pedagogical theories and educational work, and to explicitly reject any possible sense that Waldorf schools might in any way espouse discriminatory views. An adapted translation of excerpted parts of the *Stuttgart Declaration* (as authorized by *The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education – ECSWE*) reads as follows:

Discriminatory tendencies are not tolerated in Waldorf schools or Waldorf teacher training institutes. The Waldorf school movement explicitly rejects any attempt to misappropriate Waldorf pedagogy or Rudolf Steiner's work for discriminatory purposes.

Waldorf schools have been working on the basis of these principles since the movement was founded in 1919. Institutions working out of Waldorf education are today engaged in all parts of the world, including areas of social tension in Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East.

Waldorf schools pursue their pedagogical tasks out of the spirit of human rights, thereby contributing to building a society founded upon mutual respect, tolerance, and cooperation between all human beings.

Waldorf schools do not select, stratify, or discriminate amongst their pupils, but consider all human beings to be free and equal in dignity and rights, independent of ethnicity, national or social origin, gender, language, religion, and political or other convictions.

Waldorf Schools recognize that the richness inherent in a school community is built upon the synergy between the curriculum, the students who are studying that curriculum, and the teachers who offer it. To this end, Waldorf Schools actively build school communities that are reflective of the larger community in which we are located, and also intentionally promote the synergistic interaction between the elements of our community.

Honouring the multiple perspectives that exist in our increasingly diverse communities, Waldorf Schools heed the call for ongoing collaborative conversations in our education. Collectively we find many ways to facilitate community-based participation in the co-construction of the educational experience in our schools. Parent-school partnerships are foundational to these processes in our schools. In addition, Waldorf Schools have developed their curriculum to intentionally embrace and immerse students in contemporary and ancient world cultures across the globe.

More specifically and locally, through our curriculum, the Calgary Waldorf School continues to meet the Alberta Ministry of Education's Guide to Education, Programs of Study and curricular outcomes, while at the same time enriching our students' educational experience and fostering a broader understanding, appreciation, and respect for the diverse human endeavours that we are all part of. Our Calgary Waldorf School also participates in local and global service learning initiatives as part of our broad commitment to social justice.

Waldorf Schools, true to the fundamental spirit of Rudolf Steiner's educational philosophy, are strongly committed to these principles and objectives in bringing a quality educational program option that fundamentally embraces cultural, societal, and individual diversity and inclusiveness.

Note about two terms used in this Policy and Procedures document:

- (1) Throughout this document, "staff member" refers to any employee of the School.
- (2) Throughout this document, "student" refers to any student enrolled in the School.

PART I

The Calgary Waldorf School's statements of its "Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles" are intended to establish a positive, healthy school environment. Ours is an environment in which we treat with dignity and respect, as well as accept and embrace, all expressions of diversity. It is also an environment in which we foster and nurture each and every student's, and each and every staff member's, sense of welcome and belonging, sense of inclusion, and positive sense of self within our school community. Consistent with our "Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles", our Calgary Waldorf School Society's Board of Directors is committed to providing and ensuring a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment for all students and staff members, including those with (but not limited to) diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Our aim is to provide the educational opportunities and supports that all our students and staff members need in order to be successful in our school and in life and to be positive, contributing members of our society.

All our students and staff members have the right to learn and to work in an equitable, inclusive environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. This right is guaranteed under the following pieces of federal and provincial legislation, all of which the Calgary Waldorf School hereby affirms that we fully support:

- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;
- *Alberta Bill of Rights*;
- The *Alberta Human Rights Act* as amended March 10, 2015. In addition, the *Alberta Human Rights Act* includes the right not to be discriminated against by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion, or sexual orientation or gender identity or gender expression. Legislation also provides as a fundamental right the "right of parents to make informed decisions respecting the education of their children"; and
- Requirements of the *Alberta School Act* (and upon Proclamation the *Education Act*) that provide for measures which support the equality of and non-discrimination toward students who may belong to minority groups, including diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

PART II

The Calgary Waldorf School Society's Board of Directors will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived differences or sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The Calgary Waldorf Schools Society's Board of Directors believes that all students and staff members have the right to:

- Be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect.
- Have their confidentiality protected and respected.
- Self-identification and determination.
- Freedom of conscience, expression, and association.

- Be fully included and represented in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner by all school personnel.
- Have equitable access to the same supports, services, and protections provided to heterosexual students, staff members and their families.
- Have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, and/or violence.
- Have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, embraced, valued, and respected within our school environment.

PART III

The Calgary Waldorf School Society's Board of Directors is committed to implementing measures that will:

- Define appropriate expectations, behaviours, language, and actions in order to prevent discrimination, prejudice, and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their harmful effects.
- Ensure that all such discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.
- Improve students' and staff members' understanding of the individual lives of minorities, including sexual and gender minorities, and their families, cultures, and communities.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate inclusive educational strategies, professional development opportunities, and administrative guidelines to ensure that minorities, including gender and sexual minorities and their families, are treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of the school community in a manner consistent with the Calgary Waldorf School's "Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles".

To assist our teachers, administrators, and the Board of Directors with more specific implementation measures in this regard, the following Alberta Education 2016 resource will be used as a guide for our Calgary Waldorf School when putting into practice this March 17, 2016 Policy and Procedures, as well as its May 17 and June 7, 2018 Updates: *"Guidelines for Best Practices: Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions."*

PART IV: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Calgary Waldorf School's "Code for Our Community" (adopted by our school's Faculty Council on May 28, 2018 and by our Board of Directors on June 7, 2018) appears as follows within our school's revised and updated (Spring 2018) "Grade School Discipline Policy":

"Code for Our Community"

"Building meaningful and respectful relationships is at the heart of our Discipline Policy at the Calgary Waldorf School. As members of this community, we expect students to join faculty,

staff, and parents in demonstrating **RESPECT** for people and property, **RESPONSIBILITY** for what we say and do, **HONESTY** in all situations, **APPRECIATION** for the good in each other, **KINDNESS** to self and others, and **CELEBRATION** of diversity. The goal of these six principles is to be proactive in building an inclusive, warm-hearted, healthy, and safe school environment for all.

Together these six principles comprise the “**Code for Our Community**”:

Principle 1:

RESPECT for people and property means showing genuine regard for our school and all members of our community.

Principle 2:

RESPONSIBILITY for what we say and do means taking up in words and actions the expectations for behaviour towards self and others.

Principle 3:

HONESTY in all situations means demonstrating courage for the truth.

Principle 4:

APPRECIATION for the good in each other and our school means demonstrating gratitude and recognition for the contributions of others.

Principle 5:

KINDNESS to self and others means comporting oneself with friendliness and consideration.

Principle 6:

CELEBRATION of diversity means joyfully embracing the unique gifts of each member of our community.”

Purpose

In keeping with our “Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles”, and our “Code for Our Community”, this March 17, 2016 Policy and Procedures, its May 17 and June 7, 2018 Updates, and Alberta legislation, the Calgary Waldorf School is committed to:

- Providing all students with a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment.
- Establishing a reasonable and caring balance between individual and collective rights, freedoms, and responsibilities within the school community.
- Publishing (as part of student registration, school-start information, and other documents and forms) written expectations for student behaviour while at school, while participating in school-related activities, and while engaging in activities that may have an impact on others in the school.

Expected Conduct

Consistent with Section 13 of the *School Act* and in keeping with the Calgary Waldorf School's "Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles", as well as with the School's "Code for Our Community", each student is responsible for acting positively in support of a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment by:

- Acting at all times in keeping with the philosophy underlying the school, as expressed in the School's "Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles" and in the School's "Code for Our Community".
- Respecting oneself and the rights of others in the school.
- Conducting oneself in a manner that contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment which respects diversity, is inclusive, and fosters a sense of belonging.
- Refraining from and refusing to tolerate bullying, whether in or outside of the school building or grounds, or school-day hours, or by electronic means.
- Informing a responsible, trusted, and caring adult in a timely manner of incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, or other unwelcoming or uncaring acts.
- Attending school regularly and punctually.
- Diligently and actively being prepared to learn, and actively pursuing learning.
- Being accountable to teachers and other school staff members for individual behaviours.
- Cooperating with teachers and other school staff members to make the school a positive learning environment for all.
- Knowing and following the rules of the school.

Unacceptable Conduct

Unacceptable behaviours that may negatively affect a member of the Calgary Waldorf School community or the school's learning environment, whether in or outside of the school building or grounds or school-day hours or by electronic means, include, but are not limited to:

- *Discrimination.* In keeping with the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, no student or person may discriminate against a student or person on the basis of an individual's race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender (including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy), physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, or source of income.
- *Acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.* As stipulated in the *School Act*, Section 1.1 (b.1), bullying is defined 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".
- *Physical violence.*
- *Acts of retribution* against an individual who has intervened to prevent bullying or informed about bullying or other unacceptable behaviour.
- *Illegal activities*, including those involving illegal or restricted substances, possession or use or threat of use of weapons, and theft or damage to property.

Consequences

Students are expected to conduct themselves in keeping with their responsibilities as students.

The school will investigate each instance of unacceptable conduct and pursue disciplinary action in a matter consistent with the principles of due and fair process and with the school's student discipline policy. In grave circumstances, an individual found to have engaged in unacceptable conduct may be subject to possible suspension or expulsion.

Remediation and Support

In order to foster a positive learning environment, the Calgary Waldorf School will engage in reasonable and caring efforts to support both the individual(s) who may have been the subject or victim(s) of unacceptable behaviour(s), and to support perpetrators of unacceptable conduct to improve their conduct. The particular efforts utilized in a case being remediated and supported will take into account the students' ages, maturity and developmental levels, and other specific individual circumstances.

Supportive actions the Calgary Waldorf School may take may include, but are not limited to:

- More focused attention to individual students from teachers and other school staff members.
- Regular follow-up meetings of specific teachers with individual students.
- Mentoring of individual students by older students.
- Student Peer Support Groups, including Gay-Straight Alliances (and other similar voluntary student organizations) as appropriate.
- Restorative justice processes.
- Counselling.

PART V: SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER DIVERSITY

The Calgary Waldorf School Society's Board of Directors is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning environment for all members of the school community. This includes those members of our community who identify or are perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, queer or questioning, regarding their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Board expects all members of this diverse community to be welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported in our school.

All members of our school community have the right to learn and to work in an environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. This right is guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, and the *Alberta School Act*, all of which the Calgary Waldorf School hereby affirms that we fully support. These rights shall be supported and enforced so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation for individual differences. The Board of

Directors will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The Board of Directors believes that all sexual and gender minority students, staff members and families have the right to:

- Be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect.
- Have their confidentiality protected and respected.
- Self-identification and determination.
- Freedom of conscience, expression, and association.
- Be fully included and represented in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner by all school personnel.
- Have equitable access to the same supports, services, and protections provided to heterosexual students, staff members and their families.
- Have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, and/or violence.
- Have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, embraced, valued, and respected within the school environment.

The Board of Directors is committed to implementing measures that will:

- Define appropriate expectations, behaviours, language, and actions in order to prevent discrimination, prejudice, and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their harmful effects.
- Ensure that all such discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.
- Improve students' and staff members' understanding of the individual lives of minorities, including sexual and gender minorities, and their families, cultures, and communities.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate inclusive educational strategies, professional development opportunities, and administrative guidelines to ensure that minorities, including gender and sexual minorities and their families, are treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of the school community in a manner consistent with the Calgary Waldorf School's "Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles" and the School's "Code for Our Community".

The Board of Directors understands that institutional and cultural change occurs over time. The Board of Directors is therefore committed to the following annual process of review and potential revision, by June 30th of each school year: reviewing and potentially revising this Policy and Procedures (including the Student Code of Conduct); confirming this review and any approved revisions via a Board Resolution; and posting the most up-to-date version of this Policy and Procedures (including the Student Code of Conduct) in publicly-accessible formats (including posting in the public zones of the School's own website). The Board of Directors also believes that the provision of at least an annual report at a regular Board of Directors Meeting and a report at the Annual General Meeting, on progress related to the strategic directions and benchmarks identified in this March 17, 2016 Policy and Procedures, and in its May 17 and June

7, 2018 Updates, will ensure accountability and will demonstrate the School's commitment to supporting our diverse communities.

PART VI: SUPPORT FOR STUDENT-INITIATED ORGANIZATIONS

As a preamble to this Part VI of our own Policy and Procedures, the Calgary Waldorf School affirms and supports the following provisions under Section 16.1 of the *School Act*:

“Support for student organizations

16.1 (1) If one or more students attending a school operated by a Board request a staff member employed by the Board for support to establish a voluntary student organization, or to lead an activity intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, the Principal of the School shall:

(a) immediately grant permission for the establishment of the student organization or the holding of the activity at the School, and

(b) subject to Subsection (4) below, within a reasonable time from the date that the Principal receives the request, designate a staff member to serve as the staff liaison to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization or to assist in organizing the activity.

16.1 (3) The students may select a respectful and inclusive name for the organization or activity, including the name “Gay-Straight Alliance” or “Queer-Straight Alliance”, after consulting with the Principal.

16.1 (3.1) For greater certainty, the Principal shall not prohibit or discourage students from choosing a name that includes “Gay-Straight Alliance” or “Queer-Straight Alliance”.

16.1 (4) The Principal shall immediately inform the Board and the Minister if no staff member is available to serve as a staff liaison referred to in Subsection (1) above, and if so informed, the Minister shall appoint a responsible adult to work with the requesting students in organizing the activity or to facilitate the establishment, and the ongoing operation, of the student organization at the School.

16.1 (6) The Principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity referred to in Subsection (1) above is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.”

Further to these provisions in Section 16.1 of the *School Act*:

As one key component of providing a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment, the Calgary Waldorf School will support the establishment of voluntary student organizations or activities (“alliances”) in our school which are initiated, implemented, and operated in order to respect and support diversity, create a school culture of inclusion and dignity for each of our students, and foster a sense of welcome and belonging within our School community. The Calgary Waldorf School is committed to supporting student alliances that include, but are not limited to, a focus on diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and/or gender expressions (e.g., a focus on the diverse community which may include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, queer or questioning (LGBTQ) individuals). Additional bases for an alliance (organization and/or activity) for promoting equality and non-discrimination could include (but are not limited to): race, religious belief, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, or family status (as per Section 16.1 (2) of the *School Act*).

Under the over-arching intent to provide and ensure a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment, and as stipulated in the *School Act* Section 16.1, should a student or students request that an alliance (organization and/or activity) be established in our school for the purposes outlined above, then the following process will occur in the Calgary Waldorf School:

- The student or students should speak with a teacher or administrator about their interest or intention to establish an “alliance” (organization and/or activity).
- This teacher or administrator will inform the Principal about the student’s or students’ interest or intention to establish an alliance, and the Principal will then talk directly with the student or students involved.
- The student or students can, of course, also speak initially and directly to the Principal about their interest or intention to establish an alliance, rather than speak to a teacher or administrator first.
- The Principal will immediately grant permission for, affirm and support the establishment of this voluntary student alliance.
- The Principal will inform the Faculty Council and the Board of Directors that he/she has granted permission for, affirmed and supported the establishment of this voluntary student alliance.
- Students involved in the alliance will select a respectful and inclusive name for their organization and/or activity (for example, including, but not limited to, “Gay-Straight Alliance” or “Queer-Straight Alliance”), after consulting with the Principal about, and receiving his/her affirmation and support for, the appropriateness of the name being selected by the students. The Principal will not in any way discourage or prohibit a name which is respectful and inclusive.
- The Principal will designate a teacher or administrator to serve as the liaison between the voluntary student alliance and the faculty/administration of the School. This liaison will be designated as soon as possible, and will facilitate the establishment and ongoing operation of the alliance (organization and/or activity).
- If there is not a teacher or administrator available to serve as this liaison, then the Principal will inform the Board of Directors, and request the Board’s assistance in finding and designating a responsible and appropriate adult to serve as this liaison.
- If the School is still unable to designate a liaison, then the Principal will inform the Minister of Education about this circumstance, and request his/her assistance in finding and designating a responsible and appropriate adult to serve as this liaison.
- Regarding the Principal’s responsibility for notifications about any voluntary student alliance (organization or activity) as described above: If the Principal gives any notification at all, then the Principal’s notification
 - is limited to the fact of the establishment of the student alliance (the organization or activity), and
 - is otherwise consistent with the usual practices in the School relating to notifications of other student organizations and activities, and
 - adheres to the applicable, governing legislation and regulations for the collection, use and disclosure of personal information in accordance with the *Personal Information Protection Act* (the legislation that governs the disclosure of personal information by Accredited, Private Schools in Alberta such as the Calgary Waldorf School).