



CHANGES to the Code of Conduct

Cell phones/mobile devices, social media and signage

As part of its commitment to supporting the safety, security and well-being of every student in Ontario, the Ministry of Education released a strengthened Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 128 – Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct.

All school boards in Ontario are required to restrict cell phone/mobile device use in schools, restrict access to social media on school networks, communicate student distractions through report cards, and post signage on expectations.

Rainbow District School Board supports the new guidance from the Ministry of Education which is reflected in our updated Code of Conduct. The changes will foster positive school climates to support student achievement and well-being.

Use of Cell Phones and Mobile Devices

All members of the school community must not use personal mobile devices during instructional time except under the following circumstances:

- for educational purposes, as directed by an educator
- for health and medical purposes
- to support special education needs

For Students in Grades 7 to 12

For all Grade 7 to 12 students, personal mobile devices are stored in lockers or assigned personal spaces out of view and powered off or set to silent/do not disturb mode during the instructional period, except when their use is explicitly permitted by the educator under the circumstances outlined above. Mobile device use is permitted before the start of the school day, at lunch and after school.

If the educator sees a personal mobile device that is not stored out of view during the instructional period, they must require the student to store the device in their locker or assigned personal space immediately.

For Students in Grade 6 and below

For students in Grade 6 and below, personal mobile devices are stored out of view in their personal space and powered off or set to silent/do not disturb mode throughout the full instructional day, except when their use is explicitly

permitted by the educator under the circumstances outlined above.

If an educator sees a personal mobile device that is not stored out of view, they must require the device be stored for the instructional day and the device must be placed, by the student, in their personal storage area with their other belongings.

The student is responsible for their personal mobile device, how they use it and the consequences of not following the school board’s administrative procedure on personal mobile devices.

Signage in Schools

School boards are required to have signage in schools to communicate behaviour expectations that are consistent with a safe learning and teaching environment.

In addition to the Government of Ontario signage, Rainbow District School Board has developed signage that will be posted on the main entrance of all buildings.



Restricting Access to Social Media on School Networks

School boards are now required to restrict access to all social media platforms on school networks and school devices. Social media platforms can only be used by students at school for educational purposes, directed by an educator. Students will not be able to access social media through school networks.

Elementary and Secondary Report Cards

Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, report cards will include information for students and their parents about classroom distractions, where applicable, including those related to the use of

Rainbow District School Board thanks students, parents/guardians, staff, school visitors, partners and members of the public who shared their feedback on cell phone/mobile device use in schools by completing a survey.

The feedback was reviewed as part of the creation of an Administrative Procedure on Personal Mobile Devices that will apply to the entire school community.

The Administrative Procedure is a requirement under the Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 128: The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct.

Survey respondents were asked to consider the following factors when providing their input: the age of the student, maximizing classroom instructional time, prioritizing mental health and well-being, fostering engaging teaching and learning environments, and focusing on student success and achievement.

In addition to the survey feedback, the Administrative Procedure considered legislative requirements, government policy directives, and the Board’s operational requirements as well as concerns about the inordinate amount of time spent on cell phones and social media and the growing research on their negative impact on student well-being.

Rainbow District School Board is committed to supporting teaching and learning in a safe, caring and productive environment. The procedure aligns with the Board’s strategic priorities in Student Success and Achievement, Literacy and Numeracy, and Mental Health and Well-Being.

Student Voice:

Watch the video to see what students have to say about cell phone and social media restrictions.

personal mobile devices. This will be communicated using the section of the report card reserved for comments on learning skills and work habits in the Elementary Report Cards and in the comment box reserved for course comments in the Secondary Report Card.

To learn more about the provincial Code of Conduct, [click here to access the parent guide.](#)

Rainbow District School Board

Code of Conduct

To be successful at school, students need a safe and positive learning environment.

The Code of Conduct supports student achievement and well-being, ensuring students have every opportunity to achieve their full potential as confident, caring members of society.

As part of its commitment to supporting the safety, security and well-being of every student in Ontario, the Ministry of Education released *Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 128 – Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct* on April 28, 2024.

The Rainbow District School Board Code of Conduct reflects the new guidance from the Ministry of Education which came into effect at the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

This Code of Conduct is also guided by the *Safe and Accepting Schools Act, 2012 (Bill 13)* which came into effect on September 1, 2012. This legislation strengthens equity and inclusive education principles and bullying prevention and intervention strategies.

Related Policy

Board Policy No. Gov-12
Learning and Working Environment:
Safe Schools

Related Administrative Procedures

Policies and procedures are available at rainbowschools.ca

With these policies and procedures, school staff will continue to work respectfully and collaboratively with students and parents/guardians, using a progressive approach to discipline with school safety first and foremost.

A school community promotes responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. In addition to students and parents, a school community includes school board trustees and school board personnel.

All students, parents/guardians and staff have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that put the safety of others or oneself at risk.

Rainbow District School Board believes that every student has the right to an education without disruption, along with the equally important responsibility not to deny this right to any other student.

Rainbow District School Board's Code of Conduct encourages positive student behaviour. A firm and fair application of this Code of Conduct shall prevail in all matters related to Rainbow District School Board, including school activities, school board business and school buses.

Positive Attitudes

Rainbow District School Board strives to create positive attitudes towards punctuality, regular attendance, completion of classroom assignments, and interest in learning through classroom participation.

Parental Support

Parents/guardians support Rainbow District School Board staff by encouraging students to fulfill their responsibilities towards their school, other students, and themselves. The Board recognizes that an important factor in success at school

is the regular completion of homework and regular attendance which requires the cooperation of the home.

Guiding Principles

Rainbow District School Board's Code of Conduct is shaped by the Provincial Code of Conduct. (PPM 128)

All participants in the publicly funded school system – students, parents/guardians, volunteers, teachers and other staff members – are included in this Code of Conduct, whether they are on school property, on school buses, at school related events or activities, and in circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate and/or virtual learning environments.

All members of the school community must be treated with respect and dignity, especially persons in positions of authority. Responsible citizenship involves appropriate participation in the life of the school community. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, and more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others. Members of the school community are expected to use non-violent means to resolve conflict. Aggressive behaviour (both physical and verbal) is not a responsible means for interacting with others.

All members of the school community must promote the safety of people in the school. The possession, use or threatened use of any object to injure another person endangers the safety of oneself and others.

Alcohol and illegal drugs are addictive and present a health hazard. Schools will work cooperatively with police as well as drug and alcohol agencies to promote prevention strategies and, when necessary, respond to school members who are in possession of, or under the influence of, alcohol or illegal drugs.

Insults, disrespect, and other hurtful acts disrupt the teaching, learning and business in a school community. Members of the school community have a responsibility to maintain an environment where conflict and differences can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility.

Roles and Responsibilities of the School Community

School members include principals, teachers, staff, students, parents and/or guardians, school councils, trustees, volunteers and visitors.

Principals, under the direction of the School Board, take a leadership role in the daily operation of schools. They provide this leadership by:

- demonstrating care for the school community and a commitment to academic excellence, student achievement and well-being in a safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environment;
- holding everyone under their authority accountable for their behaviour and actions;
- empowering students to be positive leaders in their school and community;
- communicating regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community;
- modeling the standards of respect, civility and responsible citizenship.

Teachers and school staff, under the leadership of their principals, maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour.

As role models, teachers and school staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents/guardians;
- maintain consistent and fair standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parent/guardians, volunteers and members of the school community;
- prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship, in particular the skill of respectful communication, both in person and online;
- model the standards of respect, civility, and responsible citizenship. This includes modeling appropriate use of personal mobile devices. Educators are not to use personal mobile devices during instructional time, unless explicitly for work-related purposes.

Students are to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- comes to school prepared, on time and ready to learn;
- shows respect for themselves, for others and for those in positions of authority;

- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others;
- follows the established rules and takes responsibility for their own actions;
- dresses appropriately for school.

Parents/guardians play an important role in the education of their children, and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents/guardians fulfill their responsibility when they:

- show an active interest in their child's homework, school work and progress;
- communicate regularly with the school;
- help their child be appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;
- become familiar with the provincial Code of Conduct, the Board's Code of Conduct and school rules;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour;
- assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child.

School council members act as a valuable support mechanism to their local schools when they:

- act as a liaison group on school-related issues;
- act in an advisory capacity to principals on specified school policies.

Police and community members are essential partners in making our schools and communities safe. Community members need to support and respect the rules of their local schools.

RESILIENCE

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Community agencies deliver prevention or intervention programs that may be used by the school community. Protocols are effective ways of establishing linkages between boards and community agencies and of formalizing the relationship between them.

The police play an essential role in making our schools and communities safer. The police investigate incidents in accordance with the protocol developed with the local school board and applicable legislation. These protocols are based on a provincial model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol developed by the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Education.

Standards of Behaviour

The standards of behaviour apply to students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, school council members, trustees and visitors engaged in any school activity.

Respect, Civility and Responsible Citizenship

All members of the school community must:

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws;
- comply with all Ministry of Education, school board and school policies and administrative procedures;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity in achieving academic excellence and in the appropriate use of technology;
- respect differences in people, their ideas and their opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, both in person and online, especially when there is disagreement;

- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- respect all members of the school community, especially persons in positions of authority;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching;
- refrain from using abusive language or swearing at another person;
- not use personal mobile devices during instructional time except under the following circumstances:
 - for educational purposes, as directed by an educator
 - for health and medical purposes
 - to support special education needs

Safety

All members of the school community must not:

- engage in bullying behaviours, including cyberbullying;
- commit sexual assault or sexual harassment;
- traffic weapons or illegal drugs;
- commit robbery or theft;

- be in possession of any weapon, including but not limited to firearms;
- threaten or intimidate another person;
- be in possession of alcohol, cannabis, and illegal drugs (for students, this would also include being in possession of electronic cigarette/vape, tobacco and nicotine products);
- use, or be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, electronic cigarettes/vape, illegal drugs and related products;
- provide others with alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, electronic cigarettes/vape, cannabis and related products;
- inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias;
- commit an act of vandalism that causes damage to school property, to property located on the premises of the school or to the property of a member of the school community;
- record, take or share non-consensual recordings or photos of members of the school community.

Bullying is defined as aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where:

The behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil, ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of:

- causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or

COMMUNITY

- creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and
- the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education.

Bullying includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying by electronic means including:

- a) creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the Internet; and
- c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

Education Act, Subsection 1(1)

Enforcement Relating to Alcohol, Tobacco, Electronic Cigarettes/Vape, Recreational Cannabis and Related Products and Illegal Drugs

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017 prohibits smoking (tobacco and cannabis) and the use of electronic cigarettes (vaping) at schools, on school grounds, and all public areas within 20 metres of these grounds.

Anyone smoking or vaping on school property is guilty of an offence and if convicted may result in a fine under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017 also prohibits the sale and supply of tobacco or e-cigarettes to anyone under 19 years of age. Anyone who sells or supplies tobacco or an e-cigarette to a student under 19 years of age is guilty of an offence and if convicted may result in a fine under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017.

At minimum, in the case of these substances being found in the possession of students, parents/guardians must be notified, and the student must surrender the item(s) to the educator or administrator. As per PPM 145, it is expected that students involved in these incidents would receive support to learn from inappropriate behaviours and make choices that support continuing their learning.

Enforcement of Restrictions to Student Personal Mobile Device Use

Personal mobile device refers to any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate or to access the Internet, such as a cellphone, tablet, laptop or smartwatch.

All members of the school community must not use personal mobile devices during instructional time except under the following circumstances:

- for educational purposes, as directed by an educator
- for health and medical purposes
- to support special education needs

For all Grade 7 to 12 students, personal mobile devices are stored in lockers or assigned personal spaces

out of view and powered off or set to silent/do not disturb mode during the instructional period, except when their use is explicitly permitted by the educator under the circumstances outlined above. Mobile device use is permitted before the start of the school day, at lunch and after school.

- If the educator sees a personal mobile device that is not stored out of view during the instructional period, they must require the student to store the device in their locker or assigned personal space immediately.

For students in Grade 6 and below, personal mobile devices are stored out of view in their personal space and powered off or set to silent/do not disturb mode throughout the full instructional day, except when their use is explicitly permitted by the educator under the circumstances outlined above.

The student is responsible for their personal mobile device, how they use it and the consequences of not following the school board’s administrative procedure on personal mobile devices.

If the student does not store their personal mobile device when required, they must be sent to the Principal’s office. Principals have discretion under PPM 145, Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour, to consider a range of responses to address this behaviour, including suspension.

Restricted Access to Social Media

Social media platforms can only be used by students at school for educational purposes, directed by an educator.

HONESTY

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Suspension

The purpose of a suspension is to caution students and deter them from continuing with or repeating unacceptable behaviours; prevent other students from being exposed to or involved in dangerous and damaging activities; discipline students who have transgressed the rules of the school; and to warn parents or guardians of serious discipline problems with their children. The primary purpose underlying the implementation of a suspension is to result in a change in behaviour for the student.

Activities Leading to Possible Suspension

A student may be suspended for a minimum of one (1) school day and a maximum of twenty (20) school days.

Suspension shall be considered when a principal's investigation of an incident, which should include consultation with the pupil's parent/guardian and pupil or the adult pupil, determines that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

- a) uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person;
- b) possessing alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs or restricted drugs;
- c) consumption of cannabis on school property;
- d) being under the influence of alcohol, drugs and/or cannabis;

- e) sharing cannabis on school property;
- f) swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority;
- g) committing an act of vandalism that causes damage to school property;
- h) bullying;
- i) use of profane or improper language;
- j) smoking/vaping on school board property;
- k) academic dishonesty;
- l) inappropriate use of technology;
- m) any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the physical or mental well-being of any member of the school community; and
- n) any act considered by the principal to be contrary to the Board Code of Conduct.

Suspension Reviews

The parent/guardian or the adult pupil may request a review of a decision to suspend where a suspension has been issued.

A written request setting out the reasons for a review must be made within three (3) days of receipt of notice of the suspension. The time for requesting the review may be extended at the discretion of the Superintendent of the school where circumstances precluded a request within the requisite time frame.

The review shall take place upon receipt by the Superintendent of the school of a request for a review.

Suspension Appeals

Where a suspension review has occurred, the pupil's parent/guardian or the adult pupil may appeal the suspension imposed by the principal. In accordance with the Board's administrative procedures, the appeal must be made in writing and delivered to the Director of Education within ten (10) days of the commencement of the suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion shall be considered when a principal's investigation of an incident, which should include consultation with the pupil's parent/guardian and pupil or the adult pupil, determines that the pupil has committed one or more of the infractions outlined below on school property, and/or during a school-related activity or event, and/or in circumstances where the infraction has an impact on the school climate.

The infractions for which a principal shall suspend a pupil and may consider recommending to the Board that a pupil be expelled from the pupil's school or from all schools of the Board include:

- a) possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm;
- b) using a weapon or object to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;
- c) committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner;
- d) committing sexual assault;
- e) trafficking in weapons, cannabis and/or in illegal drugs and/or possessing weapons, cannabis and/or illegal drugs for the purpose of trafficking;
- f) committing robbery;
- g) giving alcohol and/or cannabis to a minor;

EQUITY

- h) bullying, if:
- the student has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and
 - the student's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person;
- i) any activity that is a suspension infraction under subsection 306 (1) of the Education Act that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor;
- j) an act, including opposition to authority, considered by the principal to be significantly injurious to the school climate and/or to the physical or mental well-being of others;
- k) a pattern of behaviour that is so inappropriate that the student's continued presence is injurious to the effective learning and/or working environment of others;
- l) activities engaged in by the student on or off school property that have caused extensive damage to the property of the board or to goods that are or were on board property;
- m) a pattern of behaviour that demonstrates that the student has not prospered by the instruction available to him/her/them and that the student is persistently resistant to making changes in behaviour which would enable him/her/them to succeed; or
- n) any act considered by the principal to be a serious violation of the Board Code of Conduct.

Expulsion Appeals

A pupil's parent/guardian or adult pupil may appeal a Board's decision to expel a pupil to the Child & Family Services Review Board in accordance with the procedures set out by the Ministry of Education.

Rainbow District School Board is committed to the promotion of respect, responsibility and civility in its elementary and secondary schools.

MITIGATING AND OTHER FACTORS

In considering whether to suspend a student for engaging in an activity described above, the principal will take into account mitigating and other factors.

Prior to suspending a student, the following mitigating factors shall be taken into account:

1. The pupil does not have the ability to control his/her/their behaviour.
2. The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his/her/their behaviour.
3. The pupil's continuing presence in the school does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person.

OTHER FACTORS

The following other factors shall be taken into account if they would mitigate the seriousness of the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled:

1. The pupil's history.
2. Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil.
3. Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his/her/their race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment.
4. How the suspension or expulsion would affect the pupil's ongoing education.
5. The age of the pupil.
6. In the case of a pupil for whom an Individual Education Plan has been developed,
 - (i) whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's Individual Education Plan,
 - (ii) whether the appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
 - (iii) whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct.

In circumstances where one or more of the factors above mitigate the decision to apply a suspension as a form of discipline for the pupil, the principal may consider whether alternative discipline and/or other intervention is appropriate in the circumstances.

RESPECT

Restart: Sudbury, Restart: Espanola, and Restart: Manitoulin are programs for students who have been suspended or expelled. Students are supported in both academic and non-academic areas. *For more information, talk to your school principal.*