

George Elliot Secondary School

# Code of Conduct

- Updated June 28, 2023



The staff at George Elliot Secondary strive to provide our learners with the highest quality educational experiences we can, as we implement our **Love, Learn, Thrive** vision for each child.

With reference to Board Policies [401](#), [450](#), [450R](#), [452](#), [455](#), [455R](#), and [486](#), the purpose of the George Elliot Code of Conduct is to provide and maintain a safe, caring and orderly environment for all students and their learning.

## **Who Does This Code of Conduct Apply to?**

The Code of Conduct applies to all students:

- on school property or off property while travelling to and from school while on breaks
- in attendance at school or any school-sponsored activity
- whose behaviour at any time or place, as well as online, has a negative effect on the school environment and/or learning

## **BC Human Rights Code**

George Elliot Secondary School promotes the values expressed in the [BC Human Rights Code](#) (see Board Policy [450](#), [450R](#), [452](#)) respecting the rights of all individuals in accordance with the law. All participants in school business, activities or events shall conduct themselves in a manner that does not contravene these rights and its basic principles of respect and fairness. No person shall discriminate against another based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, physical and mental disability, gender, gender identity and expression or sexual orientation within the school environment or through the school system and its related function through publication, or in accommodation, service or facility. The school will treat seriously any behavior that contravenes the grounds set out in the [BC Human Rights Code](#).

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## **Rights and Responsibilities**

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>Students have the right to work and learn in an environment conducive to a quality education.</b>	<p><b>Students have the responsibility to actively participate and to be responsible learners. Some examples include but are not limited to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attend all classes on time and to be prepared to work</li> <li>• put forth their best effort and seek out assistance when needed</li> <li>• stay focused and not distract others</li> <li>• complete assignments in a timely manner</li> <li>• respect the school environment including our personal appearance, the physical space and learning atmosphere</li> </ul>
<b>Students have the right to be treated with respect.</b>	<p><b>Students have the responsibility to respect others (not to bully, tease, pick on, or harass others). Some examples include but are not limited to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be kind and inclusive of others</li> <li>• be polite and actively listening to others</li> <li>• accept and be respectful of differences</li> <li>• be honest and trustworthy</li> <li>• be a helpful bystander, not a hurtful bystander</li> <li>• promptly reporting incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation to a trusted adult</li> </ul>

<p><b>Students have a right to privacy and security of personal space.</b></p>	<p><b>Students have the responsibility to respect the property and privacy of others (learners, staff and community).</b> <i>Some examples include but are not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not touching other people's property without permission</li> <li>• respecting personal boundaries</li> <li>• taking and sharing digital images and/or videos respectfully and with proper permission only</li> </ul>
<p><b>Students have the right to feel safe at school.</b></p>	<p><b>Students have the responsibility to behave in a safe manner and to protect the safety of others.</b> <i>Some examples include but are not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• move around the building and premises in a safe and orderly manner</li> <li>• behave appropriately, respectfully and responsibly at all times</li> <li>• report dangerous situations to staff, including possession of banned items</li> <li>• take an active role in ensuring the safety of all members of the school community</li> </ul>

## **Dress Code**

George Elliot is committed to providing students with learning environments that are safe, responsive, and inclusive. We recognize that decisions about dress reflect individual expression of identity, socio-cultural norms, and that they are personal.

Students may attend school and school-related functions in dress of their choice provided that their choices:

- Conform with established health and safety requirements for the intended activity
- Do not represent or promote alcohol or drugs
- Use respectful language
- Do not depict or promote violence, racism, sexism or discrimination
- Are not intimidating to others

Ultimately, the school administration has the responsibility to apply the dress guidelines when necessary. If any learner dresses in an inappropriate manner, the individual will be advised personally and discretely and given an opportunity to meet school district guidelines.

Footwear must always be worn for health and safety reasons.

## **Attendance**

Success is directly related to students' work ethic and active participation in classroom learning. Parent/guardian support of regular, on-time attendance is paramount to the academic success of their child. Each absence results in a lost learning opportunity in the classroom that may not be recreated. Regular attendance and punctuality is necessary for students to gain the full benefit of educational instruction. Absenteeism may result in loss of course credit.

If a parent/guardian determines that the student must be absent from school, the parent/guardian needs to inform the school prior to the scheduled time for that class. Parents/guardians are asked to notify the school of any extended absences well in advance when possible. Please note that optional extended absences (such as long family vacations during the school year) may not be able to be academically supported; GESS does not offer "distance learning" through Google Classroom substituting for in-class, in-person learning.

In the case of a long-term illness a doctor's note may be requested. Please consult with your child's vice-principal in such cases.

## **Signing In/Out**

Students coming late to school are required to sign in at the office. Students who need to leave school during instructional time must inform the teacher and sign out at the office. Students will be asked to provide a note from a parent/guardian or have a staff member speak to a parent/guardian on the phone when signing out. When students are signed out by parents/guardians during the instructional day, students are under the care of their parents/guardians and are required to leave the school property for supervisory reasons.

## **School Visitors**

All visitors to the school must report directly to the office and state their reason for visiting the school. Visitors may not be in the halls unsupervised without express permission from the school administration for safety reasons. Students are required to make prior arrangements to meet their friends who do not attend George Elliot off the school property after school hours. Learners from other schools are not permitted to be on George Elliot property during the school day, just as George Elliot students are not to be on other school properties during the school day.

We do not allow friends or family (ie. siblings or cousins) of students to "visit for the day" and attend classes with learners. This practice is disruptive to learning environments and becomes a supervision issue.

## **Our School Community Neighbours**

Members of our school community are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. There is an expectation that the businesses, families and properties located in the school neighborhood are treated respectfully. Anyone who engages in conduct which disturbs,

disrupts or damages the persons or property of the school neighborhood may be subject to school discipline and/or legal consequences.

### **Personal Property/Lockers**

At the beginning of the year, all Grade 9s will be assigned lockers, and all other learners will be offered a school lock and locker if they would like one. **All locks and lockers remain the property of the school and the school retains access to the lockers throughout the year.** Lockers may be opened and searched when school administration deems it necessary. Personal locks are not to be used for safety and security reasons.

Students should not bring unnecessary items, valuables, or large amounts of money to school. The school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. Students are urged to safeguard their valuables/backpacks/property by storing items in their lockers. Items of value should never be left unlocked in the gym change rooms.

In order to ensure student's belongings are safe, lock combinations and lockers should not be shared.

A replacement fee of \$5.00 may be charged to students who have lost their locks.

### **Responsible Student Use of Personal Technology Devices, School Technology, and District Networks**

The purpose of using network services and digital technologies while in educational settings is to engage in responsible educational activities. Therefore, the use of personal technology devices, school technologies, and district network services requires students to abide by the school's Code of Conduct and procedures, as well as **Central Okanagan Public Schools Policy 486: Student Use of Network Services and Digital Technologies**.

Some examples of responsible use with district and personal devices include the following:

- **Act responsibly** when accessing technology and district networks, including the Internet in their school
- Use technology equipment and property according to all applicable rules and with **care and respect**
- Engage in **appropriate use** as directed by school staff
- Respect the **safety and privacy of self and others** and do not provide personal contact information about themselves or other students
- Treat others with **respect and kindness** when using digital devices and network services
- Respect **resource limits** of the network services and do not engage in activities that jeopardize the integrity, security or performance of the network
- Understand the importance of **privacy and security** and take all reasonable precautions when accessing network services and digital technologies

The use of Personal Technology Devices, School Technology, and District Networks is a privilege and usage may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct. Schools will not be held responsible for any misplaced, lost, stolen, or broken items brought to school

by students. Use of network services and digital technologies which violate the terms outlined in policy and/or the School's Code of Conduct may result in serious consequences including definite or indefinite suspensions and/or police intervention.

Personal learning devices may only be used during instructional time at the discretion of the classroom teacher. If at any point, learners' use interferes with or distracts the learner or learning of others or the safety and well-being of others, the school may intervene to align with our code of conduct and District policy.

Please note that students are not required to have their own personal learning device or cellphone.

### **Bicycles, Scooter and Skateboards**

Bicycles, scooters, and skateboards are an effective, healthy means of transportation to and from school. We encourage their use as transportation, however, we cannot take responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged equipment. We also encourage students to wear helmets while using bicycles, scooters and skateboards and ask that parents/guardians please have a discussion with your child about traffic safety. Bicycles, scooters and skateboards are not to be used on any part of GESS property. These items are not to be brought into classrooms.

Scooters and bikes should be secured with a good lock in the racks located at the front of the school. Skateboards should be stored securely in lockers. We do not have alternative storage inside the building for bikes, scooters, or skateboards (not in classrooms, not in storage rooms, not carried from room to room throughout the day). These places are not necessarily secure, and we know that these items are costly for families to replace - however, the school cannot be held responsible for lost, misplaced, or stolen property stored in various unsecured areas around the school.

### **Student Drivers**

All student drivers will be required to meet with the administration to have a conversation about parking expectations prior to registering for a parking pass.

**Under no circumstance are students allowed to drive other students on school sponsored activities.** Students driving to and/or from school sponsored activities must complete a driver declaration form prior to the activity.

Students who drive recklessly or demonstrate unsafe behaviour, on George Elliot property may face suspension and/or lose the right to bring vehicles to school. The RCMP will be contacted in serious situations. Students may park in the school's parking lot in the designated student parking area. Illegal parking may result in tickets and/or towing. In the interest of safety, students are encouraged to not unnecessarily loiter in the parking lot.

## **Vaping, Smoking and Use of Tobacco Products**

In accordance with Provincial regulations, all schools in Central Okanagan Public Schools are designated as smoke free areas ([Board Policy 640](#)). Any member of our school community who chooses to use tobacco products or vape, must do so off school property. Students using tobacco or vape products on school property will have them confiscated. Please note that the District of Lake Country has a bylaw ([Bylaw 954](#)) that prohibits smoking or vaping in public places.

## **Violations of the Code of Conduct**

We recognize that the vast majority of members of our school community conduct themselves in a positive and responsible manner. However, violations of this Code of Conduct will occur, some being minor and some being more serious, and therefore will be dealt with accordingly.

Discipline is governed by District Policies [455](#) and [455R](#). Students may be disciplined for violations which occur going to and from school, off school property (and outside of regular school hours), if such violations adversely affect students or the operation of any school.

Examples of unacceptable conduct that would constitute violations of the Code of Conduct include (*these examples cited do not comprise an all-inclusive list*):

### *Behaviours that:*

- interfere with the rights of others to learn (e.g. getting into a power struggle with another school member or members)
- create an unsafe situation for any school member (e.g. not complying with safety procedures when working with equipment)
- distract others from focusing on instruction or concentrating on prescribed tasks.
- Are willfully disobedient
- Are repeated violations of the code of conduct (ie: smoking, vaping, substance abuse, truancy, inappropriate language, etc.)

### *Acts of:*

- bullying, harassment or intimidation - including those by electronic means
- Truancy or failure to apply oneself to their studies
- physical violence, vandalism, or assault
- retribution against a person who has reported incidents
- discrimination or similar acts as defined by the [BC Human Rights Code](#)

### *Illegal acts, such as:*

- possession, use or distribution of illegal or restricted substances
- possession or use of weapons
- bomb threats

## **Discipline Procedures**

In the event of a violation of our Code of Conduct, the staff will endeavor to act consistently by:

- communicating with all individuals involved
- determining all the facts
- dealing with students with fairness and respect

We understand that students require assistance in their development and in subscribing to these socially responsible values and behaviours. One role of school staff is to educate and guide our learner's social development by increasing expectations and consequences as students mature both physically and socially. As a result, responses to behaviour will vary according to these variables. Generally, as a student matures, expectations will increase, and consequences will be adjusted accordingly.

We recognize that each incident must be dealt with on an individual basis, dependent upon severity, circumstance, and history. Every effort will be made to suit the consequence to the learner and the situation using a **progressive disciplinary model** as per district policy. Whenever possible, the learner, with the assistance of the administrator, teacher, behaviour intervention teacher, counselor, and/or parent/guardian, will be involved in solving the problem. Where appropriate, special considerations may apply to learners with special needs who violate the Code of Conduct in a manner that reflects their intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional, or behavioural abilities.

Consequences for violations of the Code of Conduct are designed to reinforce positive behaviours and encourage positive change for those involved. Consequences may include discussions and with school staff, mediation, restitution, community service, loss of personal time and/or suspension. **Due to legal confidentiality reasons, school and district staff cannot disclose confidential information related to a child's disciplinary details or consequences to anyone other than the legal guardian of the child.** The use of consequences will be governed by the following principles:

Consequences will:

- be appropriate to the student's stage of development
- reflect the intensity, frequency and/or duration of the inappropriate behaviour
- make sense to the student as much as possible and be appropriately time

Minor violations of the Code of Conduct are dealt with in a variety of ways, including meetings with students, school staff and parents.

For serious breaches of the Code of Conduct, suspensions from school may be issued by an administrator. A suspension is the removal of a student's right to attend regularly scheduled instructional sessions. Suspensions may either be **definite** or **indefinite**:

- **Definite suspensions**, whether in-school or out of school, are suspensions up to and including ten school days
- **Indefinite suspensions** are those in excess of ten school days and are referred to the District Suspension Review Committee



Suspensions may have one or more of the following objectives to:

- improve and/or correct student behaviour
- deter other students from similar behaviour
- plan proactive educational interventions
- clarify and solve problems
- protect the suspended student and/or other students/staff from dangerous behaviours
- provide or develop restorative justice opportunities

## **School Search and Seizure Policy**

Student searches may be made based on reasonable suspicions of a violation of school rules and/or law. The search shall be made pursuant to the reasonableness, under all circumstances, of the search. The search of a student shall be justified at its inception, based on reasonable suspicion and reasonable scope in light of the age and gender of the student and the nature of the infraction. Contraband and other property unauthorized to be on school property or school sponsored activities will be seized for evidentiary purposes in a school hearing and/or legal hearing. Return of the property may be made to the parents/guardians of the student. Illegal substances or property will be turned over to law enforcement.

## **Central Okanagan Public Schools Appeal [Policy 460](#)**

Parents and guardians of a learner who is entitled to an educational program in Central Okanagan Public Schools may appeal the decision of an employee of the Board of Education which significantly affects the education, health or safety of the learner.

- STEP 1: Parent meets with employee (ie. teacher)
- STEP 2: Parent meets with principal
- STEP 3: Parent meets with the Superintendent or designate (ie. Lake Country Family Assistant Superintendent)

If at this point the issue remains unsolved and the parent/guardian is not satisfied, the parent/guardian has a right to a final appeal to the Board. This district policy is in place to help ensure that effective communication is part of the problem-solving process. Details of this process are available at the school and on the District website ([Board Policy 460](#)).