

Parents and Guardians as Partners In Education

Background

Black Gold School Division acknowledges that parents/guardians have a legitimate right to participate in educational decision-making for their children, and to express their concerns within appropriate channels. At the same time, we do have a responsibility to provide our staff with a safe and respectful workplace environment free from harassment, abuse, or threats.

According to the Alberta Teacher's Association, harassment in the school context is defined as persistent parental or community criticism of or interference with school programs, staff performance, or interaction with students that is unwarranted and/or unsubstantiated. In some instances, harassment may constitute a contravention of the *Alberta Education Act* (Section 256). Threats to, or assaults upon school staff are criminal offences and are governed by the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

In order to maintain a high level of cooperative and collaborative parent-school interaction, we expect parents/guardians to foster positive and respectful relationships with teachers, principals, and with other school staff and professionals who provide supports and services to students in the school (as per the *Alberta Education Act* Part 3 Section 32 d, e, f - Parent Responsibilities).

We understand that all members of our school community contribute to the success of our schools, and that we each share responsibility to ensure that our individual conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment.

Black Gold School Division expectations *(Also add this section to the School Registration Package)*

Black Gold School Division understands that all members of our school community contribute to the success of our schools, and that we each share in the responsibility of ensuring our individual conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment.

As a Black Gold parent/guardian, you can expect to be treated as a valued partner in your child's education by your school. In return, you are expected to:

- Treat all staff with dignity and respect
- Interact with other parents and children in a polite manner
- Work to resolve differences in a positive, proactive manner
- Encourage your child(ren) to be respectful

Interactions with staff should always be:

- Private
- Professional and respectful
- Focused on your child's best interest

Visiting school property

School grounds and buildings are private property. There are procedures in place to ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors. Parents/guardians are required to sign in to all buildings, and are confined to the office area unless permission is specifically given otherwise. Additionally, no person shall:

- Disrupt the proceedings of the school
- Loiter or trespass in the building or grounds
- Conduct themselves in a manner that is disrespectful to students, staff, or other parents

Communicating with staff

Parents/guardians can communicate directly with the teacher if they have any questions about their child(ren)'s programming, behaviour, or other classroom-related concerns. As situations are best resolved at the school level, parents/guardians will use the following channels to address their concerns:

First: Communicate concern(s) to the teacher.*

Second: If the concern is not resolved after speaking with the teacher, communicate concerns to the school-level administration.

** The Division respects our employees' wellness. If you plan on communicating with teachers or school administration by telephone or email, please do so between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Staff will reply at their earliest practical opportunity.*

Social media considerations

Parents/guardians are encouraged to help the Division, schools, and staff to minimize social media harm and support a safer, more welcoming, caring environment online. Before parents/guardians post to social media, they are encouraged to ask themselves:

- Is it true?
- Is it necessary?
- Is it kind?
- Have I spoken to the people that can address this before posting online?

Action may be taken against members of the public whose conduct has resulted in any form of harassment of employees, students, parents, volunteers, visitors or representatives of the Division. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Restricted access to property and persons
- Charges of slander, libel or defamation
- Trespass notice
- Charges being laid under the *Criminal Code*

References

Alberta Education Act:

Parent/guardian responsibilities

32 A parent/guardian has the prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be provided to the parent's child, and as a partner in education, has the responsibility to:

- (d) ensure that the parent's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment,
- (e) co-operate and collaborate with school staff to support the delivery of supports and services to the child,
- (f) encourage, foster and advance collaborative, positive and respectful relationships with teachers, principals, other school staff and professionals providing supports and services in the school

Prohibited activities

256 No person shall:

- (a) disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school,
- (b) disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school meeting or board meeting,
- (c) loiter or trespass in a school building or on property owned by a board, or
- (d) conduct themselves in a manner detrimental to the safe operations of a school.

Black Gold School Division:

[Board-Policy-19-Welcoming-Caring-Respectful-Safe-Healthy-Learning-Working-Environments.pdf](https://bgrsd18.sharepoint.com/HR/APM%20PUBLISHED/AP-152-Parent-Public-Inquiries-Dispute-Resolution.pdf)

<https://bgrsd18.sharepoint.com/HR/APM%20PUBLISHED/AP-152-Parent-Public-Inquiries-Dispute-Resolution.pdf>

<https://bgrsd18.sharepoint.com/LearningServices/APM%20PUBLISHED/AP-350-Student-Conduct.pdf>

<https://bgrsd18.sharepoint.com/Superintendent/Board%20Policy%20PUBLISHED/Board-Policy-19-Appendix-Student-Code-Conduct.pdf>

<https://bgrsd18.sharepoint.com/LearningServices/APM%20PUBLISHED/AP-351-Student-Conduct-School-Buses.pdf>

<https://bgrsd18.sharepoint.com/HR/APM%20PUBLISHED/AP-170-Harassment.pdf>

<https://bgrsd18.sharepoint.com/HR/APM%20PUBLISHED/AP-171-Threatening-Behaviour.pdf>




Respect Group - Respect In The Workplace program

<https://www.respectgroupinc.com/respect-in-the-workplace/>

Appendix:

Black Gold School Division acknowledges that parents and guardians have a legitimate right to participate in educational decision-making for their children, and to express their concerns within appropriate channels. We welcome your questions and concerns, and make every effort to address them in a timely manner.

See below for the steps you should take when reaching out to us.

STEP 1 	CLASSROOM TEACHERS For classroom-related questions or concerns, the classroom teacher is your first point of contact. They can help with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Classroom expectations● Homework, class assignments and assessment● Any questions or concerns about the classroom● Student behavior (interpersonal conflict, bullying/harassment)
STEP 2 	SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION For questions and concerns beyond the classroom, please contact your school principal. They can help with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Questions or concerns about your school● School education / health / assessment / professional development plans● Student registration● Student schedules● School safety and security (link to emerg protocols)● School budgets and fundraising● School Councils● Report Card concerns● School Code of Conduct● Discipline concerns/suspensions <p>FIND YOUR SCHOOL >> (<i>link to BGSD website to find a school/ on school websites, link to the handbook</i>)</p>
STEP 3 	ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENTS The Associate Superintendents of Schools will work with parents and school administration to address parental concerns <i>only once they have been addressed to the appropriate person(s) without satisfaction</i> . Associate Superintendents support our schools in finding solutions, and can be contacted if you have questions or concerns that have not been answered, or for help with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Resident students● Programming / attendance issues

- Staff/ personnel issues and concerns
- Transportation issues
- Alternate attendance requests

CONTACT ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT >> ([link to BGSD website](#))

STEP 4



SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for the 31 schools in the Black Gold School Division. The Superintendent is the liaison between the Board of Trustees and senior administration. The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for ensuring Division Policies and Administrative Procedures are in compliance with the Provincial legislation and associated regulations.

- The Superintendent is the final administrative arbiter when dealing with issues that cannot be resolved by other means.

CONTACT SUPERINTENDENT >> ([link to BGSD website](#))

STEP 5



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees are your elected school board officials. They are available to help you with the following:

- Governance and Leadership
- Board policies
- Collective bargaining
- Community engagement and advocacy on educational issues
- Ideas and suggestions for improvement

The Board of Trustees will listen to issues within their purview that have not been satisfactorily resolved by the administration.

FIND YOUR TRUSTEE >> ([link to BGSD website](#))